Public Relations' Theoretical Applicability to American Art Museums for the Purpose of Gaining and Maintaining Community Engagement

Andy Chavez

California State University Fullerton

Introduction

In the current contemporary art world, there has been a rise in museums' need to utilize the public's interests for the purpose of increasing interest (Kletchka, 2018) and therefore attendance and maintaining memberships. Based on observations,x attendees appear to show up for the purpose of social media and the want or need to interact with works consequently posting photos with a certain aesthetic unique to themselves (Budge & Burness, 2018). Museums have taken on the task of providing this environment for engagement while still providing an educational perspective. Studies in this area have found that those who remain with a museum over a period of time are most likely to renew memberships, and their approval ratings grew (Banning & Schoen, 2007, p. 428). Under the umbrella of the contingency theory of accommodation, this literature review will explore historical issues in terms of education departments of museums, nonprofit perspectives that can apply to museums, and related institutions in an effort to create a possible area for further exploration.

Theoretical Resources

The range of educational stances in the realm of the art world creates a multitude of various instances where engagement can become difficult. Utilizing public relations theory allows for the creation of various models that adjust accordingly to the public. Having a basis of the four models of public relations, all of which can possibly apply to museums include press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Press agentry was previously shown to be the most commonly used model, however Grunig and Grunig (1992) believe that two-way symmetrical is the most ethical model to use "in meeting organizational goals" (p. 308). Gürel and Kavak (2010), take these pillars into account and argue that two-way symmetrical is not always the most effective way to

communicate and engage with possible museum visitors (p. 50). Instead what is proposed is a model that heavily relies on inspiration from contingency theory. Cancel et al. (1999) briefly defines contingency theory as "a more realistic portrayal of public relations strategies or models based on a continuum" (p. 172). Ranging on a scale of advocacy to complete accommodation, one can discern what type of strategy should be used. However, similar to the study done two years later by Cameron et al. (2001), two-way symmetrical communication is not always the correct route because ethics take precedent (Cancel et al., 1999. P. 173). For this reason the contingency theory of accommodation is analyzed in this section.

Elements that prevent the contingency theory of accommodation from being used to its complete extent were researched in Cameron et al.'s (2001) interviews of "eight professionals who were top public relations managers at companies with 1998 revenues in the billions of dollars" (p. 249). A multitude of museums do not have this level of revenue, however this research gives insight into how practitioners view this contingency theory. In summary "higher moral authority, being caught between two contending publics, litigation/regulation, and jurisdictional issues" were found to be the most hindering instances where accomodation could not be truly used (Cameron et al., 2001, p. 255). While practitioners were inclined to use two-way symmetrical communication and leaned towards accommodation, when questioned about the ethics of using the two-way symmetrical model, it was suggested that they were not familiar (Cameron et al., 2001). This evidence is suggestive of public relations practitioners leaning away from traditional theory in practice, supporting Gürel and Kavak's (2010) creation of a new model all together that merely has an essence of theory incorporated. The variables that effect contingency theory of accommodation will be used as a measure of how museums and other related agencies have used public relations as a means to engage stakeholders. Ultimately, the

use of elements of this theory are argued in support of Gürel and Kavak's final model that requires further study.

Museum Education

The American Alliance of Museums "elucidated the importance of education and public engagement for public audiences in museums over 35 years ago" (Kletchka, 2018, p. 299). Museum education itself is an area that renders exploration because the range of people who can potentially engage with a museum come from variable backgrounds, therefore engagement and learning can prove to be a complicated area. Having this knowledge, there is also an established precedent for what museums should uphold, and therefore Kletchka (2018) delved further into this subject matter. May and Clapp (2017) explored maker-centered learning and the role that aesthetics play within this type of learning. Perspectives on education in terms of maker-centered learning are of interest because in the realm of museum education, workshops and opportunities for visitors to learn are hands-on.

Kletchka (2018) addresses a study of the reputation museums have as an institution worthy of addressing issues of the greater society within a college setting. The study conducted was an exploration into the idea of the museum as an institution that reflects the ongoing conversations that take place within the local community. In this case, it was addressing the death of Michael Brown and consequent responses that included a sort of performance art (Kletchka, 2018, p. 298). The museum on campus at this particular university was not a location chosen for this staging, and therefore there was cause to believe that the museum had lost its connection with students (Kletchka, 2018, p. 299). In other words, the museum had failed to make itself known as a safe space for political concerns to be addressed and expressed.

Kletchka (2018) discovered that an "object oriented approach" impacts museums at a

structural level, and therefore there is more of an emphasis on work that is pleasing to the eye, which is in direct contradiction of "contemporary human experience" (p. 300). This is in comparison to the research done by May and Clapp (2017), which is grounded on the assumption that when interviewed about the maker-centered learning method, educators would reference art or aesthetics. Although this was the assumption, May and Clapp (2017) found that most of the time educators would reference these terms when speaking about objects, and less in terms of "thinking skills and processes," and learning environments. Certain results indicated that "maker-centered learning appeared as a natural avenue for exploring educational themes related to the arts and aesthetics" (May & Clapp, 2017, p. 347). These findings prove the point that Kletchka (2018) was referring to regarding the "object oriented approach" which can now be attributed to educational roots via this study. What is proposed is that educators alone are not the ones who can transform this area of conflict, "all staff, board members, and volunteers" must "ground their work in an ethos of radical public inclusion" (Kletchka, 2018, p. 300). From this one can glean that the education environment can utilize the contingency theory of accommodation in order to adjust focus from what can be perceived as advocacy to one of more accomodation, on the basis of the advocacy-accommodation continuum (Cancel et al., 1997, p. 37). The role of a museum educator gives one the ability to pursue different paths to arrive at the conclusion as to what is the most effective.

Finally, there is a history that provides evidentiary support for the previous study where administration is partly to blame for the inability of education departments to fulfill their civic duty (Kletchka, 2018). Specifically, the rise and fall of the education department at the Museum of Modern Art, New York is referenced, where class conflict appeared to play a role (Graves, 2017). The beginnings of the education department are traced back to Victor D'Amico's

recruitment into MoMA's burgeoning public education program in 1937 (Graves, 2017, p. 19). From the start, this was a department supported by the board, which was composed of those who come from similar upper class means. Graves (2017) cites sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theories in that the museum offered an opportunity for the board members to gain "social capital" that is defined as "a person's connections to other people" (p. 21). Eliza Bliss Parkinson was the member who backed the creation of the education department, and as the department evolved, D'Amico considered himself a part of Parkinson's society. Among the various accomplishments of the education department was the Children's Art Carnival, and ongoing art education classes that the museum hosted (Graves, 2017). At this point in time, the education department and the museum itself are in a well balanced place in terms of the accommodation theory.

When approaching education as a means to bring in more visitors, Kletchka (2018) argues that there will have to be a shift in the composition of the administration as a whole, where they will "cease relying on their educational...staff as social mediators between institutions and the public" (p. 308). The research done by Kletchka is indicative of the possible reasoning as to why educational material is at times for naught, and there may be a larger element as a whole that must correctly reflect the greater local population's culture in order to have genuine engagement. The modernist museum definition can be applied to the events that transpired between MoMA and D'Amico in his plea for a community-centered education department.

Around the Cold War era, D'Amico decided to create the Children's Art Caravan that would travel around to different neighborhoods, including lower class neighborhoods. MoMA's board made the decision to have this installed in Harlem, and therefore serve "Black audiences where they lived" but also in effect keep them away from the art institution itself (Graves, 2017,

p. 21). One can discern from this one movement that there is a disparity in how each entity - the education department and the board - approached the mission of an art museum's educational contributions. The idea of the post-museum versus the modernist, where the post-museum is most responsive to visitor culture and modernist museums are upholding archaic power structures (Kletchka, 201, p. 307), helps explain that from an administrative level, the issue of class conflict rendered application of either advocacy or accommodation futile.

When the MoMA's director stepped down at the time, as a final project he announced the Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center, which would support more scholarly research (Graves, 2017, p. 22). D'Amico was left out of the planning for this center, and the Children's Art Carnival was eventually phased out of existing and replaced with internships and reading programs (Graves, 2017). When this was transpiring, it was announced that the education center would be permanently closed; D'Amico reached out in an attempt to level with the board. According to Graves (2017) this was the result of the board, administration, and curators, whom are viewed through Bourdieu's lens as "the museum's legitimate bourgeoisie" and by switching focus from community learning towards scholarly learning, "used its considerable capital to maintain and perpetuate its dominant status" (p. 24). At this point in MoMA's history, application of the contingency theory of accommodation would argue that internal variables are at play, such as the lack of heterogeneity of employees impacted the public relations element of the education department (Cancel et al., 1997, p. 62). Throughout this whole experience, MoMA has since changed of course, although the history of what happened serves a great purpose to emphasize the fact that the administration and board must be behind the education department and take into account the benefits of having an inclusive learning environment.

Authenticity and Community Engagement

Johnston and Lane (2018) produced multiple studies on community engagement focusing on relational capital and authenticity in particular. A second study involving Johnston and Lane (2019) focused on the community engagement practitioners *themselves* and the element of authenticity.

Of the multiple ways in which engagement is solicited from organizations, Johnston and Lane (2018) identified episodic and relational engagement. This specific study was not done in the realm of nonprofit organizations, nonetheless it does illustrate an adequate definition of these types of tactics used for the purpose of engagement. Episodic engagement is defined as "discrete and isolated episodes, not connected to ongoing business or other issues" and in the case of this study, was used for engaging the community for immediate action on certain "organizational behavior and/or decisions where the outcome was known - or likely - to have an impact on a community" (Johnston & Lane, 2018, p. 637). The use of episodic engagement was dominant in the cases studied, showing that the majority of engagement specialists utilize this method in order to gain support quickly. This is also a reliable method to garner the opinion or level or support that an organization possesses. In other words, it "provides organizations with a credible and authoritative source of information on community experiences and their perceptions of impacts" (Johnston & Lane, 2018, p. 638). In relation to museum usage of this information, one can keep this in mind when planning out any future engagement plans.

Relational engagement on the other hand, is "more focused on enriching and enhancing the ongoing 'conversation' between organization and community" (Johnston & Lane, 2018, p.637). Johnston and Lane (2018) specifically state that "relational engagement is an approach where the organization invests, resources and focuses on a social level of engagement across all community level touch points" (p. 640). Use of this type of engagement is essentially a two way

communication where the organization is able to foster a long-term relationship, which has an impact on whether "representatives of the public know or like representatives of the organization," yet another variable contributing to the contingency theory of accommodation (Cancel et al., 1997, p. 61). "This relational form of engagement might be carried out through open online forums, newsletters and regular community events" (Johnston & Lane, 2018, p. 639). In summary, Johnston and Lane (2018) contend that episodic engagement, while most used, requires an existing relationship to succeed and consequently in some cases it can end up as "a net drain on relational capital" (p. 641). Relational engagement, then, can give organizations information as to "how social expectations are formed and change over time" and build the previously mentioned positive association with the organization while assembling "organizational behavior that warrants that positivity" (Johnston & Lane, 2018, p. 641).

Among the research questions asked analyzing community engagement practitioners: "what are the key attributes, as perceived by practitioners, of community engagement" (Johnston & Lane, 2019, p. 5)? Under the guise of authenticity, practitioners had an overwhelming consensus of the themes of "authenticity of process and authenticity of outcome" (Johnston & Lane, 2019, p. 7). What this research uncovered was that although this may be apparent in recent times, the authenticity of an organization's communications has a great effect on the greater public that is being served. Another perspective offered is that the community must also be authentic when they are communicating with an organization (Johnston & Lane, 2019, p. 8). The function of this two way authenticity is so that the community feels heard, and the organization feels support (Johnston & Lane, 2019, p. 9), therefore forming a connection that can aid in a museum's application of contingency theory. Museums can use this research in order to discern what and how to communicate to their local audience, and in turn genuinely listen and respond to

what they expect from their art institutions.

Public Relations and Community Engagement Expectations

Understanding what those in the area of nonprofit public relations expect is directly connected to the actual PR positions that are specific to this practice. In a focus group and survey done by Rogers and Andrews (2016), the initial goal was to deem what community partners stated as their public relations expectations when in a service-learning relationship, but there were some intriguing results in reference to how the positions are structured within the organization and why. “Although 70 percent of respondents do not have a dedicated communications/marketing/public relations person on their nonprofit staff, 87 percent of the respondents’ job descriptions include” the aforementioned communications skills (Rogers & Andrews, 2016, pp. 99-100). Deeper research pointed out that a specific complaint among those in the focus group was the “absence of a dedicated communication staff person” revealing that this is a known factor that the staff is working against (Rogers & Andrews, 2016, p. 100). This issue is prominent and is easily tied back to a previous section where the administration within a museum was a traceable cause for issues within the education department at MoMA. It is also a factor that is considered among the variables of the contingency theory of accommodation (Cancel et al., 1997). Absence of a public relations specialist to start with, complicates the ability to accurately discern a plan of action. The final enlightening aspect of Rogers and Andrews’s study was that many of these nonprofit staff members do not have defined goals nor do they identify the target audience for public relation fulfillment (p. 100). A deductive process can propose that because there is no identification of audience or strategizing taking place in a nonprofit setting, engagement with the general public will be stunted in some manner.

Public Relations, Community Engagement, and Social Media

Social media is an additional free platform that offers nonprofits the opportunity to gain support while allowing for engagement. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) were able to conduct research that was specific to Twitter and nonprofit use for engaging with the public. In addition to Twitter usage, there is another study that Saxton and Waters (2014) performed which covered another sector of social media, Facebook. Analysis of how social media is currently being used is a springboard for museums to reevaluate current usage.

The type of nonprofits explored on Twitter were classified as "a sample of large charitable organizations" (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 340). Of importance is that among the sample, 15% of those organizations were defined as "Arts, Culture, and Humanities" (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 340). Arguments in favor of data from Facebook include the fact that this type of data can be measured and accessed. Amongst the sample taken, 14% were in the "arts, culture, and humanities" and when analyzing the number of updates during the testing period, "arts and culture organizations...had the highest" (Saxton & Waters, 2014, p. 288). Along these lines, one can surmise that museums can be included in that sector of highest activity on Facebook.

The three categories that were employed in the case for classification of tweets were information, community, and action, all of which have different purposes for the organization. Information spread information to the public about the organization, community involves basic functions of acknowledgement that can "foster relationships, create networks, and build communities," and lastly action has the purpose of having the public "do something" (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, pp. 342 - 343). Once the tweets from the study were arranged in a ternary plot, the results presented that the majority were informational (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 348). When discussing these results, Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) inferred that "information could be seen as a core activity to attract followers," while community "messages serve to bind and engage a

following of users," and action tweets can "mobilize the resource… that has been developed" (p. 350). In the application of these results, museums are able to decide whether to engage in a more two-way asymmetrical or two-way symmetrical route.

Nonprofit use of Facebook to engage with the public was categorized similar to the previously discussed study: information, fundraising, event and promotion, call to action, and community building (Saxton & Waters, 2014, p. 286). Through an observation of the chart depicting the average number of likes, comments, and shares one can distinguish what areas collect the largest amount of engagement. The most liked type of message included call to action, the most commented on statuses were community-building related, and informational status updates were the most shared (Saxton & Waters, 2014, p. 290). Utilization of the contingency theory of accommodation variables within these lines is indicative of having staff who are well versed in this type of research (Cancel et al., 1997, p. 62). The information provided, then, gives the indication to the reader that different messages render different reactions from the public towards the organization.

The last piece of information bolstering the case for nonprofit organizations in the arts is the element involving the binomial regression performed. In this context, "the organization type played a significant factor in influencing public comments, as healthcare organizations...and arts organizations...were more likely to have responsive stakeholders" (Saxton & Waters, 2014, p. 292). One can argue then, that the path that is being built in regard to public relations in the area of engagement with stakeholders should be able to be successfully applied to the case of museums in the contemporary world.

Public Relations and Museum Media

"Photographs are now used in social media as ephemeral moments of communication and

primarily for sharing experience" (Budge & Burness, 2018, p. 138). In the following section, the use of various types of media and public relations with museums is evaluated. Museums have been viewed as an institution exclusive for those who are knowledgeable in various art movements, and styles of work. The introduction of social media into this realm has yielded a new kind of stakeholder. Recent studies have looked into the ability of museums to involve the public by being directly influenced by them (Kletchka, 2018). While this brings more visitors into museums, the issue remaining is the retention of general interest and engagement in order to continue to grow. Evidence is cited that lists social media goals "to promote the arts...increase the audience involvement, to use the organization's resources more efficiently," allow the organization to advocate for art efficiently, provide arts education "and enable artistic collaboration," and to improve on "management requests" (Suzic et al., 2016, p. 7). Lastly, Budge and Burness (2018) investigate a specific niche in the contemporary art world: the connection between museum works and instagram.

Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) used a previous application of the agenda setting theory to social media in the museum field in order to further detect what kind of media attention would enhance visitor attendance. "Within the first-level agenda-setting theoretical framework," the popularity of each museum was calculated via the amount of visitors within a certain length of time (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2012, p. 482). In other words, the amount and type of media coverage was deemed as the independent variable upon which museum reputation was dependent (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2012, pp. 484 - 485). Possession of this information gives museums the ability to have some sort of control in their media relations strategies. Suzic et al., (2016) examined the "social media presence of museums in two European capitals" in order to discern whether it could successfully be used as a public relations means (p. 5). While this was based in

Prague and Berlin, one can argue that there is still applicability because museums nevertheless have a level playing field in the realm of social media. Capriotti and Kuklinski (2012) conclude that museums are more invested in information relevant to themselves instead of what is useful for "each separate public" and are using "Internet and the web 2.0 as new means to create and present old media...therefore reproducing the one-way passive forms and processes of traditional offline communication" (p. 625). American contemporary art museums are able to use this information and apply it for the purpose of creating a more engaging website that not only supplies information for the first time visitor, but also makes available some sort of ongoing engagement to spur return visits to maintain the relationship between the organization and stakeholders.

In monitoring what is published, Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) can surmise what the public opinion is and therefore predict the visitation levels. Conversely, visitation levels can give an indication as to whether there is a need to make more of an effort to be publicized. The results of Zyglidopoulos's study (2012) indicated that publicity which cast the museum in a positive light led to a higher attendance as predicted, as well as the amount of publicity (p. 489). In terms of first and second level agenda-setting, the visibility factor has an impact, and "favorable mentions in the media enjoy higher visitation" versus the lower attendance from negative mentions (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2012, p. 493). A specific effect that is applicable to museums wherever the location is that "media visibility and museum promotion activities in the current month have apositive impact on visitation both in the current month and in the following month" (Zyglidopoulos et al., 2012, p. 492). This means that there is a direct correlation between the timeline of publicity and attendance, implying that social media public relation strategies should have this in mind when attempting to publicize themselves. What can be gathered from

Zyglidopoulos et al. (2012) is that through "various marketing processes...such as public relations activities and advertising," museums can create a reputation conducive to amassing more visitors who can therefore become long term stakeholders with the organization (p. 493).

"Access, learning, experience, sharing and creation" are mainstays for the purpose of networks (Suzic et al., 2016, p. 7). Suzic et al.'s (2016) analysis that was conducted evaluated the presence of Prague and Berlin museums on their websites, Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter. A summary of the results indicates that Berlin museums had the most presence on all of their platforms with the exception of Youtube. Suzic et al. (2016) clarified this however, that "although Prague museums on average use Youtube channels more actively than Berlin museums, they attract fewer followers" (p. 13). Websites by far were the most active hub for institutions, leading to the belief that the "effectiveness of social media strategy may be the number of webpage visits" (Suzic et al., 2016, p. 12).

Further inquiries into the actual use of the internet in general for museums were researched by Capriotti and Kuklinski (2012) where the content of Spanish museum websites was evaluated. What was discovered initially was not supportive in the hopes that museums' websites provide a dynamic platform for many to connect with. In reality, the websites provided general information about the exhibitions and permanent collection along with news about events. As stated by Capriotti and Kuklinski (2012), "this can generate an image of a lack of dynamism in the information management of institutions," meaning that while this information is indeed necessary, once one visits the site, they have no reason to make a return search (p. 623). Other discoveries include the presentation of information in a one-way format with limited use of audiovisual resources, low integration of social media feeds, and limited options for receiving ongoing or follow up information (Capriotti & Kuklinski, 2012, p. 625). All of this research is

specific to Spanish museums, however seeing as the area of museum work is smaller than others, one can argue for the applicability. Larger more prominent museums can be assumed to be a successful model for smaller scale museums to follow, however with this new information, steps can be taken to make their impact longer lasting.

In the study conducted by Budge & Burness, (2018) engagement was measured as the actual museum space and the digital space offered by social media. Photographs shared on Instagram tagging the Australian Museum of Contemporary Art were studied in terms of how the visitors engaged with the objects (Budge & Burness, 2018, p. 140). The findings implied that approximately 50% of the postings tagging the museum were social in nature, meaning that those postings were done in order to elicit a commentary, or suggest that others engage in some way (Budge & Burness, 2018, p. 143). From here public relations specialists can predict that certain pieces that are displayed will be featured in this type of situation, on that account they can have a say in some part of the process of building an exhibition. Informing curatorial staff about this perspective can allow for works to be chosen that will be appropriate for social engagement while staying in line with the museum's mission statement.

Viewed through the variables in the contingency theory of accommodation, the past experiences of those in charge of publicizing would come into question as well as departmental divisions (Cancel et al., 1997). Successful attraction of more followers is indeed dependent on what public relations practitioners have experienced and their ability to use that experience in museum work. Assuming that the museum has at least one staff member solely dedicated to public relations and media, the ability of that staff to recognize these patterns is essential.

Addressing the Issue of Sustaining Engagement

The earlier analyzed study by Johnston and Lane (2018) addressed episodic and

relational engagement, which one can bear in mind in order to review previous work done by Banning and Schoen (2007) that addressed art museum visitor engagement. The organization-public relationship scale that was employed contains the elements of "personal relationship, community relationship, and professional relationship" (Banning & Schoen, 2007, p. 437). The question of applicability of this scale to museums was supported, however one "tenet" did not correlate: "age, household income, education, home ownership, and marital status showed no significant differences by *relationship types*" meaning that museums can conclude that anybody should be able to engage with the organization (Banning & Schoen, 2007, p. 438). With regard to longevity of relationship maintenance between a museum and it's members, Banning and Schoen (2007) state that time along with positive interpretations of the three types of relationships, provides the means for "relationship duration" (p. 438). One can conclude from this research that the public relations practitioner must be knowledgeable about their audience and the type of relationship they have with a museum, as any missteps in communication may make or break a stakeholder's relationship (Cancel et al., 1997).

Gürel and Kavak (2010) take multiple theories into account including the contingency theory of accommodation, the four models of public relations, and Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory. What is important to note is that this work is specific to applying these components into one conceptual model for public relations within museums. The model that is proposed consists of "market orientation level of the management," the amount of interest from the public, and the amount of interest resulting from the strategies used (Gürel & Kavak, 2010, p. 51). Other research within this proposal explores the reasonings as to why people visit museums in the first place. Reasons include interest in specific artists or art movements, breaking out of everyday routine, and enjoying time with others (Gürel & Kavak, 2010). Since there is

such a range in terms of what brings visitors to a museum, the authors state that studies suggest museums must refrain from emphasizing qualities that cater to those who frequently visit (Gürel & Kavak, 2010). This is especially seen when a potential visitor to engage with is not given the tools to properly educate themselves, further proving the need for museums to consider innovative resources. Gürel and Kavak (2010) refer to Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory as a part of their model. In this case there is the leader and follower, but contrary to the traditional power structure, there is an importance attached to the follower's role (Gürel & Kavak, 2010, p. 50). While leaders are quick to decide strategy based on goals it is ineffective to "hold followers accountable for skills they haven't had an opportunity to demonstrate" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996, p. 5).

Gürel and Kavak's (2010) model separates the public into three distinct categories of interest levels: interested, somewhat interested, and uninterested (p. 53). Based on the varying levels, one can customize their strategy to use one-way informative, two-way asymmetrical, or two way symmetrical models to retain, persuade or educate the public (Gürel & Kavak, 2010, p. 59). This is where the contingency model of accommodation theory comes into play, as the authors argue for a relational instead of organizational contingency theory in order to address that "museums deal with multiple publics with whom they have different relationships" (Gürel & Kavak, 2010, p. 50). Contemporary museums, then, have the ability to lead the change in how to approach and maintain engagement to potentially result in museum memberships and word of mouth publicity.

Findings & Discussion

Museum engagement has become increasingly stark in light of how traditional restrictions are in direct conflict with new media, which asks for museums to be engaging and not just instructional

(Capriotti and Kuklinski, 2012). The literature proposed implicates public relations as a way to progress in the direction of making new connections while growing in engagement between art museums and the public. Specifically, the incorporation of contingency theory of accommodation through the lens of relationships versus organizations addresses this ability (Gürel & Kavak, 2010). In summary, public relations' ability to reach the masses will bridge a gap for museum outreach.

Much of the studies discovered were not directly performed on contemporary art museums in America, many were conducted in Europe and Australia. While the application can still be argued, there is a gap in this type of research. Additionally, there is a misrepresentation in those who are cast in the role of public relations specialists, and those who have those attributes included in their job descriptions (Rogers & Andrews, 2016).

The research questions proposed ask: With knowledge about episodic and relational engagement (Johnston & Lane, 2019), how will U.S. public relations continue to assist in contemporary art museum engagement? Will the restructuring of museums on an administration level allow for application of the model proposed by Gürel & Kavak? In what other ways can the contingency theory of accommodation continue to be utilized in contemporary art museum public relations?

References

Banning, S. A., & Schoen, M. (2007). Maximizing public relations with the organization–public relationship scale: Measuring a public's perception of an art museum. *Public Relations Review*, *33*(4), 437–439. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1016/j.pubrev.2007.08.001

Budge, K., & Burness, A. (2018). Museum objects and Instagram: agency and communication in digital engagement. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, *32*(2), 137–150. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1080/10304312.2017.1337079

Cameron, G. T., Cropp, F., & Reber, B. H. (2001). Getting past platitudes: Factors limiting accommodation in public relations. *Journal of Communication Management*, *5*(3), 242. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1108/13632540110806802

Cancel, A. E., Cameron, G. T., Sallot, L. M., & Mitrook, M. A. (1997). It Depends: A Contingency Theory of Accommodation in Public Relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *9*(1), 31–63. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1207/s1532754xjprr0901_02

Cancel, A. E., Mitrook, M. A., & Cameron, G. T. (1999). Testing the contingency theory of accommodation in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, *25*(2), 171. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1016/S0363-8111(99)80161-1

Capriotti, P., & Pardo Kuklinski, H. (2012). Assessing dialogic communication through the Internet in Spanish museums. *Public Relations Review*, *38*(4), 619–626. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.05.005

Graves, J. A. (2017). Education, administration, and class struggle at the museum of modern art, 1937-1969. *Studies in Art Education*, *58*(1), 17–27. https://doi-org.lib-

proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1080/00393541.2016.1258529

Grunig, J.E. & Grunig, L.A. (1992). Models of public relations and communication. In Grunig, J.E. (Ed.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* (pp. 285-326), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grunig, J.E. & Hunt, T. (1984), Managing Public Relations, The Dryden Press, New York, NY.

Gürel, E., & Kavak, B. (2010). A conceptual model for public relations in museums. *European Journal of Marketing, 44*(1), 42-65. doi:http://dx.doi.org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1108/03090561011008600

Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. (1996). Revisiting the life-cycle theory of leadership. *Training & Development*, *50*, 42–47.

Johnston, K. A., & Lane, A. B. (2018). Building relational capital: The contribution of episodic and relational community engagement. *Public Relations Review*, *44*(5), 633–644. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.10.006

Johnston, K. A., & Lane, A. B. (2019). An authenticity matrix for community engagement. *Public Relations Review*, *45*(4), N.PAG. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1016/j.pubrev.2019.101811

Kletchka, D. C. (2018). Toward post-critical museologies in U.S. art museums. *Studies in Art Education*, *59*(4), 297–310. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1080/00393541.2018.1509264

Lovejoy, K., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Information, community, and action: How nonprofit organizations use social media. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *17*(3), 337–353. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1111/j.1083-

6101.2012.01576.x

May, S., & Clapp, E. P. . (2017). Considering the role of the arts and aesthetics within maker-centered learning. *Studies in Art Education*, *58*(4), 335–350. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1080/00393541.2017.1368287

Rogers, C., & Andrews, V. (2016). Nonprofits' expectations in PR service–learning partnerships. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *71*(1), 95–106. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1177/1077695815584226

Saxton, G. D., & Waters, R. (2014). What do stakeholders like on Facebook? Examining public reactions to nonprofit organizations' informational, promotional, and community-building messages. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *26*(3), 280–299. https://doi-org.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/10.1080/1062726X.2014.908721

Suzic, B., Karlícek, M., & Stríteský, V. (2016). Adoption of social media for public relations by museums. *Central European Business Review, 5*(2), 5-16. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.lib-proxy.fullerton.edu/docview/1834365254?accountid=9840

Zyglidopoulos, S., Symeou, P. C., Bantimaroudis, P., & Kampanellou, E. (2012). Cultural agenda setting: Media attributes and public attention of Greek museums. *Communication Research*, 39(4), 480–498. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210395747