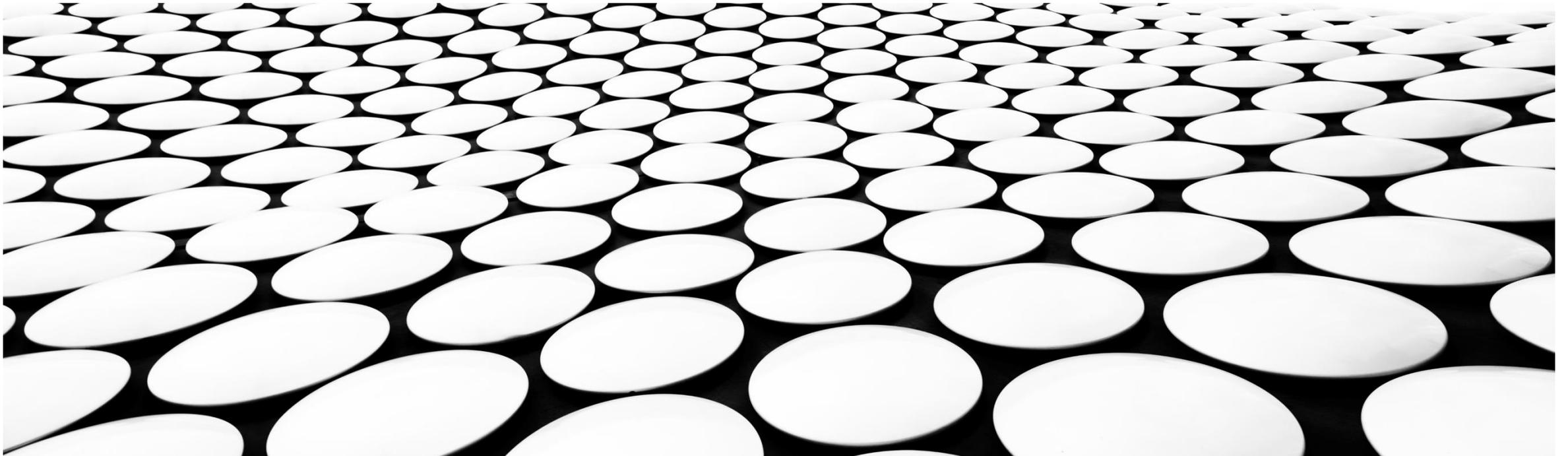

WHY THIS METHOD?

LINKING RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

EUNJU RHO, PH.D. (ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY)





Education:

Ph.D. (2013). Univ. of Georgia
MPA (2008). Texas A&M Univ.
MA (2005). Korea Univ.
BA (2003). Korea Univ.

Experience:

Associate Professor, NIU
Assistant Professor, U of Akron /
NIU
Researcher (2006). COTI
Researcher (2005-06). NIA

Career Highlights

- **Research:** Publications in PAR, ARPA, PMR, IPMJ, etc. ; APSA Paul A. Volcker Junior Scholar Research Grant Award
- **Teaching:** 2024 Louis Brownlow Faculty Member of the Year. ASPA Chicago Chapter; Teaching awards. NIU / U of Akron
- **Service:** Chair, ASPA Section on Korean Public Administration; Committee/leadership for APSA, PMRA, NASPAA, KAPA, KAPS, AOM
- **Editorial Service:** Public Administration Review /Public Performance & Management Review Board/ International Journal of Policy Studies Editors-in-Chief / IRPA Book Editor, Asso Editor

NIU MPA – KUPA Dual Degree Program

- Public management, performance management, managerial behavior, leadership, strategic planning, organizational communication



4th Ranked

Local Government Management Program in the US

Eunju Rho, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Public Administration

Northern Illinois University



NIU COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCE MPA – KOREA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS (KU- PSE) MASTERS OF ARTS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM

- **Effective: 2025. 01. 01**
- **Admission to NIU MPA program**
 - Undergraduate GPA (minimum 2.75 on a 4.0 scale / transcript)
 - TOEFL (80 IBT), Duolingo English test (115), IELTS (6.5)
 - Graduate school application form
 - A letter from the KUPA Department Chair
 - 2 recommendation letters from an academic and one letter from a professional (e.g., working experience)
- **University Credit Hour Requirements:**
 - NIU (39 credits) – 15 credits - KUPA; 24 credits -NIU
 - Comprehensive exam – KU students must complete both 1) an NIU-required oral comprehensive exam and 2) a KU-required written exam in two subjects.
 - Capstone/Thesis: solo-authored capstone paper for NIU (20-40 pages) + enhanced version of this paper for KUPA
 - Internship (pre-career students): at least one-semester internship is recommended (over \$20 per hour) → \$1,600 per month (20 hours x 4 weeks)
- **Tuition: 1.5x domestic tuition (discounted rate) = \$623.32 x 1.5 = \$934.98 per credit hour → 24 credits: \$22,439**



OUR STORY TODAY: KEY QUESTIONS, TAKEAWAYS, AND NEXT STEPS

- Why This methods?
- Methodology is not just a technical tool—it is a strategic and epistemological choice.
- In public administration, method selection must balance:
 - Theoretical relevance
 - Contextual and cultural fit
 - Practical constraints (e.g., IRB, access, capacity)
- Today's goal:
 - Align methods with research questions
 - Introduce examples of diverse methods from my own research



START WITH THE RESEARCH QUESTION: GOOD QUESTIONS DRIVE GOOD METHODS

- Categories of research questions:
 - *Explanatory*: What explains a phenomenon?
 - To identify associations or drivers of outcomes (e.g., what factors influence contracting decisions?)
 - Methods: Regression models, panel data analysis, SEM
 - *Exploratory*: What is happening, and why?
 - To uncover new patterns, behaviors, or understand complex phenomena (e.g., how are local governments implementing AI in practice?)
 - Methods: in-depth interviews, qualitative case studies, grounded theory
 - *Comparative*: How do entities differ across settings?
 - To identify differences across units (countries, states, organizations, time) (e.g., how does AI use differ between US and Korean local governments?)
 - Methods: cross-national surveys, multi-level models, multiple case comparisons
 - *Evaluative*: What works, for whom, and under what conditions?
 - To assess the impact or effectiveness of programs, strategies, or interventions (e.g., what crisis communication strategies help restore public trust?)
 - Methods: experimental design, program evaluation, systematic review



START WITH THE RESEARCH QUESTION: GOOD QUESTIONS DRIVE GOOD METHODS

Question Type	Primary Goal	Common Methods
Explanatory	Identify patterns of relationships	Regression, panel data, SEM
Exploratory	Understand new or complex phenomena	Interviews, qualitative case study
Comparative	Analyze variations across contexts, groups, or time	Cross-national survey, comparative case studies
Evaluative	Assess effectiveness or impact of policies, programs, or interventions	Experiments, program evaluation, PRISMA



DATA SOURCES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: WHAT KIND OF DATA CAN WE USE?

- **Primary vs. Secondary Data**
 - **Primary data:** Researcher collects his/her own data through surveys or other methods
 - *More time consuming and resource-intensive*
 - **Secondary data:** Researcher utilizes data that already exist from other sources
 - *Less time consuming and fewer resources are required*
 - *May be required as part of an administrative or planning process*
- **Data Types:**
 - **Quantitative:** Cross-sectional or panel survey data
 - **Qualitative:** In-depth interviews, fieldwork
 - **Mixed or Synthesized:** Mixed methods or systematic reviews
 - **Alternative:** YouTube videos, comments, social media analytics

Time Dimension	Level of Aggregation			
	Microdata	Aggregated (or Ecological) Data	Single Measure (or Completely Aggregated) Data	Multilevel (or Hierarchical) Data
Cross section	Cross-sectional microdata	Cross-sectional data on aggregate units (such as states)	A statistic on one unit (such as a country) at one point in time	Multilevel cross section
Before-after (paired samples)	Before-after microdata	Before-after data on aggregate units	Before-after comparison of one unit	Multilevel before-after data
Panel data (repeated measures or cohort studies)	Panel microdata	Panel aggregate data	Time series	Hierarchical panel data
Pooled cross sections	Pooled cross sections of microdata			Multilevel pooled cross sections

FORMS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA & METHODS

Remler, D. K., & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2021). *Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation*. Sage Publications.

SECONDARY / CROSS-SECTIONAL / MICRODATA

EXAMPLE: RHO, YUN, & LEE (2015), DOES ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE MATTER?

The image shows the cover page of a journal article. At the top left is the logo for PAR (Public Administration Review). At the top right is the logo for ASPA (American Society for Public Administration). The authors' names and affiliations are listed: Eunju Rho (The University of Akron), Kangbok Lee (Auburn University), and Taesik Yun (The University of Georgia). The title of the article is 'Does Organizational Image Matter? Image, Identification, and Employee Behaviors in Public and Nonprofit Organizations'. Below the title is an abstract. On the right side, there is a short biography for Eunju Rho and a note for Taesik Yun.

PAR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REVIEW

ASPA

Eunju Rho
The University of Akron

Kangbok Lee
Auburn University

Taesik Yun
The University of Georgia

Does Organizational Image Matter? Image, Identification, and Employee Behaviors in Public and Nonprofit Organizations

Abstract: Organizational image, identity, and identification are powerful concepts in terms of understanding members' behaviors and beliefs. In particular, the term "image" has frequently been used to describe the overall impression of the organization, but most scholars have only focused on organizational image as it is perceived by external audiences. However, organizational image as perceived by members within an organization is critical for determining its impact on individual employees' motivation, work behaviors, and further performance at work. This article explores the roles of organizational image and identification in explaining organizational behaviors—extra-role behavior and absenteeism—in public and nonprofit organizations. A series of seemingly unrelated regressions were used to analyze survey data from 1,220 respondents. Results show that organizational image is positively related to employee identification, and identification has a significant influence on promoting extra-role behavior and lowering employee absenteeism.

Eunju Rho is assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron, with expertise in public management. Her research focuses on several aspects of public management, including interorganizational management, government contracting, managerial behavior, and communication. She received her PhD in public administration from The University of Georgia.
E-mail: eho@uakron.edu

Taesik Yun is program manager in

- RQ: "How do employees' perceptions of organizational image influence their identification and behavior (extra-role performance and absenteeism)?"
- **Data & Methods:**
 - **National Administrative Studies Project III (NASP-III):** Cross-sectional survey of 1,220 public and nonprofit managers in Georgia and Illinois
 - Unit of analysis: individual employees (microdata)
 - Analysis technique: Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) to estimate mediation relationships across behavioral outcomes

SECONDARY / CROSS-SECTIONAL / MICRODATA

EXAMPLE: RHO, YUN, & LEE (2015), DOES ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE MATTER?

- Why Use Secondary Microdata?
 - Efficient and cost-effective: utilizes existing high-quality available datasets
 - Access to broad and diverse samples across organizational types and sectors
 - Enables theory testing and extension using well-validated measures
 - For replication, theory extension, or hypothesis testing

- Things to Consider:
 - Cross-sectional data limit causal inference
 - Must carefully evaluate measurement validity of existing survey items
 - Sectoral or regional representativeness may limit generalizability
 - Unite of analysis should align with theoretical framework

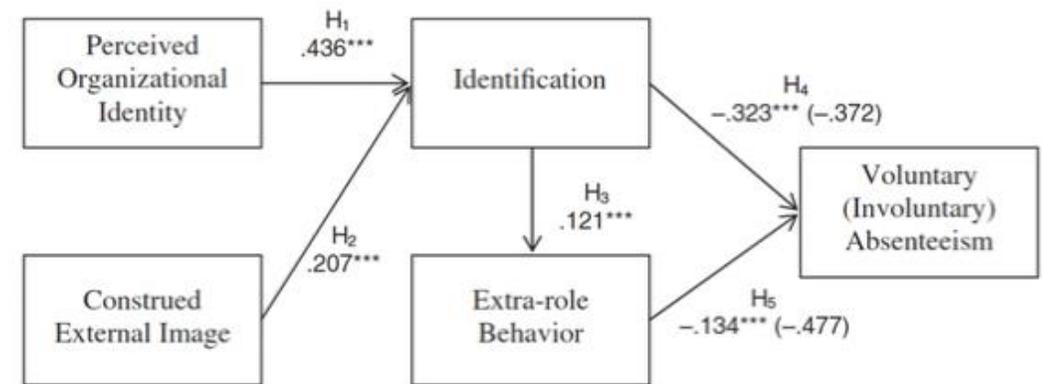


Figure 1 Hypotheses Testing Results

- **Statistical Methods: (multistage model)** The SEM approach requires variables to be latent and to be measured using multi-item scales rather than being observed (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). This condition is not satisfied in this study. Instead, we analyze the model for each of the stages using seemingly unrelated regressions (SURs : see Autry et al. 2010). The SUR model has been demonstrated as effective for estimating which models are capturing mediating conditions (Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes 2007).

SECONDARY / PANEL / AGGREGATED / ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

EXAMPLE: RHO (2013) CONTRACTING REVISITED

The image shows the cover page of a research paper. At the top left is the logo for PAR (Public Administration Review) and at the top right is the logo for ASPA. The author's name, Eunju Rho, and affiliation, University of Georgia, are listed in the top right. The title of the paper is centered: 'Contracting Revisited: Determinants and Consequences of Contracting Out for Public Education Services'. Below the title, there are two columns of text. The left column contains a summary of the paper's findings, and the right column contains a biographical note about the author, Eunju Rho, including her current position as a doctoral candidate and her research interests in public management and organizational behavior.

PAR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REVIEW

ASPA

Eunju Rho
University of Georgia

Contracting Revisited: Determinants and Consequences of Contracting Out for Public Education Services

The determinants and consequences of contracting are examined in more than 1,000 Texas school districts for 1997–2008. The results largely replicate prior research by O’Toole and Meier, showing that contracting is negatively related to spending on school districts’ core instructional functions and that the relationship between contracting and bureaucracy is reciprocal. The present findings, based on data from a longer period, indicate that contracting is positively related to school district performance. This article also finds support for an extended model of contracting determinants involving two environmental shocks: negative budget shocks and enrollment shocks.

O’Toole and Meier examined not only the impact of government contracting on service quality but also the determinants of contracting using data from more than 1,000 Texas school districts for 1997 through 1999. They found that contracting trims core instructional spending but does not improve educational performance. In addition to identifying contracting determinants, such as smaller organizational size, unstable organizational membership, and organizational resources, their results showed that contracting is associated with more bureaucracy; indeed, the panel analysis confirmed the reciprocal relationship between contracting and bureaucracy.

Eunju Rho is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Public Administration and Policy at the University of Georgia. Her research focuses on public management, interorganizational network management, emergency management, organizational behavior, and organizational communication.
E-mail: ejrho@uga.edu

- RQ: “What are the determinants and consequences of contracting out public education services in the US school districts?”
- **Data & Methods:**
 - Data: Over 1,000 Texas school districts from 1997 to 2008 (12 years, 12,368 observations)
 - Unit of analysis: School district (organization)
 - Source: Texas Education Agency – annual performance, finance, demographic reports
 - Analysis technique: fixed-effects regression

SECONDARY / PANEL / AGGREGATED / ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

EXAMPLE: RHO (2013) CONTRACTING REVISITED

- Why Use Administrative Panel Data?
 - Provide objective, consistently collected performance and financial indicators
 - Covers a long time span, capturing environmental shocks (e.g., budget cuts, enrollment surges)
 - Enables robust modeling of dynamic relationships between contracting, performance, and bureaucracy
 - Avoids issues of survey bias or missing waves in subjective data
 - Enables replication of prior studies and stronger generalizability (Rho, 2013 extends O'Toole & Meier, 2004)
 - Longitudinal structure allows testing for lagged effects and policy trends
 - Captures contextual factors shaping managerial decisions

- Things to Consider:
 - Requires careful handling of serial correlation, heteroskedasticity, and multicollinearity
 - Interpretation must consider potential omitted variable bias
 - Lack of micro-level behavioral data (e.g., motivations, perceptions) limits some theory-building

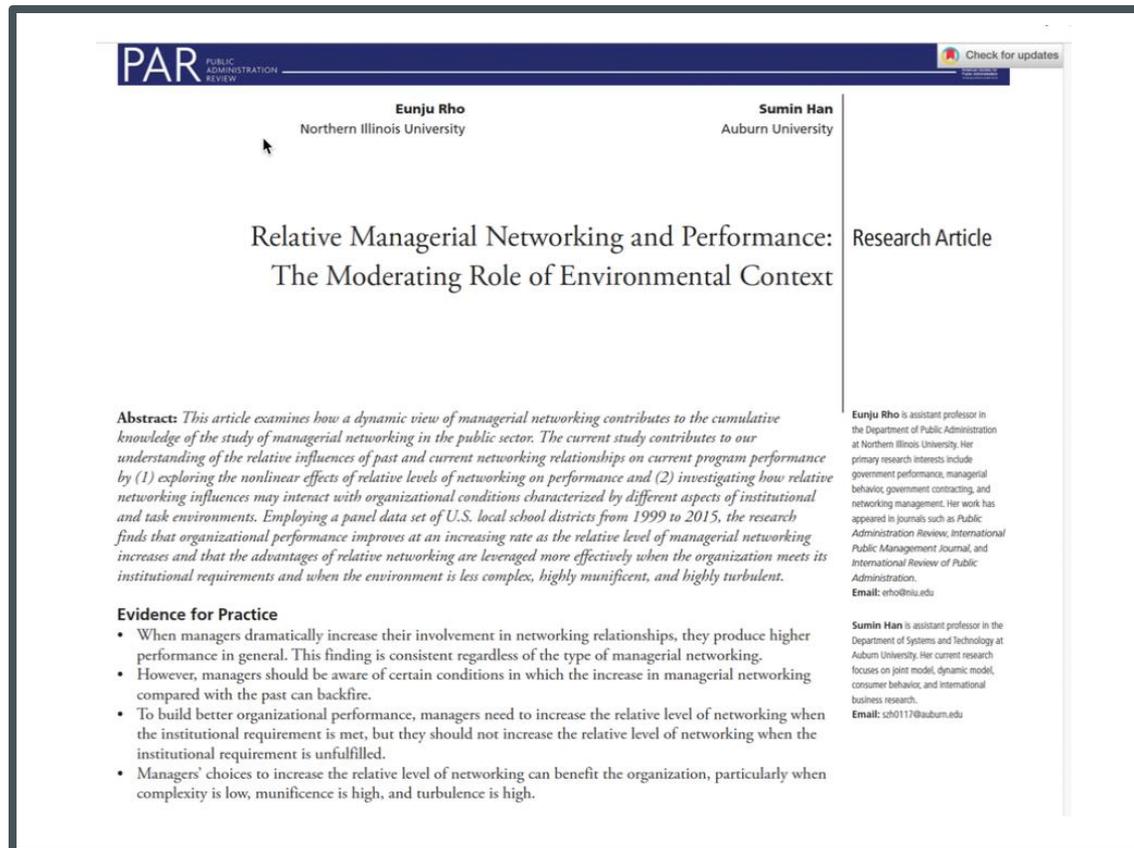
Table 6 Impact of Environmental Shocks on Contracting

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable = Percentage of Budget Contracted			
	Slope	t-score	Slope	t-score
Budget shock	1.6053	6.05**	1.7136	6.46**
Enrollment shock	0.8960	2.54**	0.9586	2.73**
Enrollment (K)	-0.0558	8.76**	-0.0608	9.61**
Teacher turnover	0.0107	1.18	0.0171	1.87#
Revenue per pupil (K)	0.6883	22.82**	0.7933	23.37**
Percentage local fund	0.0989	28.90**	0.0971	28.22**
Central administrator (%)	0.0899	1.52*		
School bureaucrats			-1.1740	3.58**
Central office bureaucrats			-0.6687	3.14**
Standard error	7.8573		7.8509	
R ²	0.199		0.200	
F	165.83		157.95	
N	11,318		11,318	

Note: Coefficients for individual years are not reported.
 #p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01.

SECONDARY / PANEL / ADMINISTRATIVE + SURVEY DATA

EXAMPLE: RHO & HAN (2021) RELATIVE MANAGERIAL NETWORKING & PERFORMANCE



PAR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REVIEW

Eunju Rho
Northern Illinois University

Sumin Han
Auburn University

Relative Managerial Networking and Performance:
The Moderating Role of Environmental Context

Research Article

Abstract: *This article examines how a dynamic view of managerial networking contributes to the cumulative knowledge of the study of managerial networking in the public sector. The current study contributes to our understanding of the relative influences of past and current networking relationships on current program performance by (1) exploring the nonlinear effects of relative levels of networking on performance and (2) investigating how relative networking influences may interact with organizational conditions characterized by different aspects of institutional and task environments. Employing a panel data set of U.S. local school districts from 1999 to 2015, the research finds that organizational performance improves at an increasing rate as the relative level of managerial networking increases and that the advantages of relative networking are leveraged more effectively when the organization meets its institutional requirements and when the environment is less complex, highly munificent, and highly turbulent.*

Evidence for Practice

- When managers dramatically increase their involvement in networking relationships, they produce higher performance in general. This finding is consistent regardless of the type of managerial networking.
- However, managers should be aware of certain conditions in which the increase in managerial networking compared with the past can backfire.
- To build better organizational performance, managers need to increase the relative level of networking when the institutional requirement is met, but they should not increase the relative level of networking when the institutional requirement is unfulfilled.
- Managers' choices to increase the relative level of networking can benefit the organization, particularly when complexity is low, munificence is high, and turbulence is high.

Eunju Rho is assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration at Northern Illinois University. Her primary research interests include government performance, managerial behavior, government contracting, and networking management. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Public Administration Review*, *International Public Management Journal*, and *International Review of Public Administration*.
Email: erho@niu.edu

Sumin Han is assistant professor in the Department of Systems and Technology at Auburn University. Her current research focuses on joint model, dynamic model, consumer behavior, and international business research.
Email: sh0117@auburn.edu

- RQ: “How does the relative increase in managerial networking over time influence organizational performance, and how do contextual factors moderate this relationship?”
- **Data & Methods:**
 - Data: combined administrative panel data (performance, resources, district characteristics) with superintendent surveys
 - Unit of analysis: 1,000+ Texas school districts from 1999 to 2015 (organization-level aggregated + individual level microdata)
 - Source: Texas Education Agency (Annual performance, finance, demographics) + superintendent management survey (1999, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2014)
 - Analysis technique: Dynamic panel data analysis using system GMM with lagged DV

SECONDARY / PANEL / ADMINISTRATIVE + SURVEY DATA

EXAMPLE: RHO & HAN (2021) RELATIVE MANAGERIAL NETWORKING & PERFORMANCE

$$RNET_{it} = NET_{it} - \frac{1}{t-1} \sum_{j=1}^{t-1} NET_{ij}$$

- Why Use Administrative + Survey Panel Data?
 - Merges individual-level behavioral data with organizational outcomes
 - Captures objective performance trends across time
 - Enables the study of how past decisions and contextual factors influence current outcomes
- Things to Consider:
 - Survey fragmentation: Managerial surveys were collected irregularly, requiring care to ensure time consistency
 - Unit alignment issues: Merging administrative and individual-level survey data demands precise matching by district and year

Table 2 The Effect of Relative Networking on Performance and the Moderating Effect of Environmental Factors between Relative Networking and Performance

DV = Student Exam Pass Rate	Main Effect (1)	Interaction Effect (2)
Lagged DV	0.716** (0.005)	0.553** (0.003)
Main effect		
Relative level of networking (RNET)	0.001* (0.0005)	0.0006 (0.0007)
Relative level of networking ² (RNET ²)	0.002** (0.0002)	-0.0005 (0.0004)
Adequate yearly progress (AYP)	-	0.031** (0.001)
Complexity (COMP)	-	-0.029** (0.001)
Munificence (MUN)	-	-0.005** (0.0005)
Turbulence (TUR)	-	-0.019** (0.0009)
Interaction effect		
RNET x AYP	-	0.002** (0.0009)
RNET x AYP	-	-0.001 (0.001)
RNET x COMP	-	-0.005** (0.0006)
RNET x COMP	-	-0.001** (0.0003)
RNET x MUN	-	0.001** (0.0004)
RNET x MUN	-	0.001** (0.0003)
RNET x TUR	-	0.0007 (0.0004)
RNET x TUR	-	0.002** (0.0003)
Controls		
Superintendent succession	-0.008** (0.001)	-0.003** (0.0004)
Superintendent tenure	0.00004 (0.0001)	0.0005** (0.0001)
Teachers' salary (thousands)	0.026** (0.001)	0.005** (0.001)
Class size (student-teacher ratio)	-0.004** (0.0003)	-0.006** (0.0002)
Teachers' experience (year)	8.7x10 ⁻⁷ (0.001)	0.008** (0.0007)
Year dummies	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes
Number of districts (N)	1,135	1,118
Observations (N x T)	14,342	12,550
Number of instruments	318	756
Sargan test p-value	0.720	0.349
Wald test	28,024.7**	6.72x10**

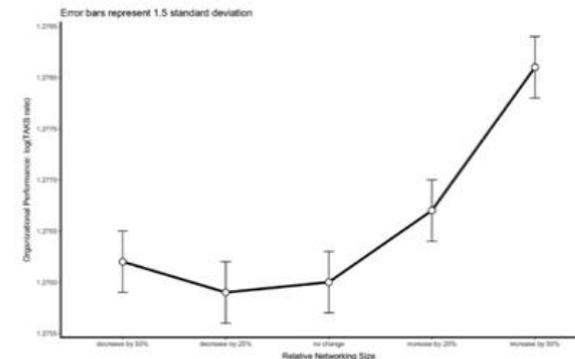
Notes: DV = dependent variable; RNET = relative networking size; RNET² = quadratic term of the relative networking size; COMP = complexity; TUR = turbulence; MUN = munificence.
 **p < .01; *p < .05.

than small differences in the level of managerial networking. Taken together, the relationship between the relative level of managerial networking and overall student performance improved at an increasing rate.⁴

Moderation hypotheses 2–4 were tested using the full specification (model 2 in table 2). Fairly significant moderating effects on the relationship between relative networking and organizational performance were observed when environmental factors were introduced in the model. The result supported hypothesis 2, which predicted that the relative networking–performance relationship would vary according to AYP status. A significant effect was observed on the interaction term between relative networking and AYP ($\beta = 0.002, p < .01$, the linear interaction term). The result also supported hypothesis 3, which predicted that the relative networking–performance relationship would vary according to complexity ($\beta = -0.005, p < .01$, the linear interaction term; $\beta = -0.001, p < .01$, the quadratic interaction term).

The result was similar for hypothesis 4, which predicted that the relative networking–performance relationship would vary according to environmental munificence, as there was a significant effect on the interaction term ($\beta = 0.001, p < .01$, the linear interaction term; $\beta = 0.001, p < .01$, the quadratic interaction term). Finally, the result supported hypothesis 5, which predicted the interaction effect between relative networking and turbulence ($\beta = 0.002, p < .01$, the quadratic interaction term).

To illustrate the patterns of the significant moderating effects that supported the hypotheses, we plotted the significant (at $p < .05$) interaction effects with 25 percent above and below the mean to present high and low levels of the moderating variables, respectively, using the coefficients in model 2. The moderation plots for the hypotheses are shown in figures 2–4.





SOME LIMITATIONS OF SECONDARY DATA

- Does data availability distort research?
 - Determining what study gets done
- Critical Questions to Ask about Secondary Data
 - What was original public of the data – why were they collected?
 - Are they administrative data, survey data, or some other type of secondary data?
 - What form or structure applies to the data? (e.g., microdata or aggregated? Time dimensions?)
 - What variables, or measures, are (un)available in the data? What kinds of questions can the data help answer?
 - Is there a codebook or related documentation of the data?



WHEN TO COLLECT ORIGINAL DATA?

- Secondary data may not provide
 - Sufficient data for a small (local) area
 - Relevant variables
 - Relevant combinations of variables (for examining relationships)
 - Timely, up-to-date findings
 - Full access (due to confidentiality concerns)



WHEN TO COLLECT ORIGINAL DATA?

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 - Sufficient data for a small (local) area
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PRIMARY / CROSS-SECTIONAL / MICRODATA : SURVEY: WHEN SHOULD YOU DO A SURVEY?

- **Do you know enough about the topic?**
 - To do a survey, you must understand enough to know what specific questions to ask people
 - Qualitative methods, such as focus groups, are often better for emerging, little-understood issues
 - Example: surveying Americans to better understand perceptions of economic growth
- **Does the information exist already in another source?**
 - The information you seek from a survey may be available already from another source
 - Example: Surveying police chiefs to find out the local crime rate (crime statistics for localities are readily available from other sources)
- **Can people tell you what you want to know?**
 - Some information you seek to gather may not be well known or understood by respondents
 - Example: How many grams of trans fat do you eat in a typical day?
- **Will people provide truthful answers?**
 - People or firms may not be willing to provide information, even if they know it
 - Example: will respondents answer honestly about illegal drug use?



PRIMARY / CROSS-SECTIONAL / MICRODATA : SURVEY: STEPS IN THE SURVEY RESEARCH PROCESS

- Identify the population and sampling strategy
 - Be clear about whom to survey—the population
 - Identify a sampling strategy
- Develop a questionnaire
 - Start with an outline of topics or items
 - Then refine the question format and wording
- Pretest questionnaire and survey procedures
 - Cognitive pretesting: explore respondents' understanding of the questionnaire
 - Field pretesting: a practice run of the actual survey procedures
- Recruit and train interviewers
 - A very important step to ensure good interview surveys – interviewers need to convey friendliness and trustworthiness
- Collect data
 - The field work step of doing a survey (i.e. household visits, telephone calling, e-mailing, etc.)
- Enter and prepare data for analysis
 - Fairly automatic in computerized data collection, but more work when using paper forms
- Analyze data and present findings
 - Including statistical analysis of the survey data and preparation of a report or presentation of findings



PRIMARY / CROSS-SECTIONAL / MICRODATA : SURVEY

EXAMPLE: INTERNATIONAL SURVEY ON AI IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SAIL-GOV)

- RQ: To understand how local governments across different countries adopt, use, and govern artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, and how institutional, organizational, and contextual factors influence these processes.
- **Method: Cross-Sectional Survey of Public Managers**
 - Respondents: Local government officials across multiple countries
 - Unit of Analysis: Local government organizations (e.g., municipalities, counties)
 - Instrument: Standardized yet locally adaptable online survey
 - Data Type: Self-reported, structured, individual-level responses (microdata)
 - Timing: Single time-point administration per country (cross-sectional)
- **Key Design Features**
 - Three-tiered questionnaire: Priority 1 (core global items), Priority 2 (recommended), Priority 3 (optional), plus country-specific additions
 - Multilingual adaptation with consistent core structure for cross-country comparison
- **Why Cross-Sectional Survey?**
 - Standardized modules on AI use, governance, barriers, stakeholder engagement, and perceived impact
 - Mixed sampling via practitioner networks (e.g., ICMA, KACM)
- **Practical Value**
 - Policy briefs and practitioner reports for governments
 - Academic publications comparing institutional readiness for AI
 - Data repository for future longitudinal or mixed-method extensions

MIXED METHODS: COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

EXAMPLE: JU, RHO, & JUNG (2025): CHUNGJU-MAN CASE

JOURNAL OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2025.2499571>



Check for updates

Exploring public-sector YouTube influencer PR strategies: a mixed-methods field study

Ilwoo Ju ^a, Eunju Rho ^b and Juyong Jung ^c

^aBrian Lamb School of Communication, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, USA; ^bDepartment of Public Administration, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, USA; ^cDepartment of Public Management Information System, Korea National University of Transportation, Chungju, Republic of Korea

ABSTRACT

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze YouTube influencer strategies in public-sector communication, focusing on South Korea's most-subscribed local government channel. Phase I employs an inductive approach based on in-depth interviews with the channel's creator. This phase develops a grounded model of effective public relations (PR) strategies, highlighting crucial organizational factors, content themes, and creator attributes. Phase II refines the theoretical framework by integrating insights from existing research on social media influencer marketing, city branding, and strategic PR. A field survey of 10,321 YouTube channel visitors examines this framework, identifying key factors – such as creator authenticity, emotional connection with the creator, content informativeness, and entertainment value – that shape brand perception, travel intentions, and word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions. This study advances YouTube influencer PR literature within public-sector communication by offering actionable insights for government strategies and expanding the understanding of influencer impacts in PR.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 23 November 2024
Accepted 24 April 2025

KEYWORDS

YouTube PR strategies; influencers; local government PR; mixed-methods; field study; city branding; public-sector communication

- **Research Question:** “What drives successful government communication using local government YouTube channel?”.
- **Method:** Mixed-methods design combining qualitative interviews and quantitative field survey
 - Case: ChungTV, the official YouTube channel of Chungju City, South Korea, featuring a public officer acting as a digital influencer ("Chungju Man")
 - Phase 1 (Qualitative): Semi-structured interviews with YouTube creator (Chungju Man) → Grounded theory coding revealed key concepts
 - Phase 2 (Quantitative): Field survey: 10,321 ChungTV viewers → Quantitative analysis

MIXED METHODS: COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

EXAMPLE: JU, RHO, & JUNG (2025): CHUNGJU-MAN CASE

- **When to Use Mixed Methods:**
 - When exploring a new or complex phenomenon that requires both explanation and measurement
 - When qualitative findings can inform the design of a broader quantitative study (explanatory sequential design)
 - When quantitative results raise interpretive questions best answered through qualitative follow-up (explanatory sequential design)
 - When seeking to triangulate findings from multiple data sources (concurrent triangulation design)
- **Benefits of Mixed-methods Design**
 - Enhances credibility and validity through triangulation
 - Enables both theory-building and theory-testing
 - Enhances both theoretical development and practical relevance
- **Things to consider:**
 - Integration of findings must be carefully planned (conceptual framework should guide both phases)
 - Requires **multi-method literacy** and coordination across research teams
 - Data collection and analysis timelines are often more complex and resource-intensive

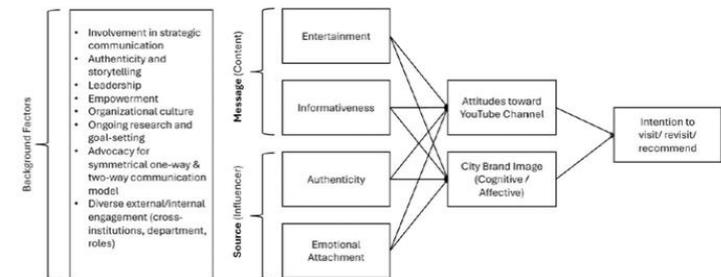


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of local government YouTube influencer PR strategy.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

EXAMPLE: KIM, RHO, & TEO (2024): CITIZEN SATISFACTION

Article

Citizen Satisfaction Research in Public Administration: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract

This study presents a systematic review of the 122 studies on citizen satisfaction in the field of public administration. The research aims to identify the current state of knowledge on citizen satisfaction by drawing on existing empirical results and conceptual arguments, highlighting research gaps, and developing a heuristic framework to guide future research. Based on a literature search of 12 major public administration journals, our findings indicate that citizen satisfaction has gained significant academic attention as a performance measure to monitor and assess public service delivery, particularly at the local level. Despite substantial scrutiny in diverse research contexts, quantitative studies still predominate, mainly using secondary survey data in their research. Furthermore, we observed an absence of an agreed-upon definition for citizen satisfaction and an over-emphasis on the expectancy-disconfirmation model to explain the satisfaction process, highlighting the need for scholars to move beyond the performance-expectation dyad. While reviewing a set of environmental, organizational, and individual-level antecedents and outcomes, we noticed few scholars have considered the effects of moderating variables on citizen satisfaction. As such, our paper concludes by identifying a few underexplored research themes that could facilitate knowledge-building regarding citizen satisfaction.

- **Research Objective:** “What have public administration scholars studied about citizen satisfaction, and what directions should future research take?”
- **Method:** Systematic review using PRISMA-based procedures
 - Timeframe: 2000-2022
 - Scope: Peer-reviewed journal articles focused on citizen satisfaction in PA
 - Databases searched: SCOPUS, Web of Science, EBSCO
 - Final sample: 103 articles
- **What is SLR?**
 - A systematic literature review is a structured, transparent, and replicable approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing prior research. It is particularly useful for: 1) Mapping the state of knowledge in a field, 2) Identifying theoretical, methodological, or contextual gaps, 3) Informing future research agendas and practice

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- **When to Use SLR:**
 - When evidence on a topic is fragmented, inconsistent, or scattered across disciplines
 - When aiming to develop a conceptual framework based on existing studies
 - When conducting evidence-based policy or theory reviews
- **Standard Protocol:**
 - Follows established guidelines such as PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)
 - Includes clear inclusion/exclusion criteria, database search strategy, and review coding scheme

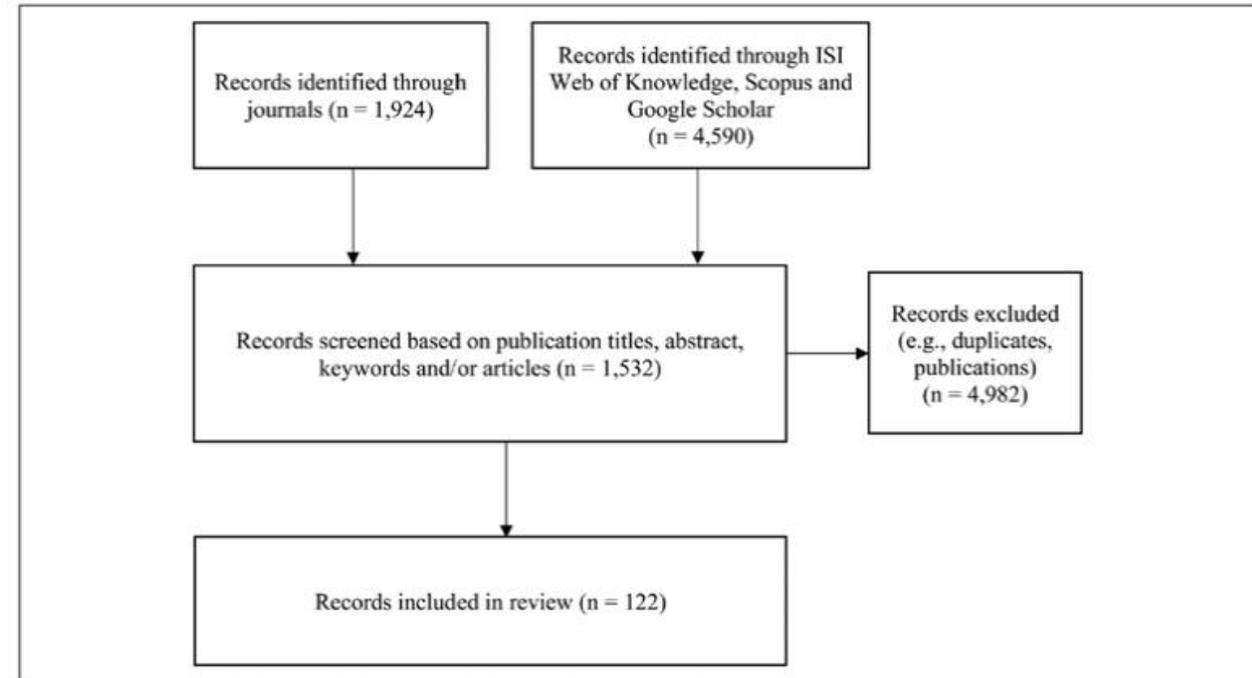


Figure 1. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram.

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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- Benefits of SLR:
 - Makes the invisible structure of a field visible
 - Enables cumulative theory-building
 - Identifies not only what we know, but what we've ignored
 - Supports policy-relevant and interdisciplinary agendas
- Things to Consider:
 - Must develop and follow a transparent protocol to ensure replicability
 - Requires judgment and consistency in coding and interpreting findings
 - May be limited by publication bias and access to full-text sources

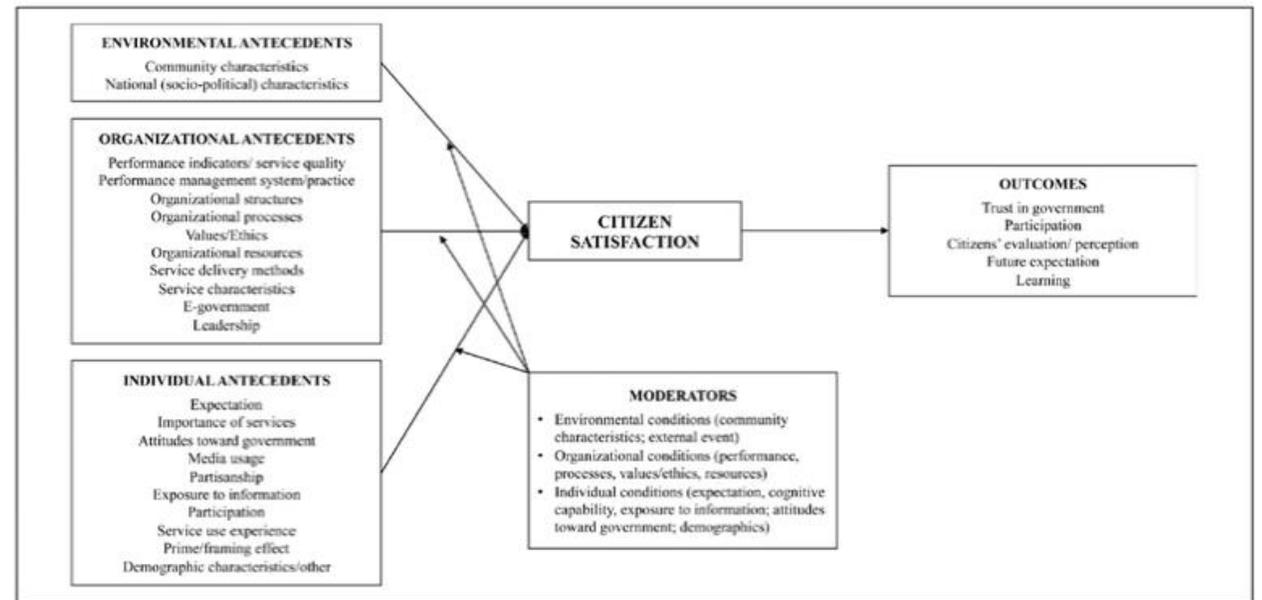


Figure 5. Heuristic framework.



KEY TAKEAWAYS & MOVING FORWARD

- **So... Why This Method?**
 - Let the **research question** dictate the method—not the reverse.
 - Different methods uncover different dimensions of the same policy problem.
 - Be intentional, theory-driven, and contextually aware when choosing methods.
 - Aim for **fit**: between question, data, and method.
- **Choose Methods Strategically, Not automatically**
 - Ask: “What’s the best way to answer my question?”
 - Don’t force regression when your topic needs interviews
 - Don’t run a survey when the data already exist
- **Use multiple methods When Needed**
 - Combine qualitative insight with quantitative confirmation (mixed methods)
 - Integrate surveys with administrative data to gain breadth and depth
 - Use systematic reviews to map what we already know—and what we’ve missed
- **Final Advice for Researchers**
 - Be methodologically intentional, not habitual
 - Be context-aware and theory-driven
 - Be open to integrating or adapting methods to fit your research goal