

Awards for best research papers in public relations: EUPRERA and Emerald honor academics and practitioners from Europe

Pamplona, October 8, 2021 – The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA), a body of academic institutions, researchers and senior professionals in the field of strategic communication with nearly 500 members from 46 countries, has awarded authors for their excellent research in strategic communication at the EUPRERA annual congress in Pamplona, on October 8. The congress is known as the major gathering of scholars and professionals interested in advancing the profession of public relations and corporate communications on the continent, hosted this year by Universidad de Navarra.

Academic and professional awards for research on
conflict management, employer branding, measurement of public segmentation, internal crisis communication

EUPRERA Best Paper Awards were given to the authors of three papers with the highest rankings in a two-stage, blind peer-review process performed by a scientific committee of renowned international scholars, headed by Sabine Einwiller from University of Vienna. The three winning papers:

“Navigating Turbulent Political Waters: Organizational Stances and Public Perceptions of NBA’s International Crisis with China” by **Hui Zhao** and **Chiara Valentini**.

Hui Zhao and Chiara Valentini explore the role of political factors in the unfolding and management of an international crisis using contingency theory and conflict management. The study is based on the case of the American National Basketball Association (NBA) and its conflict with China in 2019, which was sparked by a tweet by an NBA manager supporting the anti-government protesters in Hong Kong. A comprehensive analysis of different contents including Chinese and US social media and newspapers reveals highly interesting results that expand our knowledge on the influence of political factors on organizational stances and choices of response strategies.

“Strategic Internal Communication for Effective Internal Employer Branding” by **Nina Pološki Vokić**, **Ana Tkalac Verčič** and **Dubravka Sinčić Ćorić**.

This paper by Nina Pološki Vokić, Ana Tkalac Verčič and Dubravka Sinčić Ćorić offers new insights into the relationship between internal communication satisfaction and employer attractiveness. Based on a survey among 3457 employees in 26 mid-sized and large organizations, the authors find support for their assumption that the quality of and employees’ satisfaction with internal communication have a considerable influence on how attractive employees perceive their employer. The most relevant dimensions of internal communication satisfaction are “satisfaction with feedback” and “satisfaction with communication climate”. The results make a strong contribution to the role of internal communication and offer highly beneficial insights for communication practice.



“CSR in Hypermodern Times: Towards a New Measurement of Segmentation of Socially Conscious Publics”, by **Sarah Marschlich** and **Ganga Dhanesh**.

In their paper, Sarah Marschlich and Ganga Dhanesh develop a measurement instrument to segment socially responsible publics by their personality traits, communication preferences, and behavioral intentions along five dimensions of hypermodernity. The authors propose and validate an instrument consisting of five subscales, which expands researchers’ and practitioners’ methodological toolkit for segmenting socially conscious publics. The paper is meticulously researched, well-structured and highly relevant for academics as well as practitioners who want to stay abreast of changes in contemporary publics.

Moreover, Emerald Group Publishing, publisher of *Journal of Communication Management*, delivered the yearly **Emerald Professional Impact Award** for the best research-based paper that is not only academically sound, but which makes an important and useful contribution to the practice of communication management. The paper addresses issues of current concern to managers and also successfully discusses the research’s implications to managers and for practice. The winning paper is:



“Employees’ Personal Crisis within an Organizational Crisis: When a Lack of Transparency and Support Causes Job Frustration and Disengagement”, by **Christopher Ruppel, Julia Stranzl and Sabine Einwiller**.

This article is based on an internal crisis communication study in Austria conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus is on employees and how socioemotional communication (transparent communication and organizational support) mitigates negative outcomes in the form of job disengagement. The study shows that transparent communication had a negative effect on employees’ uncertainty, whereas organizational support negatively influenced job-related anxiety and frustration. Thus, both approaches can help alleviate employees’ personal crisis during an organizational crisis and minimize the risk of job disengagement. The article is an excellent contribution to both research and applied knowledge showing the value of transparent and supportive strategic communication in crises.

Special recognition to the best reviewer

EUPRERA Best Reviewer Award recognizes the work done by the reviewer because it is an essential contribution to the quality and the success of the annual congress. This year’s winner is:

Anne-Marie Cotton from Arteveldehogeschool University College, Belgium

Anne-Marie has contributed to careful, thorough and useful reviews. As stated by the Head of the Scientific Committee, her reviews were very insightful, detailed and clearly aimed at helping authors to improve their submission.