# The relationship between newspaper credibility and reader attitude toward Korea and Koreans

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## RMIT

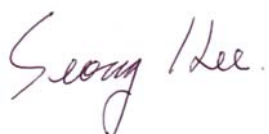# The relationship between newspaper credibility and reader attitude toward Korea and Koreans

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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# Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Esther Seonghee Stockwell

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# Abstract

As receivers of information from the media, we are faced with the constant problem of determining what sources are and are not credible. Given that much of what we know of the world around us comes directly from the media (Lippman, 1922), as receivers of messages from the media we realise how important the credibility of a news source is. Many of the attitudes that we form about a wide range of issues in society are formed as a direct result of the coverage we receive through the media, although there are numerous other factors involved such as issue involvement, intensity and closure (e.g., Guttman, 1954). Traditionally a large number of studies have argued that a high credibility source is more effective in causing attitude change than a low credibility source (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953; Bochner & Insko, 1966; McGuire, 1973), while other experimental research examining the interaction between source credibility and other variables have indicated that there are other factors which have an important mediating effect on the impact of source credibility.

To further complicate the issue, researchers have argued that credibility is not a stable attribute that a person assigns consistently to a source. Instead, credibility is highly situational and is a changeable perception by a receiver (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969; Smith, 1970; Hayes, 1971; Chaffe, 1982). Also, individual differences of receivers such as age, education, gender, and knowledge about the media and the topic could contribute to the evaluation of source credibility (Westley & Serverin, 1964; Lewis, 1981). In addition, the importance of the issue in the media, the controversiality of the issue, receiver bias, the receiver's involvement with the issue and so on have also been

shown to have a relationship with the evaluation of source credibility (Stone & Bell, 1975; Robert & Leifer, 1975; Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986).

This thesis thus explores the various complexities involved in the relationship between media credibility and attitude formation by examining the characteristics that play a role in making a news source credible to readers, and then considering those factors that affect attitude change in the receivers of a news message. To achieve this, university students in south-east Queensland were examined in order to investigate attitude change regarding the issue of South Korea as a result of coverage in sources they perceive to be of high and low credibility. The study consisted of three stages: a survey of the university students to determine which newspapers they find to be of high and low credibility, a content analysis of their high and low credibility sources for articles of positive, neutral and negative tone, and finally an experiment which measured subjects' attitude change through reading articles of different tones in high and low credibility sources.

# 1.  Introduction

Given the way in which the mass media have become such an important part of our daily lives, the degree to which we can trust what we hear or read has emerged increasingly as a social issue in recent years.   As receivers of information from the media, we are faced with the constant problem of determining what sources are and are not credible.   Few would disagree with the statement made by Bradlee (1981), when he said, "the credibility of a newspaper is its most precious asset, and it depends almost entirely on the integrity of its reporters."   Given that much of what we know of the world around us comes directly from the media (Lippman, 1922), as receivers of messages from the media we realise how important the credibility of a news source is. Many of the attitudes that we form about a wide range of issues in society are formed as a direct result of the information we receive through the media.

According to a study by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), however, the public found too many factual errors in newspapers, believes that newspapers fail to show respect for readers, suspects that stories are influenced by biases of journalists, and believes that sensational news stories get more news coverage because they sell newspapers rather than for being important (Foerstel, 2001, p. 6).   Such shortcomings that are perceived by readers would do little to help newspapers maintain credibility.

This leads us to a number of key questions.   Is the credibility of a news source the primary factor which determines the degree to which our attitudes may be influenced by the press?   What is the role of newspaper credibility in forming attitudes towards

issues? Are we more likely to change our attitudes towards an issue if we encounter information in a highly credible source that contrasts with our existing views?

Traditionally a large number of studies have argued that a high credibility source is more effective in causing attitude change than a low credibility source (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953; Bochner & Insko, 1966; McGuire, 1973). Other experimental research examining the interaction between source credibility and other variables have, however, indicated that there are other factors which have an important mediating effect on the impact of source credibility. For instance, the perception of credibility has been shown to be swayed by the internal characteristics of the message (Slater & Rouner, 1996), and the timing of the source's identification (Greenberg & Tannenbaun, 1961; Mills & Harvey, 1972; Sternthal, Philips, & Dholakia, 1978).

In addition, researchers have argued that credibility is not a stable attribute that a person assigns consistently to a source. Instead, credibility is highly situational and is a changeable perception by a receiver (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969; Smith, 1970; Hayes, 1971; Chaffe, 1982). Also, individual differences of receivers such as age, education, gender, and knowledge about the media and the topic could contribute to the evaluation of source credibility (Westley & Serverin, 1964; Lewis, 1981). In addition, the importance of the issue in the media, the controversiality of the issue, receiver bias, the receiver's involvement with the issue and so on have also been shown to have a relationship with the evaluation of source credibility (Stone & Bell, 1975; Robert & Leifer, 1975; Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986).

Credibility is, then, at one level, dependent upon the media organisation, in terms of the way that news content is selected, written and distributed. It is also dependent upon the receivers, and the background and knowledge they bring with them when receiving a news message. Therefore, this thesis seeks to examine the issue of credibility of the media both from an organisational perspective and from the perspective of the receiver. It will achieve this by firstly examining the existing literature on newspaper credibility and attitude change, and then describe the current study. It explores the various complexities involved in the relationship between media credibility and attitude formation by examining the characteristics that play a role in making a news source credible, and then considering those factors that facilitate attitude change in the receivers of a message.

This provides the foundation for the current study, in which university students in south-east Queensland were investigated for their current views of which newspapers they found to be of high and low credibility, and then exposed to news messages in these sources. Their changes in attitude as a result of these news sources were then examined through a range of data collection techniques, as is described in the methodology chapter. For the news message, South Korean news coverage in Australian domestic newspapers was selected. There were several reasons to select South Korean news coverage. Firstly, as stated earlier, most people are heavily dependent on the media for information about foreign affairs. The nature of international news to many may be exemplified by a study by Pratt (1981), who showed that U.S. students were interested in international news as a means of acquiring

knowledge of foreign countries for their own personal interests such as broadening their potential travelling destinations and so on, rather than in the issues raised in the coverage. Except for people who already have pre-knowledge of or experience with South Korea, most people will only have indirect experience through the media. Therefore, it can be said that the media can play an important role in shaping or forming receivers' perceptions of South Korea and South Koreans.

From this view point, using international news (South Korean coverage) might clarify the relationship between the degree of receivers' involvement in, or pre-knowledge of, the issue and the evaluation of media credibility.  Gunther (1987, p. 42) argues that a highly involved person is likely to maintain his/her existing opinion, meaning that the degree of involvement will be a greater factor in evaluating media credibility rather than the strength of personal opinion in an issue such as abortion. The choice of a comparably uncontroversial issue—such as the majority of the coverage of South Korea—where receivers are more likely to be influenced in the information provided in the news, allows for a clearer picture of involvement and news credibility than controversial issues like abortion, where people strongly maintain their attitude thus possibly affecting their perceptions of media credibility.

It is unlikely that the majority of articles that we read in the newspaper would be considered as being controversial to us. Of course, there are a percentage of articles on specific topics which would be controversial to different readers, but in general, most articles that receivers read in the newspaper are more informative-type articles than persuasive.   In this sense, the selection of international news as a type of

non-controversial issue is perhaps more indicative of the bulk of information that receivers get from newspapers. As a result, the choice of non-controversial international news may be more representative of a "real world" topic than the controversial topics that tend to be the focus of most experimental type studies.

The results of the study are outlined after this, and this is followed by a detailed analysis and discussion of the results. This is followed by a further discussion of the implications of the study, as well as a number of observations made as a result of the study. The thesis concludes with a summary of these issues and some suggestions for future directions for research in the future.

# 2.    Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

## *2.1    Introduction and overview of the issues*

Media credibility is an issue which has received significant attention in media research over the years.    The factors which contribute to the credibility of a source, and the ways in which the receivers of messages from these sources react to these messages have been the subject of several studies spanning more than 50 years (e.g., Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Bochner & Insko, 1966; McGuire, 1973; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983; Slater & Rouner, 1996; Cohen & Elliott, 1997; Wathen & Burkell, 2002).    The relationship between the credibility of a news source and how receivers' attitudes can be altered as a result of the news source has proven to be complex (e.g., Vallone, Lepper, & Ross, 1985).    This chapter will introduce those characteristics that are important in the establishment of the credibility of a news source, and then investigate the factors that play a role in facilitating changes in attitude of message receivers.

There is a body of research showing that a high credibility source is more persuasive than a low credibility source (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953; McGuire, 1973; Miller, 1987; Perry, 2002).    According to the results of an early study evaluating 'fairness' and 'justifiability' of identical content when presented in 'high-credibility' and 'low-credibility' sources, 'low-credibility' sources were considered less fair or less justified than the corresponding high-credibility sources (Hovland & Weiss, 1951).    In addition, this study argued that readers' opinions were changed significantly by the attribution of the material to a different source.    For instance, readers were more likely to change their opinions in the direction advocated by

the content to a significantly greater degree when the material was presented by a 'high-credibility' source than when the material was presented by a 'low-credibility source' (ibid) and that a low credibility source suggested to the receivers that the content of the message was not to be believed (Hovland, Weiss & Kelly, 1953).

This general pattern has been supported by subsequent research and has been shown to extend to "new media." For example, the online sites of major newspapers get a higher credibility rating than web sites operated by less known media organizations or individuals (cited in Obijiofor & Green, 2001). There are some differences related to the media technologies. Johnson and Kaye (1998) suggest that traditional newspapers are generally heavily investigated for accurate and unbiased reporting, while online newspapers are often not subject to these same pressures. In addition, some online newspapers rely more on anonymous sources and developing stories without complete and thorough source attribution (Obijiofor, 2001). Such unattributed information which is often published online may cause readers to question the credibility of these sources. Accordingly, readers tend to believe more news stories from familiar and credible online news sources than lesser known online news sources such as Yahoo or Netscape (Yau & Al-Hawamdeh, 2001).

What, then, are the factors that lead to high credibility of a source? In Hovland and Weiss's (1951) study, U.S. physicist Robert Oppenheimer (high credibility) and the Russian newspaper *Pravda* (low credibility) served as the sources of a message about the practicality of building an atomic-powered submarine. Kelman & Hovland (1953) conducted a similar study in which subjects were provided with information

about the treatment of juvenile delinquents from a high credibility source (a juvenile court judge) and a low credibility source (a drug dealer). In both studies, they found that a high credibility source was more persuasive than a low credibility source – that is, the content of the message was made more acceptable by its link to a 'credible' source. It can thus be argued that highly credible sources promote learning, and the message, which is better learned through these sources, is more persuasive. In addition, they associated this superiority of persuasion of high credibility sources with attitude change, and concluded that a high credibility source is more effective in facilitating attitude change than a low credibility source, even when the message is the same (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Kelman & Hovland, 1953).

As a result, Hovland and his associates suggested that source credibility is defined in terms of two components: expertise and trustworthiness (Hovland, Weiss, & Kelly, 1953). Expertise has to do with the extent to which people perceive that source of message as a real expert on the topic that he or she is speaking about, while trustworthiness has to do with the extent to which people find sources of the message to be reliable or truthful (Sparks & Sparks, 2002). Research by Bochner and Insko (1966) provides evidence for this argument. They presented a written message to their subjects concerning the number of hours of sleep per night that people actually needed. The same message was attributed to either a Nobel Prize winning physiologist (high expertise) or a YMCA director (low expertise). The Nobel Prize winning physiologist and the YMCA director were both trustworthy sources. Some subjects read that people needed eight hours of sleep per night, others read that people needed seven hours of sleep per night, some six hours, and so on down to zero hours of sleep per night.

Bochner and Insko found that as the highly expert source advocated a more and more extreme position (e.g., two hours of sleep per night), more attitude change was produced. However, as the less expert source advocated a more and more extreme position, less and less attitude change was produced. Expertise was therefore important in influencing attitude change, especially when the advocated position was quite different from the receiver's initial attitude.

An interesting aspect of these studies into source credibility is the time after receiving a message. According to Hovland and Weiss (1951), a high credibility source has its greatest impact immediately after exposure to the message. The results for tests administered immediately after reading treatment demonstrated that a high credibility source did produce more opinion change on the topics. Four weeks later, however, the difference narrowed significantly. Subjects exposed to high credibility sources demonstrated reduced agreement with the message after this time, whereas subjects exposed to low credibility sources showed greatly improved agreement. This phenomenon has been referred to as a "sleeper effect" (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1949; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Researchers have not attributed this to forgetfulness about the source, but to a tendency to dissociate the source and the opinion as time progresses (Whitehead, 1968; Gilling & Greenwald, 1974; Allen & Stiff, 1989). They also suggested that persuasion is the result of simple reinforcement, which high credibility only enhances for a short time.

As credibility has its greatest impact immediately after exposure, the appropriate time for identifying the source is significant for determining credibility (Greenberg &

Tannenbaun, 1961; Mills & Harvey, 1972; Sternthal, Philips, & Dholakia, 1978). They reported that credibility had a more persuasive effect when the source was identified prior to the message than when identification was delayed until after exposure to the message content. This view is supported by Ward and McGinnies (1974), who advocated that a highly credible source was more influential than a low credibility source when identification preceded the message.

However, can high credibility promote effective attitude change in all receivers? A survey of the literature would suggest that the answer is 'no'. Johnson and Schileppi (1969) investigated male high school students that received either a plausible or implausible message from a high or low credibility source under high-ego (i.e., where subjects were informed their opinion was important) or low-ego involvement conditions (i.e., where subjects were informed their opinion was not important). The results indicated there were in fact less attitude change under high ego-involvement conditions, in addition to less attitude change in regard to low credibility sources and less attitude change in regard to implausible messages. The study suggested, then, that effects of attitude change for high credibility sources cannot be generalised when receivers believe that their opinion is important (Johnson & Schileppi, 1969; Hass, 1981; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981).

Other factors have also been associated with differences in attitude change, such as when people have a great deal of prior knowledge about a topic, or are more involved in the issues. In such cases, it is difficult to find an effect of source credibility (Rhine & Severance, 1970; Hass, 1981). This means that when involvement and prior

knowledge increase, the message content becomes a more important influence on persuasion because people are more motivated to examine the content rather than the source (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979b).   Although the effects of source credibility would be minimal for the issue regarding high involvement and prior knowledge, people would be more motivated to think about the information provided by a high credibility source because people are more induced to examine what an expert has to say (Gilling & Greenwald, 1974; Hass, 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1983).   The interaction of involvement and media credibility will be dealt with in more detail later in the chapter.

Such results have suggested that there are variations in the trust receivers place in news messages that can only be attributed to the readers themselves.   Following Hovland's research on source credibility, the contribution of the receiver to credibility has been the topic of investigation of several experimental studies (e.g., Aronson, Turner, & Carlsmith, 1963; Vallone, Lepper, & Ross, 1985; Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986; Gunther 1987).   In one such study, Westly & Severin (1964, p. 325) asked, "What kind of people place their greatest trust in television, or the radio, or the newspaper, as a news medium?"   People will react differently to the content of a message and it can be predicted that their rating of media credibility will be different.   This can be attributed to the fact that an individual receiver's personal stake, or involvement in or prior knowledge of an issue affects his or her perception of the source (Vallone, Lepper, & Ross, 1985).   The receiver's personal characteristics such as age, education, social status, ethnicity and knowledge of the media can also contribute to an individual's evaluation of media credibility (Westly & Severin, 1964; Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale, 1978; Whitney, 1984; Kiousis, 2001).   According to Appiah (2002), for instance,

media credibility evaluations from Black Americans are related to the tone of the coverage of their own ethnic group. That is, Black Americans pay special attention to the racial aspects of the coverage of Black Americans when they evaluate media credibility. However, White Americans' media credibility evaluations consider non-racial aspects of status, including their social class and appearance.

Beyond demographics, Westley and Severin (1964) demonstrated that people did not always feel that their most preferred medium was the most credible. Studies have suggested that situational factors such as issue importance, the controversial nature of the issue, reader bias, stereotyped ideas (Roberts & Leifer, 1975; Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986) are closely related to media credibility. Contextual factors may also be significant. For instance, Cornelius (1981) demonstrated the perception of media credibility from the perceptions of economic and political relations between nations. For Nigerian students at the University of Minnesota, favourable perceptions of political and of trade relations between the U.S. and Nigeria were positively related to perceived media credibility. However, perception of tension in political relations was negatively related to the perceived credibility of media.

Thus, research has suggested that the relationship between newspaper credibility and attitude is not linear. There is a range of issues which require consideration, starting with the concept of credibility itself and how receivers themselves view and judge credibility. A number of mediating variables have to be considered. In addition, it is essential to consider what other factors are efficacious in causing attitude change in message receivers apart from the credibility of a source. Thus, this chapter will

examine media credibility and attitude change based on the notion that credibility is conceptualized not only as a characteristic of the media but also as a receiver-centred concept. Discussion in this chapter will be divided into two perspectives: 1) source perspective, and 2) receiver perspective. Source perspective will deal with characteristics of the media – i.e., media credibility based on evaluations of the media institution, the reporters and editors. Receiver perspective will deal with how receivers evaluate credibility judgments – i.e., media credibility judged by different types of people, including those from different socio-economic backgrounds, and in particular, media credibility evaluated by the degree of receiver involvement, including their knowledge and direct or indirect experience. This section will then deal with the concept of the relationship between the credibility of the source and attitude change.

## 2.2 Source perspective

By far the majority of research into media credibility focuses on what media messages do to people (Bauer, 1973), and this is typically achieved through examining the characteristics of media institutions. As Reeves, Chaffee and Tims (1982, p. 298) observe: "There is an understandable tendency to place more trust in information from media which are professionally organised to validate and edit their content…" One way for receivers to determine source credibility is by examining the media content itself (i.e., messages) (Austin & Dong, 1994; Slater & Rouner, 1996), and there have been examinations of media for credible news coverage undertaken in content analysis research (Graber, 1987; Robinson, 1987). However, since initial credibility assessments affect overall judgments about the message, such studies have suggested

that the message could have more impact on assessments of credibility if it is well presented and believable. Furthermore, it is important to realise that a message is constructed by a reporter, and the content which is conveyed to receivers is determined and selected by editors. It is quite conceivable, then, that reporters and editors can, knowingly or otherwise, inject their own opinions and beliefs into their coverage of an issue. Accordingly, it can be stated that journalists and their stories have a direct impact on media credibility and the media effect on receivers. It is therefore necessary to consider the characteristics of the media to demonstrate how these factors affect receivers' judgments about source credibility.

There are several characteristics of the media which have been identified as having the potential to influence media credibility. The literature review includes an overview of social reality, gatekeeping and agenda setting in order to give background to the concept of media effect. There does not seem to be any reason to test any of these hypotheses in the current study, as the current study is investigating media credibility and reader attitude change. While the credibility of a news source may be dependent on a combination of these issues, the current study does not investigate each of these independently to identify their effect on credibility, but rather to provide background information to illustrate the complexity of media effect. These include how the media operate in the construction of social reality, their gatekeeping role, and how the media determine the "agenda" of political and social discourse. Each of these issues is examined below.

## 2.2.1 Social reality

### 2.2.1.1 Construction of social reality

One of the important roles of the media is to extend our knowledge of the environment beyond places and events that we can experience directly. As Lippman (1922) stated, the world that people have to deal with politically and socially is out of reach, out of sight, and out of mind, and it has to be explored by reporters, reported, and then imagined. Some researchers observe that there is a frequent pattern in the development of social issues, where people often get their first information regarding an issue from the media. This issue becomes more of a topic of conversation which adds to the information in the media. The degree to which these conversations influence notions about the relative importance of various social issues is not known (Donohue, Olien, & Tichenor, 1978). Lippman notes "how indirectly we know the environment in which nevertheless we live" (1971, p. 284). That is, little of what people know about the world and events in it comes from their direct observation and personal experience – much more comes from what people are told or shown by other people and by the mass media. It is this latter form of communication upon which people have become increasingly dependent. People have come to rely on the information or pictures presented in the media as guides for the construction of their own social realities.

How, then, do news media affect receivers' perceptions of social reality? Tan (1986) suggests that the media are able to determine our perceptions of social reality through selective presentations and by emphasizing certain aspects of them. For example,

television audiences have a better view of events such as a parade than the people on the street. The television camera provides viewers with various angles such as close-ups, movement from spot to spot to follow the action, and puts the viewers into the centre of more happenings than any one on-site observer could attend. These televised events give the viewers an image of the parade that is uncharacteristic of the actual ceremonies as viewed by a spectator at the scene, yet has been created as a 'reality' of its own – in other words, a set of pictures in the viewer's head (Wright, 1986).

In addition, news coverage not only allows occurrences to exist as public events, but also to convey character to them, for news coverage helps to shape the public definition of events by selectively attributing to them specific details (Danziger, 1976; Tuchman, 1978). Tuchman cites an example of a riot, where she writes, "…news reports transform **a** riot as an amorphous happening into **the** riot (this particular riot) as a public event and public concern [emphasis mine]" (1978, p. 190). That is, news reports help the public define what a "riot" is through their reports of particular riots. Of importance is the fact that the public definition of riots exists without reference to the processes that shaped the riot-as-occurrence into riots-as-news-events (Tuchman, 1978).

The media can convey an impression about priorities and direct attention selectively from among many issues and thus a 'defining of situation' can affect receivers' defining situations in their own realities (McQuail, 1994). Such a process – called "agenda setting" – is one way in which a set of references for viewing the world is constructed. According to Graber (1987), receivers are influenced by many cues to the importance of news reports that the media supplied. In this regard, researchers have examined

statistical correlations between the amount of attention given to various social issues by the media, usually in news reporting, and perceived importance of these issues by individuals or the public (Wright, 1986; Graber, 1987). For example, Yoon (1998) tested agenda setting on the World Wide Web. He examined the influence of the use of Korean newspaper sites by Korean students at the University of Texas on their thinking about which economic issues were most important in Korea. He asked Korean students what they personally thought was the most important issue facing the Korean economy in a telephone survey, and did a content analysis of the economy section of three leading Korean newspapers on the Web. The result showed that issues ranked high on the Web tended to be ranked high by the survey respondents, with a rank order correlation of .83. In addition, his results also suggested that students with higher exposure to Web-based newspapers showed the greatest similarities between their personal agendas and the Web-based newspaper agendas. Thus, agenda setting is also a significant issue regarding how receivers' construction of reality is affected by the media. This concept is dealt with in more detail in section 2.2.3 of this chapter.

Bandura's social learning theory (1977) supports the view that the media can affect audience conceptions of social reality. The social learning theory explains both our acquisition of specific information and response tendencies by observation and also how such learning can be generalised to a new situation. When people generalize information which they have learned from a specific news source to their own social environments, this source tends to guide their construction of social reality. It is thus possible to argue that many of the effects of the media might take place through a process of social learning (Bandura, 1994; Harrison & Cantor, 1997). Harrison &

Cantor (1997) applied the social learning theory to examine the role of television in influencing audience members' ideas about ideal body shapes. They noted that images of thinness and dieting were very common in the media and the media often described thin actors as having an ideal body shape. They found that viewers with higher exposure to messages depicting and promoting thinness tended to desire thinness more, and were more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies than viewers who watched television less frequently.

Further examples may be seen in studies demonstrating how media content affects gender-role expectations (Tedesco, 1972; Beuf, 1974; McGhee, 1975; Tan, 1986). One such study showed that there was a stronger tendency among heavy viewers than among moderate and low television viewers to make such gender-role judgments, with over 70 per cent of the boys and 73 per cent of the girls (of the heavy viewers) choosing stereotypical careers for themselves (Beuf, 1974). The fact that children use television portrayals of males and females as guides to appropriate gender-role behaviour in real life adds further weight to the argument regarding the power of the media to guide viewer realities.

As the social learning theory explains that the media affect our habits of perception and thinking, the framing of news coverage may also influence the way receivers interpret an issue. A frame can be defined as "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration" (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991). For instance, Shah & Domke (1995) presented a news story about health care in an

ethical frame to one group and a news story about health care in a societal frame to another. The story with the ethical frame emphasized rights and morals associated with health care, while the story with the societal frame emphasized costs and benefits to society and, indirectly, to individuals. The results showed that receivers exposed to the story framing health care as an ethical issue were more likely to interpret health care as an ethical issue, than receivers exposed to the story framing health care as a societal issue.

Given that frames may guide how to people understand the world and thus form judgements, the important role of the media in framing foreign nations for the public cannot be underestimated. Many researchers conclude that most people are provided information about international affairs mainly through the mass media. As a result, the media can play an important role in shaping or forming mass perceptions of other nations (Albritton & Manheim, 1983, 1985; Perry, 1985; Brewer, Graf, & Willnat, 2003). According to Brewer et al. (2003), after participants read news stories that explicitly portrayed Libya and Iran as sponsors of terrorism, their original attitude toward these countries as anti-terrorist was changed significantly negatively. This is a good example to illustrate how the media can influence people in forming judgments about foreign nations.

## 2.2.1.2 Social reality and credibility

Through investigating how the media affect receivers' perceptions of social reality, questions regarding what the media do to reflect social reality or do to give a distorted picture of reality have come to the forefront. Kepplinger asserts that "mass media

culture is not merely a reflection of reality but its own level of reality, to which the media user orients himself", because mass media reality which is broadcast "often gives a distorted picture of reality" (1979, p. 173). For instance, bias in news content in particular can be referred to as distorting reality by, for example, giving a negative picture of minority groups, misconstructing the role of women in society, or of differentially favouring a particular political party or philosophy (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991).

The major concern regarding distorting reality by the media is that of the receiver's reaction. That is, media receivers often cannot distinguish between the truth and falsehood portrayed in the media reports due to their lack of direct experience. To illustrate this, Hartmann and Husband (1974) conducted a study of how people's conceptions of the racial issue in Britain were influenced by personal experience with minorities and by information about them derived from the media. In advance of their study, they argued that how people felt about minorities would often be affected by their immediate social environment. That is, whether people liked or disliked minority groups would in part be influenced by the norms of their own neighbourhood and by their personal contacts with persons from minority groups. However, their study demonstrated that people's perceptions of racial issues as a social problem were derived primarily from the media. In other words, the public's concepts of the social issues of minorities or immigration were mainly shaped by the 'facts' people derived from mass media stories. Therefore, it can be said that a media user's perception of reality is often formed more by media culture than by reality-culture, even though the mass media may present a false or inadequate picture of reality (Kepplinger, 1979, p. 173). In this

way, the media have the power to transform events of questionable importance into an event of public concern through various television camera angles and selection of details they make accessible to news receivers.

The tendency for receivers' views of reality to be affected by the media is not a uniform one. According to McLeod and Chaffee (1973), the influence process is affected by the beliefs, attitudes and values brought to an influence situation by its participants. That is, peoples' prior beliefs, attitudes and values construct a frame of reference which is a kind of cognitive map for interpreting reality that precedes and controls the exchange of information and influence. In addition, Adoni and Mane (1984) argued that the individual's subjective reality is organised in terms of 'zones of relevance' which differ on the basis of their distance from the 'here and now' activity directly around the individual. That is, social reality is perceived based on the distance of its elements from the individual's everyday life experiences. The individual interests and frequent experiences in face-to-face situations are part of 'close' zones of relevance. The 'remote' zones of relevance are composed of general elements that are not accessible to direct experience. Research by Doob and MacDonald (1979) supports this argument. They selected neighbourhoods in Toronto, Canada, that were either high- or low-crime areas based on actual police figures and measured the total TV viewing, TV violence viewing, viewing of TV news, listening to radio, and newspaper reading in those neighbourhoods. The results indicated that people who lived in the high-crime areas were, in fact, more afraid than people in low-crime areas. Also, they watched more television and tended to watch more violent television. Doob and MacDonald found significant correlations between viewing of TV violence and fear of crime in the

high-crime area of Toronto. This could be attributed to the fact that people in low-crime areas may not feel that television violence is relevant to them, while people in high-crime areas may recognise the cues in television violence more readily, since the aggressive cues in television violence and their own communities may be quite similar. As a result, viewers in high-crime areas are more likely to generalise from television violence to their own social realities. Accordingly, it can be stated that the social realities created by media can play a role in the credibility attributed to media sources by receivers when these realities coincide with their images of the world around them.

As Katz (1980) notes, the factors of selective perception, and of intra- and interpersonal relations are important variables that the media rely on. Curran (1990, p. 153) writes, "…the location of individuals in the social structure will tend to determine which discourses they have ready access to. This influences in turn the range of 'readings' that they will derive from media content." It can therefore be suggested that the specific culture, structure, social status and personal contents of an individual's life will influence how s/he perceives media messages and meanings. Through these individual differences, there appear differences in the ways in which individuals' social realities are shaped by the media.

## 2.2.2   Gatekeeping

Another major issue associated with media credibility is "gatekeeping". Put simply, gatekeeping determines what issues are or are not published in the media. Each day, journalists are confronted with decisions about what to report and what not to report.

Considering that reporters and editors play a major role in shaping how we perceive the world as they go about their daily task of selecting, reporting, editing news and defining the importance of issues (i.e., the agenda) for their readers, listeners and viewers, it has been stated that the news media have the ability to structure and organise our world for us. Donohue, Tichenor and Olien (1972) defined the gatekeeping process as a broader process of information control that includes not only selection of messages but also the withholding, transmission, shaping, displaying, repetition of entire messages or message components and timing of information as it goes from the sender to the receiver. Accordingly, the statement by McCombs (1994, p. 11) that "the news is not a reflection of the day; it is a set of stories constructed by journalists about the events of the day" appears to be highly representative of the role of the media.

A gatekeeping process can result in an inevitably incomplete picture of reality, or as a surveillance function of media for a society in which public problems dictate media and audience attention (Cater & Heintz-Knowles, 1992). In addition, this viewpoint coincides with the receiver's reasons for relying on news media content – reasons such as surveillance of the environment, information-seeking, and the need for personal guidance (Jensen, 1993). Behind such receivers' dependence on news media are media characteristics that one expects would instil some degree of trust. Indeed, as Reeves, Chaffee and Tims (1982, p. 298) argue, receivers are more likely to trust media sources that verify the content of what they provide. Therefore, an analysis of the gatekeeping function of the media is essential to examine media effect on receivers and the issue of media credibility.

## 2.2.2.1 Concept of gatekeeping and gatekeeping effect

The concept of gatekeeping in the communication area was developed by White (1950), who stated that gatekeeping is about opening or closing the channels of communication, or, in other words, access or refusal of access (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

White's gatekeeping model (1950)

(Reproduced in McQuail & Windahl, 1993)



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| N | = | Source of news item |
| N1,2,3,4 | = | News item |
| N2-1, 3-1 | = | Selected items |
| M | = | Audience |
| N1, N4 | = | Discarded items |
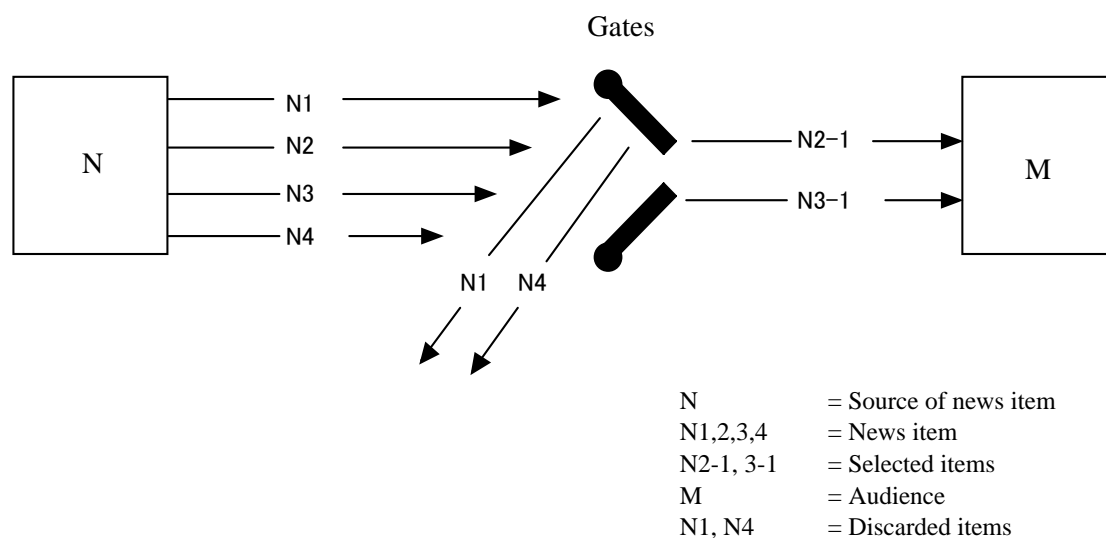
Basically, White's model features a number of competing news items (N). At the gate, the editor ("Mr. Gate") selects those items considered to be of sufficient interest and importance to be passed through to the next stage of news production. Thus, N2 and N3 have been selected and have undergone the first stage of transformation (White's use of the 'to the power 1' at this point). N2-1 and N3-1 are no longer raw information,

instead they are mediated information. White's model is not without limitations. There is no explanation regarding the criteria for selection and rejection of news items, nor acknowledgement of the fact that in the general process of mediation there are many gates. It does, however, serve to illustrate the concept, and includes the essential aspects. White describes news selection as a rational individual-level process where a gatekeeping editor pits core beliefs about newsworthiness. This set of gatekeeping processes appears at various levels in a typical news organisation. In other words, one day's news represents the effects of many gatekeepers at many gates. For example, when a reporter is assigned to cover a news event, s/he decides whom to interview, whom to ask questions and which items to focus or delete when writing the story, including the general tone to give the several possible angles of the story (Breed, 1955). This process is explained as the reporter's role in the gatekeeping process, though the level of power is much weaker than that of the editors. The story produced by the reporter could be rejected or selected by the editors. Even the selected story can be changed by the editors. Thus, it is obvious that news media content which we receive and depend on every day is not raw information but mediated or controlled information by reporters and editors who act as gatekeepers.

According to Chang and Lee (1992), in the world of foreign affairs, for example, reporters and editors, as gatekeepers, undoubtedly hold a central and critical position in providing news and information to the receivers. The editor organises and classifies information coming from different parts of the world by controlling the amount and volume of foreign news flow in the newsroom. By selecting certain issues, and by explaining the issues and trends, news editors could impact public perception of reality.

This leads to a critical question of what kind of criteria editors use when they select or reject news stories. Studies about gatekeeping have indicated that the way editors view various news factors impacts on how they select stories they receive. Analysis of editors' overt reasons for rejecting news stories from press associations suggests that education and employment background, political attitudes, and religious orientation of the staff who gather and present news are among the personal characteristics that influence news content. White (1950) suggested that "Mr. Gate" relies heavily on his/her own value judgments, his/her own set of experiences, and attitudes for making those decisions. In addition, reporters and editors are affected by political, national, cultural or other factors (sources, messages, constraints, laws, etc.). To use a recent example, when the U.S. government proclaimed "War against terrorism" after the September 11, 2001 tragedy, Osama Bin Laden was depicted by U.S. news media such as CNN as the enemy. In response to this, U.S. military action against Osama Bin Laden—such as launching a missile into civilian areas in Afghanistan—appeared to receive little criticism in coverage by the U.S. media. This news coverage was transmitted to the world via the transnational media and at the same time, the entire world was kept "informed" of what was happening in the U.S. through the same channels, and Osama Bin Laden was presented by the U.S. media as an enemy of the world. Reporters and editors participated in the construction and identification of enemies or sources of threat.

Berkowitz (1990) found that preferences of a single individual did not adequately explain the nature of news content, because decisions made in the newsroom are the

result of a group process. Even the concept of the "editor" has changed in recent years, in many cases is no longer the primary controlling entity, but rather a part of a management team (Waterford, 1999). Thus, journalists are expected to follow certain procedures and to make judgments in accordance with accepted norms and values of the news organisation (Bantz, McCorkle, & Baade, 1980). An individual journalist's gatekeeping decisions are also controlled by organisational policy (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, & Wrigley, 2001, p. 233). Some research has suggested that editors are affected by similar factors in their news selection roles (Peterson, 1979; Riffe & Shaw, 1982). This shared consensus would be the result of newsroom socialisation, common professional norms, or editors' perceptions of reader preference (Riffe & Shaw, 1982). Baker (1980) demonstrated that journalists often learnt to conform to the particular set of priorities that related to their news organisation's perception of audience. For example, Chang and Lee (1992) explained that newspaper editors' perception of foreign news is determined by individual differences and organisational constraints in the newsroom. Every commercial news organisation strives to survive economically. Gans (1979) regarded economic considerations as a constraint on news selection, because news workers have to be as mindful of the need to attract and hold audience attention as they are of their function to inform. Even though organisational policy defines actions or activities that are expected of all staff as well as actions that are regarded as unacceptable, conformity to policy is not always automatic because gatekeepers' subjective attitudes or interests or 'liberal' attitudes often conflict with organisational policy set by the proprietor (Breed, 1955).

Another important factor affecting news selection is news values. Gatekeepers are

expected to make judgments of what news is selected or ignored. That judgment is, to a large degree, determined by the gatekeepers' sense of newsworthiness; they evaluate potential stories based on agreed-upon values. Stephens (1993) cited six criteria for determining what is newsworthy: importance, interest, controversy, the unusual, timeliness, and proximity (including the journalists' expectations of audience interest in potential stories). Accordingly, the gatekeeper's role is not limited to only the selection or rejection of stories, but also includes other factors to hold audience attention and meet his/her criterion of a "good story", such as keeping, placing, or removing specific emphases or information in news stories (Altheide & Snow, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). For example, regarding the process of selecting foreign news, Hess (1996, p. 74) stated that reporters and editors accept a "one size-fits-all definition of foreign news: news [is] a cyclone, a fire, an election, someone shooting someone else."

Foreign news comes mostly from the few countries that are politically and economically 'developed' within the context of the international news flow. In other words, the foreign news attention pattern of each day is similar: For US media, each pays far greater attention to countries which are economically affluent, politically powerful and culturally similar to the United States. The content of foreign news, according to Hough (1988), follows the long standing definition of what is newsworthy. For example, analysis of the content of foreign news in U.S media showed that foreign news is mostly negative and focuses on such subjects as famine, natural disaster, and political and military intrigues (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1981). The Australian media shows similar tendencies as the U.S. media. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) analysed international news over two one-week periods in 1995 in *The Australian, The Sydney*

*Morning Herald* and the ABC 7pm news bulletin. They reported that North America, Western Europe and Asian/Pacific region loom large in Australia's international news map each occupying 25 per cent or more of the total number of stories, while Latin America and Africa made up less than 5 per cent.

Concerns about Third World imbalance in newsflow and coverage led UNESCO to formally examine complaints of international imbalance of information and communication via the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems headed by Sean MacBride, which culminated in the publication of *New World Order in Communication* (known as the MacBride Commission Report). According to the MacBride Commission Report, the Third World accuses developed countries of 'cultural imperialism' through media and information dominance (MacBride, 1980). By transmitting to the developing countries only news processed by the media of developed countries, that is, news which they have filtered, cut, and, arguably, distorted, the transnational media impose their own way of seeing the world upon the developing countries (Masmoudi, 1979). Giffard claims that "the major news agencies, in short, stand accused of ethnocentrism, of emphasizing differences between societies, of evaluation of Third World countries in terms of western values, and of disseminating abroad a more favourable image of the industrialised world than of the developing countries" (1984, p. 15).

Journalists' perceptions of factors that influence foreign news selection are determined by their individual differences and organisational constraints in the newsroom. According to Chang and Lee (1992), those journalists with more of an internationalist

perspective may tend to consider factors inherent in the events more important in their selection of foreign news. In contrast, journalists with a conservative orientation and more professional journalism training may be likely to view foreign events from their own country's perspective. According to Nossek (2004), when a foreign news item is defined as 'ours' then journalists' professional practices become subject to national loyalty, while when a foreign news item is 'theirs', journalistic professionalism comes into its own. That is, a journalist's definition of an event such as 'our war' or 'their war', 'our terrorism' or 'their terrorism' determines how it will be covered. Chang and Lee (1992) suggested that perceived impact on American security and national interest was a major factor in the selection of international news for inclusion in U.S. dailies. According to Lee and Craig's comparison between the news coverage of South Korean and Polish labour strikes in U.S. newspapers, they reported that South Korea is 'our' bloc and (communist) Poland is 'their' bloc depending on whether or not the country was considered as friendly to the U.S. government (1992). That is, even though the coverage dealt with a similar issue—South Korea and Polish workers striking against their ruling system for democratization including the right to form independent unions—regarding the South Korean labour strikes, U.S. newspapers paid less attention to the issue and demands of the strikers, and dealt with the strikes as violent and aggressive inter-organisational disputes over wages with most of the coverage appearing inside the newspaper. However, the Polish labour strikes consistently gained front page attention from U.S. newspapers, and the coverage represented the strike as a political or reformist 'crisis' to the whole of Poland. This showed that the 'us-them' dichotomy and the anti-communist perspective of the U.S. government stood out in the media coverage. Moreover, this 'us-them' dichotomy also was also present in news

stories about the U.S. downing of an Iranian plane, calling it a technical problem while the Soviet downing of a Korean jet was portrayed as a moral outrage (Entman, 1991)

Regardless of the influences on gatekeeping at the individual or organisational level, the important point for this thesis is that the news coverage produced by journalists is the medium for receivers to be able to be informed of particular issues in the world

The gatekeeping issue is not only of relevance to international news portrayed in the U.S., and we have similar problems within our own domestic Australian environment. Australian newspapers in general are very provincial, mainly focusing on regional news with minimal news from other Australian states. Even the regional emphasis of the newspapers tends, however, to centre around particular areas within regions (Brand & Pearson, 2001; Tannock, 2002).

Bias in Australian news coverage is also evident in international news. Identifying the relative distinction of different regions in Australia's news and the images of these regions as reflected in the topic areas of news from the region has been the focus of a number of studies. Overton's (1989) analysis of Australian television news argues that the Australian media fail to provide comprehensive and balanced coverage of world affairs despite the large amount of international news available via satellite. According to Gerdes and Charlier (1985), there is a predominance of U.S. stories and a relative lack of attention given to news from Africa and South America in Australian coverage. Noble and Noble (1980) and Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (1997) noted that, for instance, in the Australian media North America's image is one of science, but with a

high crime rate, international politics, economics and diplomatic activity with personalities and human interest stories, while the image of South America is primarily one of military and defence and of natural disasters. One of the images of the Middle East and Africa is political and military crises. In the case of Africa, the numbers of news for Africa were very small and the highest number of news stories was in the category of civil wars or political violence.

In addition, Stockwell (1998) suggested that coverage of South Korea in four daily domestic newspapers (*The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *The Courier Mail*) was heavily dependent upon the trade relationships between the two countries. Coverage of South Korea as measured by the number of stories was twenty times greater at the end of the 1965 to 1995 period than at the beginning, with the largest increases occurring after 1980, when trade relationships strengthened. There was also evidence of more "positive" coverage from 1980 than there was prior to this time. However, although the reciprocal relation between Australia and South Korea has grown (especially economically), the image of Korea in Australian domestic newspapers has been consistently one of a politically struggling and socially insecure country during the last 30 years. The adequacy of the stories published is also in question. Over 50% of the articles from 1970 to 1995 were judged to  not have sufficient background information.

A major concern relating to the construction of news about other nations and their people is that receivers' awareness and knowledge of other nations is heavily dependent upon the media. This is because receivers often lack primary experience, and are hence

not equipped to have a critical eye to distinguish correct information from misrepresented news stories caused by competing national interests, inadequacy of content, portrayals that are unrepresentative of events and people, misunderstandings, and so on. People form their attitudes by gaining information through outside sources—conversations with others, reading books and newspapers, watching television, education and so on—when they are unable to gain information through their own experiences. If this reporting is biased and unfair, it impacts negatively on the reader's perception, attitude and knowledge of other nations. According to the result of a survey by Korzenny, Toro and Gaudino (1987), an American local newspaper from Michigan printed significantly negative images of Russians and Russia. Readers exposed to this coverage indicated that they were less inclined to travel to Russia as a result of the images portrayed by the coverage. In addition, receivers' awareness of foreign nations is also influenced by the images selected by editors. Editors need to be cautious of presenting images that are stereotypical, that is, that conform to social belief of a group rather than portraying it on the strength of individual characteristics. Many stereotypes (particularly negative ones) are shared with other individuals within a cultural or social group (Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds, & Turner, 1999), meaning that stereotypical images may potentially be overlooked by editors as they may be shared with others around them (see Stangor, 2000, for a discussion of stereotypes). Selection of images and text has the potential to create or perpetuate stereotypical beliefs of these social or cultural groups.

According to Gumpert and Cathcart (1982), stereotyping is a form of abstracting, and furthermore, such stereotyping distorts and reduces the accuracy of portrayals involved.

One problem with stereotypes is that there existence usually stems from information that is not entirely inaccurate (Stangor, 2000). They often arise as a result of an overgeneralisation of some factual information. As Stangor (1995) argues, using stereotypes is unfair to those being judged in that no stereotype is true of all members of a specific category. The media are integral to creating stereotypes, which then becomes imprinted in the receivers' minds, an attitude which affects the outcome of further human interaction. Therefore, the role of reporters and editors is quite important in people's daily lives, in that negative stereotypes may lead to barriers between social and cultural groups.

## 2.2.2.2 Gatekeeping and credibility

Considering the power held by the media in shaping our realities, and in determining the issues which are selected for audiences, it is not surprising that receivers themselves adopt varying attitudes towards media sources. As people experience the unknown world or issues through the journalists' eyes, their perceptions of reality and attitudes toward the issue are influenced by journalists. This effective relationship between journalists and their receivers occurs when the receivers trust the message in the newspaper, for example, as their information-seeking source. As receivers read a succession of reports that they find trustworthy written by journalists in a single source, there is a cumulative effect which eventually influences the credibility of the newspaper from the viewpoint of the receivers. Additionally, internal characteristics of the message in the coverage – such as the style of writing, photographic images and so on – that can affect perception of source credibility (Chartpraster, 1993; Slater & Rouner,

1996).   Therefore, credibility appears to be a variable that can be studied within the context of the gatekeeper (including reporter), medium or message itself.

However, one essential variation for credibility is in the message receivers themselves. Gunther and Lasorsa (1986) found that the greater importance individuals placed on an issue, the higher their trust of newspaper coverage on that issue.   This is an example to illustrate the degree to which receivers trust media messages depends on the background or characteristics of the message receivers.   Some studies have noted that receivers' demographic variables (e.g., age, education, and gender) and their prior knowledge of an issue can affect their trust in the media coverage (Martin, O'Keefe, & Nayman, 1972; Burgoon, Burgoon, & Atkin, 1983; Gaziano and McGrath, 1986).   In addition, the exposure (which is the concrete interaction between media and receivers) and reliance (which is how dependent receivers said they were on a particular medium for information) can mediate people's perceptions of media credibility (Abel & Wirth, 1977; Mulder, 1981; Gunther, 1992).   Within this argument, it is possible that journalists' perceptions and presentation of an issue may differ markedly from their receivers.   For example, although journalists work under a professional code of ethics where fairness and balance are integral, some receivers are known to have shown increasing signs of distrust toward the content of news coverage due to their receivers' extreme partisan positions toward the issue (Donna, Rouner, & Buddenbaum, 1999). One of the major sources of bias accusations is the individual perceptions of media receivers (D'Alessio & Allen, 2000).   An example is when editors have two divergent interpretation letters regarding the same report in the same newspaper.   This is because, in spite of the high credibility of a newspaper, the receiver may have different opinions

or disagree with the reporter's viewpoint regarding a certain issue. It is variance in the letter writers, not the newspaper, that must lie behind these different perceptions of content and imputation of bias.

Ismach (1975, p. 41) described receivers' features in the communication situation thus: "A crucial relationship… is that between source and receiver. Yet there is nothing in the media credibility literature which relates receiver attributes and source characteristics to other variables." That is to say, there is evidence pointing towards different types of receivers who interpret news messages in different ways. He explained that there are two 'types of people' who have developed either trusting or sceptical approaches to media messages based on their past communication experiences. Other studies regarding receivers' features proposed the relationship between 'type of people' and the credibility of media implies that the important variance in determining credibility is between receivers (Westley & Severin, 1964; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986). Accordingly, all of a receiver's traits such as sceptical disposition or general background such as age, education, social activity or knowledge about media, or knowledge or experience of the topic are associated with media criticism or evaluations. Thus, based on previous research regarding receivers and media credibility, it can be stated that judgements of credibility are not rigid, but rather, are subject to change depending on receivers' individual views and experiences, and on the characteristics of the messages they receive.

## 2.2.3   Agenda setting

Whereas gatekeeping is a process by which items are selected for presentation to

audiences, agenda setting determines the amount of importance attached to these items. As stated above, the media influence how we perceive and attend to the world beyond our direct and immediate experiences and our awareness of issues of the day. These influences are associated with our behaviour as we become absorbed in the issues given prominence by the news media. For instance, it is not difficult to remember where we first heard the news of the September 11, 2001, tragedy in New York and Washington and how so much of the next day or even week was spent discussing the news. Lippmann (1922) noted this role of the news media in defining our world, not just the world of politics during and between elections, but also almost our entire world beyond our immediate personal and family concerns. In addition, he argued that the media act as an intermediary between events that occur in the world and the images of these events in our mind, with his now well-known phrase describing the media as the link between 'the world outside and the pictures in our head.'

There is a common assumption in mass communication that the media receiver not only learns some facts or information through exposure to the news media, but that s/he also learns about the degree of importance to be attached to news topics from the emphasis placed on those topics by the news media (McCombs, 1994). Cohen (1963, p. 13) defines this situation thus:

The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people about what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about… The world will look at different people, depending… on the map that is drawn for them by writer, editor, and publishers of the [news] paper they read.

This ability of the media to structure and organise receiver cognitions and to influence existing cognitive change has been labelled the "agenda setting function of the media" (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). The selected news items do not receive the same treatment when presented to the receivers. News items are presented to receivers depending on the journalistic notions of news values and other editorial judgments regarding page placement, headline size, article length and so on. Receivers adopt these journalistic definitions of importance from the news media, and incorporate similar sets of weight into their own agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Edelstein, 1993; Perry, 2002).

The concept of agenda setting has been traditionally explained in terms of the relationship between the issue and the media, the public and the policy agendas. Based on the process of agenda setting, it can be argued that media agenda is the ranking of issues in the media; public agenda is a ranking of issues in public opinion; and the policy agenda is the ranking of issues by political elites and interrelationships among these three types of agendas (Becker, 1982; Rogers & Dearing, 1988; Rogers, 1995; Dearing & Rogers, 1996). Historically a large number of agenda setting studies have explained the agenda setting effect in specific election periods. However, since 1980, as methodological limitations in agenda setting research have been addressed, it has been examined in not only specific political situations but also regarding general issues in our daily life such as environmental issues, interpersonal communication, minority groups and so on.

This thesis, therefore, deals mainly with the relationship between the role of the agenda

setting effect and their receivers, and does not deal with election-based agenda setting research.    As described above, agenda setting theory suggests that the mass media "can influence which issues people think about, although they may not be able to instigate changes into how people think" (Gooch, 1996, p. 110).    This implies that heavy coverage of an issue in the media should also result in a high public impact (Mazur, 1989).    For example, Atwater, Salwen and Anderson (1985) found positive correlation between the prominence given to six environmental issues by the media and the salience assigned to those issues by the public.    It can thus be said that "media have the capacity to broaden awareness and transform many discrete problems into a major issue" (Lowe & Morrison, 1984).    To illustrate this point, Brookes (1976) suggested that the increase in environmental coverage, for example, brought about a new tendency to redefine what had so far been considered as individual problems – such as traffic nuisance and pollution incidents – as part of a broader problem with the environment (cited in Lowe & Morrison, 1984).    Another aspect of the agenda setting effect which has attracted attention is media credibility, and researchers have argued that more credible sources are likely to have a larger agenda setting effect (e.g., Rogers & Dearing, 1988).    That is to say, people will become more dependent on the message from what they consider a highly credible media source than a low credible source, thus with a highly credible media source, people will become more susceptible to agenda setting effects.

Some researchers have questioned whether it is possible to make such inferences about the impact of media coverage on public opinion (Rubin & Sachs, 1972; Andersen 1991; Hansen, 1991).    One example cited is that most people are quite concerned about

environmental issues regardless of any kind of media coverage, and so one could not infer from correlations that the media influences them in any way. Therefore, effects or impact might occur where the issues involved are distant from the audience whose only source of information then becomes the mass media. Regarding the relationship between individuals' different personal backgrounds and the agenda setting effect, previous studies argued that receiver characteristics such as prior levels of knowledge about the topic of a particular news item and the manner of exposure to news programs have a strong relationship with agenda setting effects (Gantz, 1978; Graber, 1980; Woodall, Davis & Sahin; 1983; Hill, 1985). This means that if receivers' prior knowledge, motivations and habits of exposure to news media affect the recall of news items, then these factors should have some bearing on the process whereby receivers' issue agendas are established and modified.

Accordingly, this thesis will define the effect of media agenda setting on people's attitudes towards an issue in terms of increased awareness. Specifically, it will deal with how an individual's background knowledge of an issue and media credibility influence agenda setting effects.

## 2.2.3.1 Development of the role of agenda setting in the news media

The first major empirical test of agenda setting was by McCombs and Shaw (1972) in 1968 with their Chapel Hill (USA) study. According to the results of their study, for major issues, the correlation between emphasis in the media on an issue and receiver perception of that issue as important was $r = .967$, and for minor issues, the correlation

was $r = .979$.   That is, there was an extremely high rank order in the correlation between the salience of issues on the media agenda and their corresponding salience of the public agenda.   The study concluded that the media 'set' the agenda for the public.

Prior to 1972, a large number of researchers focused on the direct effects of media messages in changing the attitudes of audience members.   However, the dominant research result only indicated minimal media effects and did not investigate personal convictions (Rogers & Dearing, 1993).   The 'Chapel Hill' study (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) provided empirical evidence about the power of the mass media and showed that this effect was cognitive in nature rather than persuading individuals in the audience. This study had a large influence on subsequent research into agenda setting. Funkhouser (1973), for instance, supported arguments about the relationship between news coverage and public perception of the importance attached to an issue.   He investigated the relationship between public opinion and news coverage, and the relationship between news coverage and reality.   According to his study, there was a positive relationship between news coverage and public opinion regarding the issue. The issues which received prominent news coverage also received a high ranking of importance from the public.

Starting with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) Chapel Hill study and Funkhouser's (1973) study, the basic idea of the media agenda influencing the public agenda has been supported by several subsequent studies, such as MacKuen's (1987) comparison of US national concern about eight issues from 1960 to 1977 with coverage in newspapers, Smith's (1987) examination of 19 local issues in the US and news coverage in the

*Louisville Times* over a period of eight years, and Eaton's (1989) comparison of national public opinion on 11 major issues between 1983 and 1986 with news coverage of these issues in the media.

However, not only directional media effects but also various assertions and criticisms regarding agenda setting have been made by researchers (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2003). Regarding the agenda setting effects of television news programs, for instance, Patterson and McClue (1976) claimed that television news coverage had no impact on the audience's perceptions of an issue. However, Bention and Frazier (1976) argued that television did have an influence on audience perceptions of issues even though the effect was less than the newspapers'. With this mix of results, some researchers have proposed that confusion over the results of agenda setting studies may be caused by methodological limitations, including the widespread use of cross-sectional studies rather than longitudinal ones (Swanson, 1988).

Since 1980, researchers focused on the media agenda-public agenda relationship through employing various methodologies such as laboratory experiments over extended periods (MacKuen, 1981; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Brosinus & Kepplinger, 1990). In addition, they examined the agenda setting effect not only during election campaigns but in various situations regarding different issues, and several different valuable arguments regarding media agenda setting effect on the public appeared. For example, some studies have provided evidence that the news media are not always a substantial "tyrant" dictating public attention (Brosinus & Kepplinger, 1990; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). Brosinus and Kepplinger (1990), for instance, compared a content

analysis of major German television news programs for an entire year with weekly public opinion polls on the issues considered most important by Germans. They showed a positive relationship between media agenda and public agenda effects in only five issues: East-West relations, defence, European Community politics, the environment and energy. Moreover, Iyengar and Simon (1993) examined priming1 in news coverage of the Persian Gulf crisis from 1990 to 1991. During that time, the high ranking item of the media agenda and the public agenda was the Gulf crisis. In addition, public opinion of the Bush (Snr) administration's foreign policy performance was a more important condition to the overall evaluation of the George Bush administration than his economic performance during the Gulf crisis. However, before the Gulf crisis, the public opinion of his economic performance was a more essential condition than his foreign policy performance. Therefore, the result of salience priming suggests that the media agenda can do more than set the public agenda.

In addition, research found that not only could members of the public learn the relative importance of issues from the amount of coverage devoted to the issues in the news media but also that numerous other variables, such as personal characteristics of respondents were building blocks of public issues (Miller & Wanat, 1996). Studies examining the effect of personal experience on the agenda setting function of the media have generally found that those people who are most personally involved with mass mediated issues are also the most sensitive to the media's agenda (Iyengar & Kinder, 1985; Weaver & Willhoit, 1992).

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1 According to Iyengar, Peters and Kinder (1982), priming is the process in which media attend to some issues and not others and thereby alter the standards by which people evaluate election candidates.

## 2.2.3.2 Applicability of agenda setting

An investigation of the development of agenda setting research suggests that studies of media coverage recall and comprehension point to several factors that may influence the agenda setting process (Graber, 1980; Woodall & Sahin 1983; Hill, 1985; Wanta, 1997). The recall and comprehension of media coverage are affected by factors controlled by reporters, editors or broadcasters and characteristic traits of the receivers. Factors controlled by journalists can be described as the journalistic notions of news values or page placement, headline size, article length and so on. These encourage receiver recall and learning from the media. This issue has been dealt with more within the gatekeeping section. Regarding different characteristics of the receiver effect on the agenda setting process, it can be suggested that if receivers' prior knowledge, motivations, and TV watching and newspaper reading habits affect the recall of news items, then it seems that these same factors should have some bearing on the process whereby receivers' issue agendas are established and modified.

In addition, Wanta (1997) employed an "agenda-setting susceptibility" score to examine individual variables. According to his results, individuals first form opinions regarding the perceived credibility of the media for information. Based on these perceptions, individuals form a level of reliance on the media for information, then they expose themselves to media content based on this level of reliance. Accordingly, receivers' perceptions of the credibility of the media, their reliance level on news media content for information and their exposure to the media can play roles in the agenda

setting effects. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss different individual characteristics and backgrounds and their views of media credibility as factors that may influence the agenda setting process.

## 2.2.3.3 Agenda setting and credibility

Winter (1981) strongly suggested that one must not dismiss intervening variables in the media agenda-public agenda relationship such as source or channel credibility. For instance, in Brisbane, people in professional or managerial occupations regard the *Courier Mail* as a more credible news channel than the *Daily Sun* (Henningham, 1983). When a business manager in Brisbane reads a headline in the *Courier Mail* about the present international trading situation in Australia, the medium's salience for this news item is more likely to be accepted. In fact, many researchers support the notion that more credible sources are more persuasive in their agenda setting effects (Erbring, Goldenberg, & Miller, 1980; Iyengar & Kinder, 1985; Rogers & Dearing, 1988). Iyengar and Kinder (1985) state that source credibility is the most consistent mediator in agenda setting studies. According to their study, participants who gave the news media a high credibility ranking were generally more influenced than other participants who felt otherwise. In addition, they suggested that agenda setting was mediated more by viewers' assessments of source credibility and their emotional responses to news coverage.

Research by Wanta and Hu (1994) helps to illustrate the point. They investigated three potential variables in the agenda setting process: media credibility, media reliance, and

media exposure. Since Hovland and his associates suggested that credibility of a source is defined in terms of the two components of expertise and trustworthiness, a number of studies have applied Hovland's idea to many different areas of the mass media. Meyer (1988), for example, developed two useful scales for measuring credibility: believability and community affiliation. Believability referred to the presumption that news media need to offer accurate and unbiased information. The concept of affiliation was based on newspaper editors' and reporters' concern that media need to maintain harmony and leadership status in a community (Meyer, 1988). Accordingly, if receivers view the news media in a positive way regarding believability and community affiliation, it is believed that agenda setting influences should be stronger (Wanta & Hu, 1994). The media reliance is related to Defleur and Ball-Rokeach's (1989) idea in which if individuals have an objective of gaining information on the important issues, they would come to rely highly on the media.

In addition, studies into media reliance agenda setting research have demonstrated that agenda setting effects were most noticeable for individuals who rely highly on the news media for information. Therefore, it can be stated that reliance on the media for information likewise should influence the agenda setting effects of the news media. Lastly, the concept of media exposure has often been dealt with in agenda setting research to find correlations between level of exposure and strength of agenda setting effects (McCombs, 1981). This assertion relates to a position of agenda setting theory in which individuals learn the salience of issues from the coverage these issues receive in the news media, thus, media issues should be perceived as salient to individuals. That is, if individuals learn the relative importance of issues from the news media,

individuals should believe that media issues are important if they have been exposed often to media messages.

These variables in agenda setting are based on the assumptions that if individuals perceive the media to be highly credible, they will rely on the media for gathering information, and will increase their exposure to media messages.   In turn, individuals will become more susceptible to agenda setting effects.   Wanta and Hu (1994) conducted interviews that yielded 341 completed telephone surveys in Jackson Country, Illinois, USA, in October 1990.   To determine the issues, the content of four news media including two TV news programs and the front pages of two newspapers were analysed and five issues were chosen: the Middle East Crisis, the budget deficit, the economy, education, and the environment.   Based on the results of the test, as shown in Figure 2, they suggested that individuals develop degrees of reliance on the media based on their opinions of media credibility, and the degree of reliance may affect how often individuals seek out and use the news media for information.   Moreover, the degree of exposure to the news media may influence the intensity of agenda setting effects within individuals.   In addition, Wanta and Hu (1994) found that the affiliation index has a significant correlation with the agenda setting effects.   This means that if individuals believe the media are highly affiliated with society[2], they will tend to believe that the issues covered are in the best interests of society.   Therefore, individuals will be affected directly by the messages the media transmit, regardless of their degree of reliance or exposure to the media.

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2  Wanta & Hu (1994) extended Myer's (1988) community affiliation to society affiliation.

**Figure 2**

Path coefficients for aggregated newspaper and television measures

(Adapted from Wanta and Hu, 1994, p. 96)
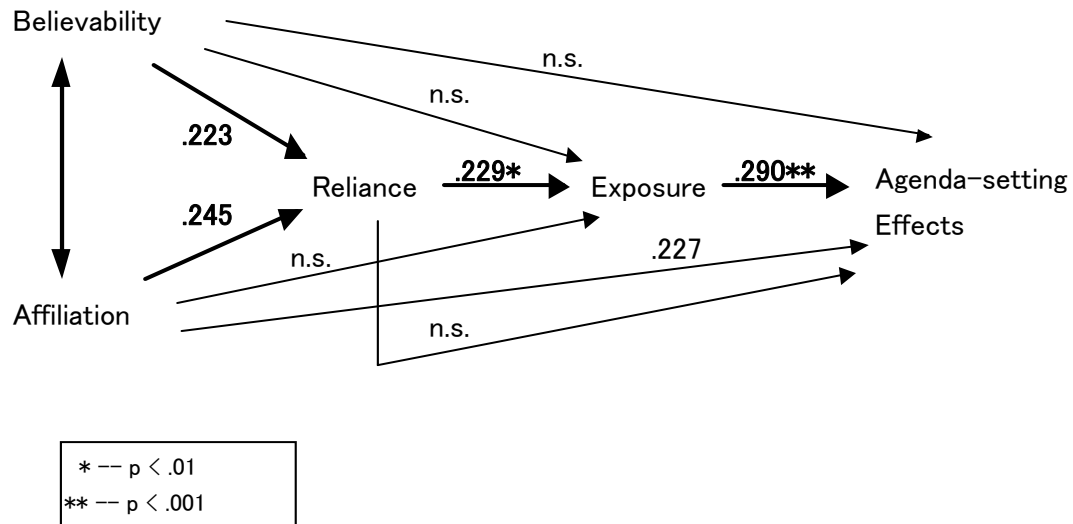


In support of the argument that the more credible individuals view the news media to be, the stronger the agenda setting effects they will display, Ghanem and Wanta (2001) argued that the level of agenda setting effects shown by their respondents was associated with their level of exposure to Spanish-language newscasts. Hispanic individuals who watched Spanish cable news were more likely to display agenda setting effects from Spanish cable news than non-Hispanics who watched Spanish cable news. Exposure to Spanish cable news was positively associated with the Spanish agenda setting effects score.

Therefore, through previous research, it is obvious that between media credibility and

agenda setting effect on media receivers there is an inevitable relationship. That is, if individuals perceive that the medium is more credible, they are more dependent on the news in that medium for gathering information, and their exposure to media messages will be increased as well. In addition the message from high credibility media will be more persuasive, thus individuals are more sensitive to media influence on their personal agendas of issues.

Then, with high credibility, will receivers become more susceptible to agenda setting effects in all cases? It would be not an unfamiliar experience to disagree with the content of news coverage even in our credible media source. Regardless of the high credibility of a newspaper, we may not always agree with the content of news regarding a particular issue. Why does this happen? If a message from a high credibility newspaper is more persuasive and thus there is more media influence on our personal agendas of issues, how can we account for this type contradiction? Some researchers argue that credibility is not a stable attribution that a person assigns consistently to a channel, but rather that credibility is highly situational (Smith, 1970; Hayes, 1971; Stone & Beell, 1975; Chaffee, 1982; Beaudoin & Thorson, 2005), and that receivers' various backgrounds such as age, education, social activity and their involvement, motivation or personal stake in an issue are important predictors of their trust in media coverage of that issue. Background can be an important factor in promoting agenda setting effects on the receivers. Therefore, it is essential to study receiver characteristics and the relationship between the issue and receiver's different circumstances to examine the agenda setting effect on receivers.

### 2.2.3.3.1 *Contingent condition*

Two concepts of the interaction between the issue and individual circumstances have been argued for as contingent conditions affecting the strength of the agenda setting relationship. The first is called "need for orientation", and the second is "obtrusiveness/ unobtrusiveness" (McCombs, 1994).

The first contingent condition, the need for orientation, is based on the idea of cognitive mapping and recognises that individuals who are in an unfamiliar situation or position will strive to orient themselves (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). It has been stated that the need for orientation "was conceived as a cognitive utilitarian motivation growing out of each person's need to be familiar with his/her surroundings to strive to 'map' his world, to fill in enough detail to orient himself" (McCombs & Weaver, 1973, p. 3).

Originally, Jones and Gerard (1967) argued that the need for orientation consisted of two components: the personal relevance of the subject, and the degree of one's uncertainty about the subject. For example, regarding the Japanese misrepresenting their history about invading South Korea in their government-approved high school history textbooks, audiences' need for orientation was defined depending on their level of interest in this issue and the degree of uncertainty in their minds about what the important issues were. Historically, South Korea and China were invaded by Japan. Therefore, to Korea and China, the Japanese textbook's misrepresentation of the history of the invasion of China and Korea as "assisting the weak government of Korea and China" is a very important matter. Government approval of the textbook shows that

Japan does not recognise its actual role in history (Washington Post, April 6, 2005; Joongang, April 7, 2005; Keonghyang, July 19, 2005).

Those audiences characterised as having a high interest in the issue and a high degree of uncertainty about the issues would be classified as having a high need for orientation. For example, Australians who have experience living in Korea and only know that the relationship between Korea and Japan is historically uncomfortable might have a high interest in the distorted historical accounts about Korea and China in Japanese high school history textbooks. Conversely, they would have a high degree of uncertainty about the issue caused by their lack of knowledge about the history of Korea and Japan, and would thus be classified as having a high need for orientation. Accordingly, people with a high need for orientation would be exposed to more news about the problem of Japanese high school history textbook and its issues such as reactions from the Korean and Chinese governments, the other nations' views regarding this matter, and so on. They are open to a considerable agenda setting effect, that is, they would have personal agendas that more closely reflect the agenda of the news media. In contrast, audiences with a low need for orientation are exposed less to news of the Japanese history textbook matter and show less agreement or any opinion regarding the agenda of the issues advanced by the news media .

The role of need for orientation was tested by McCombs and Weaver (1973) in the relationship between Charlotte voters' agendas and the coverage of issues in local newspapers in October of 1972. They divided voters into two groups: high need for orientation and low need for orientation. They found that among voters with a high

need for orientation, the correlation between their agenda and the coverage of an issue

was high ($r = .68$) compared with voters with a low need for orientation ($r = .29$).

Conceptualisation of and procedures measuring the need for orientation have changed

over time. One such example is provided by Weaver (1978), who explained the

concept of the levels of the need for orientation in more detail, as shown in Figure 3.

He argued that a moderate need for orientation results either from low personal

relevance of the subject and high uncertainty about the subject or high relevance and

low uncertainty.

**Figure 3**

Revised conception of levels of need for orientation by McCombs and Weaver (1973)

(Adapted from Weaver, 1978)

Uncertainty

|  |  | Low | High |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relevance | Low | Low Need for Orientation (Gruop III) | Moderate Need for Orientation (Group II) |
|  | High | Moderate Need for Orientation (Group II) | High Need For Orientation (Group I) |

Most studies using aggregated agendas based on the need for orientation agree that

higher levels of need lead to higher levels of exposure to information in the media and to increased agenda setting effects (McCombs & Weaver, 1973; Weaver, 1977; Weaver, Graver, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981).

However, when analyses were based on an individual rather than an aggregated agenda, the results were somewhat different (Swanson, 1988). There have been a few studies that have found that the agenda setting effect was the strongest among less interested and more uncertain audiences (i.e., considered as having moderate levels of need for orientation) (Schoenbach & Weaver, 1983, 1985; McLeod, Se-Wen, Chi, & Pan, 1990). Accordingly, to understand the association between agenda setting and the level of need for orientation, it is not enough to deal with only isolated properties of people, issues or news content. It is necessary to measure more specific cognitive effects and motives for informational media use by examining the interaction between the issue and individual factors because an individual's different circumstances such as income, education, or pre-knowledge about the issues may produce different emotional and cognitive approaches toward the issue and thus different results for the agenda setting effect (McCombs, 1996). The cognitive approaches toward the issue will be further discussed in section 2.3 on receiver perspective.

The second contingent condition regarding the issue can be divided into two categories. The first category is obtrusive issues ("topics with which people have direct personal experience") and the other category is unobtrusive issues ("topics for which the media may be people's only source of information") (Swanson, 1988, p. 607). For example, for many industrial workers in cyclical industries or part-time workers, the issue of

employment is a highly obtrusive issue, while for a tenured university professor, the issue of employment is an unobtrusive issue. In addition, for Korean and Chinese people, the issue about the distorted historical accounts about Korea and China in Japanese high school history textbooks is a highly obtrusive issue, while for many Australians, this issue would be unobtrusive. As individuals obviously differ in their issue sensitivities and preoccupations, they may react differently to the level of issue coverage in a given news source, depending on their individual predispositions toward the particular issue (Iyengar, 1979). Obtrusive issues such as inflation in general or the price of petrol obtrude into our lives. Therefore, there is unlikely to be anyone who depends only on the news media to inform them of their significance in our daily life, but rather daily experience puts those issues into conversation. In contrast, our knowledge of unobtrusive issues, for example, Australian foreign policy or the Middle East situation, is remote from personal knowledge and comes completely from the news media. As a result, media audiences are not impacted solely by the news content, but rather, differences in issue emphasis by the media do have an impact on the importance of issues but only among certain subsets of receivers. However, it is true that the importance in our minds of unemployment, for example, is an important product of our exposure to the issue in the news (Shaw & Martin, 1992).

Other studies which examine obtrusive/ unobtrusive issues as independent variables in agenda setting research, it is possible to relate this to the concept of need for orientation. McCombs and Weaver have suggested individuals differ in their need for orientation and that this may determine whether or not agenda setting takes place (Weaver, 1977). Need for orientation is based on the relevance of the information to the individual and

the degree of uncertainty concerning the subject of the message. Correlating the concept of obtrusive/ unobtrusive issues and the need for orientation, one such study insists that uncertainty would be highest for unobtrusive issues because people do not have any direct experience with the issues (such as the Middle East situation), thus producing a stronger agenda setting effect (Weaver, Graves, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981). In contrast, another study insists that personal relevance should be highest for issues with which people have direct experience (obtrusive), meaning that obtrusive issues produce stronger agenda setting effects (Iyengar & Kinder, 1985). However, these two different arguments ultimately support the idea that agenda setting might not take place to the same extent and in the same way for all individuals, and the greatest agenda setting effects occur for those with a moderate need for orientation (high relevance but low uncertainty/ low relevance but high uncertainty) (Swanson, 1988).

### 2.2.3.3.2 *Personal involvement*

In regard to issue difference, different individual circumstances would also be considered one of the variables in the agenda setting effect. Iyengar (1988) noted that researchers have ignored the effect of direct experience of an individual. While it is obvious that the individual relies highly on the media for public affairs information, personal involvement or pre-knowledge of an issue is also a reliable source of information. That is, personal involvement may make individuals more or less receptive to the media agenda (Iyengar & Kinder, 1986). For instance, many national issues such as crime, unemployment and so on will have been experienced by a large number of individuals. Therefore, it can be said that the 'issue attention' cycle

includes both mediated and direct experience.

Moreover, as individuals obviously differ in their issue sensitivities and preoccupations, they may react differently to the level of issue coverage in a given news source, depending on their individual predispositions toward the particular issue (Iyengar, 1979; McQuail, 1994).   For example, for people who have been recently unemployed or with unemployed persons in their family, the salience of unemployment increases dramatically with stories dealing with unemployment issues, while for people over 60, salience of crime against the elderly salience is high with stories dealing with such crime.   In both cases, it is clear that the strength of media agenda setting is influenced by personal experience (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).   That is, receivers do not have impact solely from the news content, but rather, differences in issue emphasis by the media do impact issue salience for different readers. Therefore, Erbring, Goldenberg, and Miller (1980) concluded that agenda setting is in fact an interactive effect, jointly produced by news coverage and audience sensitivities.   Individuals with direct involvement of some issue are more likely to respond to news coverage quickly while others are likely to be slower to respond.    Thus, different conditions of individuals and issues are likely to act as contingent conditions that encourage or inhibit public or individual levels of agenda setting and of media impact (Weaver, 1978; Erbring et al., 1980; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Agenda setting is traditionally related to the fact that audiences gain issue salience from the news media, incorporating similar sets of weight into their own agendas (McCombs

& Shaw, 1972; Edelstein, 1993; Perry, 2002).   However, this review suggests that there are several factors that influence the agenda setting effects, namely:   media credibility which involves the extent to which an individual perceives a communication source or channel to be trustworthy, receiver characteristics, and the relationship between the issue and receivers' different circumstances (e.g., issue involvement).

Previous studies have demonstrated that source credibility is the most consistent mediator in agenda setting effects.   Participants who ranked the news media high on credibility were generally more influenced than other participants who did not.   Thus, researchers suggested that agenda setting is mediated more by audience members' assessments of source credibility and their emotional responses to news coverage.   In addition, regarding the issue of media credibility and agenda setting, researchers stated that certain prestigious media and specific news events play an important role in boosting an issue up the media agenda (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

Berlo, Lemert and Merts (1969) point out that credibility can be seen as a changeable perception by the receiver, and differences in people reacting to an issue might explain differences in media credibility. That is, different characteristics of the contents of news stories, individuals' different characteristics and the degree of issue involvement could affect media credibility and this tendency also has an influence on the limitation or enhancement of the agenda setting effects.

## 2.2.4  Summary

This section has mainly dealt with the characteristics of the media and what their messages do to people.  In examining the issue of media credibility, a significant amount of research has focused on what media messages do to people (media effects).  The media can determine our perceptions about the facts, norms, and values of society through selective presentations and by emphasizing certain themes.  The media can affect audience conceptions of social reality and also help audience to form their attitudes toward an issue, a thing or a nation.  Thus, the media have been described as not only a mirror that reflects the realities of society as they are, but instead, as Perry (2002) describes, is more like a searchlight, where the area under the searchlight can be affected by certain habits and rituals of journalists.

Journalists as gatekeepers undoubtedly hold a central and crucial position in providing news and information to the receivers.  They have the ability not only to structure and organize our world for us but also to direct our attention to certain problems or issues.  Many studies have examined the relationship between public opinion and media content, and the relationship between media content and reality.  It has been demonstrated that public opinion about what should be on the public agenda is heavily influenced by the topics and issues that appear in the news.  The coverage may not determine exactly what position people take on a given issue, but it helps to guarantee that the issue is considered to be an important one in their own realities.  However, while some may consider that what the media do to their receivers is much like a bullet directed to a passive target, one very important point is that their receivers are not always passive and

do not always show unified reactions. Even though people can experience the unknown world or issues through journalists' eyes and their perceptions of reality and attitudes toward the issue are influenced by journalists, this effective relationship between journalists and their receivers occurs when the receivers place their trust in the message provided by the media. Among other things, this trust is based on media performance.

Source (i.e. media) variables are not the only determinants of credibility. The degree to which receivers trust media messages depends also on their own backgrounds and individual characteristics. Different individual circumstances would also be considered as one of the variables in the media effect. In addition, a person's susceptibility to media influence may differ from context to context. Thus, individual differences can cause different impacts on audience members' attention and comprehension of messages. Factors such as people's prior beliefs, knowledge, experiences and values form precede and control the information and influence functions of the media.

Accordingly, the following section examines the characteristics of media receivers to facilitate an understanding of the relationship between receivers and their credibility judgments of the media.

## 2.3    Receiver perspective

This thesis is concerned with determining how news receivers' attitudes are affected by news messages that appear in sources that are considered to be either high in credibility or low in credibility.   As mentioned in the introduction, different individuals react differently to the content of a media message and it can thus be predicted that the rating of media credibility will also be different.   That is to say, differences in the way in which receivers perceive the content of messages should affect credibility (Gunther, 1988).   In this section, through reviewing some experimental research and theories that deal with receiver-centred arguments regarding media credibility, we can further our understanding of those receiver traits that affect media credibility judgments.   First, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of the receiver which correlate with media credibility.

### 2.3.1    Receiver characteristics

#### 2.3.1.1    Receiver demographics

It has been demonstrated that the personal characteristics of a media receiver such as age, gender, location of residence, education, income and so on have correlation with media credibility (Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale, 1978; Lewis, 1981; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986).   Many personality variables have been measured, which, it was assumed, had a modifying effect on media-determined attitude changes.   For example, according to Rotter (1966), individuals manifesting an internal locus of control perceive reinforcement to be primarily attributable to their own actions.   In contrast, individuals characterised by an external locus of control perceive reinforcement to be beyond their

control and attributable to powerful others. Given this argument, individuals with external locus of control are more influenced by high credibility sources than those with internal locus (Ritchie & Phares, 1969; McGinnies & Ward, 1973). In addition, others argue that highly authoritarian people are strongly influenced by source credibility cues, whereas less authoritarian people make greater use of message cues in determining their attitude (Harvey & Hays, 1972). Westley and Severin (1964, p. 334) found a range of characteristics of "an ideal type of media user who is especially likely to assign high credibility to a newspaper", based on a number of variables, including education, income, urbanism, and gender. These were found to have a solid relationship with credibility.

Henningham (1983) found in a study of newspapers in Brisbane that the *Daily Sun* and the *Courier Mail* were the most popular newspapers. However, the *Daily Sun* was generally more popular among blue-collar workers of lower income and education, while the *Courier Mail* was more popular among people in professional or managerial occupations, with higher incomes and education. This suggests the existence of a social class distinction in newspaper selection. Such a distinction in newspaper selection also provides some degree of preliminary evidence that the credibility a person attributes to his or her preferred newspaper could be explained depending on disposition to trust or distrust media sources. However, some researchers question this viewpoint, arguing that credibility is not something that a person assigns consistently to a channel, rather it can be seen as a changeable perception by the receiver depending on the situation (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969; Smith, 1970; Stone & Beell, 1975; Chaffee,

1982).    This issue is described in the following sub-section.

## 2.3.1.2    Situation vs. disposition

Credibility as a situational assessment is treated as a relative term rather than a disposition of persons.    This was explained by Hemple (1952), who believed that as a disposition (property) the concept may be called a trait, observable in a single unit of analysis, but as a relation it is only observable in contact with other ideas or objects. He described it this way; when "X is doubtful" it is a disposition (property); but when "X is doubtful about Y," doubt is a relational term demonstrated in the presence of Y. The situational view suggests that important components of trusting or doubting responses do not exist until a person has something to trust or doubt as a relational term, while the dispositional view predicts a reflex trust response across situations (Gunther, 1992).

Some studies suggest that situational variables are proven as predictors of credibility. This means that situational variables such as the degree of issue importance and the controversial nature of the issue seem to have a relationship with media credibility evaluation.    In addition, receiver bias toward an issue and partisanship on an issue affect media credibility evaluations.    For instance, Vallone, Lepper, and Ross (1985) tested Arab and Israeli students by exposing them to media coverage of the Middle East. Both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab students who were highly partisan on Middle East issues perceived more bias in the media coverage dealing with the 'Beirut massacre', and each side believed the bias to be in favour of the other side (this finding is called a 'hostile

media effect'). This example shows that receivers who are more partisan or biased on the issue are more likely to perceive bias in content of media coverage about the issue and this receiver bias also has a relationship with media credibility evaluation. Those holding attitudes on either side of an issue are prone to judging a source as less credible because they are more likely to encounter content that they perceive as opposing their own view (Stamm & Dube, 1994). In addition, an issue which is related to personal life—such as ethics of abortion, tax, welfare and so on—is more controversial (Slater & Rouner, 1997). As shown in previous research about situational views, we can see a connection between an individual's personal involvement in an issue and media credibility judgments. The issue of 'involvement', thus, is an important one, and requires further examination.

## 2.3.2 Involvement and attitude

Involvement with an issue has been considered as a component of attitude, as will be described below. Attitudes, as used here, are basically our predispositions toward things and, in general terms, refer to whether we like something or not: whether we regard something in a favourable or unfavourable way. They are important because they affect actions – that is to say, a person's behaviour is often determined by his/her attitude (Perry, 2001). The implication this has for media credibility is that differences in attitudinal direction (favourable or unfavourable) would be expected to make a difference in perceptions of media trustworthiness. In this way, differences in receiver attitudes toward message content should affect credibility.

Guttman (1954) identified four attitudinal components: direction of effect (positive/negative), intensity of attitude towards issues covered by the source, closure, and involvement.   Stamm and Dube (1994) suggested that Guttman's multidimensional concept of attitude is the most applicable as it appears to embrace and distinguish among all receiver-message relationships.   We assume, for instance, an experimental situation which is designed to measure the four components of attitude.   For example, people might receive the following statement regarding a health insurance issue: "It's the government's responsibility to help the Australian who cannot afford private health insurance" and ask whether they agree, disagree or have no opinion on the statement (for measuring direction).   If they agree with the statement, it is scored as positive, and if they disagree it is scored as negative.   To measure intensity, people were asked, "How strongly do you feel about this issue?" and responses can range on a numbered scale from "not at all strongly" to "extremely strongly".   To measure closure, people were asked the question "How likely are you to change your opinion on this issue?" Responses range from "not at all likely" (high closure) to "extremely likely" (low closure).   Finally, involvement can be measured using numbered scales that ask "Please tell us how much this issue has been on your mind lately".   Responses can be arranged from "not at all" to "a great deal".

**Figure 4**

Graphs of intensity, closure and involvement by direction

Direction is shown as a simple distinction between positive and negative.
(Adapted from Guttman, 1954, p. 108)
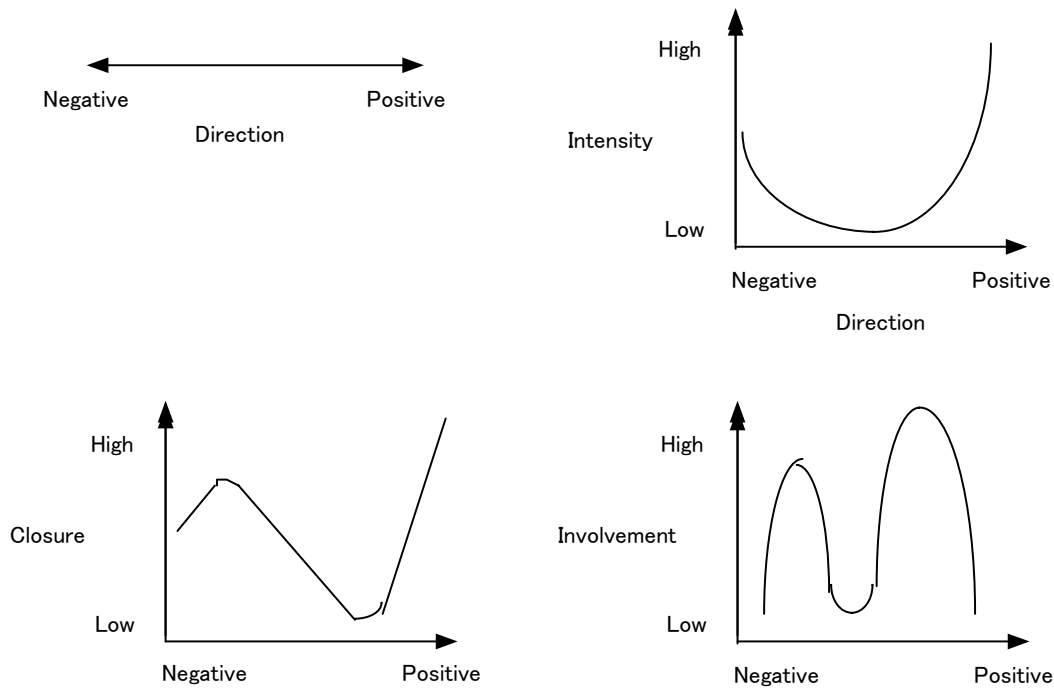


Figure 4 shows a multidimensional concept of attitude. If an attitude scale were

internally consistent, attitude would be measured along a continuum that is negative at

one end and positive at the other (Guttman, 1954). With the curve for intensity,

individuals with scores farther to the right should become more intensely positive and

individuals with scores farther to the left should become more intensely negative (see

the upper right graph in Figure 4). The curves for closure and involvement are more

complex, and the relationship between how positive or negative an individual is and the

degree of closure and involvement is not a converse one. In addition, it can be argued

that the relationship between attitude direction and credibility becomes increasingly

complex to the extent that different relationships are exhibited between other attitude components and credibility (Stamm & Dube, 1994).  Similarly, the relationship between involvement and credibility is not one that can be easily predicted, and is dependent upon other factors, as described forthwith.

### 2.3.3    Cognitive mechanism

One method which has been adopted to try to explain the relationship between an individual's personal involvement with an issue and source credibility (as a receiver-centred concept) is through cognitive processes.  In this line of research, the connection between an individual's personal involvement with an issue and source credibility is explained through cognitive response theory, the elaboration likelihood model, and social judgment theory (Sherif & Nebergall, 1965; Rhine & Severance, 1970; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Roser, 1981; Gunther, 1986; Stamm & Dube, 1994; Severin & Tankard, 2000).

This section discusses the relationship between the receiver's individual involvement with an issue and source credibility in order to shed light on how a message receiver may be affected by higher or lower credibility of a news source.

### 2.3.3.1    Cognitive response theory

Cognitive response theory was initially developed by Greenwald (1968), and differed from Hovland's (1953) views of attitude.  While Hovland believed that all attitude

change is based on message learning, Greenwald (1968) argued that an individual could learn something in a message without experiencing attitude change, due to the fact that they are two different things – acceptance of a message and retention of a message. Persuasion, Greenwald believed, was related to existing attitude, knowledge and feeling. That is to say, the receiver recounted cognitive material that had already been stored. This cognitive response theory was advanced by Petty and Cacioppo (1979). They suggested that increasing a person's involvement with an issue also increases the person's motivation to think about the issue being presented in the message, and also to have an informed attitude. This means that highly involved receivers produce supportive thoughts when they think about the content of a pro-attitudinal message (since the message is likely to present ideas with which the receiver will agree). On the other hand, these receivers produce counter-arguments when they think about the content of a counter-attitudinal advocacy (since the message is likely to present ideas with which the receiver will disagree) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981). Therefore, when a receiver is involved highly in the issue in a message, the message content becomes a more important determinant of persuasion to the receiver, thus he or she is more likely to ignore source credibility.

On the other hand, when a receiver is not involved (low involvement) with an issue in the content of message, the issue is likely not to encourage his or her motivation to think about the issue, thus, the issues in the content of the message receive little attention. Thus, the receiver instead pays more attention to source credibility (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

The idea that increasing a person's involvement with an issue also increases the person's motivation to think about the issue being presented in the message in cognitive response theory is explained again – but from a slightly different perspective – in the elaboration likelihood model.

## 2.3.3.2  The elaboration likelihood model

The elaboration likelihood model argues that there are two routes to attitude change: the central route and the peripheral route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).   The central route is related to when the receiver deals actively with the information and he/she is persuaded by the rationality of the arguments.   Therefore, when the central route to persuasion is active, the receiver is said to be involved on high elaboration.   On the other hand, the peripheral route is involved when the receiver does not use the cognitive energy to process the information in the message or to evaluate the argument.   Thus, when the peripheral route to persuasion is active, the receiver is said to be involved on low elaboration (Siero & Doosje, 1993).   As a result, peripheral cues such as source credibility influence him or her (see Figure 5).   According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986, p. 7), elaboration refers to "the extent to which a person carefully thinks about issue-relevant information.   The difference between the two routes has to do with the extent to which attitude change that results from a message is due to active thinking about either the issue or the object-relevant information provided by message."

**Figure 5**

The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion by Petty

(Adapted from Tankard, 2000, p. 176)
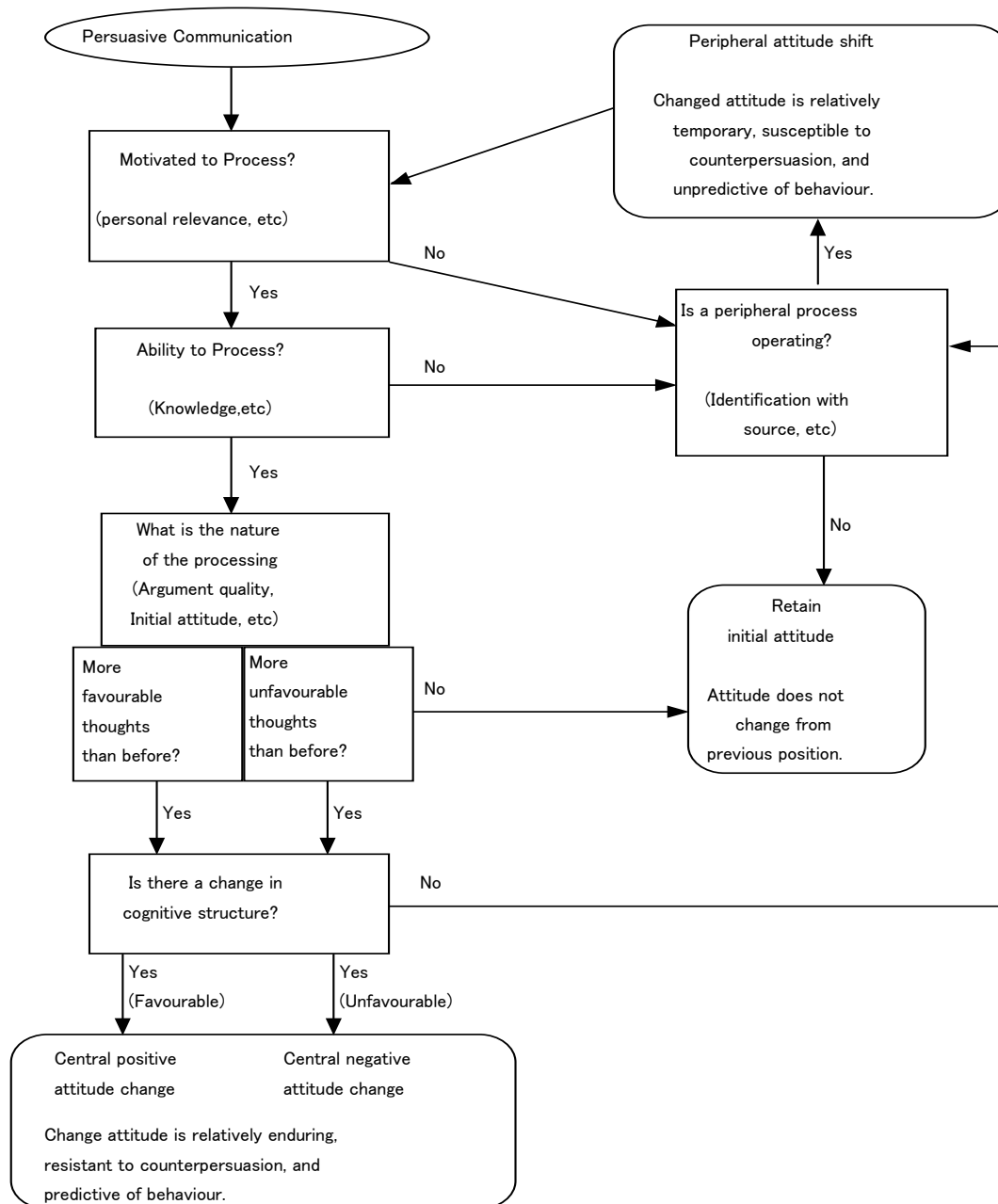


That is, in the central route, the degree of issue involvement and issue-relevant information would be the most direct determinant of the direction of attitude and

amount of attitude change produced.  On the other hand, in the peripheral route, a receiver's attitude change is the result of peripheral cues.  Therefore, for instance, it can be said that a high credibility source will affect attitude change in peripheral situations but not in central situations. Then, what kinds of factors determine which route (central or peripheral) will be taken? According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), there are two main factors: motivation and ability.  These two factors will determine whether a person will think about the content of a message or not (the degree of elaboration by a receiver).   That is to say, motivation to think about the message and the issue and the ability to process the message and issue is sufficient for message elaboration.  If both motivation and ability are present, then message elaboration will occur (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).  If a person is motivated and able to think about the message arguments, the following sequence of events will occur: attention, comprehension, elaboration, integration, and then enduring attitude change.

Salmon (1986) argues that the receiver's degree of involvement is an important motivational variable.  The elaboration likelihood model proposes that people who are highly involved with an issue become more motivated to elaborate messages (i.e., more motivated to think about the contents of a message) because their personal concern gives them more reason to seek correct information and opinions.  Involvement in the elaboration likelihood model is linked to the perceived personal relevance of a message. For example, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) presented a study in which college students were notified that seniors be required to take a comprehensive exam in their major prior to graduation.  For half the students, the speaker advocated that the policy begin next year (high consequence/ high personal relevance), and for the other half, the speaker

advocated that the policy take effect in 10 years (low consequence/ low personal relevance). Half the students received the message which contained eight highly persuasive arguments (strong), and for the other half the message contained eight specious arguments (weak). For source expertise, half the students had the information from a professor of education at Princeton University (expert source), and the other half had the message from a junior at a local high school (non-expert source).

The result of this study was that under a high-consequences condition, students' attitudes about comprehensive exams were decided depending on the nature of the issue-relevant argument in the message (see Figure 6). Strong arguments produced significantly more attitude change than weak ones. However, the expertise of the source had no significant influence. On the other hand, under a low-consequences condition, students' attitudes were determined primarily by source expertise, and the quality of arguments presented had little effect. It can also be explained by the fact that with the central route, persuasion occurs when the receiver is led to have predominantly favourable thoughts about the advocated position. If an advocated position is one towards which a receiver is already persuaded (in case of the agreement between the receiver's initial position and recommended position), the receiver will be favourably oriented to the message. However, if there is disagreement between the receiver's initial position and the recommended position, a stronger or more carefully defined argument will cause the receiver to lean towards the recommended position. It can then be stated that strong persuasive arguments can result in attitude change in the direction of the message. If a message contains weak arguments, the receiver is likely to consider counter-arguments when thinking about the message and thus move in a

direction away from the position recommended in the communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1999). In addition, Petty (1977) noted that the new attitude that results from effortful issue-relevant cognitive activity (central route) tends to be relatively enduring. However, the new attitude that results from various persuasion situations (peripheral route) tends to exist only as long as the cues remain salient.

**Figure 6**

Top panel: Attitude change as a function of source expertise and perceived consequences.

Bottom panel: Attitude change as a function of argument quality and perceived consequences.

(Adapted from Petty & Cacioppo, 1986, p. 260)
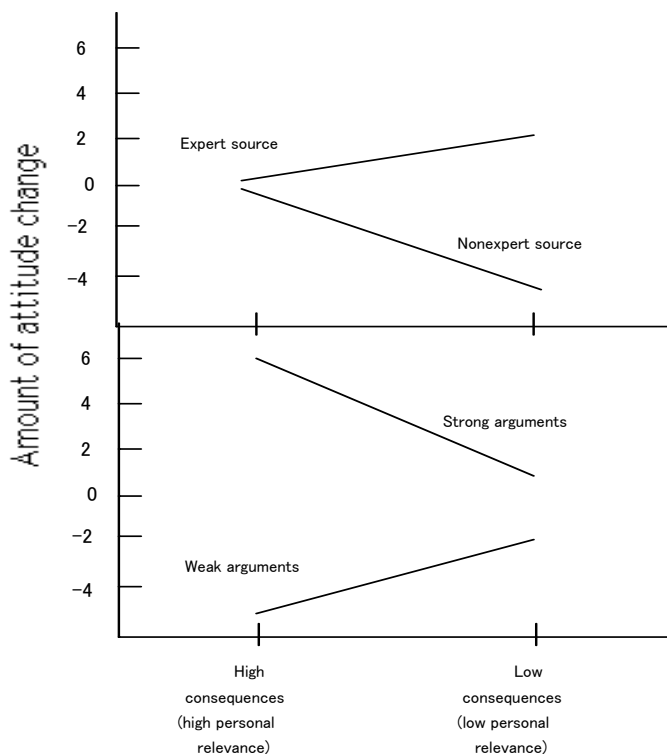


Chaiken's (1980) study helps to illustrate the persistence of attitude changes induced

under different source and message characteristics. In her study, subjects read a persuasive message where she manipulated three variables; personal involvement, message arguments and source likeability. The results suggested that in the high-involvement conditions, subjects' attitudes were induced mostly by the number of issue-relevant arguments in the message, and that strong arguments effect significantly more attitude change than weak ones. In high-involvement conditions, the likeability of the source, however, had no significant influence. Conversely, under low-involvement conditions, while the number of arguments presented had no significant influence, source likeability lead to subjects' attitude change. In order to determine the longevity of the attitude change, Chaiken took a second measure of attitude change in addition to the initial measure about 10 days later. High-involvement subjects (i.e., those subjects whose initial attitude changes were based predominantly on their responses to the issue-relevant arguments) showed less of a decline in attitude change than did low-involvement subjects (i.e., those subjects whose initial attitude changes were based largely on their responses to the characteristics of the source).

The elaboration likelihood model is likely to bring together the diverse findings of research into attitude change into unified theories through two different routes: the central route emphasizing a thoughtful consideration of issue-relevant argumentation and the peripheral route emphasizing the importance of issue-irrelevant cues. The elaboration likelihood model confirms that when the issue about to be discussed has a high level of personal involvement, it is the issue-relevant concerns that lead to the receiver's initial attitude change. With this situation, source credibility does not affect

attitude change.    On the other hand, when the issue about to be discussed does not have a high level of personal involvement, source credibility leads to the receiver's attitude change rather than issue-relevant concerns.

### 2.3.3.3    Social judgment theory

The social judgment theory, developed by Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall (1965), also depends on different levels of involvement.    That is, to determine the amount of persuasion that a message will produce depends on the person's level of involvement in the issue.    Sherif et al. (1965) argued that different levels of involvement would be associated with different 'latitudes' of acceptance, rejection, or noncommitment for different messages concerning an issue.    The 'latitude of acceptance' includes the person's most preferred position and constitutes the range of statements the person would find acceptable or agreeable with his or her own opinion.    The 'latitude' of rejection comprises the range of opinion that the person would find unacceptable. Finally, the 'latitude' of noncommitment comprises those positions that the person finds neither acceptable nor unacceptable (Sherif et al., 1965).    According to Sherif and Hovland (1953), in a high-involvement condition, the social judgment theory predicts wider latitude of rejection, with fewer messages falling in a receiver's noncommitment range.    Since a highly involved person has wider latitude of rejection, he or she should be resistant to persuasion, thus producing less attitude change.    Frequent rejection of message content might thereby result in loss of credibility for the source (Eagly, 1981). However, under lower involvement condition, Sherif and Hovland (1953) predict that the latitude of rejection is narrow, and more messages are likely to fall into the range of

acceptance or noncommitment. It follows that a low-involved person exhibits more attitude change than a high-involved person.

## 2.3.4   Involvement, credibility and attitude change

Cognitive response theory and the elaboration likelihood model suggest that a receiver who is highly involved with the content of the issue pays little or no attention to credibility attribution. Rather, the receiver feel more favourable toward the sources of information he or she is processing more deeply, thus will show more attitude change. However, the social judgment theory predicts that a receiver who is highly involved with the issue is sceptical of message content and of message sources, thus, many more messages are rejected and are discounted, thus there will be little attitude change. That is to say, despite the fact that these models describe a similar receiver (i.e., one who is highly involved but pays minimal attention to credibility attribution), the outcomes are quite contradictory, with the cognitive response theory suggesting more attitude change, and the social judgment theory suggesting less attitude change. With these contradictory outcomes, Gunther (1988, p. 280) suggests that "these apparently competing bodies of thought are dealing with more than just two levels of involvement". He suggests that with three levels of involvement – low, moderate and high –   the two models would be complementary rather than conflicting as shown in Figure 7 (Gunther, 1987).

**Figure 7**

Model of three involvements of level, and the ranges operationalised by cognitive response and social judgment theories

(Adapted from Gunther, 1988, p. 281)

COGNITIVE RESPONSE
THEORY
(Involvement manipulated)

|  Low  |  High  |

| Low involvement | Moderate involvement | High involvement |

|  Low  |  High  |

SOCIAL JUDGMENT
THEORY
(Involvement measured)
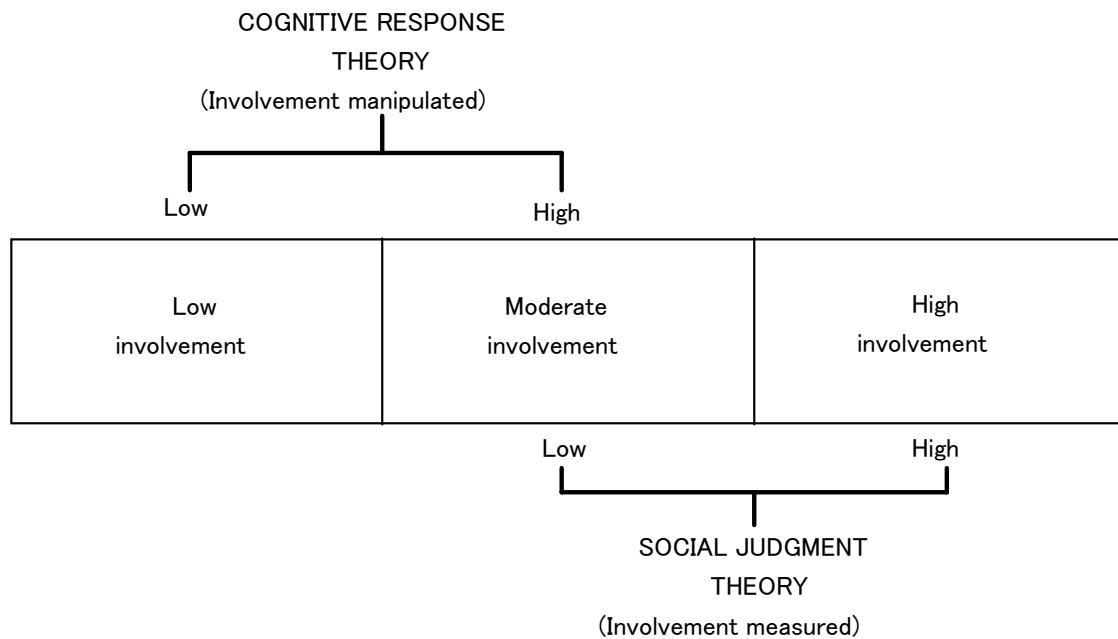
According to Gunther (1988, p. 280), a high involvement in cognitive response theory is operationally a moderate involvement condition, where attitude is actively made and attention is paid to the substance of message. It occurs with deeper cognitive processing. This correlates operationally with low involvement condition in social judgment theory where the latitude of rejection is narrow, and more messages and message sources are likely to fall into the range of acceptance. It follows that the low-involved person in an issue produces more attitude change than the high-involved person (Greenwald, 1981). Accordingly, Gunther believed that by providing three involvement levels, cognitive theory and social judgment theory do indeed demonstrate

a complementary relationship.

In order to understand the three levels of involvement, it is useful to examine Gunther and Lasorsa's (1986) three-level attitude extremity conditions. Firstly, a condition which a receiver is relatively uninvolved with an issue or uninterested in an issue is related to a low attitude extremity. In this condition, a receiver is also uninterested in the content of media coverage of the issue. The uninvolved receiver has no motivation to think about the issue, no anchor and no stable attitude position from which to judge content. Gunther (1988, p. 281) advocated that, "in this condition one feels inadequately equipped to evaluate or countergauge and thus is likely to fall vulnerable to persuasive intentions." Accordingly a sensible response to questions about media trust is scepticism across the board. This means that, as cognitive response theory predicts, a receiver decides his or her evaluative attention regarding an issue depending on the characteristics of message source (status, credibility and so on) as a focus of trust assessment (Zaller, 1987). Therefore, the receiver pays more attention to the credibility of the media than the content of the media regarding the issue.

Secondly, moderate involvement is related to the condition of moderate attitude extremity. In this condition, two different situations could occur. One is that a receiver who is moderately involved with the content of an issue does not strongly hold an opinion about the issue, but instead has a tendency to look for information and ideas actively. The tendency would be derived in order to assess and revise his or her own opinion, thus a receiver would increase his or her motivation to think about the issue being presented in the message and that guides attitude formation, as suggested by

cognitive response theory.   In addition, it is also possible that through the process of looking for and gaining information and ideas, a receiver rejects fewer messages, suggested by social judgment theory (i.e., narrow latitude of rejection and wider range of non-commitment).   Therefore, to a receiver who is moderately involved with an issue, media content of the issue is utilitarian.   Accordingly, Slater and Rouner (1996) suggest the source, which provides more useful messages to the receiver, would have a favourable evaluation from the receiver.

Finally, a condition under which a receiver is highly involved with an issue or interested in an issue is related with a high attitude extremity.   A highly involved receiver has strong motivation to think about the issue, has a strong anchor and rigidly holds an opinion and more self-perceived expertise on the issue, thus has a very stable attitude position from which to judge content.   For this tendency, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) believed that highly involved receivers have the ability and motivation to undertake 'biased processing.'   That is, prior opinion guides their perceptions and processing of a message in such a way as to maintain the original opinion (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975; Slater & Rouner, 1993).   Accordingly, as social judgment theory suggested, the receiver has wider latitude of rejection, with fewer messages falling in his or her noncommittal range, and has a narrow range of acceptance.   For a receiver under this condition, the content of media regarding an issue is more important than credibility of the media.   The media source which provides contrary and counter-attitudinal information would receive negative evaluation, such as being biased, misguided, or ill-informed, and would be rejected by the receiver because he or she strongly holds "my own opinion."   Accordingly, the highly involved receiver is more likely to ignore

source credibility (Rosser, 1990; Austin & Dong, 1994).

The argument about the degree of involvement and rating source credibility shows that it is likely that there is the highest opportunity for a receiver to trust the media highly when the receiver is in moderate involvement (or a moderate attitude situation) in a specific issue.   That is to say, trust in the media could be lower both when the receiver is in a high or low involvement condition (extremely polarized or neutral attitude situation) in a specific issue.   Gunther (1987) proved this statement through a study in which he tested 268 San Francisco Peninsula residents in 1985.   Subjects were given two attitude statements for each of three issues – abortion, Latin America and welfare. The resulting extremity of attitude measure was issue-specific.   The results of the study showed a curvilinear relationship between attitude extremity and trust in media news coverage of an issue as shown in Figure 8 (Gunther, 1987).

Thus, this relationship between source credibility, involvement and attitude change can be seen to be quite a complex one.   The degree of involvement in a given issue will often have a neutralising effect on source credibility, while receivers with a moderate involvement appear more likely to be affected by the media.   Furthermore, the credibility of a news source seems more likely to be taken into consideration by receivers when they are in a moderate-involvement, moderate-attitude situation than those who are at the extremes.

**Figure 8**

Plot of trust in media coverage by extremity of attitude, for all observations

(Adapted from Gunther, 1987, p. 66)
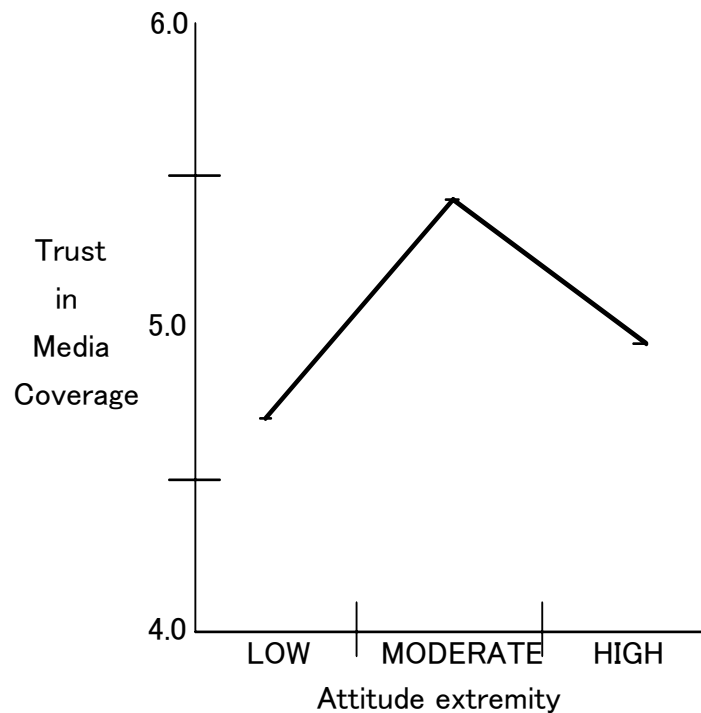


## 2.3.5 Summary

In this section, I have argued that audience evaluations of the content of media coverage can influence media credibility judgments, derived from a receiver-based rather than a media institution-based explanation for differences in trust in the media. Through examining the literature, not only the receiver's demographic information (although there was little theoretical basis and empirical support) would be a predictor of trust in the media, but also the relationship between a receiver and the content of a message, that is, the degree of a receiver's involvement in a specific issue and prior knowledge about the issue would predict trust in media judgments for that issue. Moreover,

depending on a high- or low-ego involvement condition, the receiver's attitude change on the issue will vary.

A low-involved receiver regarding an issue has little or no motivation to think about the issue, no anchor and no stable attitude position from which to judge content. Therefore, the receiver decides his or her evaluative attention on the issue depending on the characteristics of message source (status, credibility and so on) as the focus of trust assessment. Accordingly, the receiver pays more attention to credibility of the media than the content of the media regarding the issue. Secondly, a receiver who is moderately involved in an issue does not strongly hold an opinion about the issue, but instead, has a tendency to look for information and ideas actively. Therefore, the source which provides a more useful message to the receiver would have a favourable evaluation from the receiver. Finally, a highly involved receiver has strong motivation to think about the issue, has a strong anchor and rigidly holds an opinion, and has more self-perceived expertise on the issue, thus has very stable attitude position from which to judge content. Therefore, the content of the message regarding an issue is more important than credibility of the media to him or her.

In conclusion, it is evident that there are a range of factors which allow evaluation of the credibility of the media, and measurement of attitude change is not only based on media performance but also on receiver variables. It can indeed be said that "it is what audiences do with news, as well as what newspeople do with news, that accounts for judgments of trust in mass media" (Gunther, 1992, p. 163).

The literature has shown, however, that there is a lack of empirical evidence to demonstrate the relationship between newspaper credibility, receiver involvement in an issue—especially an uncontroversial issue—and changes in receiver attitude. While there have been studies which have shown the relationship between attitude extremity and the credibility of a news source, there appears to be little investigation into how exposure to news messages in sources which are viewed by receivers to be of varying degrees of credibility will affect the attitudes of the receivers. Thus, it is the objective of this thesis to investigate message receivers who have differing levels of involvement in certain news issues that appear in the news media in sources that they perceive to be either credible or not credible to identify whether credibility of the source will cause any attitude change in the receivers.

In the context of the current study, the topic that was chosen was coverage of South Korea in Australian newspapers read by university students in south-east Queensland. News coverage of South Korea was selected in order to clarify the relationship between the degree of receivers' involvement of or pre-knowledge of the issue and the evaluation of media credibility in the case of a non-controversial issue. The research questions that this study seeks to answer and the details of the methodology used in the study are described in the next chapter.

# 3.   Methodology

## 3.1   Introduction

This chapter describes the method adopted to investigate Australian students who read newspapers and who have differing levels of involvement in non-controversial news items that appeared in newspapers that they perceived to be either credible or not credible.   This study aims to identify whether credibility of the source will cause the readers' original attitudes toward the news items to change.   In a previous study, Stockwell (1998) demonstrated that in recent years, news coverage of South Korea in Australian newspapers has portrayed South Korea as a country that is friendly to Australia and an important trading partner.   North Korea, on the other hand, is generally far less positively presented in the media, and the majority of coverage in the news shows North Korea as a dictator-led country with severe political and economic difficulties.   Furthermore, the study sought to determine pre-knowledge and pre-involvement with the topic, but given the political situation in North Korea, it was thought to be highly unlikely that students had direct experience with North Korea or North Koreans.   Thus, news of South Korea has been selected as the focus of this study due to the coverage being relatively non-controversial in Australian newspapers, and the greater expected experience with South Korea and South Koreans by Australian students.

Nevertheless, it is possible that knowledge and attitudes about Korea and Koreans may have been influenced by knowledge and attitudes related to North Korea.   That is, the respondents might be influenced in part by ethnic or cultural generalisations based on

information and attitudes about (North) Korea and (North) Koreans that are not part of this study.

Additionally, it should be noted that there have been no enduring or episodic critical issues or conflicts at the time of this study.   South Korea is a non-controversial to topic to Australian students, and little knowledge or salience was assumed.

The research builds on the existing research literature in the field.   Although there has been a growth of cultural studies examinations of mass communication, it is generally recognized that that approach has made no significant contribution to effects research in general (Salwen 2002, Baran and Davis 2000, Perse 2001, Gayle 2006) or the particular effects considered in this research: knowledge and attitudes regarding a foreign country and people.

It has become commonplace at many Australian universities to begin a research report by first "hoisting the flag" of either "qualitative" or "quantitative" research as if he labels have some important explanatory power in themselves.   It would be inappropriate here.   Surveys and often categorized as "quantitative" research and interviews as "qualitative." Both are employed in this research.   So is content analysis, subjective judgments about the presence of *qualia* in texts, but generally presented also in numerical terms.   The distinction or labeling, in this research at least, would be misleading; suggesting either that *qualia* were not present or examined, or that they were not subject to enumeration, measurement or comparison.

## 3.2   Research Questions

To determine whether credibility of the news source will cause attitude change toward Korea(ns) among the news readers, a number of specific research questions were formulated   based on issues highlighted in the literature.   They relate to use and credibility judgements of newspapers, level of involvement, attitude and attitude change. The specific research questions are as follows:

RQ1:    Which newspapers do Australian university students in South-East Queensland consider to be high and low credibility newspapers?

RQ2:    What are Australian university students' credibility judgements of their most frequently read newspaper?

RQ3:    Are there differences between high credibility newspapers and newspapers most frequently read by the students?

RQ4:    How many Australian university students have experienced reading different reports of the same story in different newspapers?

RQ5:   How much are Australian university students personally involved with Korea?

RQ6:    How do Australian university students perceive Korea?

RQ7:   How much do Australian university students know about Korea?

RQ8:    a) How do Australian university students perceive the image of Korean after exposure to Korean news which <u>supported</u> their original attitude in the newspapers?

RQ9:    How do Australian university students perceive the image of Korean after exposure to Korean news which <u>differed </u>from their original attitude in the

newspapers?

RQ10:   Is they any relationship between Australian university students' perceived image of Korea after exposure to the news (which supported or differed from their original attitude) and their degree of involvement toward Korea?

RQ11:   How do Australian university students perceive the fairness of coverage of Korean news in the high or low credibility newspaper when the tone of coverage agrees or disagrees with their original attitude toward Korea?

RQ12:   Is there any relationship between subjects' credibility judgements of the newspaper and their degree of involvement with Korea?

This study consists of three stages: (1) Survey, (2) Content analysis, and (3) Experiment. (using a before-and-after experimental design).

In the pre-test phase of the study (the survey), high and low credibility sources to be used in the experiment were determined. In addition, the survey was conducted to measure newspaper reading habits, credibility of newspapers, experience and knowledge of South Korea and South Korean people and (pre-experimental) attitudes toward South Korea and South Korean people. In this section, the word Korea has been used to refer to both South Korea as a country and the South Korean people. Thus, the word Korea could refer to South Korea, South Koreans, or both, depending on the context. That the study focussed on South Korea and South Koreans (as opposed to North Korea) was clearly pointed out to all participants. Details of the survey are presented in the next section.

In the content analysis, based on the results of the survey, 30 news articles were selected from the high credibility newspaper (*The Australian)* and the low credibility newspapers (*Courier-Mail).* These 30 news articles were selected as follows: five news articles with a <u>positive</u> tone, five news articles with a <u>neutral</u> tone and five news articles with a <u>negative</u> tone, each from the high- and low- credibility newspaper. The definitions of positive, neutral and negative used in this study are described in section 3.3 on content analysis.

Approximately four weeks later, the experiments were performed on three groups of subjects on the basis of their original attitudes toward Korea. The groups were constructed based on the result of the survey (the first stage of the method in this study).

In the experiment, subjects were categorised into three different groups depending on their original attitudes toward Korea in the survey: a <u>positive</u> original attitude = Category 1; a <u>neutral</u> original attitude = Category 2; and a <u>negative</u> original attitude = Category 3). Within each category, subjects were further divided into three sub-groups (A, B, and C) depending on their involvement in Korea (high, middle and low) as measured in the survey: a high involvement = A; a middle involvement = B; and a low involvement = C).

The sub-groups A, B, and C were numbered from 1 to 6 (e.g., A1, A2, A3,…,A6, B1, B2,…,B6 and C1, C2,…,C6). Subjects 1 to 3 in each sub-group A, B, and C (e.g., A1, A2, A3, B1,…,C3) were exposed to two news articles each about Korea from the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper. Each subject was exposed to two news articles. The two news

articles they were exposed to both had the same tone, that is, positive, neutral or negative: A1, B1, C1 = positive tone in the high credibility; A2, B2, C2 = neutral tone in the high credibility; and A3, B3, C3 = negative tone in the high credibility. Subjects 4 to 6 in each sub-group A, B, and C (e.g., A4, A5, A6, B4…..C6) also received two news articles about Korea in the low credibility newspaper in the same way as subjects 1 to 3 (refer to Tables 1-3). After the subjects read the two news articles, they were presented with a questionnaire which sought to measure (1) their change in attitude, and (2) their opinion about the news articles and the sources.

To validate the questionnaire and to obtain a sample of the kind of image students have about Korea, a pilot study was conducted from $5^{th}$ August, 2002 to $12^{th}$ August, 2002. The subjects of the pilot study were 50 university students in the University Queensland and Griffith University in Brisbane. Data obtained from the pilot study helped in the construction of each of the stages of the main study. The results of the pilot study are not presented here. The details of each of the three stages of the main study are discussed in the following sections.

## 3.3 Survey

A convenience sample of 462 university students (from The University of Queensland, Griffith University, Queensland University Technology and Bond University) in South-East Queensland (315 were from Brisbane, 147 were from the Gold Coast) was surveyed in the first stage of the study. The survey was conducted from $20^{th}$ February, 2003 to $13^{th}$ March, 2003. In most cases, the students were asked by their teachers

(who were not involved in the study) during one of their regular scheduled classes, to complete the questionnaires and return them at the beginning of the next class. In order to obtain a variety of data, the questionnaire was administered to students from different faculties such as humanities, social sciences, education, linguistics, engineering, science, business and law. A breakdown of the students and their universities is listed in Table 1

**Table 1**

Details of students' university

| University Name | No. of Students | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| University of Queensland | 110 | 23.8 |
| Queensland University of Technology | 104 | 22.5 |
| Griffith University Brisbane campus | 108 | 23.4 |
| Griffith University Gold Coast campus | 72 | 15.6 |
| Bond University | 68 | 14.7 |
| **Total** | **462** | **100** |

To get as wide a cross-section of student backgrounds as possible, respondents were sought from as many faculties in each university as were available. In addition, a large number of students were also approached by the researcher in the libraries of the universities as well. The specific courses in which the students were enrolled have not been provided here in order to protect the privacy of the respondents (a breakdown of the subjects by sex, age and university has been included in Appendix H). Participation in the survey was voluntary, and cooperation from the lecturers was only in the form of handing out and receiving completed questionnaires.

The survey was mainly conducted to determine the high- and low-credibility sources to be used in the experiment. This was achieved through establishing a profile of newspaper reading habits of the respondents, including their views of credible news sources and the criteria by which they assign credibility to these sources. In addition, the questionnaire was also used to measure the respondents' experience and knowledge of Korea. This was aimed to identify respondents' level of involvement, as well as their initial (pre-experimental) attitudes toward Korea. Finally, the questionnaire contained a request for the respondents to also participate in the experimental test.

The respondents' newspaper reading habits were measured using an adaptation of the Roper-type question because it was expected to be the most widely used regarding measures (Rimmer & Weaver, 1987). Questions asking about the frequency of reading newspapers included, *On average, how often do you read newspapers per week?* and *On average, how many newspapers do you read per day?* To measure newspaper reading behaviour, the respondents were asked specifically, *Which of the following reasons apply to you when you plan to read newspapers?* The reasons included helping in daily living, providing good conversation topics, feeling closer to the community, providing up to date news, and providing an in-depth analysis of issues. In addition, respondents were asked their reasons for reading newspapers, with response options such as *I read a particular newspaper because I agree with the editorial view, I read a particular newspaper because the news stories are objective and do not contain the reporters' opinion,* and *I read newspapers because the stories are presented in a balanced way.* The degree of importance attached by respondents to each statement

was measured by using a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1-5, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). For example, the first statement was *Reading newspapers helps me in my daily living.* If respondents strongly agreed with this statement, they circled 5; however, if they strongly disagreed with this statement, they circled 1.

The questionnaire then sought to determine respondents' evaluations of Australian newspapers. Firstly, to measure consistency of news reporting, respondents were asked whether or not they had ever read different reports of the same story from different newspapers, using questions such as, *As far as you can recall offhand, have you ever read conflicting or different reports of the same story from different newspapers?* In addition, to determine respondents' high and low credibility ratings of Australian newspapers, respondents were asked: *If you read different reports of the same event from different newspapers, which one would you be <u>most</u> inclined to believe?* and *If you read different reports of the same event from different newspapers, which one would you be <u>least</u> inclined to believe?* To avoid revealing to respondents that they were being asked about newspaper credibility, the terms <u>most</u> inclined to believe and <u>least</u> inclined to believe were used instead of the words credible, trustworthy or believable. Respondents were asked to choose only one Australian domestic newspaper from the following examples: *The Australian, The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Courier-Mail, The Financial Review, The Sun-Herald*, and *The Daily Telegraph.* The newspapers were selected on the basis of circulation leadership within their regions but still being readily available in South-East Queensland. The inclusion of *The Australian* was not based on the regional circulation

criterion, but because of its acknowledged opinion leadership and influence in Australia (Stockwell, 1998). In addition, respondents were given the option of Other, where respondents could write their own responses. Respondents were then asked questions designed to identify their credible newspaper on the basis of content (local news, state news, national news, international (foreign) news, business/ finance news, health/ medical news, crime/ natural disaster news, and sports/ entertainment news) because different newspapers have different specialities (e.g., *The Financial Review* is known for its focus on financial news). Respondents were asked the question, *If you had to choose one source for each of the following, which newspaper would you choose?*, and the following topics were provided: *A: Local news, B: State news, C: National news, D: International (foreign) news, E: Business/finance news, F: Health/medical news, G: Crime/natural disaster news, H: Sports/ entertainment news*. With these questions, it was specifically pointed out that the study was of Australian-based newspapers only, and so respondents were asked to choose only one Australian newspaper for each question. This explanation was included because several overseas students wrote down newspapers from their own countries during the pilot study.

Source credibility questions were adapted from previous studies (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; The ASNE, 1985; 1998; Wanta & Hu, 1994; Kiousis, 2001). The questions were comprehensive enough to touch on the believability and community affiliation aspects of credibility as used in other studies (e.g., see Meyer, 1988; Wanta & Hu, 1994).

Firstly, respondents were given a question which sought to determine the newspaper they read most frequently in order to determine whether it was different from the

newspapers which they were most inclined to believe. It is believed that readers will not always choose their most credible newspaper in their daily lives because of time, availability and other environmental factors or other people. This was an open question and respondents were instructed to write only one Australian newspaper.

Respondents were then asked about the credibility of their most frequently read newspaper, considering that the newspaper read most frequently could be different from their most credible one. The most frequently read newspaper was used because respondents were expected to be more familiar with the contents and format of the newspaper than the one they were most inclined to believe. Respondents were asked, *Please circle the number in between each pair that best represents how you feel about your most frequently read newspaper*. Specifically they were asked about fairness, bias, providing enough information about news, privacy, separating of facts, sensation, morality, patriotism, factuality, training of reporters, and quality of reporting. They rated each item from 1 to 5 on a 5-point Likert-type scale. For example, the first set of words was fair and unfair. If respondents thought their most frequently read newspaper was extremely <u>fair</u>, they circled 1, but if they thought their most frequently read newspaper was extremely <u>unfair</u>, they circled 5.

Regarding reliability, the respondents were asked, *Overall, how would you rate the reliability of your most frequently read newspaper?* They indicated how much they relied on their most frequently read newspaper from not at all reliable to very reliable on the 5-point scale. To help respondents' understanding of the term reliable, a clarification was provided, such as: *By reliable, we mean 'dependable'*. To measure

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students' experience reading different reports of the same story in different newspapers, the question *Have you ever read different reports of the same story in different newspapers?* was asked. In addition, regarding personal involvement in reported news, the question *Has your most frequently read newspaper ever contained news reports of events or issues that you had <u>personal</u> knowledge of?* was provided. If respondents chose Yes, they were required to go to the next two questions, which asked how fair and accurate the newspaper covered the news that the respondent was familiar with. Respondents indicated whether they believed it was very fair or very unfair on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 (questions measuring accuracy followed the same format).

Subjects' involvement with Korea was measured using two types of questions, the first asking about experience with Korea, and the other testing basic declarative cultural knowledge about Korea. Firstly, respondents were asked questions about their experience and knowledge with questions such as, *Have you any experience with Korea?* If respondents selected Yes, they then chose from: *1. Have travelled to Korea, 2. Have Korean friends or neighbours, 3. Have read a book about Korea(ns), 4. Have watched TV programs about Korea(ns)   5. Other.*

Libben and Lindner (1996) argue that cultural knowledge can be considered as existing on three levels: central (i.e., very basic general knowledge), intermediate (i.e., a broader knowledge of the culture), and peripheral (knowledge that is more obscure – also known as situational). Thus, as a measure of the respondents' level of involvement with Korea (high, middle, and low), ten questions regarding Korea were posed. These comprised general knowledge questions about Korea, including three basic (central)

questions, three intermediate questions, and four advanced (peripheral). The questions were formulated based on a scale of general knowledge of foreign countries developed by Kim (1999). Respondents were classed by their level of involvement based on the number of questions that they got correct, i.e., if subjects got three or less of the answers correct, they were classed as having low involvement regarding Korea, but if they got between four and six (inclusive) answers correct, they were classed as having mid involvement, and if they got seven or more questions correct, they were classed as having high involvement. The ten questions were as follows:

*1. Where is South Korea's capital city?*

      Seoul          Pusan          Pyeongyang    I don't know

*2. What is a famous South Korean automobile company?*

      Proton         Isuzu          Hyundai       I don't know

*3. In what year was the World Cup Soccer competition held in Korea?*

      1994          1998          2002         I don't know

*4. What language is used mostly in South Korea?*

      Japanese      Korean        Chinese       I don't know

*5. What is a famous martial art in Korea?*

      Karate         Savat         Taekwondo     I don't know

*6. What is 'Kim-chi'?*

      Place          Dance         Food         I don't know

*7. Who is South Korea's president?*

      Kim Dae-Jung   Roh Mu-Hyon       Kim Jong-Il    I don't know

*8. What is the name of South Korea's currency?*

      Won           Yuan         Rupee       I don't know

*9. What is South Korea's highest mountain?*

      Halla-san     Fuji-san      Aso-san       I don't know

*10. What country invaded Korea in 1910?*

      USA           Japan        China        I don't know

To measure respondents' initial (pre-experimental) attitudes toward Korea, 15 statements about Korea were provided. This researcher was unable to find any previous research or word lists regarding images or stereotypes of Korea, although there were a large number of research papers regarding images or stereotypes of white and black Americans, Japanese, French, Germans, Africans, and so on. Accordingly, the statements used in the questionnaire were obtained from the pilot study and from the results of an analysis of the tone of Australian press coverage of Korea from 1965 to 1995 (Stockwell, 1998). The pilot study asked an open-ended question: *How do you think about Korea or Korean people?*, and the answers were used in framing the questions in the survey. High frequency words found in the analysis of the content of news coverage of Korea from 1965 to 1995 were used in the survey as well.

Fifteen statements were made about Korea and respondents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with these statements, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree): *1. Korean people are dedicated to their country. 2. Korean people are friendly. 3. Korean people are family oriented. 4. Korean people are conservative. 5. Korean people are hard working. 6. Korean people are impulsive. 7. Korean people are aggressive. 8. Korean people are deceitful. 9. Korean people are quick tempered. 10. Korean people are unreliable. 11. Korea is unstable politically. 12. Korea has a lot of demonstrations. 13. Korea is not safe to travel to. 14. Korea has a lot of internal conflicts. 15. Korea has an improving economy.*

The final part of the questionnaire included four questions aimed to elicit information about the backgrounds of the respondents, such as gender, university and major, residence (suburb only) and age.  In addition, respondents were asked whether they would like to participate in the experimental test voluntarily.  If they were willing to participate in the experiment test, they were asked to provide their e-mail address on the questionnaire.

## *3.4   Content analysis*

The high and low credibility newspapers were identified based on the results of the survey.  According to the results, the high credibility newspaper was *The Australian* and the low credibility newspaper was *The Courier-Mail*.  The main purpose of the content analysis of news of Korea in both the high and low credibility newspapers was simply to find examples of positive and negative news coverage with positive tone, negative tone and neutral tone in each newspaper, and not to analyse details of the news content..  As a result, in this study, news items in the high and low credibility newspapers were coded according to only the subject, whether the topic of the news was positive, negative or neutral, and the tone of news items.  The analysis included newspaper articles and headlines with non-advertising reference to Korea.  Letters, cartoons, currency values, the world's weather or special weekend magazine supplements were not included in the study.

The sample frame was from 1/1/2001 to 31/12/2002.  All of the news items about

Korea within the sample frame were obtained through the LexisNexis Newspaper Database. News items were divided by subject, such as international news, business/financial news, sports news, and so on. However, a large number of the news items about Korea in the low credibility newspaper (*The Courier-Mail)* dealt with sports. Other subjects such as international news, business/financial news, social/ general news, the editorial section and so on were very brief and accounted for only a very small proportion of news when compared with the high credibility newspaper (*The Australian).* Therefore, it was difficult to choose news items from various subject areas. The LexisNexis Newspaper Database listed 624 items of news coverage in *The Australian* with Korea or Korean in their headlines and lead paragraphs in 2002, and 503 items in 2001. On the other hand, based on the results of the LexisNexis Newspaper Database, there were 345 items of news in *The Courier-Mail* with Korea or Korean in their headlines and lead paragraphs in 2002, and only 198 in 2001. Eventually, only 30 news items were chosen in all, and they were assigned to the following main directional categories:

Topic:

The articles were coded as positive, neutral or negative depending on the overall topic of the news article. The topic was related only to the actual facts presented in the news, and was not in any way related to the tone adopted by the reporter. News that described the developing of the Korean economy, for example, was categorised having a positive topic. News coverage of labour demonstrations or political upheaval was categorised as having a negative topic. News coverage was categorised as having a neutral topic when it was not possible to determine whether the content was positive or negative, such as a presidential visit to a foreign country. For the present study, only

news with a positive or negative topic was included.

<u>Tone:</u>

The tone differed from the topic in that the tone included the reporter's own opinion in the news coverage. It was thus possible that although news was positive in topic that the reporter's tone was negative or neutral. For the most part, the tone of the reporter followed the topic of the news, but this was not always the case. A detailed description each of the categories used for tone is provided below.

1. Positive tone – An article was coded as positive if it conveyed a favourable impression of Korea. Positive articles supported or justified the act or actions, or contained quotes by individuals who approved of the action. Some examples were, The Korean rebound also provides something of an economic lesson for its struggling neighbors...…The Korean performance has pleased influential analysts. Credit Suisse First Boston described Seoul's resilience as impressive and tips 3.8 per cent growth next year. (S. Korea gives Asians a boost, *The Australian,* 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2001, p. 28) …if Australians needed any reason to support the underdog, then Korea offers plenty. Not only does our friendship date back to the Korean War, but we are almost perfect trading partners…. Australians and Koreans are different in many ways. But, at least in the trading sphere, this difference has forged a bountiful relationship -- a good basis on which to build social ties. Having come this far and achieved so much, Korea need do nothing more to earn Australia's admiration than keep its fighting spirit; nothing, that is, besides giving the Socceroos a few lessons on winning. (Koreans ride high on red tide of pride. *The Australian*, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2002, p. 1) and South Korea's rapid economic turnaround after the regional meltdown five years ago has, at its core, an X factor that restricts its

utility as a model for other recovering Asian nations. That X factor is sociological rather than fiscal. It is the Korean people and their astonishing drive.   There is a uniquely Korean element of concentration, focus and drive to reach its goals. (Country drive of Korean kind - Asia's moment of truth. *The Australian,* 4th July, 2002, p. 26) were coded as positive.

2. Neutral tone – An article which neither portrayed Korea favourably nor unfavourably, neither justified nor condemned the act or actor was coded as neutral.   Examples were, Union workers at two top South Korean car makers walked out yesterday, on the second day of an outlawed and unprecedented strike by railway and power unions over long working hours and privatisation. (Korea strike grows. *The Courier Mail*, 27th February, 2003, p. 16), Hyundai Motors' December sales were down 17 per cent on the previous year -- the second decline since June for Korea's biggest carmaker. (Hyundai sales slump again. *The Australian* 3rd January, 2002, p. 20) and South Korea beat Poland 2-0 to seal its first World Cup finals victory at its 15th attempt, goals by Hwang Sun-hong and Yoo Sang-chul sending the 55,000 crowd at the Group D match in Pusan into raptures. (South Korea belts Poland to clinch first finals win. *The Courier Mail*, 5th June, 2002, p. 48) were coded as neutral.

3. Negative tone – An article was coded as negative if it had a negative meaning toward, or would have, in all probability, caused the reader to form a negative opinion about Korea.   Negative articles would contain unfavourable descriptions of the acts, or the actors, or condemn the action or actors involved.   Some examples of this were, The renewed control over South Korea's economy comes amid a fresh economic slowdown….with presidential and parliamentary elections looming next year, a

series of domestic political problems tempers the mileage (S Korea debt-free but under new cloud. *The Australian,* 24th August, 2001, p 9), What causes particular alarm abroad and among animal rights activists in South Korea is the way dogs are killed to make the meat more tender -- sometimes by beating, burning or hanging, methods which are illegal but have proved hard to curb. (Koreans tell visitors to eat their words, not pets *The Courier Mail*, 21st May, 2002, p. 8) and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung yesterday took personal blame for his country's deepening economic malaise, apologising to his nation's people for allowing a sense of crisis to develop. …<Business is slow, stock prices have plummeted, with millions of investors taking huge losses, and unemployment is increasing. A sense of crisis is heightening, and public morale has dropped. This is deplorable indeed> (Graft crisis pushes Kim on reshuffle. *The Australian,* 2nd January, 2001, p. 8) were included in the 'negative' category.

Accordingly, five articles of a positive tone, five articles of a negative tone and five articles of a neutral tone were selected from each of the high- and low- credibility newspapers.

Reliability of the coding was checked by having a different coder recode about 40% (12 articles in all) of the total sample of 30 selected news articles from the high and low credibility newspapers. The inter-coder reliability was calculated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient which was considered as an accurate measure of reliability of coding in content analysis (e.g., Krippendorff, 2004). The current study yielded a result of $r=.92$ between the raters, hence the articles selected were considered

appropriate for each category.

## *3.5 Experiment*

In this study, attitude change was examined considering the relationship between subjects' original attitude toward Korea (Positive, Negative or Neutral), and subject's involvement with Korea (high, middle or low), source credibility from them (high or low) and message quality (positive, negative or neutral tone).

A total of 203 university students volunteered to participate in the experiment from the 462 students who responded to the survey (see section 3.2 for details).   From 5th April, 2003 to 27th April, 2003, subjects freely decided the time for participation and came to a pre-determined study room in the library in their university to participate in the experiment, all of which were conducted by the researcher.   As much as possible, the researcher tried to get more than one student to complete the experiment at a time in order to reduce the total time spent on the experiment (generally between two and five), but there were many students who completed the experiment alone with the researcher. In cases where more than one student participated in the experiment in the study room of the library at one time, verbal and visual contact among the subjects was restricted to ensure they did not influence each other.   That is, participants sat separately and were not allowed to talk to each other.

From the total of 203 students who volunteered to participate in the experimental stage of the study, 108 were selected.   The 108 participants were selected as follows. Firstly, the 203 students were sorted into three categories depending on their initial

(pre-experimental) attitudes toward Korea.    Of the 203 students who volunteered, there were 77 students who were judged to have a positive attitude, 74 with a neutral attitude, and 52 with a negative attitude, based on the results of the survey.    Then, after investigating the level of involvement of the participants depending on their initial (pre-experimental) attitudes toward Korea, it was decided that 36 subjects in each category would be chosen to take part in the experiment, totalling 108.    This figure was decided on due to the fact that the smallest category of involvement (negative attitude with high involvement) included only 12 students, which was multiplied by three to give a figure of 36.    Students for each of the categories where there were more than 12 students were selected according to those who demonstrated the characteristics most indicative of the group (i.e., of 29 students in the high-involvement group with a positive original attitude, the 12 students with the highest positive attitudes and involvement were chosen).

Thus, Category 1 (n = 36) included subjects who had a <u>positive</u> original attitude towards Korea, Category 2 (n = 36) included subjects with a <u>neutral</u> original attitude towards Korea, and Category 3 (n = 36) included subjects who had a <u>negative</u> original attitude towards Korea.    Each of the three categories was then subdivided into those subjects who had a high, mid and low involvement of Korea.    That is, Group A (n = 12) in each attitude category (i.e., positive, neutral and negative) had <u>high</u> involvement of Korea, Group B (n = 12) in each category had <u>mid</u> involvement of Korea and Group C (n = 12) in each category had <u>low</u> involvement of Korea.

Subjects in groups A, B, and C in each category were further divided from 1 to 6, and

were assigned a number (e.g., A1, A2, A3, …, A6, B1, B2, …, B6 and C1, C2,…,C6). Subjects numbered 1 to 3 in groups A, B, and C (i.e., A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2 and C3) received news articles about Korea from their <u>high</u> credibility newspaper. Subjects numbered 4 to 6 in groups A, B, and C (e.g., A4, A5, A6, B4, B5, B6, C4, C5 and C6) received news articles about Korea from their <u>low</u> credibility newspaper.   That is, the newspaper which each subject was provided with in the experiment was the same as his/her high- or low- credibility newspaper selected in the survey.   Three versions of news articles were provided from the high- or low- credibility newspaper; a positive tone, a neutral tone and a negative tone.   In case of news with neutral tone, there were 2 types of news; a positive news with neutral tone and a negative news with neutral tone. That is, subjects who were categorised as A1 in Category 1 (n = 2) were those with a <u>positive</u> original attitude toward Korea, with <u>high</u> involvement of Korea, and were provided the two news articles about Korea with <u>positive tone</u> in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper.   A summary of the experiment groups is as follows (Table 2, 3, and 4):

**Table 2**

Category 1 (36 people who had a <u>positive</u> original attitude toward Korea)

| Sub group | | Involvement | Newspaper | Coverage of Korea |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A: | A1 | High involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | A2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | A3 | | | Negative tone |
| | A4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | A5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | A6 | | | Negative tone |
| | | | | |
| B: | B1 | Middle involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | B2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | B3 | | | Negative tone |
| | B4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | B5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | B6 | | | Negative tone |
| | | | | |
| C: | C1 | Low involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | C2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | C3 | | | Negative tone |
| | C4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | C5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | C6 | | | Negative tone |

**Table 3**

Category 2 (36 people who had a <u>neutral</u> original attitude toward Korea)

| Sub group | | Involvement | Newspaper | Coverage of Korea |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A: | A1 | High involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | A2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | A3 | | | Negative tone |
| | A4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | A5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | A6 | | | Negative tone |
| B: | B1 | Middle involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | B2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | B3 | | | Negative tone |
| | B4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | B5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | B6 | | | Negative tone |
| C: | C1 | Low involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | C2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | C3 | | | Negative tone |
| | C4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | C5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | C6 | | | Negative tone |

**Table 4**

Category 3 (36 people who had a <u>negative</u> original attitude toward Korea)

| Sub group | | Involvement | Newspaper | Coverage of Korea |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A: | A1 | High involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | A2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | A3 | | | Negative tone |
| | A4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | A5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | A6 | | | Negative tone |
| B: | B1 | Middle involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | B2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | B3 | | | Negative tone |
| | B4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | B5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | B6 | | | Negative tone |
| C: | C1 | Low involvement | High credibility | Positive tone |
| | C2 | | | Neutral tone |
| | C3 | | | Negative tone |
| | C4 | | Low credibility | Positive tone |
| | C5 | | | Neutral tone |
| | C6 | | | Negative tone |

Firstly, subjects were given two news articles about Korea with the name of the source, and were informed the results of the first survey, i.e., that *The Australian* was selected as a high credibility newspaper and *The Courier-Mail* was selected as a low credibility newspaper in the survey.   Students who selected *The Australian* as a high credibility source in the survey were given two news articles to read with the following instruction printed above each article: "Please read the following news article.   This article is from *The Australian*.   *The Australian* was selected as a high credibility newspaper by the majority of university students in South-East Queensland who responded to the first

survey." Students were provided with this additional information to reinforce their opinion regarding the credibility of *The Australian*. In the same way, students who chose *The Courier-Mail* as a low credibility source were given two news articles to read with this instruction: "Please read the following news article. This article is from *The Courier-Mail*. *The Courier-Mail* was selected as a low credibility newspaper by the majority of university students in South-East Queensland who responded to the first survey." Once more, students were provided with this additional information to reinforce their opinion regarding the credibility of *The Courier-Mail*.

Different content of news articles were provided to subjects depending on the group. For example, in Category 1 (positive original attitude toward Korea), subjects in A1 received two news articles with a <u>positive</u> tone toward Korea in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper (*The Australian*), subjects in B3 were provided with two news articles with a <u>negative</u> tone in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper (*The Australian*), and subjects in C6 were given two news articles with a <u>negative</u> tone toward Korea in the <u>low</u> credibility newspaper (*The Courier-Mail*). Subjects in Categories 2 and 3 were provided with news articles following the same procedure as Category 1.

After the subjects had read the two news articles, they were given a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure three issues: 1. whether their attitude toward Korea changed or not, 2. the direction of the change (if any), 3. respondents' opinions toward the news coverage and the source they read. Firstly, in order to measure respondents' attitude changes, the 15 statements used to measure respondents' initial attitudes toward Korea in the survey (pre-test) were provided. Respondents were

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asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with these statements, using a 5-point

Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree):

1. Korean people are dedicated to their country.

2. Korean people are friendly.

3. Korean people are family oriented.

4. Korean people are conservative.

5. Korean people are hard working.

6. Korean people are impulsive.

7. Korean people are aggressive.

8. Korean people are deceitful.

9. Korean people are quick tempered.

10. Korean people are unreliable.

11. Korea is unstable politically.

12. Korea has a lot of demonstrations.

13. Korea is not safe to travel to.

14. Korea has a lot of internal conflicts.

15. Korea has an improving economy.

Secondly, to measure their opinion toward the news article in the given source they read,

they were asked to indicate their opinion using a 5-point Likert item set with 5 scales: 1.

fair/ unfair, 2. unbiased/ biased, 3. accurate/ inaccurate, 4. factual/ opinionated, 5. good

quality report/ poor quality report.  For example, if they believed the news articles in

the newspaper provided to them were extremely accurate, they circled 1, if they

believed the news articles in the newspaper provided to them were extremely inaccurate,

they circled 5.

After the final stage of the study was completed, the results were analysed to determine the effects of newspaper source credibility and issue involvement on attitude change. The details of these results are presented and explained in the following chapter.

# 4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the survey, content analysis and the experiments outlined in the methodology. The findings relative to the survey are reviewed first, followed by the content analysis and the experiment. The results have been presented in terms of students' reading habits, newspaper credibility, the most frequently read newspaper, Australian university students' attitudes towards and perceptions about Korea, change in attitude towards Korea and change in credibility judgements of the newspapers. Finally, several *post hoc* findings are presented.

## *4.1 Survey Results*

### 4.1.1 Subjects

A total of 462 university students in South-East Queensland were surveyed in the first stage of the study. They were from The University of Queensland, Griffith University, Queensland University of Technology and Bond University. The 462 students were composed of 302 students from the Brisbane area (Logan was included in the Brisbane

area), 147 students from the Gold Coast, and 13 students from other areas.  The total figure consisted of 246 female and 216 male students.  The majority of the students (71.4%) were less than 20 years old.


## 4.1.2 Newspaper reading habits of respondents

Almost all the respondents (90.5%) said they read newspapers.  About 47% read newspapers 3 - 4 times per week.  A further 23.2% said they read newspapers more than 4 times per week (see Table 5).  In terms of the number of newspapers read by students per week, Table 6 shows a majority of the students (48.1%) read one newspaper per week.  About 38% of students read two newspapers per week, and 2.6% of the students read more than three newspapers per week.

**Table 5**

Frequency of reading newspapers per week

| Frequency | Respondents | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Once a week | 36 | 7.8 |
| Twice a week | 74 | 16 |
| Three times a week | 118 | 25.5 |
| Four times a week | 103 | 22.3 |
| Five times a week | 48 | 10.4 |
| Six times a week | 25 | 5.4 |
| Everyday | 34 | 7.4 |
| No response | 24 | 5.2 |
| **Total** | **462** | **100** |

**Table 6**

Number of newspapers read per week

| No. of Newspapers | Respondents | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| One newspaper | 229 | 49.6 |
| Two newspapers | 174 | 37.7 |
| Three newspapers | 41 | 8.9 |
| More than three newspapers | 12 | 2.6 |
| No response | 6 | 1.3 |
| **Total** | **462** | **100** |

Regarding newspaper reading behaviour, the students were asked 'Which of the following reasons apply to you when you plan to read newspapers?' Students chose the number between 1 and 5 to show the degree to which the reasons given applied to them personally when they plan to read newspapers. On the scale, '1' meant the reason did not matter to them and '5' meant it mattered a lot to them. As shown in Table 7, the mean rating of 3.82 indicated that most students agreed that reading newspapers was important in providing them with up-to-date news. In addition, the mean figure of 3.12 showed that students also valued reading newspapers because it helped them in their daily lives. The rating of 2.73 showed that in-depth analysis of

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issues in newspapers was more important to students than the objectivity of the news stories (m = 2.37).   The mean of 2.65 showed the students did not consider the newspaper as a way of becoming closer to their community.   Moreover, as the mean figure of 2.17 for editorial view showed, reading newspapers for the editorial view did not matter greatly to students.   In addition, the mean figure for balance in presenting news stories was 2.49, hence it was not a major issue for students when they planned to read newspapers.

**Table 7**

The reasons respondents have when they plan to read newspapers

| Reason | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|
| Reading newspapers helps me in my daily living | 3.12 | .662 |
| Reading newspapers provides me with good conversation topics | 2.69 | .727 |
| Reading newspapers help me feel closer to my community | 2.64 | .713 |
| Reading newspapers provides me with up-to-date news | 3.82 | .403 |
| Reading newspapers provides me with an in-depth analysis of issues | 2.73 | .588 |
| I read a particular newspapers because I agree with the editorial view | 2.17 | .763 |
| I read newspapers because the news stories are objective and do not contain the reporter's opinion | 2.37 | .783 |
| I read newspapers because the stories are presented in a balanced way | 2.94 | .792 |

\* This question used a scale of '1' to '5', where '1' meant the particular reason did not matter at all to students and '5' meant that it mattered a lot to them when they planned to read a newspaper.   Accordingly, a higher mean indicates that the reason matters more to the students than a lower mean.

## 4.1.3 High- and low-credibility newspapers

In this section the results pertaining to how the high- and low-credibility newspapers were selected have been described. Note that the following abbreviations have been used throughout this thesis to represent the various newspapers investigated in this study (Table 8). The place of publication is also listed.

**Table 8**

Abbreviations for newspapers

| Abbreviations | Newspaper name | Place of Publication |
|---|---|---|
| AUST | The Australian | National |
| AGE | The Age | Melbourne |
| SMH | The Sydney Morning Herald | Sydney |
| CM | The Courier-Mail | Brisbane |
| FR | Financial Review | Sydney |
| SH | The Sun-Herald | Sydney |
| DT | Daily Telegraph | Sydney |
| GB | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Gold Coast |
| NR | No response | |

In determining subjects' high- and low- credibility newspaper, the subjects were asked if they read different reports of the same event from the following newspapers, which one they would be <u>most</u> inclined to believe and which one they would be <u>least</u> inclined to believe. As Figure 9 shows, *The Australian* was named as the high credibility newspaper by nearly 50% of the students. A little over 22.3% of the students selected *The Courier-Mail* as their high credibility newspaper, followed by *The Sydney Morning Herald* (11.5%), *The Financial Review* (6.5%), *The Age* (6.1%) and *The Daily Telegraph* (3.2%). *The Sun Herald* <u>(0.9%)</u> and the *Gold Coast Bulletin* <u>(0.4%)</u> were at the bottom of the list. A further 0.6% of students could not decide.

It was quite unexpected that *The Australian* was chosen as the highest credibility newspaper by South-East Queensland students when comparing the results with Henningham's 1982 study. According to Henningham, only 5% of Brisbane-ites read

*The Australian* in 1982. The comparatively low rankings for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* could probably be attributed to the fact that most of the students were from South-East Queensland. A large number of students from the Gold Coast selected *The Courier-Mail* as their high credibility newspaper when compared with Brisbane, where the overwhelming majority chose *The Australian*.

**Figure 9**

High-credibility newspaper
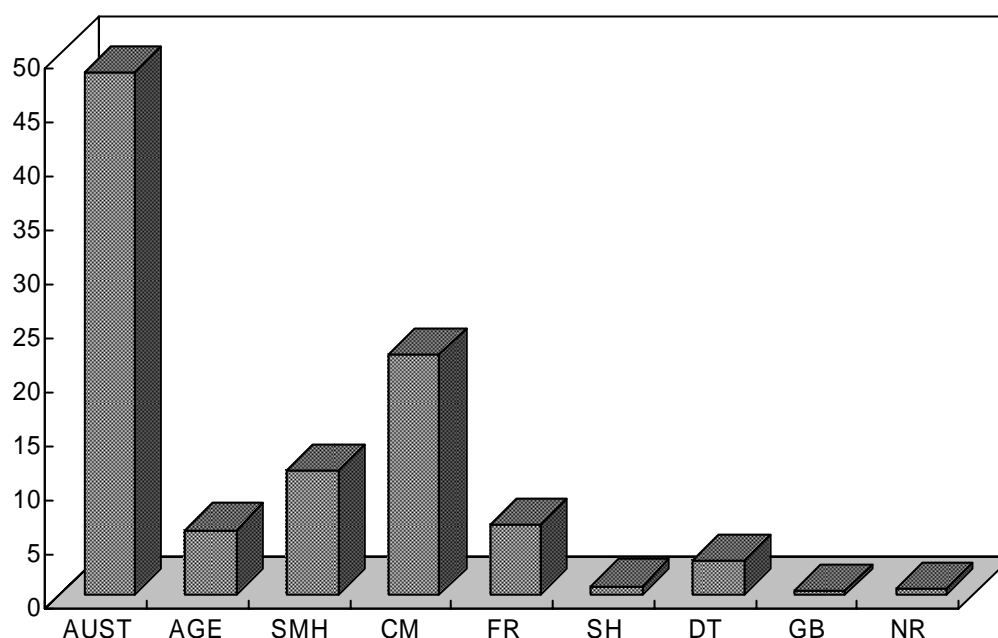


On the other hand, *The Courier-Mail* was named the low credibility newspaper by 30% of students (Figure 10), while 18.6% of the students selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* as their low credibility newspaper. This was followed by *The Daily Telegraph* (15.4%) and *The Sun Herald* (13%). As might be expected, this question yielded quite the opposite results from the rankings for high credibility. In particular, a large number of

students selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* as their low credibility newspaper when compared with the result for high credibility newspaper (18.6% vs 0.4%). Again, compared with the results Henningham obtained in 1982, it is quite surprising that *The Courier-Mail* was selected as the lowest credibility newspaper. According to Henningham, *The Courier-Mail* was by far the most popular newspaper by 58% of Brisbane-ites in 1983. This high ranking for popularity and comparatively low ranking for credibility is indicative of the fact that readers do not necessarily choose their daily newspaper on the grounds of credibility, as will be demonstrated later.

**Figure 10**

Low-credibility newspaper
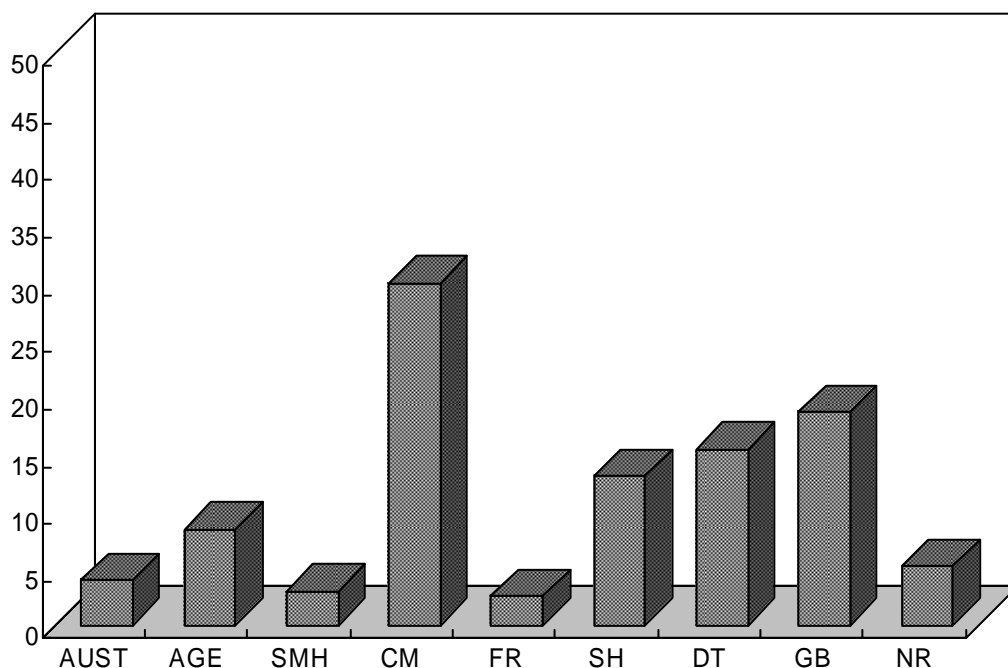


*The Age* (8.4%), *The Australian* (3.9%), *The Sydney Morning Herald* (3%) and *Financial Review* (2.6%) were at the bottom of the low credibility list. Again,

newspapers which are based in the other states such as *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* rated low on the low-credibility scale, which is not a surprising result given the provincial nature of Australian newspapers, where people tend to read their regional newspaper. Thus, students would be expected to be less familiar with other states' newspapers such as *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. One possibility is that these two major newspapers are frequently heard or read *about* in Southeast Queensland, but not read. They are frequently cited by other news sources. "Fame" might have been translated into credibility for these subjects. In the case of *The Financial Review,* the readership of the newspaper was limited to students such as those majoring in the business or finance.

The results did not produce a clear-cut "highest credibility" and "lowest credibility" newspaper, with *The Courier-Mail* rating highly in both the high- and low-credibility scales. As a result, the selection of which newspaper to be selected as "high" and "low" was based on the relative credibility of the newspapers in that particular scale, that is, the newspaper that ranked the highest in the high-credibility scale was considered as the high-credibility newspaper, and the newspaper that ranked the highest in the low-credibility scale was considered as the low-credibility newspaper. Looking at the results of the survey, *The Australian* was a logical choice for the high-credibility newspaper, but the choice was somewhat more difficult for the low-credibility. Despite the fact that *The Courier Mail* was the second most credible newspaper according to respondents, the percentage was still relatively low at just over 20%. In addition, the results showed it as being lowest in credibility for 30% of the survey respondents, nearly double the figure for the second-lowest in credibility, *The Gold*

*Coast Bulletin*.   Thus, for the purposes of this study, *The Australian* was selected as the high-credibility newspaper (having been rated as highest in credibility by 50% of the respondents, and *The Courier Mail* as the low-credibility newspaper, having been rated that way by 30% of the respondents. Although the CM also rated highly as a high credibility newspaper for some subjects (22.3%),that was far below the rating of the Australian. "High" and "low" as used in the rest of this study, therefore, refers to the two newspapers in relation to each other.   There was no newspaper higher on the high credibility scale than the Australian, and there was no newspaper higher on the low credibility scale than the Courier-Mail.   All of the other newspapers were lower than both the Australian and the Courier-Mail on the high credibility scale.

## 4.1.4 Most frequently read newspaper

As Figure 11 shows, about 52% of students selected *The Courier-Mail* as their most frequently read newspaper.   This was followed by *The Gold Coast Bulletin* (17.1%) and *The Australian* (16.2%).   The other newspapers came after this with similar percentages (less than 5%).

**Figure 11**

Most frequently read newspaper
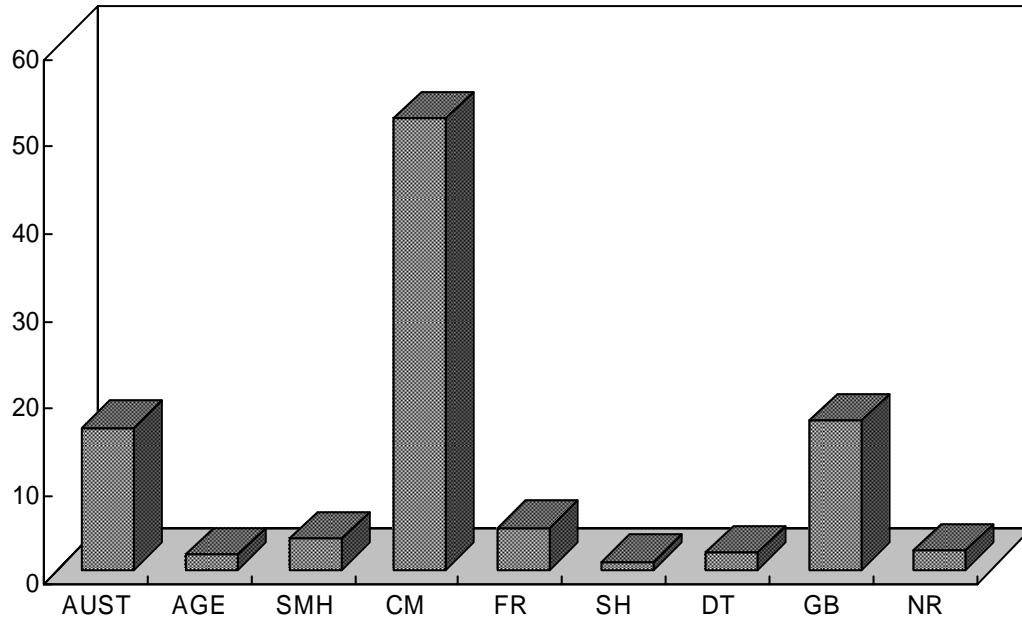


The question sought to determine whether there is a difference between students' high credibility newspaper and the newspaper most frequently read by students. As described above, *The Australian* was selected as the high credibility newspaper by almost 50% of the students but as their most frequently read paper by only 16.2%. Only 3.9% of subjects regarded the Australian as a low credibility newspaper. For the Courier-Mail, however, the situation is different. 22.3% rated it as their high credibility newspaper and whereas nearly 52% named it as their most frequently read one. However, 30% rated the Courier-Mail as a low credibility paper. In addition, even though a large number of students from the Gold Coast selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* as their low credibility newspaper, 54% of students who live on the Gold Coast said that *The Gold Coast Bulletin* was their most frequently read newspaper. This

clearly demonstrates that readers do not always choose their most credible newspaper in daily life. For instance, 75.3% of students selected *The Courier-Mail* for state news, however, only 8% of students selected *The Australian* for state news. Moreover, *The Gold Coast Bulletin* was chosen for local news by 62% of students resident in the Gold Coast area. It is conceivable that the differences between the responses for respondents' high credibility newspaper and their most frequently read newspaper is caused by limitations such as geography and time, as well as demand for local information, as discussed in the next chapter.

## 4.1.5   Reporting of news and reader experience

As Figure 12 shows, 34.7% of respondents said they had read conflicting reports of the same story in different newspapers. Details of how the reports varied were not requested in this survey.

**Figure 12**

Experience reading conflicting reports of the same story in different newspapers
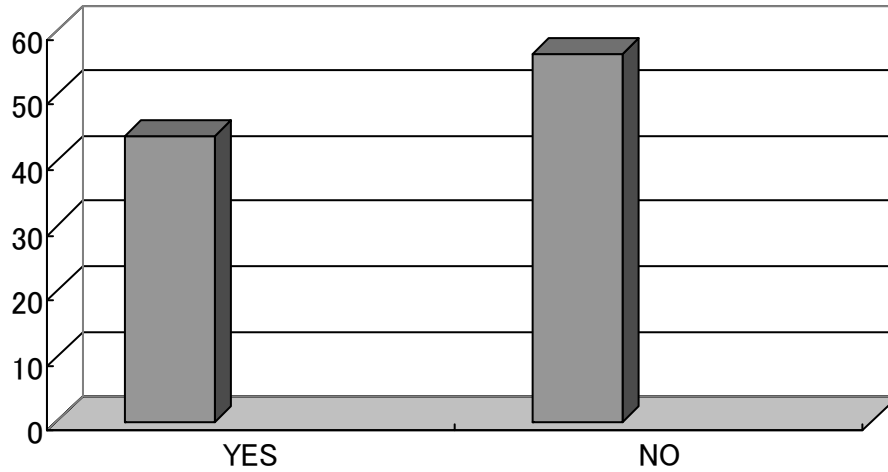


Students were further asked whether they had experienced reading news reports of events or issues that they had personal knowledge or experience of in their <u>most frequently read</u> newspaper, to which 29.8% of respondents indicated that they did, as shown in Figure 13.

**Figure 13**

Students' experience of news reports of events or issues they had personal knowledge or experience of in their most frequently read newspaper.
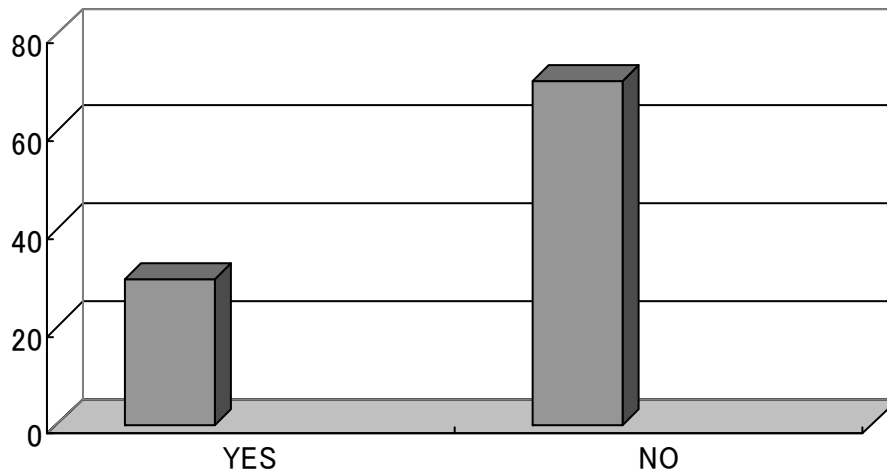


Those who answered 'yes' to this question were asked to judge the fairness and accuracy of the news reports in their most frequently read newspaper. As Table 9 shows, the mean rating of 3.29 for fairness reflected that readers tended to believe that the news coverage about which they had personal knowledge or experience of was not especially fair nor unfair, but tending toward the unfair. In addition, the mean score of 3.15 for accuracy also suggested that readers judged the news coverage about which they had personal knowledge or experience of as neither particularly accurate nor inaccurate, but tending toward the inaccurate. While these figures make it difficult to confirm clearly that readers have a negative viewpoint regarding fairness and accuracy about news coverage that they had personal knowledge or experience of, the results certainly indicated that the overall impression is not a positive one. When this is compared with the ratings for overall fairness and accuracy (3.29 and 3.15 respectively) in their <u>most frequently read</u> newspaper by students (3.14 and 3.08), it was evident that

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respondents tended to perceive the news as less accurate when they had personal

knowledge or experience of it in their most frequently read newspaper.

**Table 9**

Credibility judgements about newspapers containing news reports of events or issues that students had personal knowledge or experience of in their most frequently read newspaper

| Items | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Fair / Unfair | 3.27 | .823 |
| Accurate / Inaccurate | 3.13 | .779 |

\* The scale consisted of 14 pairs of bipolar adjectives presented on a 5-point scale, with "1" being the most favourable evaluation (e.g. Fair, Unbiased, etc.) and "5" being the least favourable evaluation (e.g.  Unfair, Biased, etc.).

### 4.1.6   Australian students' perceptions of Korea

In order to measure students' perceptions of Korea, 15 Likert-type statements which

described Korea and Korean people were given to students, who were asked to indicate

their degree of agreement with those statements with 1 meaning strongly agree and 5

meaning strongly disagree (see Table 10). "Korea" and "Korean" in this research refer

only to the country and people of the Republic of Korea (South Korea or ROK)

including South Korean residents abroad.  North Korea (the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea or DPRK) and its people are not considered in this thesis.

**Table 10**

Statements about Korea

| Statements | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Korean people are dedicated to their country. | 2.60 | .433 |
| 2. Korean people are friendly. | 2.56 | .347 |
| 3. Korean people are family oriented. | 2.53 | .665 |
| 4. Korean people are conservative. | 3.00 | .767 |
| 5. Korean people are hard working. | 2.42 | .469 |
| 6. Korean people are reliable. | 3.01 | .783 |
| 7. Korea is stable politically. | 3.38 | .442 |
| 8. Korea is safe to travel to. | 2.95 | .524 |
| 9. Korea has an improving economy. | 2.75 | .486 |
| 10. Korean people are quick tempered. | 1.97 | .821 |
| 11. Korean people are aggressive. | 1.88 | .827 |
| 12. Korean people are impulsive. | 1.90 | .871 |
| 13. Korean people are dishonest. | 1.93 | .846 |
| 14. Korea does have a lot of internal conflicts. | 1.67 | .672 |
| 15. Korea does have a lot of demonstrations | 1.62 | .689 |

* These questions used a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant the respondent strongly agreed with the statement and 5 meant they strongly disagreed with the statement about Korea and Korean people. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that the statement received a positive rating from respondents.

As Table 10 shows, Australian students generally have a positive image of Korean people, however, Korea still has an image of not being politically or socially stable. In particular, the score of 2.42 for Question 5 suggested that students tended to believe that Korean people are hard working. However, the rating of 3.38 for Question 7 showed a tendency existed for students to feel that Korea is not stable politically. The scores of 1.67 for Question 14 and 1.62 for Question 15 also suggested a tendency for students to feel that Korea has problems of political and social instability.

On the other hand, the figure of 2.56 for Question 2 showed students tended to believe that Korean people are friendly.    The figure of 2.75 for Question 9 also suggested an awareness of Korea's improving economy.    The figure of 2.53 for Question 3 showed that students tended to believe that Korean people are family oriented.    In addition, the mean rating of 2.60 for Question 1 showed that the students positively believed Koreans are dedicated to their country.    Based on comments from some students, this image of Koreans being dedicated to their country may be related to Korean supporters in the World Cup soccer competition in 2002.    Despite the negative image portrayed through reports of internal conflict, demonstrations and the unstable political situation, the rating of 2.95 for Question 8 showed students tended to believe that Korea is a safe place to travel to.

It should be noted that there weren't big differences in the means for each item.    That is, for most statements the range of mean was from 2.5 to 3.5, indicating a basically neutral image of Korea and Korean people among Australian students.    However, even the relatively small differences in the means of each statement did serve to give a general indication of the overall image of Korea to Australian students.    In addition, through the standard deviations for each statement, it is possible to see the degree of agreement respondents have for each statement.    For instance, the relatively small standard deviation for the statement about the friendliness of Korean people (SD = .347) shows a general consensus towards the mean of 2.56, while on the other hand, the larger standard deviation for Question 12 (SD = .871) suggested that although respondents generally felt that Korean people show impulsive tendencies (M = 3.17), there was a lot of variation in their responses.

To determine each student's individual attitude toward Korea, the mean for all statements from 1 to 15 was calculated, and the students were then categorised into positive attitude, neutral attitude and negative attitude based on these means. Students with a mean of all statements between 1 and 2.7 were categorised as having a positive attitude, between 2.8 and 3.3 as having a neutral attitude and between 3.4 and 5 as having a negative attitude. The reason that this range was fixed at between 2.7 and 3.3 for neutral attitude was to try to balance the numbers of respondents in each category. Originally, the neutral range was defined to be between 2.5 and 3.5, but the positive attitude and negative attitude groups were very small, with only 18.1% and 6.9% respectively, forcing a reconsideration of the range for each attitude. Even with this adjustment, as Figure 14 shows, the clear majority of students (55.6%) were categorised as having a neutral attitude toward Korea, followed by 27.7% of students with a positive attitude towards Korea, and 16.6 % students with a negative attitude towards Korea.

**Figure 14**

Students' attitude toward Korea
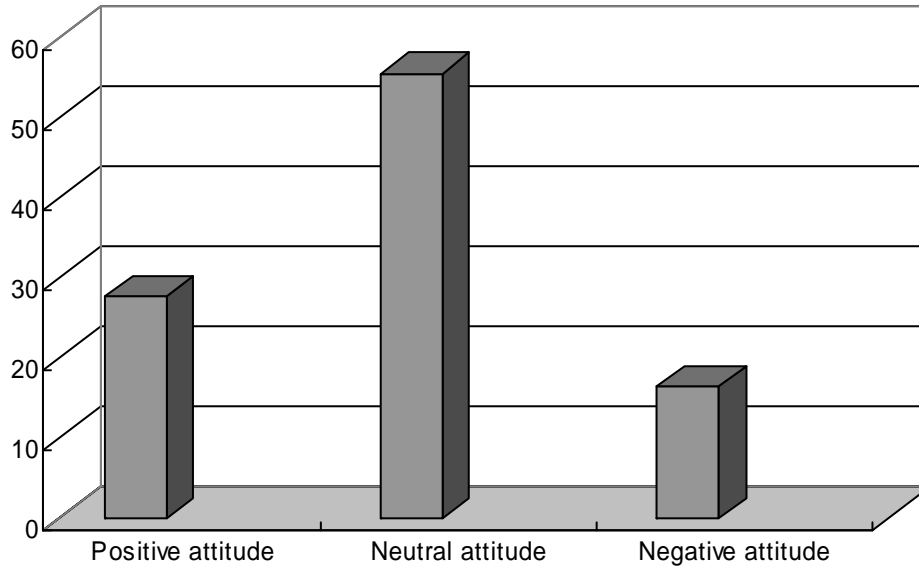


### 4.1.7 Australian students' knowledge of Korea

To measure students' general knowledge about Korea, 10 multiple-choice questions were asked. These covered Korea's capital city, a famous company name, a major event which was held in Korea, martial arts, food, currency and so forth (see Table 11).

**Table 11**

General knowledge questions about Korea

| Questions |
|---|
| 1. What is the name of South Korea's capital city? |
| 2. What is the name of a famous South Korean automobile company? |
| 3. What year was the World Cup Soccer competition held in Korea? |
| 4. What language is used mostly in South Korea? |
| 5. What is the name of a famous martial art in Korea? |
| 6. What is 'Kim-chi'? |
| 7. Who is South Korea's president? |
| 8. What is the name of South Korea's currency? |
| 9. What is the name of South Korea's highest mountain? |
| 10. Which country invaded Korea in 1910? |

Depending on students' responses to the questions in Table 11, they were divided into three levels of involvement: low, middle and high. If students had between 0 and 3 correct answers, they were categorised as having a low involvement of Korea. Students who had between 4 and 6 correct answers were categorised as having a middle involvement, and students who had between 7 and 10 correct answers were categorised as having a high involvement. As Figure 15 shows, 45.5% of students were categorised as middle involvement of Korea, 36.3% of students as low involvement, and only 16.9% of students as having high involvement of Korea.

**Figure 15**

Students' level of involvement of Korea
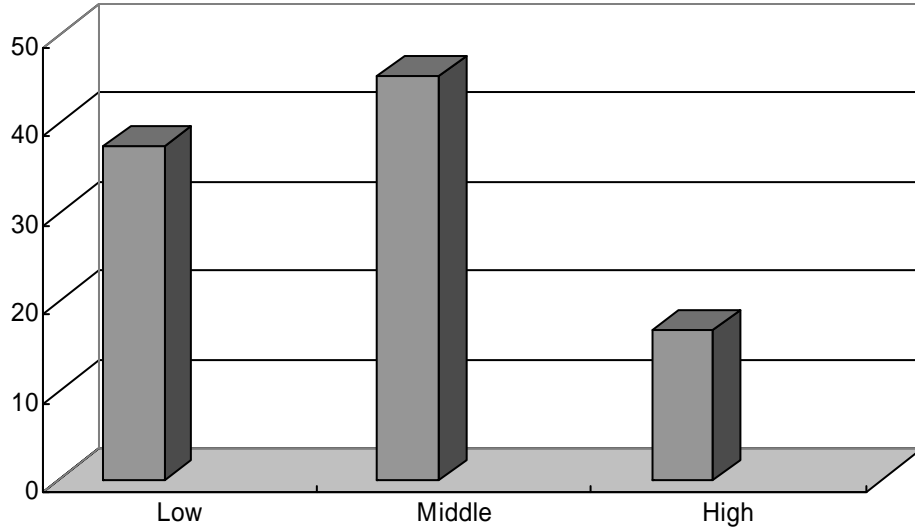


As Figure 16 shows, 28.6% of students (132 students) had personal experience with Korea, while 71.4% of students said they did not.

**Figure 16**

 Do you have any experience with Korea?
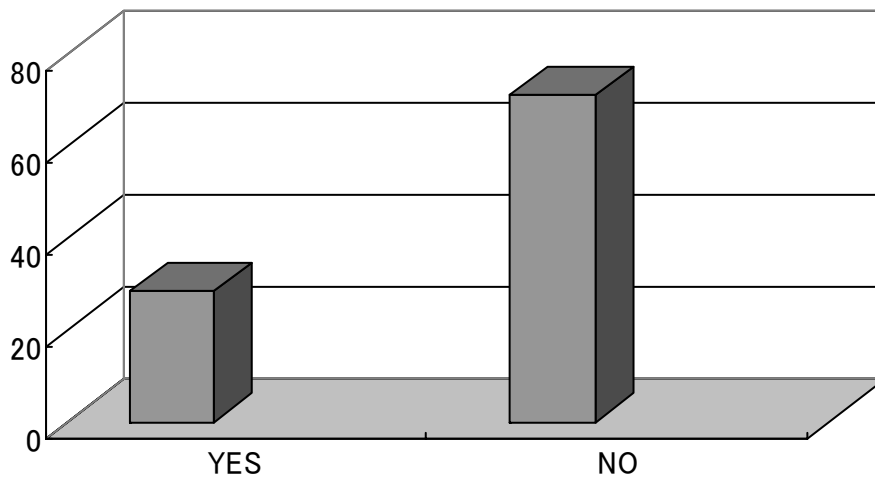
Those students who had personal experience with Korea were asked for more details about their experiences, through questions such as whether they had travelled to Korea, had Korean friends, neighbours or classmates, had read books about Korea or watched TV programs or videos about Korea, and so on.   As the results show in Figure 17, a large number of students had experience with Korea through their Korean friends, neighbours, or classmates (69 students).   A further 25 students had travelled to Korea; 24 students had an experience through TV or video programs about Korea and 11 students had read about Korea in books.   The remaining 4 students indicated they had studied in Korea, had Korean business partners, and so on.

**Figure 17**
How have you experienced Korea?
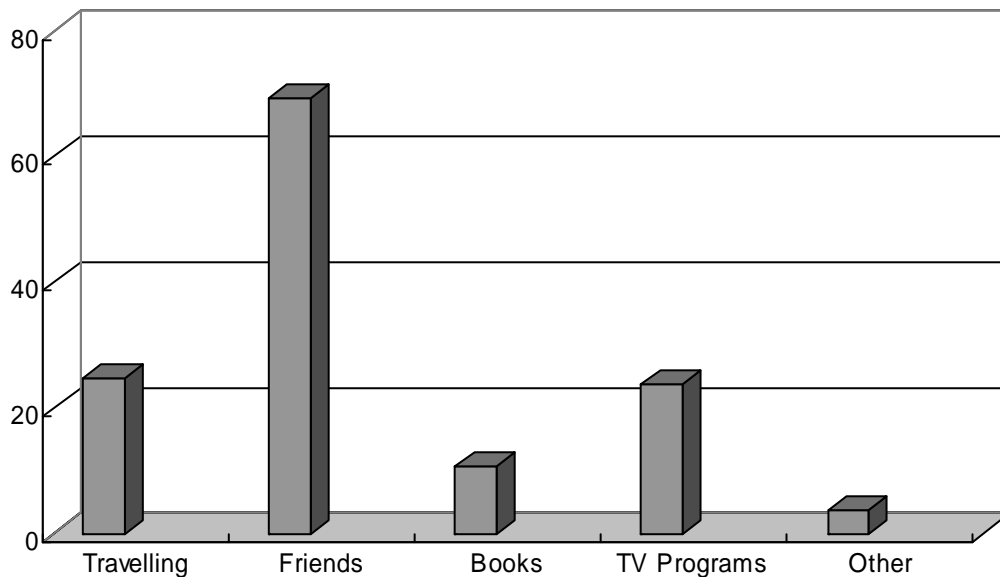
## *4.2 Content Analysis Results*

Since the high (*The Australian*) and low (*The Courier-Mail*) credibility newspapers were identified based on the results of the survey, a content analysis of news of Korea in both the high and low credibility newspapers was necessary for the experiment. The main purpose of the content analysis of news of Korea in both the high and low credibility newspapers was simply to find news coverage with positive tone, negative tone and neutral tone in each newspaper, and not to analyse details of the news content. As a result, in this study, news items in the high and low credibility newspapers were coded according to only the subject of news items and the tone of news coverage (e.g., positive, negative and neutral tone). The subjects included economic activity, government and politics, foreign relations, defence and military, social-general, internal conflict, science and medicine, culture, accidents and disasters, sports, travel, and environment. The analysis included newspaper articles and headlines with non-advertising reference to Korea. Letters, cartoons, currency values, the world's weather or special weekend magazine supplements were not included in the study.

The sample frame was from 1/1/2001 to 31/12/2002. Through the LexisNexis Newspaper Database, all of the news items about Korea within the sample frame in the high- and low credibility newspaper were obtained. News items were divided by subject, such as international news, business/financial news, sports news, and so on. The LexisNexis Newspaper Database listed 624 items of news coverage in *The Australian* with "Korea" or "Korean" in their headlines and lead paragraphs in 2002, and 503 items in 2001. In *The Courier-Mail,* there were 345 items of news with

"Korea" or "Korean" in their headlines and lead paragraphs in 2002, and only 198 in 2001.   Thirty news items were chosen in all, and they were assigned to 3 categories: positive, neutral and negative.   The categories, or "tone" were determined on the basis of whether the articles presented positive, negative or neutral news or opinion about Korea, Koreans, or the events covered. They can be regarded as indicating the opinion or evaluation of the reporter.    This is explained in more detail later in this chapter. Accordingly, five articles of a positive tone, five articles of a negative tone and five articles of a neutral tone were selected from each of the high- and low- credibility newspapers.   Two news articles of each tone in high or low credibility newspaper respectively were provided to each student who participated in the experimental stage.

## 4.3   Experiment Results

In the experimental stage, 108 of the 203 students who participated in the survey (the pre-experimental stage) volunteered to participate in the experimental stage of the study. As explained in the methodology chapter (Section 3.7), there were three categories depending on respondents' original attitude toward Korea (a positive, neutral and negative attitude).   Each of the three categories included 36 respondents.   In addition, each of the three categories was subdivided into those respondents who had a high, mid and low involvement of Korea.

One third of the students were exposed to two news articles, half of these with a positive tone in their high-credibility (*The Australian)*, and the other half in their low-credibility

newspaper (*The Courier-Mail*). Another third of the students were exposed to two news articles with a neutral tone in the high- or low-credibility newspaper. The news with neutral tone such as relatively short informative news with no or minimal reporter opinion included a positive news story and a negative news story. The remaining third of the students were given two news articles with a negative tone in their high or low credibility newspaper (see Tables 12, 13 and 14). Students' degree of involvement of Korea and their original attitude toward Korea were used as classificatory variables. The main purpose of the experimental stage was to measure five issues: (1) whether opinion changed; (2) direction of change; (3) whether change was related to coverage tone of the stimulus articles being either supportive or non-supportive of subjects' original opinion; (4) whether change was related to source credibility; (5) whether level of involvement was related to opinion change. A summary of the experiment groups is as follows:

**Table 12**

Category 1 (36 people who had **<u>positive</u>** original attitude toward Korea)

| Sub group | Involvement | Newspaper | Provided Articles of Korea |
|---|---|---|---|
| A: A1 (n=2)<br>A2 (n=2)<br>A3 (n=2) | High involvement<br>with Korea | High credibility<br>(*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| A4 (n=2)<br>A5 (n=2)<br>A6 (n=2) | | Low credibility<br>(*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| B: B1 (n=2)<br>B2 (n=2)<br>B3 (n=2) | Middle involvement<br>with Korea | High credibility<br>(*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| B4 (n=2)<br>B5 (n=2)<br>B6 (n=2) | | Low credibility<br>(*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| C: C1 (n=2)<br>C2 (n=2)<br>C3 (n=2) | Low involvement<br>with Korea | High credibility<br>(*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| C4 (n=2)<br>C5 (n=2)<br>C6 (n=2) | | Low credibility<br>(*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |

**Table 13**

Category 2 (36 people who had **<u>neutral</u>** original attitude toward Korea)

| Sub group | Involvement | Newspaper | Provided Articles of Korea |
|---|---|---|---|
| A: A1 (n=2)<br>A2 (n=2)<br>A3 (n=2) | High involvement<br>with Korea | High credibility<br>(*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| A4 (n=2)<br>A5 (n=2)<br>A6 (n=2) | | Low credibility<br>(*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| B: B1 (n=2)<br>B2 (n=2)<br>B3 (n=2) | Middle involvement<br>with Korea | High credibility<br>(*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| B4 (n=2)<br>B5 (n=2)<br>B6 (n=2) | | Low credibility<br>(*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| C: C1 (n=2)<br>C2 (n=2)<br>C3 (n=2) | Low involvement<br>with Korea | High credibility<br>(*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |
| C4 (n=2)<br>C5 (n=2)<br>C6 (n=2) | | Low credibility<br>(*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone<br>2 news articles with neutral tone<br>2 news articles with negative tone |

**Table 14**

Category 3 (36 people who had **<u>negative</u>** original attitude toward Korea)

| Sub group | Involvement | Newspaper | Provided Articles of Korea |
|---|---|---|---|
| A: A1 (n=2) A2 (n=2) A3 (n=2) | High involvement with Korea | High credibility (*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone 2 news articles with neutral tone 2 news articles with negative tone |
| A4 (n=2) A5 (n=2) A6 (n=2) | | Low credibility (*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone 2 news articles with neutral tone 2 news articles with negative tone |
| B: B1 (n=2) B2 (n=2) B3 (n=2) | Middle involvement with Korea | High credibility (*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone 2 news articles with neutral tone 2 news articles with negative tone |
| B4 (n=2) B5 (n=2) B6 (n=2) | | Low credibility (*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone 2 news articles with neutral tone 2 news articles with negative tone |
| C: C1 (n=2) C2 (n=2) C3 (n=2) | Low involvement with Korea | High credibility (*The Australian*) | 2 news articles with positive tone 2 news articles with neutral tone 2 news articles with negative tone |
| C4 (n=2) C5 (n=2) C6 (n=2) | | Low credibility (*Courier-Mail*) | 2 news articles with positive tone 2 news articles with neutral tone 2 news articles with negative tone |

## 4.3.1   Attitude change

### 4.3.1.1 News which supports readers' original attitude

In order to investigate attitude change, it was necessary to divide students into groups depending on their original attitudes toward Korea; positive, neutral or negative. The students who had a neutral attitude have been analysed separately in the post hoc findings. Thus, only those students who had a positive or negative original attitude towards Korea were included to measure the attitude change after they were exposed to news which supported their original attitude in the newspapers.

Table 15 shows pre- and post-reading attitudes after exposure to the article which <u>supported</u> respondents' original attitude toward Korea.   The top part of the table

represents students with positive original attitude and the bottom part students with negative original attitude. Even though the difference in the pre- and post-reading attitudes was not large, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed that it was significant at $F(1,35) = 465.64$, $p = .001$.

Of the students with a positive original attitude, 18 were randomly assigned to be exposed to two positive news articles with a positive tone[3] (Pos Pos) or two positive news article with neutral tone (Pos Neu) in either the high credibility or low credibility newspaper. Another 18 were exposed to two negative news articles with a negative tone (Neg Neg) or two negative news articles with neutral tone (Neg Neu) in either the high credibility or low credibility newspaper. That is, a total of 36 students were exposed to two news articles which supported their original attitudes. In all cases, each student was provided with two articles that were of the same tone in the same newspaper (e.g., two positive tone articles in *The Australian*). No students were ever given a mix of articles varying in tone or from the other newspaper.

As Table 15 shows, 36% of the 36 students changed their attitude after they were exposed to news which supported their original attitude. In addition, all of these students changed their original attitude in a positive or negative way following the tone of news in the article they were presented. That is, the students with a positive original attitude reinforced their attitude toward Korea after they were exposed to news with

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[3] **Positive tone** – An article was coded as positive if it conveyed a favourable impression of Korea. Positive articles supported or justified the act or actions, or contained quotes by individuals who approved of the action.
**Neutral tone** – An article was coded as neutral if it was neither portrayed Korea favourably nor unfavourably, neither justified nor condemned the act or actor.
**Negative tone** – An article was coded as negative if it had a negative meaning toward, or would have, in all probability, caused the reader to form a negative opinion about Korea. Negative articles would contain unfavourable descriptions of the acts, or the actors, or condemn the action or actors involved.

positive tone about Korea. The results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA confirmed that this was significant at $F(1,17) = 26.13$, $p = .001$. In particular, the results also suggested that this tendency for attitude change was greater when the students were exposed to news articles with a positive tone in their high credibility newspaper. A similar result was obtained for the 18 students with a negative original attitude who were exposed to reports with a negative tone. They reinforced their original negative attitude toward Korea after they were exposed to news with negative tone and this tendency was greater with their high credibility newspaper. The results of the ANOVA comparing their pre- and post-reading attitude change were significant at $F(1,17) = 83.42$, $p = .001$.

An investigation of the attitude change as a result of the tone of news showed that when there was a positive or negative tone in the news (n = 24), 42% of the students exhibited a change in attitude. In contrast, when the news had a neutral tone (n = 12), attitude change was present in 17% of the students. This result suggested that when news coverage supported the readers' original attitude, attitude change (in this case reinforcement) was more likely to occur when news articles included the reporter's own opinion (i.e., when the reporter included a positive or negative tone in the report) as opposed to when it had a neutral tone. That is, it could be stated that when readers were exposed to news with a positive or negative tone, they received more influence from the news than when they read news with a neutral tone.

When totalling the results for the high- and low-credibility newspapers, in all 50% of the students with a positive original attitude reinforced their original attitude when they

were exposed to news articles which <u>supported</u> this attitude. A far greater proportion of students (83%) who were exposed to news which supported their original attitude in their high credibility newspaper showed this tendency compared with students exposed to their low credibility newspaper (17%).   In contrast, students with a negative original attitude were less likely to reinforce their original attitude after they were exposed to news with a negative tone, with only 33% of the students showing an attitude change. As with the positive results, there was a marked difference between the high and low credibility newspaper with 50% of subjects exposed to negative tone news which supported their original attitude reinforcing their attitude compared with just 17% in the low credibility newspaper.

**Table 15**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes after exposure to articles which <u>supported</u> respondents'
original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive (n=18) | High | Pos Pos | 2.13 | 2.13 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 1.93 | 1.87 | 0.06 |
| | | Pos Neu | 1.53 | 1.53 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.33 | 2.20 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.13 | 2.07 | 0.06 |
| | | Pos Neu | 2.07 | 2.07 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.47 | 2.33 | 0.14 |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.53 | 2.40 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Neu | 2.40 | 2.33 | 0.07 |
| | Low | Pos Pos | 2.27 | 2.27 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 1.67 | 1.67 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 1.80 | 1.80 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.60 | 2.53 | 0.07 |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.13 | 2.13 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 2.47 | 2.53 | (0.06) |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.67 | 2.67 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.40 | 2.40 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 2.40 | 2.40 | - |
| Negative (n=18) | High | Neg Neg | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.53 | 3.60 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.47 | 3.53 | (0.14) |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.73 | 3.73 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 4.13 | 4.13 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.93 | 4.00 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 4.00 | 4.00 | - |
| | Low | Neg Neg | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.73 | 3.73 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.93 | 3.93 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.80 | 3.87 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 4.00 | 4.00 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.87 | 3.93 | (0.06) |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.87 | 3.87 | - |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude.   Accordingly, a
low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* "Pos Pos" refers to positive news with a positive tone in the newspapers.
\*\*\* "Neg Neg" refers to negative news with a negative tone in the newspapers.
\*\*\*\* "Pos Neu" refers to positive news with a neutral tone in the newspapers.
\*\*\*\*\* "Neg Neu" refers to negative news with a neutral tone in the newspapers.
\*\*\*\*\*\* Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

*4.3.1.2 News which differed from readers' original attitude*

Again, to measure the attitude change after they were exposed to news which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude in the newspapers, the students who had positive and negative original attitude towards Korea were included, but not those with a neutral original attitude.

Table 16 shows the figures for pre- and post-reading attitudes after exposure to articles which <u>differed</u> respondents' original attitude toward Korea. Following the same format as with news which <u>supported</u> respondents' original attitude, a total of 36 students with a positive or negative original attitude were exposed to two news articles which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude in either the high-or low credibility newspaper. That is, 18 students with a positive original attitude were exposed to two negative news articles with a negative tone (Neg Neg) or with neutral tone (Neg Neu), half in the high credibility newspaper and half in low credibility newspaper. The other 18 students with a negative original attitude were exposed to two positive news articles with a positive tone (Pos Pos) or with a neutral tone (Pos Neu) in either the high- or low credibility newspaper. Although the mean changes were very small, overall the one-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed that pre- and post-reading attitude change was significant at $F(1,35) = 493.14$, $p = .001$.

**Table 16**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes after exposure to articles which <u>differed from</u> respondents' original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive (n=18) | High | Neg Neg | 2.00 | 2.00 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.13 | 2.20 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.33 | 2.33 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.53 | 2.67 | (0.14) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.13 | 2.20 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.33 | 2.40 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.40 | 2.47 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.27 | 2.33 | (0.06) |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.53 | 2.53 | - |
| | Low | Neg Neg | 2.47 | 2.47 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.53 | 2.53 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.07 | 2.07 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.33 | 2.40 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.40 | 2.40 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.27 | 2.27 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.53 | 2.60 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.33 | 2.33 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.53 | 2.53 | - |
| Negative (n=18) | High | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.87 | 3.80 | 0.07 |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.73 | 3.67 | (0.06) |
| | | Pos Pos | 4.00 | 3.87 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.80 | 3.67 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.93 | 3.87 | 0.06 |
| | Low | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.47 | 3.40 | 0.07 |
| | | Pos Pos | 4.00 | 3.93 | 0.07 |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.93 | 3.93 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.80 | 3.80 | (0.06) |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.80 | 3.80 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.87 | 3.87 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.93 | 3.93 | - |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
** "Pos Pos" refers to positive news with a positive tone in the newspapers.
*** "Neg Neg" refers to negative news with a negative tone in the newspapers.
**** "Pos Neu" refers to positive news with a neutral tone in the newspapers.
***** "Neg Neu" refers to negative news with a neutral tone in the newspapers.
****** Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

As Table 16 shows, in all (including neutral and counter-attitudinal news), 16 out of 36 students (44%) changed their attitude after they were exposed to news which <u>differed from</u> their original attitude. Comparing with exposure to news which supported respondents' original attitude (36%), surprisingly more students showed an attitude change with news which <u>differed from</u> their original attitude. An investigation of the attitude change as a result of the tone of news showed that when there was a positive or negative tone in the news (n = 24), 46% of the students exhibited a change in attitude. In contrast, when the news had a neutral tone (n = 12), attitude change was present in 42% of the students. When totalling the results for the high- and low-credibility newspapers, in all 58% of the students with a positive original attitude changed their original attitude when they were exposed to news articles which <u>differed from</u> this attitude. In addition, there were no cases where the students demonstrated a change in attitude that went against the tone of news. That is, no one changed their attitude positively with negative news or negatively with positive news.

The students showed particularly more marked attitude change with the high credibility news. A total of 67% of the 12 students who changed their attitude after they were exposed to counter-attitudinal tone news (i.e., excluding neutral tone news) showed changes in their attitude with their <u>high credibility</u> newspaper. This tendency was present in both the students with a positive (83%) or negative original attitude (50%). Compared to this, in the <u>low credibility</u> newspaper, only 25% of subjects changed their attitude with news that differed from their original attitude, with changes evident in only 33% of students with a positive original attitude and 17% of students with a negative original attitude.

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Regarding news with a neutral tone, the results suggested that attitude change was more likely in students who were exposed to news that differed from their original attitude (42%) than when they were exposed to news that supported their original attitude (17%).

### 4.3.1.3 Involvement and attitude change

In order to investigate the relationship between change in the readers' perceived image of Korea and their level of involvement it was necessary to compare the 72 individual students' original attitudes toward Korea (36 students with a positive original attitude, and 36 students with a negative original attitude) and their attitudes after exposure to news about Korea. Again, because the students were exposed to news which supported or differed from their original attitude, the students with a neutral original attitude were excluded.

Firstly, to analyse the relationship between students' perceived image of Korea after exposure to the news and their degree of involvement toward Korea, it was necessary to investigate pre- and post-measurements for the high, middle and low involvement students' attitudes toward Korea, depending on their original attitude. As was suggested above, and as Table 17 shows, the students with high involvement with Korea quite rarely changed their attitudes after exposure to the news which supported their original attitude, regardless of the credibility of the newspaper (the mean of the absolute attitude change was 0.01). In cases where the students were exposed to news which differed from their original attitude, they also exhibited very little change from their original attitude toward Korea regardless of the credibility of the newspaper (Table 18).

As Tables 17 and 18 show, a total of four students changed their original attitude after they were exposed to news which <u>supported</u> or <u>differed</u> from their original attitude, two students showing a change in attitude with their high credibility newspaper, and the other two students changing their original attitude with their low credibility newspaper (see Tables 8 and 9).   Accordingly, it could be said that students with <u>high involvement</u> of Korea showed very little change in attitude after they were exposed to news which <u>supported</u> or <u>differed</u> from their original attitude regardless of whether they were responding to either the high or low credibility newspaper.

However, with highly involved students, it was not possible to examine the difference between news with the reporter's own opinion and news with a neutral tone because the number of students who changed their original attitude after exposure to such news was too small.   Therefore, it can be said that the high involvement students rarely changed their original attitude regardless of 'source credibility' but the possible effect of "tone" on these students could not be examined.

**Table 17**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes of *high involvement* respondents after exposure to articles which *supported* their original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | Pos Pos | 2.13 | 2.13 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 1.93 | 1.87 | 0.06 |
| | | Pos Neu | 1.53 | 1.53 | - |
| | Low | Pos Pos | 2.27 | 2.27 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 1.67 | 1.67 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 1.80 | 1.80 | - |
| Negative | High | Neg Neg | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.53 | 3.60 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | Low | Neg Neg | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

**Table 18**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes of *high involvement* respondents after exposure to articles which *differed from* their original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | Neg Neg | 2.00 | 2.00 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.13 | 2.20 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.33 | 2.33 | - |
| | Low | Neg Neg | 2.47 | 2.47 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.53 | 2.53 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.07 | 2.07 | - |
| Negative | High | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.53 | 3.53 | - |
| | Low | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.47 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.47 | 3.40 | 0.07 |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

Table 19 shows the pre- and post-reading attitudes for students with <u>middle involvement</u> of Korea after they were exposed to news which <u>supported</u> their original attitude. As Table 19 shows, there was a consistent change in respondents' attitude (absolute M = 0.03) from both the high and low credibility newspaper. That is, a total of six students changed from their original attitude; three students showed a change in attitude with the high credibility newspaper and the other three students with the low credibility newspaper. Therefore, it could be said that the students with <u>middle involvement</u> of Korea showed relatively consistent changes in attitude with exposure to news which <u>supported</u> their original attitude. In addition, this change was evident with not only the high credibility newspaper but also with the low credibility newspaper.

**Table 19**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes of *middle involvement* respondents after exposure to articles which *supported* their original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | Pos Pos | 3.13 | 3.07 | 0.06 |
|  |  | Pos Pos | 3.13 | 3.07 | 0.06 |
|  |  | Pos Neu | 2.93 | 2.93 | - |
|  | Low | Pos Pos | 2.60 | 2.53 | 0.07 |
|  |  | Pos Pos | 2.13 | 2.13 | - |
|  |  | Pos Neu | 2.47 | 2.53 | 0.06 |
| Negative | High | Neg Neg | 3.47 | 3.53 | (0.14) |
|  |  | Neg Neg | 3.73 | 3.73 | - |
|  |  | Neg Neu | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
|  | Low | Neg Neg | 2.93 | 2.93 | - |
|  |  | Neg Neg | 3.00 | 3.07 | (0.07) |
|  |  | Neg Neu | 2.80 | 2.80 | - |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

When students with <u>middle involvement</u> with Korea were exposed to news which

<u>differed</u> from their original attitude, their attitude changed in the direction of the

articles' tone (see Table 20).   Seven of the 12 students changed from their original

attitude following the counter-attitudinal news; five in response to their high credibility

newspaper and two in response to their low credibility newspaper.   These changes

were greater following exposure to the high credibility newspaper than the low

credibility newspaper (see Table 20).   However, when compared with the high and low

involvement students, a there were slightly more middle involvement students showed

attitude changes after exposure to the low credibility newspaper.

**Table 20**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes of *middle involvement* respondents after exposure to
articles which *differed from* their original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | Neg Neg | 2.53 | 2.67 | (0.14 |
|  |  | Neg Neg | 2.13 | 2.20 | (0.07) |
|  |  | Neg Neu | 2.33 | 2.40 | (0.07) |
|  | Low | Neg Neg | 2.33 | 2.40 | (0.07) |
|  |  | Neg Neg | 2.40 | 2.40 | - |
|  |  | Neg Neu | 2.27 | 2.27 | - |
| Negative | High | Pos Pos | 3.67 | 3.67 | - |
|  |  | Pos Pos | 3.87 | 3.80 | 0.07 |
|  |  | Pos Neu | 3.73 | 3.67 | (0.06) |
|  | Low | Pos Pos | 4.00 | 3.93 | 0.07 |
|  |  | Pos Pos | 3.80 | 3.80 | - |
|  |  | Pos Neu | 3.93 | 3.93 | - |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude.   Accordingly, a
low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
** Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

Regarding the difference between news with reporter's own opinion and news with a

neutral tone, of the 13 middle involvement students who changed from their original

attitude with exposure to pro-attitudinal news and counter-attitudinal news, ten students changed their original attitude in the direction of the reporter's own opinion while only three students showed changes in attitude with neutral tone news. News with the reporter's own opinion had more effect on the students' attitude change. Overall, a high proportion of the students with middle involvement of Korea showed changes in attitude and this tendency was present in both the high and low credibility newspaper.

Regarding the students with low involvement with Korea, overall they showed attitude change after they were exposed to news which either supported or differed from their original attitude, especially with the high credibility newspaper

Table 21 shows pre- and post-reading attitudes of low involvement respondents after exposure to news which supported their original attitude. Five of the 12 students reinforced their original attitude, with four of these five in response to their high credibility newspaper. In particular, the students with a positive original attitude (3 of 4) changed from their original attitude with the high credibility newspaper.

**Table 21**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes of *low involvement* respondents after exposure to articles which *supported* their original attitude toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High Credibility | Pos Pos | 2.47 | 2.33 | 0.14 |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.53 | 2.40 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Neu | 2.40 | 2.33 | 0.07 |
| | Low Credibility | Pos Pos | 2.67 | 2.67 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 2.40 | 2.40 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 2.40 | 2.40 | - |
| Negative | High Credibility | Neg Neg | 4.13 | 4.13 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.93 | 4.00 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neu | 4.00 | 4.00 | - |
| | Low Credibility | Neg Neg | 4.00 | 4.00 | - |
| | | Neg Neg | 3.87 | 3.93 | (0.06) |
| | | Neg Neu | 3.87 | 3.87 | - |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude.   Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

As Table 22 shows, the students with low involvement also showed rather large variation in their attitude changes after they were exposed to news which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude.   A total of six of the 12 students changed their original attitude following the tone of news, five of these in response to the high credibility newspaper. Counter-attitudinal news in the high credibility newspaper showed more effect than pro-attitudinal news in either high or low credibility newspapers and low involvement students exhibited greater changes from their original attitude after exposure to news in the high credibility newspaper than the low credibility newspaper.

**Table 22**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes of *low involvement* respondents after exposure to articles which *differed from* their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper | Type & Tone of News | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High Credibility | Neg Neg | 2.40 | 2.47 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.27 | 2.33 | (0.06) |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.53 | 2.53 | - |
| | Low Credibility | Neg Neg | 2.53 | 2.60 | (0.07) |
| | | Neg Neg | 2.33 | 2.33 | - |
| | | Neg Neu | 2.53 | 2.53 | - |
| Negative | High Credibility | Pos Pos | 4.00 | 3.87 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.80 | 3.67 | 0.13 |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.93 | 3.87 | 0.06 |
| | Low Credibility | Pos Pos | 3.80 | 3.80 | - |
| | | Pos Pos | 3.87 | 3.87 | - |
| | | Pos Neu | 3.93 | 3.93 | - |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

The effect of involvement on attitude change has been shown to differ depending on the credibility of the newspaper, the tone of the news and the level of involvement in Korea. Tables 23 to 26 provide a summary of the effects of the credibility of the newspaper on the readers in each of the three involvement categories (i.e., high, middle and low). In Table 23 and 24, the change in attitude when the tone supports the original attitude of the readers is presented, and Tables 25 and 26 illustrate the change in attitude when the attitude differs from the original attitude. Note that in both conditions, the figure for each involvement category represents the mean of the subjects in that category.

**Table 23**

News with positive tone which supported original attitude

|  | High Credibility Paper | | Low Credibility Paper | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **Pre** | **Post** | **Pre** | **Post** |
| High Involvement | 2.03 | 2.00 | 1.97 | 1.97 |
| Middle Involvement | 3.13 | 3.07 | 2.37 | 2.33 |
| Low Involvement | 2.50 | 2.37 | 2.54 | 2.54 |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.


**Table 24**

News with negative tone which supported original attitude

|  | High Credibility Paper | | Low Credibility Paper | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **Pre** | **Post** | **Pre** | **Post** |
| High Involvement | 3.60 | 3.64 | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| Middle Involvement | 3.20 | 3.23 | 3.37 | 3.40 |
| Low Involvement | 4.03 | 4.07 | 3.17 | 3.20 |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.


**Table 25**

News with positive tone which differed from original attitude

|  | High Credibility Paper | | Low Credibility Paper | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **Pre** | **Post** | **Pre** | **Post** |
| High Involvement | 3.47 | 3.47 | 3.47 | 3.44 |
| Middle Involvement | 3.77 | 3.74 | 3.90 | 3.87 |
| Low Involvement | 3.90 | 3.77 | 3.87 | 3.87 |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.

**Table 26**

News with negative tone which differed from original attitude

|  | High Credibility Paper | | Low Credibility Paper | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Pre** | **Post** | **Pre** | **Post** |
| High Involvement | 2.07 | 2.10 | 2.50 | 2.50 |
| Middle Involvement | 2.33 | 2.44 | 2.37 | 2.40 |
| Low Involvement | 2.34 | 2.40 | 2.43 | 2.47 |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.

In summary, respondents' different degrees of involvement have significant influence on attitude change. High involvement students demonstrated very little change from their original attitude toward Korea after exposure to both pro-attitudinal and counter-attitudinal news regardless of the credibility of the newspaper. Middle involvement students showed relatively consistent attitude change after exposure to pro-attitudinal or counter-attitudinal news in both the high and low credibility newspapers. Low involvement students showed obvious changes in attitude after exposure to either pro-attitudinal or counter-attitudinal news, these changes being far more likely after exposure to the high credibility newspaper than the low credibility newspaper. The implications of these results are discussed in the following chapter.

## 4.3.2 Credibility judgements of newspapers

### 4.3.2.1 Perceptions of fairness of coverage

In order to measure students' credibility judgements of the newspapers after the students were exposed to two news articles in the newspaper during the experimental stage, 5 five-point scales about the newspaper's credibility were administered: 1. fair – unfair; 2.

unbiased – biased; 3. accurate – inaccurate; 4. factual – opinionated; and 5. good quality

of reporting – poor quality of reporting.   If respondents agreed with the item very

positively, they circled "1", if they felt very negatively about the item, they circled "5".

The results are presented below depending on the students' original attitude toward

Korea.   The same five scales about *The Australian* and *The Courier-Mail* were given to

the respondents about two weeks before they participated in the experiment to

determine their credibility judgements of these newspapers.   They were not told at that

time which newspaper was selected as the high or low credibility newspaper in the

earlier survey.   Tables 27 and 28 show the students' credibility judgements about the

newspaper before and after they were exposed to pro- or counter-attitudinal news in the

high or low credibility newspaper.   Each subject's absolute value difference between

pre-attitude and post-attitude is also presented.   The details of these results are

presented in Appendix E.


The results of the students' credibility judgements of the high and low credibility

newspaper after exposure to articles which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitude toward

Korea can be seen in Table 27.   From total 36 students, 18 students who had a positive

original attitude were exposed to positive news in the high or low credibility newspaper.

The other 18 students who had a negative original attitude were exposed to negative

news in the high or low credibility newspaper.   As Table 27 shows, 18 of the 36

students (50%) demonstrated changes in their credibility judgements of the newspapers

they were exposed to.   Ten of these 18 students (55%) who demonstrated attitude

changes (see the previous section) also changed their credibility judgements, leaving 8

students (45% of 18 students) who changed their credibility judgement of the

newspaper even though they did not exhibit changes in their attitude. That is to say, after exposure to news which agreed with their view point of Korea, quite a large number of students overall changed their credibility judgements of newspaper even though they did not change their attitude towards Korea.

**Table 27**

Students' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which *agreed* with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Tone | ADA** | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | Positive | - | 2.6 | 2.6 | |
| | | | 0.06 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | High | Positive | 0.13 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
| | | | 0.06 | 2.6 | 2.4 | + |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | High | Positive | 0.14 | 2.6 | 2.4 | + |
| | | | 0.13 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
| | | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | |
| Negative | High | Negative | - | 2.6 | 3 | - |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | 0.07 | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | High | Negative | - | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | | 0.14 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
| | | | - | 2.8 | 3 | - |
| | High | Negative | - | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | | - | 2.6 | 2.6 | |
| | | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.4 | + |
| Positive | Low | Positive | - | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | | - | 3.2 | 3.2 | |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | Low | Positive | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | | - | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| | Low | Positive | - | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | - | 3.4 | 3 | + |
| Negative | Low | Negative | - | 3.4 | 3 | + |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | - | 3.2 | 3.2 | |
| | Low | Negative | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | - | 3.4 | 3 | + |
| | Low | Negative | - | 3.4 | 3.4 | |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | 0.06 | 3.4 | 2.6 | + |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
** ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

Among the changes in credibility judgement, 16 of the 18 respondents who changed

their credibility judgement of the newspaper evaluated it more positively, while 2 changed their evaluation in a more negative direction. The remaining 18 of the 36 respondents did <u>not change</u> their credibility judgements for the newspapers.

Regarding the students' credibility judgement of news in the high and low credibility newspaper, 7 of the 18 students who were exposed to news which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitude in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper changed their credibility judgements of the newspaper in a positive direction. On the other hand, 2 of the 18 students changed their credibility judgement in a negative direction, leaving 9 students who did not change their credibility judgements of the newspaper.

With the <u>low</u> credibility newspaper, 9 of the 18 students who were exposed to news which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitude gave a more positive judgement for the low credibility newspaper, leaving 9 students who did not change their credibility judgements. That is, when the students were exposed to news which agreed with their original viewpoint toward Korea, they were more likely to change their judgement of the low credibility newspaper than that of the high credibility newspaper. This might be explained by the fact that their judgements about the high credibility newspaper are already too high to allow for further movement, while there is space for students to move their judgements for the low credibility newspaper. In addition, it is clear that more students changed their attitude following the tone of the news in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper than in the <u>low credibility</u> newspaper. For the high credibility newspaper, some students gave a more positive assessment of credibility, while others reduced their degree of positive judgement. However, with the low credibility

judgements, all of the students gave a more positive judgement than they did prior to reading the news report. Again, this might be explained by the fact that credibility judgement scores for the high credibility newspaper were already quite <u>positive</u> (such as 2.4) compared to scores for the low credibility newspaper (such as 3.6). Therefore, it seems that students were able to change their credibility judgements of the low credibility newspaper more easily.

To determine the students' credibility judgements of news in the high and low credibility newspapers when the tone of coverage <u>disagreed</u> from their original attitude toward Korea, a total of 36 students were exposed to news which <u>disagreed</u> from their original attitude in the high and low credibility newspapers. From a total of 36 students, 18 students with a positive original attitude were exposed to news which had a negative tone of news in the high or low credibility newspaper. The other 18 students with a negative original attitude were exposed to news which had a positive tone of news in the high or low credibility newspaper.

As Table 28 shows, 23 of the 36 students (64%) demonstrated changes in their credibility judgements of the newspapers they were exposed to. There were 14 out of these 23 students (61%) who gave a more <u>negative</u> credibility assessment for the newspapers leaving 9 who gave a more <u>positive</u> credibility judgement to the newspapers even though they were exposed to news which <u>disagreed</u> from their original attitude. There were 13 out of the 36 respondents who <u>did not change</u> from their original credibility judgements for the newspapers. When compared with news which agreed with the respondents' original attitude, overall, the respondents showed far greater

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changes with news which disagreed from their original attitude.

**Table 28**

Students' credibility judgement of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which *disagreed* with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original attitude | Newspaper Credibility | Tone | ADA** | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | Negative | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | - | 2.6 | 3.4 | - |
| | | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.6 | + |
| | | Negative | 0.07 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
| | | | 0.14 | 3 | 2.6 | + |
| | | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | Negative | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | 0.07 | 2.6 | 2.8 | - |
| | | | 0.06 | 2.2 | 2 | |
| Negative | High | Positive | - | 2.8 | 3.8 | - |
| | | | - | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | | - | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | Positive | - | 3 | 3.2 | - |
| | | | 0.07 | 2.4 | 2.8 | - |
| | | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | Positive | 0.13 | 2.8 | 2.4 | + |
| | | | 0.14 | 2.6 | 2 | + |
| | | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| Positive | Low | Negative | - | 3.2 | 3.4 | - |
| | | | - | 4 | 4 | |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | Negative | - | 3.4 | 3.6 | - |
| | | | 0.07 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | | - | 3 | 3.4 | - |
| | | Negative | - | 3.4 | 4 | - |
| | | | 0.07 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | | - | 3.6 | 4 | - |
| Negative | Low | Positive | - | 3.2 | 4 | - |
| | | | - | 3.2 | 3.2 | |
| | | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | Positive | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | | - | 3.2 | 3.8 | - |
| | | | 0.06 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | Positive | - | 3.2 | 3.6 | - |
| | | | - | 3.2 | 3.6 | - |
| | | | - | 3 | 3 | |

\* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude.   Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
\*\* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

An examination of the relationship between attitude change and the changes in credibility judgement of the respondents showed that of the 16 of the 36 students who changed from their original attitude 11 also demonstrated changes in their credibility judgements of the newspapers they were exposed to.  In addition, out of these 11 respondents, 8 respondents (73%) gave a more <u>positive</u> credibility assessment for news which <u>disagreed</u> from their original attitude, while only 2 respondents gave a more <u>negative</u> credibility assessment.  Accordingly, this result suggests that most of the students changed their credibility judgements of the newspapers if they changed their original attitude following the tone of news after exposure to news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude.  In addition, in cases where the respondents changed from their original attitude after exposure to counter-attitudinal news, most of the respondents gave a more positive credibility assessment of the newspaper they were exposed to.  It can be said that with counter-attitudinal news, changes in attitude and changes in credibility judgements have a direct relationship with each other.

Regarding the students' credibility judgement of news in the high and low credibility newspapers, 11 of the 18 students who were exposed to news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper changed their credibility judgements of the newspaper, with 6 of these 11 students giving a more positive credibility judgement and the remaining 5 giving a more negative credibility judgement.  Of the 18 respondents who were exposed to news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude in the <u>low</u> credibility newspaper, 12 students changed their credibility judgements of the newspaper.  In all, 9 of these 12 students gave a more negative credibility judgement of

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the <u>low</u> credibility newspaper while the other 3 gave a more positive credibility judgement of the newspapers.

*4.3.2.2 Involvement and credibility judgments*

As Tables 29 and 30 show, few <u>high involvement</u> respondents changed their credibility judgement after they were exposed to news which either <u>agreed</u> or <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude toward Korea.   After exposure to pro-attitudinal news (i.e., news that agreed with their original attitude), 5 of the 12 students changed their credibility assessment of the newspaper, 4 of these in the positive direction (Table 29).   Changes in credibility were independent of whether the stimulus was a high or low credibility newspaper.   With counter-attitudinal news, there were also 5 of the 12 students who changed their credibility judgements of the newspaper, with 4 of these 5 students giving a more negative judgement of the newspaper credibility (Table 30).

**Table 29**

High involvement respondents' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which agreed with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | ADA* | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | 0 | 2.6 | 2.6 | |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| Negative | High | 0 | 2.6 | 3 | - |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.07 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
| Positive | Low | 0 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | 0 | 3.2 | 3.2 | |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| Negative | Low | 0 | 3.4 | 3 | + |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0 | 3.2 | 3.2 | |

* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

**Table 30**

High involvement respondents' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which disagreed with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | ADA* | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | - | 2.6 | 3.4 | - |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.6 | + |
| Negative | High | - | 2.8 | 3.8 | - |
| | | - | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | - | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| Positive | Low | - | 3.2 | 3.4 | - |
| | | - | 4 | 4 | |
| | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| Negative | Low | - | 3.2 | 4 | - |
| | | - | 3.2 | 3.2 | |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | |

* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

Secondly, as illustrated in Tables 31 and 32, a large number of students who had <u>middle</u> involvement of Korea changed their credibility judgement of the newspapers.   Table 31 shows that 8 of the 12 students with middle involvement changed their credibility judgements, 7 of them in the positive direction.   This change occurred for both high and low credibility newspapers.

Of the students exposed to news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitudes, most changed from their original credibility judgement of the newspapers.   As Table 32 shows, 10 of the 12 students changed their credibility judgements after exposure to counter-attitudinal news.   Of these, 5 students gave a more negative judgement and the other 5 students gave a more positive judgement of the newspaper's credibility.   This tendency was present in both the high and low credibility newspaper.   These results might be explained by the fact that the middle involvement students were not concerned about 'source credibility' and also they did not show favourable or unfavourable judgement depending on news which agreed or disagreed with their original attitude.

**Table 31**

Middle involvement respondents' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | ADA* | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | 0.13 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
|  |  | 0.06 | 2.6 | 2.4 | + |
|  |  | - | 3 | 3 |  |
| Negative | High | 0 | 2.8 | 2.8 |  |
|  |  | 0.14 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
|  |  | - | 2.8 | 3 | - |
| Positive | Low | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
|  |  | - | 3.2 | 3 | + |
|  |  | 0.06 | 3 | 3 |  |
| Negative | Low | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
|  |  | - | 3 | 3 |  |
|  |  | - | 3.4 | 3 | + |

* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

**Table 32**

Middle involvement respondents' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | ADA* | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | 0.07 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
|  |  | 0.14 | 3 | 2.6 | + |
|  |  | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| Negative | High | - | 3 | 3.2 | - |
|  |  | 0.07 | 2.4 | 2.8 | - |
|  |  | 0.06 | 3 | 3 |  |
| Positive | Low | - | 3.4 | 3.6 | - |
|  |  | 0.07 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
|  |  | - | 3 | 3.4 | - |
| Negative | Low | 0.07 | 3 | 3 |  |
|  |  | - | 3.2 | 3.8 | - |
|  |  | 0.06 | 3 | 2.8 | + |

* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

Lastly, as Table 33 shows, fewer <u>low involvement</u> students changed their credibility judgements after exposure to news which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitude than the middle involvement students. In all, 6 of the 12 students changed their credibility judgement of the newspaper after they were exposed to pro-attitudinal news and all of these 6 students gave a more positive credibility judgement regardless of the high or low credibility newspaper. This is quite a different tendency compared with their attitude changes. As Table 33 shows, most of the low involvement students changed their credibility judgements after exposure to pro-attitudinal news in the high credibility newspaper, while almost none of them changed their credibility judgements with the low credibility newspaper.

**Table 33**

<u>Low involvement</u> respondents' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | ADA* | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | 0.14 | 2.6 | 2.4 | + |
|  |  | 0.13 | 2.8 | 2.6 | + |
|  |  | 0.07 | 3 | 3 |  |
| Negative | High | 0 | 2.8 | 2.8 |  |
|  |  | 0 | 2.6 | 2.6 |  |
|  |  | 0.07 | 3 | 2.4 | + |
| Positive | Low | 0 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
|  |  | 0 | 3 | 3 |  |
|  |  | 0 | 3.4 | 3 | + |
| Negative | Low | 0 | 3.4 | 3.4 |  |
|  |  | 0 | 3 | 3 |  |
|  |  | 0.06 | 3.4 | 2.6 | + |

\* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

Nine of 12 low involvement students changed their credibility judgements of the

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newspapers after exposure to news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude toward Korea (see Table 34), 5 of these giving a more negative judgement of the newspaper's credibility. This left 4 students who gave a more positive judgement of credibility even after exposure to counter-attitudinal news. The major difference between the high and low credibility newspaper was that most students who changed their credibility judgement moved in the positive direction for the high credibility newspaper and the negative direction for the low credibility newspaper. These results were very different from pro-attitudinal news. Accordingly, it can be said that 'source credibility' had an influence on the low involvement students when they were exposed to counter-attitudinal news, giving a less favourable assessment of credibility to the low credibility newspaper.

**Table 34**

<u>Low involvement</u> respondents' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to articles which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitudes toward Korea

| Original Attitude | Newspaper Credibility | ADA* | M (pre) | M (post) | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | High | 0 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.07 | 2.6 | 2.8 | - |
| | | 0.06 | 2.2 | 2 | + |
| Negative | High | 0.13 | 2.8 | 2.4 | + |
| | | 0.14 | 2.6 | 2 | + |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| Positive | Low | 0 | 3.4 | 4 | - |
| | | 0.07 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | 0 | 3.6 | 4 | - |
| Negative | Low | 0 | 3.2 | 3.6 | - |
| | | 0 | 3.2 | 3.6 | - |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | |

* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

The results show that credibility judgements were different depending on the students' degree of involvement, the. However, there were some differences from results predicted by the literature. As expected, high involvement students did not show marked changes in attitude or credibility judgements with pro- or counter-attitudinal news in the high and low credibility newspapers. A higher proportion of the middle involvement students, however, showed changes in their credibility judgements. In particular, they gave a positive assessment of credibility with counter-attitudinal news in both the high and low credibility newspapers. In addition, they show quite a strong relationship between their attitude changes and changes in their credibility judgements. Low involvement students were more influenced by source credibility when they were exposed to counter-attitudinal news, giving a less favourable assessment of credibility to the low credibility newspaper when compared their assessments with pro-attitudinal news.

## *4.4   Post hoc findings*

### 4.4.1 Selecting newspaper depending on topic

The survey also required respondents to choose one newspaper depending on the topic, including local news, state news, national news, international news, business/ finance news, health/ medical news, crime/ natural disaster news and sports/ entertainment news, as different newspapers are known to have different specialties (e.g., *The Financial Review* is known for its focus on financial news). *The Courier-Mail* was selected by 66.5% of students for local news and 75.3% for state news, as shown in Table 35. Even though 30% of the respondents chose *The Courier-Mail* as their low credibility

newspaper, this high figure was not unexpected considering the location of the students. As all of the students were from South-East Queensland, it is not unusual that *The Courier-Mail* was the most chosen state and local newspaper by far. In addition, also reflecting the students' area of residence, 91 students from the Gold Coast (62% of students residing in the Gold Coast area) selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* for their local news.

Regarding national and international news, *The Australian* was selected by a clear majority, with 66% and 56% of students respectively, clearly re-emphasising the status of *The Australian* as a national newspaper. Not surprisingly, *The Financial Review* was selected by 34% of students as their most credible newspaper for business/ financial news. *The Australian* was chosen as the second most credible source (28.6%) for business/ financial news. Regarding health and medical news, 40% of students selected *The Australian.* *The Courier-Mail* was ranked second with 30% students. This could be because issues about health and medicine are predominantly related to national issues, and thus respondents selected their national newspaper.

For crime and natural disaster news, the results were almost the same as the first and second ranked newspapers. About 42.8% of students selected *The Australian* for crime or natural disaster news, compared to 42.3% for *The Courier-Mail*. However, *The Courier-Mail* was by far the most chosen newspaper for sports and entertainment news (64% of students). This result indicates that *The Courier-Mail* met the students' needs in terms of provision of local as well as national sports and entertainment information.

In Table 35, the most credible newspapers in regard to topic are presented. The details of these results are outlined in Appendix 3.

**Table 35**

The most credible newspaper with regard to topic

| Topic | Newspaper Name | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Local news | *The Courier-Mail* | 66.5 |
| State news | *The Courier-Mail* | 75.3 |
| National news | *The Australian* | 65.8 |
| International news | *The Australian* | 55.6 |
| Business/ finance news | *The Financial Review* | 34.0 |
| Health/ medical news | *The Australian* | 48.5 |
| Crime/ natural disaster news | *The Australian* | 42.8 |
| Sports/ entertainment news | *The Courier-Mail* | 64.7 |

Thus, despite the fact that *The Australian* was selected overall as the most credible newspaper and *The Courier-Mail* as the least credible by the respondents, *The Courier-Mail*'s selection as the most popular newspaper in Henningham's (1982) study can perhaps be explained on the grounds of its credibility for local and state news.

## 4.4.2 Credibility judgments of most frequently read newspaper

To measure the credibility of the respondents' most frequently read newspaper (in this thesis, the respondents' most frequently read newspaper was *The Courier-Mail* according to the survey results), a 14 item questionnaire was given to the students. These items asked the students about their ratings of fairness, bias, accuracy, telling the

whole story, respecting people's privacy, caring about what readers think, separating fact from opinion, sensationalism, morals, patriotism, fact, concerned about public interest, reporter training and quality of reporting (presented in Table 36). Responses were not limited to only *The Courier-Mail*, but rather students were asked to respond regarding their most frequently read newspaper.

There were no significant differences in the means for each item, however, the standard deviations varied somewhat depending on the item. That is, the range of means for each item was from 2.5 to 3.5, so it was difficult to determine which items had a greater effect on judgements of newspaper credibility. However, the large standard deviations of some items indicated that there was a large variation in the responses given by the students.

**Table 36**

Credibility judgements about frequently read newspaper

| Items | Mean | S.D |
|---|---|---|
| Fair / Unfair | 3.14 | .783 |
| Unbiased / Biased | 3.24 | .662 |
| Accurate / Inaccurate | 3.08 | .721 |
| Tells the whole story / Doesn't the whole story | 2.95 | .455 |
| Respects people's privacy / Doesn't respects people's privacy | 3.16 | .462 |
| Cares very much about what reader thinks / Doesn't cares very much about what reader thinks | 2.92 | .521 |
| Separates facts from opinion / Too much reporter's opinion rather than fact | 2.92 | .637 |
| Sensationalized / Not sensationalized | 2.88 | .642 |
| Moral / Immoral | 2.62 | .672 |
| Patriotic / Unpatriotic | 2.54 | .664 |
| Factual / Opinionated | 3.21 | .649 |
| Concerned mainly about the public interest / Concerned mainly about making profits | 2.78 | .477 |
| Reporters are well trained / Reporters are poorly trained | 2.58 | .644 |
| Good quality of reporting / Poor quality of reporting | 2.65 | .728 |

\* The scale consisted of 14 pairs of bipolar adjectives presented on a 5-point scale, with "1" being the most favourable evaluation (e.g. Fair, Unbiased, etc.) and "5" being the least favourable evaluation (e.g.   Unfair, Biased, etc.).

As shown in the Table 36, issues of fairness, bias, accuracy, and fact were closer to a negative assessment of credibility from respondents than the other items.   The mean rating of 3.25 for item 2 suggested a tendency existed for readers to feel that there was some degree of bias in their most frequently read newspaper.   The figure of 3.22 for item 7 suggested that readers tended to believe their most frequently read newspaper was opinionated.   The mean for item 1 of 3.14 indicated that respondents agreed that their frequently read newspaper was not fair.   In addition, the figure of 3.08 for item 3 indicated a slightly negative assessment regarding accuracy.   With respect to item 5, the rating of 3.16 suggested that readers tended to feel that their most frequently read newspaper did not respect people's privacy.   Again, the large standard deviations for

fairness and accuracy indicated that there were a range of responses from the students (SD = .783 and .721 respectively).  However, the relatively small standard deviation for respecting people's privacy (SD = .462) indicated that there was more agreement amongst the respondents.

In regard to the characteristics of the newspaper such as patriotism, morality, and sensationalism, readers gave relatively positive reactions, such as 2.54 for item 10, 2.62 for item 9 and 2.88 for item 8 (Table 36).   That is, these showed that readers tended to believe their most frequently read newspaper was patriotic, moral and not sensationalized.   In addition, the figure of 2.78 for item 12 suggested that a tendency existed for readers to feel that their most frequently read newspaper was concerned more about public interest than about making profits.   Regarding quality of reporters and their reporting in their most frequently read newspaper, the rating of 2.58 for item 13 and 2.64 for item 14 showed readers tended to believe that their most frequently read newspaper had good quality of reporting and well trained reporters.   However, regarding the issue of good quality of reporting, it was evident that there was a large variation in opinion in the responses given by the respondents through the large standard deviation (SD = .728).

Respondents were also asked about the degree to which they relied on their most frequently read newspaper.   Regarding reliability of respondents' most frequently read newspaper, the rating of 3.26 in Table 37 showed that readers gave relatively positive reply, meaning that overall respondents believed that their most frequently read newspaper is reliable or dependable.   However, the large standard deviation again

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indicated that there was considerable variation of opinion in the responses given by the respondents (SD = .874).

**Table 37**

The reliability of respondents' most frequently read newspaper

| Items | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Reliability | 3.26 | .874 |

\* This question used a scale of '1' to '5', where '1' meant extremely positive about the issue and '5' meant extremely negative about the issue.   A <u>high</u> mean indicates that an issue received positive assessment of credibility from respondents.

## 4.4.3 Attitude change of students with neutral original attitude

The results of the change in attitude for students with a <u>neutral original attitude</u> are shown in Table 38.   The top part of the table represents students with high involvement, the middle section represents students with a middle involvement, and the bottom part represents students with low involvement.   The one-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed that the differences in attitude between the pre- and post-reading were significant at $F(1,35) = 25.569$, $p = .001$.

There were a total of 36 students with neutral original attitude.   Of these, 12 were exposed to two positive news articles with a positive tone in either the high credibility (P1, P2, P13, P14, P25 and P26) or low credibility newspaper (P7, P8, P19, P20, P31 and P32), and six were exposed to two positive news articles with a neutral tone in the high credibility (P3, P15 and P27) or the low credibility newspaper (P9, P21 and P33), as marked in bold in Table 31.   The other 18 students were exposed to two news

articles each with a negative tone in the same way as the other groups. Of these, 12 were exposed to two negative news articles with a negative tone in either the high credibility (P5, P6, P17, P18, P29 and P30) or low credibility newspaper (P11, P12, P23, P24, P35 and P36), and six were exposed to two negative news articles with a neutral tone in the high credibility (P4, P16 and P28) or the low credibility newspaper (P10, P22 and P34).

As Table 38 shows, 56% of the 18 students who were exposed to news with a positive tone changed their attitude toward Korea positively in the post-reading measurement when compared with the pre-reading measurement. The results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA confirmed that this increase was significant at $F(1,17) = 14.367$, $p = .001$. Similarly, 50% of the 18 students who were exposed to reports with a negative tone showed a more negative result in their post-reading measurement. The results of the ANOVA comparing students' pre- and post-reading attitude change also yielded a significant result at $F(1,17) = 16.665$, $p = .001$.

As demonstrated in Table 38, combining the results of attitude change for students exposed to both the positive and negative tone, 50% of students changed their attitude after exposure to news in the high or low credibility newspaper. The students were affected more by news with reporters' tone than news with neutral tone. Most students who were exposed to the high credibility newspaper changed their attitude in a positive or negative direction following the tone of the news. This tendency was highest amongst the middle involvement group, which yielded a significant result in the one-way repeated measures ANOVA at $F(1,11) = 23.386$, $p = .001$. This was followed by the low involvement students, and the results of the ANOVA for the attitude change

for this group approached significance at $F(1,11) = 9.145$, $p = .014$.   On the other hand, the high involvement students exhibited very little change in their attitude, as evidenced by the non-significant result of the ANOVA at $F(1,11) = 15. 040$, $p = .095$.   Despite this, overall the students with a neutral original attitude who had a low involvement with Korea showed the largest differences in attitude change with as many as 75% of the students changing their attitude following the tone of the news articles in both the high and low credibility newspaper.

**Table 38**

Pre- and post-reading attitudes toward Korea (neutral original attitude group)

| Involvement | Newspaper | Stud No. | Pre-reading Mean Attitude | Post-reading Mean Attitude | Attitude Difference (Absolute) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High (n=12) | Hi Pos Pos | P1 | 2.73 | 2.73 | - |
| | Hi Pos Pos | P2 | 2.87 | 2.80 | 0.07 |
| | Hi Pos Neu | P3 | 2.93 | 2.93 | - |
| | Hi Neg Neg | P5 | 3.00 | 3.00 | - |
| | Hi Neg Neg | P6 | 2.93 | 2.93 | - |
| | Hi Neg Neu | P4 | 3.00 | 2.93 | (0.07) |
| | Lo Pos Pos | P7 | 2.80 | 2.80 | - |
| | Lo Pos Pos | P8 | 2.83 | 2.83 | - |
| | Lo Pos Neu | P9 | 3.00 | 3.07 | 0.07 |
| | Lo Neg Neg | P11 | 2.73 | 2.73 | - |
| | Lo Neg Neg | P12 | 3.13 | 3.13 | - |
| | Lo Neg Neu | P10 | 3.00 | 3.00 | - |
| Middle (n=12) | Hi Pos Pos | P13 | 3.13 | 3.07 | 0.06 |
| | Hi Pos Pos | P14 | 3.13 | 3.07 | 0.06 |
| | Hi Pos Neu | P15 | 2.93 | 2.93 | - |
| | Hi Neg Neg | P17 | 3.00 | 3.07 | (0.07) |
| | Hi Neg Neg | P18 | 3.00 | 3.07 | (0.07) |
| | Hi Neg Neu | P16 | 2.87 | 2.93 | (0.06) |
| | Lo Pos Pos | P19 | 3.07 | 3.00 | 0.07 |
| | Lo Pos Pos | P20 | 3.07 | 3.07 | - |
| | Lo Pos Neu | P21 | 3.13 | 3.13 | - |
| | Lo Neg Neg | P23 | 2.93 | 2.93 | - |
| | Lo Neg Neg | P24 | 3.00 | 3.07 | (0.07) |
| | Lo Neg Neu | P22 | 2.80 | 2.80 | - |
| Low (n=12) | Hi Pos Pos | P25 | 3.00 | 2.87 | 0.13 |
| | Hi Pos Pos | P26 | 3.07 | 2.93 | 0.14 |
| | Hi Pos Neu | P27 | 3.13 | 3.07 | 0.06 |
| | Hi Neg Neg | P29 | 3.20 | 3.33 | (0.07) |
| | Hi Neg Neg | P30 | 3.27 | 3.33 | (0.06) |
| | Hi Neg Neu | P28 | 3.13 | 3.07 | (0.06) |
| | Lo Pos Pos | P31 | 3.33 | 3.27 | 0.06 |
| | Lo Pos Pos | P32 | 3.13 | 3.07 | 0.06 |
| | Lo Pos Neu | P33 | 3.00 | 3.00 | - |
| | Lo Neg Neg | P35 | 3.13 | 3.20 | (0.07) |
| | Lo Neg Neg | P36 | 3.20 | 3.20 | - |
| | Lo Neg Neu | P34 | 3.07 | 3.07 | - |

* In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude. Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.
** "Hi Pos Pos" refers to the high credibility source, positive news with a positive tone.
*** "Lo Neg Neg" refers to the low credibility source, negative news with a negative tone.
**** "Hi Pos Neu" refers to the high credibility source, positive news with a neutral tone.
***** "Lo Neg Neu" refers to the low credibility source, negative news with a neutral tone.
****** Figures in parentheses represent a negative change.

## 4.4.4 Credibility judgments of students with neutral original attitude

As Table 39 shows, the 36 students with a <u>neutral</u> original attitude read news with a positive and negative tone in the high- and low credibility newspaper. Those students with a neutral original attitude did not have a particularly positive or negative image toward Korea, and so could not be divided into categories as to whether the news agreed or disagreed with their original attitude toward Korea. Firstly, to examine students' credibility judgement changes from news with a positive tone, 36 students read news with a positive tone in the high and low credibility newspapers. Of these, 18 students were exposed to news in the high credibility and the other half were exposed to the high credibility newspaper. With the high credibility newspaper, there were 8 students who changed their credibility judgement. Of these, 5 students gave a more negative assessment of credibility and 3 students gave a more positive assessment. With the low credibility newspaper, 11 students changed from their original credibility judgement, with 8 students of these giving a more positive assessment for credibility. That is, the neutral original attitude students showed a greater positive change in their post-treatment assessment for credibility of the low credibility newspaper than the high credibility newspaper.

**Table 39**

Pre- and post reading students' credibility judgement of the high and low credibility newspaper (neutral original attitude group)

| Newspaper Credibility | Tone of News | *ADA | Pre-reading Mean Credibility | Post-reading Mean Credibility | Change (+/-) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High | Positive | - | 2.8 | 3.2 | - |
| | | 0.07 | 2.4 | 2.4 | |
| | | - | 2.8 | 3 | - |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.06 | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.13 | 2.4 | 2.4 | |
| | | 0.14 | 2.8 | 2.4 | + |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| | Negative | 0.07 | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | - | 3.2 | 3.2 | |
| | | - | 2.8 | 3 | - |
| | | 0.06 | 2.8 | 2.8 | |
| | | 0.07 | 2.6 | 2.6 | |
| | | 0.07 | 2.6 | 3 | - |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 2.6 | + |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.6 | + |
| | | 0.06 | 2.8 | 3 | - |
| Low | Positive | - | 3.4 | 3.2 | + |
| | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | - | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | |
| | | 0.06 | 3.4 | 3 | + |
| | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | Negative | - | 3.4 | 3.2 | + |
| | | - | 3 | 3.4 | - |
| | | - | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | - | 3 | 3 | |
| | | - | 3.2 | 3.6 | - |
| | | 0.07 | 3.2 | 3 | + |
| | | - | 3.2 | 4 | - |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 2.8 | + |
| | | - | 3.4 | 3.4 | |

* ADA means Absolute Difference in Attitude. The Change column indicates if the change is a positive or negative change.

** In this table, 1 means strongly positive attitude and 5 means strongly negative attitude.   Accordingly, a low mean indicates that students have a positive attitude.

Comparing with the attitude change results, there were 13 students who changed their

attitude after exposure to news in the high credibility newspaper. Of these, only 5 students changed their credibility judgement more positively or negatively. After exposure to news in the low credibility newspaper, 6 students changed their original attitude, of which 4 in the positive direction and 2 in the negative direction. However, the cause of this result is not immediately obvious. That is, there are likely to be many factors which have an effect on the neutral original attitude students changing their original credibility judgements after exposure to news. This issue will also be discussed in the next chapter.

# 5.  Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between newspaper credibility and readers attitude. It achieved this purpose through investigating university students in South-East Queensland in order to examine attitude change regarding the issue of South Korea as a result of coverage in sources they perceive to be of high and low credibility.

As demonstrated in the literature review, regarding the credibility of media and its effects, early empirical research suggested that readers were more likely to change their opinions in the direction advocated by the content to a significantly higher degree when the material was presented by a 'high-credibility' source than when the material was presented by a 'low-credibility' source. That is, a high credibility source was more persuasive than a low credibility source – in other words, the content of the message

was made more acceptable by its link to a 'credible' source. Accordingly, it was concluded that a high credibility source was more effective in facilitating attitude change than a low credibility source, even when the message in both sources is the same.

However, a survey of the literature suggested that high credibility cannot cause attitude change in all receivers. It was found that attitude change through high credibility sources is also subject to other factors such as the characteristic of the message (e.g., plausibility), readers' ego involvement or prior knowledge of a topic, the degree of interest in the topic and so on. These results have suggested that there are variations in the trust news media audiences place in news messages that can only be attributed to the readers themselves. That is, depending on an individual reader's personal characteristics, personal stake or involvement in or prior knowledge of an issue, s/he would react differently to the content of a message and it could be predicted that her/his rating of media credibility would be different. In addition, situational factors such as issue importance, the controversial nature of the issue, reader bias, and stereotyped ideas are closely related to media credibility judgements.

Accordingly, this study examined media credibility and attitude change based on the notion that media credibility is conceptualised not only as a characteristic of the media but also as a receiver-centred concept. In particular, it focused on investigating how receivers evaluate media credibility. That is, it approaches the issue from the receiver's perspective, especially the degree of receiver involvement, including

knowledge and direct or indirect experience.   It is important to note that this study was related to international news (about South Korea), generally undramatic, informative, and distant from the daily concerns of the respondents. It thus is different from previous studies which have mainly dealt with controversial or highly salient topics such as abortion or smoking.   To this end, particularly for the lower involvement subjects, there was more likelihood of movement in attitude than for controversial ones.

The study investigated university students in South-East Queensland who have differing levels of involvement in South Korea and who were exposed to news about South Korea in their high and low credibility newspaper and identified whether credibility source will cause the readers' attitudes toward Korea to change.   In addition, it also investigated readers' credibility assessments of the news which agreed and disagreed with their original attitude toward Korea.   To achieve this, a three stage method was adopted, consisting of: (1) a survey, (2) content analysis, and (3) an experiment. Through these stages, the study examined pre-treatment (before exposure to the news reports) and post-treatment (after exposure to the news reports) attitudes.   In the pre-treatment stage of the study (the survey), 462 university students in South-East Queensland were questioned to identify their high and low credibility newspaper (for later use in the experiment).   In addition, the survey also measured the readers' newspaper reading habits, credibility of the newspapers, as well as experience and knowledge of Korea and Korean people and original (pre-treatment) attitudes toward Korea and Korean people.   In the content analysis, a total of 30 news articles with a positive tone, negative tone and neutral tone in both the high and low credibility newspapers were selected.   In the experimental stage, 108 students from the 462

survey respondents were categorised into three different groups depending on their original attitudes toward Korea and degree of involvement with Korea. They were exposed to stimulus articles with three different tones or news tones in their high or low credibility newspaper and were presented with a questionnaire which sought to measure (1) their change in attitude toward Korea, and (2) their change in credibility assessment of the newspaper.

This discussion section explains the implications of the findings following the order of the research questions, and then it analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the research, followed by a discussion of the implications for further research.

## 5.1    Implications of findings

As stated earlier, the mass media exercise a powerful influence in determining the degree of attention given to issues in which they are interested. For instance, even though receivers are not interested in an issue, if stories about a particular issue dominate the headlines and focus on the issue for several days, receivers are likely to devote more time to thinking about the issue. This ability of the media to get attention from receivers starts with the gatekeeping process and agenda setting. In this study, receivers read news about Korea which was selected by reporters regardless of whether they wanted to read about Korea or not. From the messages that they received through the news media, the receivers constructed their images and attitudes of Korea, influenced by the personal judgements and comments by the reporters that were contained in these messages.

Most receivers are heavily dependent on the media for information about Korea or Koreans as an international issue. Even though the participants in this study may already have had pre-knowledge of or experience with Korea, depending on the level of this pre-knowledge or experience, the media were potentially a major source for constructing an image of Korea in their minds. It follows then, that even though this study does not directly deal with the effects of agenda setting, the gatekeeping effect or social reality on media credibility, these three concepts have an indisputable underlying effect on the news of Korea that the participants in this study were exposed to. The research questions below therefore deal with the issues of newspaper credibility, attitudes towards Korea and credibility judgements based on the premise that news messages are presented to receivers as an outcome of these processes.

### 5.1.1 Newspaper credibility

**RQ1: Which newspapers do Australian university students in South-East Queensland consider to be high and low credibility newspapers?**

As described above, while there are trends towards which newspapers would be considered as high credibility and which would be considered as low credibility, the distinction is far from a clear-cut one. Chapter 4 showed that nearly 50% of the students selected *The Australian* as a high credibility newspaper, with the closest newspaper to this being *The Courier-Mail*, with only 22.3% of students selecting it. The fact that *The Australian* was selected so overwhelmingly as the high credibility newspaper by South-East Queensland university students out of a list which also included *The Age,*

*The Sydney Morning Herald, The Courier-Mail, Financial Review, The Sun-Herald, Daily Telegraph* and *The Gold Coast Bulletin,* was quite an unexpected result, but one that shows that *The Australian* as a national newspaper has a credible perception compared with the state-based newspapers. *The Courier-Mail*, however, was also named by 30% of the students as a low credibility newspaper, while only 3.9% of the students put *The Australian* in that category.

**RQ2: What are Australian university students' credibility judgments of their most frequently read newspaper? Are there differences between high credibility newspapers and newspapers most frequently read by the students?**

Even though *The Courier-Mail* was selected as the relative low credibility newspaper, the majority of students (about 52%) selected *The Courier-Mail* as their most frequently read newspaper. In addition, *The Australian* which was selected as the high credibility newspaper was selected as the most frequently read newspaper by only 16.2% of students.

This result suggests that readers do not necessarily choose their daily newspaper on the grounds of credibility. Instead, factors such as whether a newspaper can provide up-to-date news and information which is directly related to readers' daily lives is an factor for them in choosing their daily newspaper. This argument is supported by the fact that 75.3% and 66.5% students selected *The Courier-Mail* for the state and local news respectively. In addition, even though more than half of the Gold Coast students selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* as their low credibility newspaper, 62% of these students selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* for their local news. According to some

students' comments, the reason they did not read *The Australian* was they felt it was a Canberra newspaper and not of particular relevance to Queensland. Despite this fact, most of these students still selected *The Australian* as their high credibility newspaper. Moreover, one of the Gold Coast students said that s/he read *The Gold Coast Bulletin* for local news and watched TV for state and national news, but again selected *The Australian* as her/his highly credible newspaper.

Based on students' comments, there are two possible explanations. One is that the differences between the respondents' high credibility newspaper and their most frequently read newspaper may be caused by limitations such as geographical location, and demand for local information, factors which are directly related to their daily life. The other one is that students chose the Australian as their most credible newspaper based purely on the stereotypical image of *the Australian* as being the national newspaper, and not on any critical assessment of their own. That is, without reading and comparing the content, the quality of reporting and other features associated with newspaper credibility, students could be making their decisions on the fact that *The Australian* is a national newspaper available in every state and territory. Similarly, the choice of *The Courier-Mail* as the most frequently read newspaper could also be due to the fact that *The Courier-Mail* is one of only two daily newspapers in Brisbane, and its selection was based on the absence of competition.

When comparing the results of Henningham's 1982 study with this study, depending on the definition of his term 'popular', the results could be either supportive or contradictory. According to Henningham (1982), *The Courier-Mail* was by far the

most popular newspaper.   When asked 'which daily newspaper they liked best', 58% of Brisbane-ites named *The Courier-Mail*, while only 5% of Brisbane-its selected *The Australian* (1982, p. 23).   However, if the word 'popular' was defined as 'likeable' or 'trusted', the results would be somewhat different, where this study places *The Australian* as a high credibility newspaper by 50% of the students and *The Courier-Mail* as a low credibility newspaper by 30% of students.   If the definition of the word 'popular' were to be taken this way, it would suggest that in a period of just over 20 years, *The Courier-Mail has* changed in image from the most popular, likeable, or best newspaper to that of a low credibility newspaper.   This would also mean that there has been a marked increase in the status of *The Australian.*

Conversely, if the definition of 'popular' was correlated with 'frequency', the results of this study would show no significant change in the most 'popular' or 'frequently read' newspaper (*The Courier-Mail*) as chosen by Brisbane residents in a period over this period (58% in 1982 vs. 52% in 2002).   *The Australian*, on the other hand, has shown a marked increase from just 5% of people selecting it as the most popular newspaper in 1982 compared with 16.2% in 2002 when the data were collected.

**RQ3: How many Australian university students have experienced reading different reports of the same story in different newspapers?**

When asked whether they had read reading different reports of the same story in different newspapers, 34.7% of the students surveyed indicated that they had.   This might be attributed to the fact that a large number of news articles still contained incorrect information which is conveyed to readers without being corrected or updated

to the latest information.   For example, during the Sumatra earthquake disaster in 2005, there were large variations in the numbers of fatalities reported in the different newspapers on the same day.   Other examples may include different figures (e.g., variations in the depiction of an accident), different country names (e.g., using 'Japan' or 'China' as encompassing terms for several other Asian countries), different dates and names of places (i.e., errors that have not been picked up in the editing process), and so on.

Regarding experience of reading news reports of events or issues that they had personal knowledge or experience of their most frequently read newspaper, only 3 of 10 students indicated that they had.   For 'fairness' and 'accuracy' of the news report, they believed that the news reports were not particularly fair or accurate.   Their judgments of the news reports of events or issues that they had personal knowledge or experience of in their most frequently read newspaper were more negative than their overall assessments of the newspaper itself (this will be explained in more detail later in the chapter). Accordingly, it can be suggested that readers become more critical toward a news article which is related to their personal knowledge or experiences.   This tendency may be owing to the fact that readers judge news articles based on their own knowledge or experiences, because they trust their own knowledge or experience more than the news media.

## 5.1.2 Australian university students' attitudes toward Korea

### RQ4: How do Australian university students perceive Korea?

To measure this question, 15 statements that included characteristics of Korean people,

political and economic issues relating to Korea and the general environment of Korean society were given to the students. The results suggested that the students had a positive image of Korea overall. In particular, the students perceived Koreans as 'hard working', 'family oriented', and 'friendly' people. In addition, the students believed that Korean people were dedicated to their country, an image that might have been related to the enthusiasm of the Korean supporters in events such as the World Cup Soccer games in 2002. Regarding the economic situation, many students indicated that they believed that the Korean economy was improving.

However, there was a noticeably negative image toward Korea in regard to the political situation. In this sense, the students had a negative image of Korea, indicating that they thought there were frequent demonstrations and internal conflicts and as result that Korea was 'politically unstable'. It is quite possible that these perceptions of Korea have been developed in readers as a result of the tone of the news about Korea. According to an analysis of Australian domestic newspaper coverage of Korea from 1965 to 1995 (Stockwell, 1998), during these periods, news reports about 'Government, politics or internal conflicts' and 'Defence, military or relationship with North Korea' consistently occupied high proportions of news about Korea in every year. In addition, the proportion of news articles with a negative tone exceeded 40% from 1965 to 1995, and in particular, in 1980 when there were extremely unstable conditions politically and socially in Korea, about 60% of the news articles were reported with a negative tone. Therefore, Korea was reported as struggling and having an unstable political system. This tendency is not only true of Australian newspapers. According to previous studies (Schramm, 1981; Burgoon & Shatzer, 1987; Chang & Lee, 1992; Stockwell,

1998), most of the news about Third World countries is negative and deals with such subjects as political and military disputes, internal conflicts, and natural disasters. Unfortunately, the current study did not analyse the proportion of news subjects and reporters' tone in the news about Korea in Australian newspapers. In this regard, it is difficult to determine whether the students' negative image toward Korea was based mainly on news reports. However, based on previous studies, this negative image is no doubt related to prolonged exposure to news that portrays Korea as having an unstable political and social situation. It is interesting to note that despite the negative appraisal of Korea's political and social environment, the respondents generally gave positive views about travelling to Korea.

**RQ4-a: How much do Australian university students know about Korea?**

To measure the students' general knowledge about Korea, 10 multiple-choice questions were administered to the students, asking them to provide information about Korea's capital city, a famous company name, a martial art, food and so forth. About 63% of the students had 4 or more correct answers out of 10 questions, and about 17% of the students had 7 and more correct answers. In particular, most students knew that 'Seoul' is the Korean capital, 'Kim-chi' is a food and 'Hyundai' is a famous Korean company. Again, this result showed that Korea is not only close to Australia as its second largest trading partner but is also receiving recognition from the Australian students.

**RQ4-b: How much are Australian university students personally involved with Korea?**

Regarding the students' personal involvement with Korea, only 28.6% of students indicated they had personal experience with Korea and Korean people.  The question asked about personal experience, therefore, information gathered from newspapers and other media (TV, radio, or newspaper) was not included in the category of personal experience.  Of these students with personal experience with Korea, about 70% stated the experience was through Korean friends, neighbours, or classmates.  This result is most likely related to the fact that the subjects in the current study were university students and there are many Korean students in Australian universities.  About a quarter of the students had either travelled to Korea or had experience through TV or video programs about Korea.  Some of the answers given included that respondents 'had studied in Korea', 'had worked in Korea', and 'had a Korean spouse,' also providing further evidence that Korea is no longer an unknown Asian country to Australian students.

**RQ5-a: How do Australian university students perceive Korea after exposure to Korean news which <u>supports</u> their original attitude in the newspapers?**

As explained in Chapter 3, to measure the attitude change, the students were divided into three groups depending on their original attitude; positive, neutral and negative. The students who had a neutral attitude were analysed separately because they were in a neutral position, not positive or negative.  Thus, the students who had positive and negative original attitudes toward Korea were included as the main focus of the study in order to measure the attitude change after they were exposed to news which supported their original attitude in the newspapers.

Thirteen of the 36 students (36%) strengthened their attitude after exposure to news which supported their original attitude. Even though the students were exposed to only two news articles which supported their original attitude, that 36% changed (strengthened) their original attitude is substantial. All of these students changed their attitude in a positive or negative direction following the tone of the news. That is, the students with a positive original attitude who were exposed to news with a positive tone strengthened their original positive attitude toward Korea in the post-reading measurement when compared with the pre-reading measurement. The students with a negative original attitude who were exposed to news with a negative tone also strengthened their original negative attitude toward Korea in the post-reading measurement. This effect was stronger with the high credibility newspaper, with only a few students showing a change in attitude with the low credibility newspaper.

This is most likely due to the fact that the content of a message is made more believable and acceptable by its link with high credibility newspaper. The students' tendency to strengthen their original attitude after they were exposed to pro-attitudinal news in the high credibility newspaper may be also explained by the fact that they confirmed and justified their original attitude toward Korea through the news articles in the high credibility newspaper. In addition, the students who were exposed to news articles with the reporter's own tone or opinion (tone) showed attitude change much more than the students who were exposed to news with neutral tone. It is possible to say that attitude change was more likely when news articles included the reporter's own opinion (i.e., when the reporter included a positive or negative tone in the report) as opposed to when it had a neutral tone. In other words, it could be stated that when readers were

exposed to news with a positive or negative tone, they received more influence from the news than when they read news with a neutral tone.

One interesting result from the study was that students with a positive original attitude showed more attitude change than the students with a negative original attitude when exposed to news which supported their original attitude. It is difficult to provide a reason for this, although it is possibly related to the degree of the student's involvement with or knowledge of Korea, or even the characteristics of the students in each of the attitude groups.

**RQ5-b: How do Australian university students perceive the image of Korea after exposure to Korean news which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude in the newspapers?**

As described above, in order to measure the attitude change after they were exposed to news which differed from their original attitude in the newspapers, the students who had neutral (neither positive nor negative) original attitude towards Korea were ignored in this part of the study.

When the respondents were exposed to news which <u>supported</u> their original attitude, 36% of the respondents changed their attitude to reinforce the original attitude. On the other hand, when the respondents were exposed to news which <u>differed from</u> their original attitude, 44% of the respondents changed their attitude following the tone of the news. None of the respondents changed their attitude contrary to the news tone in this study. For example, students with a positive original attitude changed their attitude

negatively after they were exposed to news with a negative tone, and students with a negative original attitude changed their attitude positively after they read news with a positive tone. That is, even though they were exposed to news which differed from their original attitude, no one enforced or asserted their original attitude, instead, all of the students changed their attitude following the tone of the news. This tendency was far more obvious with the high credibility newspaper. This result supports the argument that a high credibility source is more persuasive, especially when the content is informative and not directly related to the readers. It is believed that one of the main reasons why the readers clearly changed their attitude following the high credibility newspaper both in cases when they were exposed to news which supported and differed from their original attitude was the topic or content of the news. That is, the topic was about international news, Korea which is unlikely to be directly related with subjects' daily lives, is not controversial, and is not a high ego-involvement topic. Thus, it can be said that the content in high credibility newspapers is often more acceptable and trustworthy to readers, and hence is more effective in inducing readers' attitude change following the tone of the news in the high credibility newspaper, especially when the content of the news is only peripherally related to the reader (low salience).

With the low credibility newspaper, based on the literature, it was expected that some students would reinforce their original attitude in contrast to the content of news after they were exposed to news which differed from their original attitude in the low credibility newspaper. However, even though the number of students who changed their attitude was very small, all of them still changed their attitude following the tone of news even in the low credibility newspaper. Again, it is believed that this result is

related to the characteristics of the topic of the news. Because the subjects were generally unlikely to have relatively strong or fixed opinions about Korea, when the content of news was persuasive or of interest to them, they were influenced by the news, even regardless of general newspaper credibility.


**RQ6: Is there any relationship between Australian university students' perceived image of Korea after exposure to news (which supported or differed from their original attitude) and their degree of involvement with Korea?**

Based on a number of previous studies (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Gunther, 1988; Rosser, 1990; Austin & Dong, 1994), there is a strong relationship between the readers' attitude change and their degree of involvement toward an issue. The degree of involvement readers have of an issue is considered one of the most important motivational variables. To demonstrate this argument, this study analysed pre- and post-reading attitudes of the students depending on their degree of involvement with Korea. Firstly, regarding the students with <u>high involvement</u> with Korea, they quite rarely changed their original attitude after they were exposed to news which <u>supported</u> their original attitude or to news which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude. In addition, they did not receive any noticeable influence from the high credibility newspaper, that is, they did not show more attitude change with the high credibility newspaper than with the low credibility newspaper.


According to the literature, a highly involved receiver has a strong anchor and rigidly holds an opinion, and has high self-perceived expertise of an issue, thus has a very stable attitude position from which to judge content. In this study as well, the students

with <u>high involvement</u> with Korea showed a very stable attitude position from which to judge content.   Whether the content of the message was pro-attitudinal or counter-attitudinal, they rarely changed their original attitude toward Korea.

It is expected that highly involved subjects will persist more with their original attitude and will view the content of counter-attitudinal message unfavourably (e.g. as less credible) when they are exposed to news which differs from their original attitude.   On the other hand, it is expected that these subjects will strengthen their attitudes with news which supports their original attitude toward Korea.   However, this study did not show such a result, and the high involvement subjects did not alter their credibility assessments of the newspapers which provided the stimulus articles.   This issue of credibility judgment will be discussed in Research Question 7 below.

That the highly involved subjects did not strongly maintain their original attitude after they were exposed to news which supported or differed from their original attitude toward Korea is believed to be due to the nature of the content of the news.   That is, news about Korea as international news is an example of a more unobtrusive issue (topics for which the media may be people's predominant source of information) to readers.   In addition, international news issues are generally not related to receivers' direct experience, nor do they typically fit into the category of high-ego involvement. Such news content might not cause subjects to show a strong reaction with news about Korea, unlike debatable, controversial or obtrusive issues (topics for which people have direct personal experience and either strong existing opinions or a need for decision-making).

Regarding attitude change caused by the characteristic of the message, Chaiken (1980) argued that high-involvement subjects' attitudes were affected mostly by the number of issue-relevant arguments in the message, and that stronger arguments effected significantly more attitude change than weaker ones. However, in this study, a total of four highly involved students changed their attitude after they read news which supported or differed from their attitude toward Korea. In addition, with highly involved students, there appeared to be little influence from news with the reporter's own opinion (tone) on their attitude as shown by the small number of subjects demonstrating a change in attitude.

Secondly, regarding the subjects with middle involvement with Korea, as shown in the results, there was a very consistent change in the subjects' attitude after they were exposed to news which supported or differed from their original attitude. One of the most interesting results of the study was that middle involvement subjects changed their attitude more with news which had a counter-attitudinal message than with news which had a pro-attitudinal message. In addition, when compared with highly involved subjects and low involvement subjects, a large number of middle involvement subjects showed attitude change from exposure to the low credibility newspaper. This result can be supported by the literature (Greenwald, 1981; Slater & Rouner, 1996) which argues that middle involvement respondents do not hold their own extreme opinion, but rather will be receptive to a broad range of information and ideas. That is, middle involvement subjects had enough knowledge or motivation or interest in Korea to read news about Korea. Their knowledge or motivation or interest was different from that

of the highly involved subjects.   They were ready to seek and obtain information about Korea in order to assess and revise their own opinion toward Korea unlike those subjects who had a firm or polarized attitude.   Accordingly, the middle involvement subjects showed change in their attitude following the tone of the news articles in not only pro-attitudinal news but also counter-attitudinal news.   In addition, this tendency was present in both the high and low credibility newspapers.   Because they had a narrow latitude of rejection and a wider range of non-commitment, they showed greater change even with counter-attitudinal news or news from the low credibility newspaper. In addition, this change was also evident in their credibility judgment.   They gave a more favourable evaluation to the sources with messages that were useful to them, that is, which influenced their attitude change.   Accordingly, it is interesting to analyse the relationship between the news which caused the subjects to change attitude and credibility assessment for the news, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Lastly, regarding the subjects with <u>low involvement</u> with Korea, overall they did show attitude change after they were exposed to news which <u>supported or differed</u> from their original attitude.   However, these changes were far more likely after exposure to the high credibility newspaper, unlike the middle involvement subjects who showed attitude change even with the low credibility newspaper.   This results can be explained by cognitive response theory which predicts that a receiver decides his or her evaluative attention regarding an issue depending on the characteristics of the message source (status, credibility and so on) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Stamm & Dube, 1994; Severin & Tankard, 2000).   The low involved subjects were relatively uninterested or less knowledgeable about Korea, thus they did not have enough motivation to seek or obtain

information about Korea actively.   In addition, the low involvement subjects changed their attitude more after they were exposed to news which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude and only in the <u>high</u> credibility newspaper.   This is explained by the fact that they did not have a strong opinion about Korea, therefore they had no stable attitude position from which to judge such content.   Accordingly, although the low involvement subjects changed their attitude, they only followed the high credibility newspaper without judgement of content in the news, most likely because they did not have enough knowledge to judge the news in low credibility newspaper.   This tendency has also been explained by agenda effect. Just as the agenda effect is the strongest in less interested and more uncertain audiences, less interested and more uncertain low involved subjects showed greater change in the high credibility newspaper.

Thus, the relationship between the subjects' attitude change and their degree of involvement can be summarised as follows.

1.  The highly involved subjects have a very stable attitude position from which to judge content.   With the content of both pro-attitudinal message and counter-attitudinal messages, they rarely changed their original attitude toward Korea regardless of the credibility of the newspaper.   This tendency is likely caused by the fact that highly involved subjects have more self-perceived expertise about Korea and rigidly hold their original attitude toward Korea.   Therefore, they did not change their attitude even with the high credibility newspaper.

2.  The middle involvement subjects showed considerable attitude change with news which both <u>supported or differed</u> from their original attitude toward Korea in both

the high- and low credibility newspapers.   This result can be explained by the fact that they had sufficient knowledge and interest in Korea to motivate them to seek and accept information about Korea.   This motivation led them to assess and revise their attitude towards Korea and to overcome source credibility.

3. The low involvement subjects showed consistent attitude change after they were exposed to news which <u>supported or differed</u> from their original attitude towards Korea.   However, this tendency was only present with the high credibility newspaper.   This may be explained by the fact that their lesser knowledge of and interest in Korea reduced their motivation to find information about Korea and thus produced a dependency on source credibility.

Generally, the results of this study supported the arguments in the literature.   However, on a general note, the absolute value for the subjects' attitude differences showed quite small changes overall, but there were quite significant numbers of students in this study who demonstrated some degree of attitude change, even after exposure to only two news articles toward Korea.   That is, even though the subjects changed their attitude, it did not change consistently in all three involvement levels, and this change was not large.   In addition, even though the subjects were exposed to news which <u>differed</u> from their original attitude, all of the subjects who changed their attitude followed the tone of the news.   This means, for example, after high involved subjects who had a <u>positive original</u> attitude toward Korea were exposed to <u>negative news</u> about Korea, they changed their attitude in the negative direction instead of persisting with their original attitude.   Regarding the preceding points in this study, it is believed that the nature of the content of the news and characteristics of messages caused these outcomes.   The

subjects' source for news about Korea is through the media rather than through direct experience, and the issues in the news about Korea are unlikely to directly influence in their daily lives.   Accordingly, even highly involved subjects generally do not have strong and firmly-held opinions about Korea when compared with debatable or controversial issues, or issues which have a direct influence on their daily lives.   In addition, regarding the characteristics of the message, again the news about Korea is not typically debatable, therefore the message does not generally contain an extremely polarized personal attitude or opinion of the reporter.   These factors may have contributed to the large number of subjects changing their attitude following the news instead of reinforcing or persisting with their original attitude.

Despite this, the tone of the news, indicating the reporter's tone or opinion had a much greater influence on the subjects' attitude than news with a neutral tone.   When analysing the results of the study, generally speaking, more subjects changed their attitude with news which reflected the reporters' negative or positive attitude toward Korea when compared with subjects who were exposed to news with a neutral tone.   It is believed that this tendency is likely to occur more with international news.   As discussed in the literature review chapter, receivers' awareness and knowledge of other nations is heavily dependent on how the media portray foreign countries.   This study suggested that reporter attitude has strong effect on readers' attitude towards the foreign country.   This is because receivers often lack primary experience, and are not equipped to distinguish between the truth and falsehood portrayed in news stories.   Some false or misleading information portrayed in the news can produce stereotyping towards the other country and this stereotyping can distort or reduce the accuracy of portrayals.

This can be imprinted in the receivers' mind and affect the outcome of further communication. Therefore, this study has provided another opportunity to confirm that people's experience of the unknown world is often that which is seen through the journalist's eye, and their attitudes and perceptions of reality toward issues are easily influenced by journalists, depending on, among other things, judgements about source credibility, previous knowledge and opinion, and experience..

## 5.1.3 Credibility judgments of newspapers

**RQ7: How do Australian students perceive the fairness of coverage of Korean news in the high or low credibility newspapers when the tone of coverage <u>agrees or disagrees</u> with their original attitude toward Korea?**

Firstly, regarding the subjects' credibility judgment of high and low credibility newspapers after exposure to news which <u>agrees</u> with their original attitude, a total of 18 out of 36 subjects changed their credibility judgment of newspapers. Of these 18 subjects, 16 gave a more <u>positive</u> credibility assessment for the newspapers while the other 2 subjects changed their credibility judgments <u>negatively</u>. The other 18 of the 36 subjects did <u>not change</u> their credibility judgments of the newspapers. In addition, a comparison of credibility judgments of both the high and low credibility newspapers showed that, after the subjects' read news which agreed with their attitude toward Korea the low credibility newspaper received more positive credibility judgment than the high credibility newspaper. This tendency might be related to the original credibility judgment for the high credibility newspaper. That is, when analysing subjects' original credibility judgments of the newspapers, their assessment of the high credibility newspaper was much higher than that of the low credibility newspaper. Therefore,

their expectation of the high credibility newspaper was already quite high. Accordingly, for news which agrees with their original attitude, the subjects' general credibility judgment for the high credibility newspaper is stable. On the other hand, with the low credibility newspaper, the subjects' original credibility judgment was already markedly lower than that of the high credibility newspaper, indicating that their expectation for the newspaper was comparatively low. Accordingly, for news which agreed with their original attitude, the subjects' credibility judgment for the low credibility newspaper was often more generous. Overall, this study showed that with news articles which agreed with the subjects' attitude toward Korea, they generally kept a stable credibility judgment of the newspapers. It is also believed that again, this result might be related to the nature of the issue. If the content of news is more controversial or contains stronger arguments, it is expected that the respondents will show more change in their credibility judgment.

When examining the relationship between the subjects' attitude change and their credibility judgments of the newspapers, 13 of the 36 subjects changed their attitude toward Korea after they were exposed to news which agreed with their original attitude, and out of those 13 subjects, 10 subjects gave a more positive credibility judgment. Although far more subjects changed their attitude with the high credibility newspaper than with the low credibility newspaper, all of them gave a positive credibility assessment for the low credibility newspaper.

Secondly, regarding the subjects' credibility judgment of high and low credibility newspapers after they were exposed to news which disagreed with their original attitude,

23 out of 36 subjects changed their credibility judgments.   Of these 23 subjects, 14 gave a more <u>negative</u> credibility assessment of the newspapers while 9 subjects gave a more <u>positive</u> credibility judgment of the newspapers.    In addition, 13 of the 36 subjects did <u>not change</u> their original credibility judgment of the newspapers.

When compared with the credibility judgments for pro-attitudinal news, a much higher number of subjects responded to counter-attitudinal news through changing their credibility judgments.   In particular, regarding the counter-attitudinal news in the low credibility newspaper, the subjects' credibility judgments were much more critical than with the high credibility newspaper.   This was quite a different reaction from the subjects compared with the credibility judgments for the pro-attitudinal news in the low credibility newspaper, which was more positive than the high credibility newspaper.

The other point with the credibility judgment for the counter-attitudinal news is that even though they were exposed to news which disagreed with their original attitude, the number of subjects who gave a more positive credibility judgment was not small.   In particular, this tendency was clearer with the high credibility newspaper.   It is believed that this result is due to the unobtrusiveness of the issue of Korea, where the subject more depends on the media, especially the high credibility source than themselves. Credibility leads to reliance and individuals develops degrees of reliance on the media based on their opinions of media credibility.   If individuals perceive the news media to be highly credible, they will tend to become highly dependent upon the media for information. This tendency is clearly shown when individual is uncertain about the issue. Accordingly, even though they were exposed to news which disagreed with their

original attitude toward Korea, the subjects depended on the information in the high credibility newspaper caused by their lack of or uncertainty of their knowledge of Korea.

This argument is also supported by the relationship between the subjects' attitude change and their credibility judgments for the counter-attitudinal news in the high credibility newspaper. That is, a total of 11 out of the 14 subjects who changed their attitude following the tone of the news after exposure to counter-attitudinal messages changed their attitude with the high credibility newspaper. In addition, 7 out of these 11 subjects gave a more positive credibility judgment to the news source. However, with the low credibility newspaper, the subjects did not change their attitude after exposure to the counter-attitudinal news, and also they gave mostly unfavourable assessments of credibility for the newspaper. Accordingly, the subjects showed that they trusted and depended on the news in the high credibility newspaper, therefore, they changed their attitude following the tone of the news in the high credibility newspaper. This tendency was clearer in subjects. However, with the low credibility newspaper, even if their knowledge of Korea was not extensive (i.e., middle or low involvement subjects), they still trusted themselves more than the low credibility newspaper.

These results suggest that students showed some degree of critical judgement with the low credibility newspaper after they were exposed to news which differed from their original attitude when compared with the high credibility newspaper. With the high credibility newspaper, even though the respondents were exposed to counter-attitudinal news, many rejected the news content. However, with the low credibility newspaper,

most of them gave more negative credibility judgements.

Accordingly, the results of the research question regarding students' credibility judgements of high and low credibility newspapers with news which agreed or disagreed with their original attitude toward Korea could be expressed as follows:

1. When students were exposed to news which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitude, generally most students gave a positive assessment of newspaper credibility. This tendency was more apparent in the low credibility newspaper. This might be explained by the fact that the scores for the credibility judgement about the high credibility newspaper were already sufficiently high as to not leave much room for a higher judgement. This being the case, it would be easier for students to give a higher post-reading credibility judgement for the low credibility newspaper.

2. When students were exposed to news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude, the majority of respondents gave a negative assessment for both the high and low credibility newspapers. However, more than a third of the students who changed from their original attitude after exposure to counter-attitudinal news changed their assessment of newspaper credibility positively. In particular, this tendency mainly existed with the high credibility newspaper. On the other hand, with the low credibility newspaper, many of the students showed a negative reaction, changing not only their attitude but also their credibility assessment of the newspaper.

**RQ 8: Is there any relationship between subjects' credibility judgments of the newspaper and their degree of involvement with Korea?**

Credibility can be seen as a changeable perception and is primarily a construct of the

message receivers themselves.   That is to say, differences in receiver involvement toward an issue produce different attitudes toward the content of messages, thus having an effect on credibility.

Firstly, with <u>high involvement</u> subjects, their credibility judgments of newspapers were not different when they were exposed to news which <u>agreed</u> and <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude towards Korea.   In addition, this tendency was the same for both the high and low credibility newspaper, thus confirming that 'source credibility' has no significant influence on readers in a high involvement condition.

In the same way as these subjects did not change their attitude in the post-reading measurement, pro- or counter-attitudinal content of news about Korea did not influence their credibility judgments.   In addition, these tendencies appeared comparably in both the high and low credibility newspaper.   Considering previous studies which have shown critical judgment from respondents about news which differed from their opinion, these results are quite different.   With the small number of subjects and no comparison with other debatable issues, however, makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions regarding this difference.   High involvement people have a tendency to show less change in credibility judgement for unobtrusive and less debatable issues such as foreign news, because they are not likely to hold a strong opinion toward Korea.   Due to this fact, they are more likely to undergo change in their position toward Korea than change their credibility judgments of the newspapers.

Secondly, with <u>middle involvement</u> subjects, the results were quite interesting. They

showed marked change for news which agreed or even disagreed with their original attitude toward Korea. With news which <u>agreed</u> with their original attitude toward Korea, 8 out of 12 subjects changed their credibility judgments of the newspapers, 7 of them positively. This favourable evaluation was present not only with the high credibility newspaper but also with the low credibility newspaper. In particular, all 5 middle involvements subjects who changed their attitude following the tone of the news gave a positive judgment for both the high or low credibility newspapers.

This tendency was also evident in news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude toward Korea. Even though they were exposed to news which disagrees with their original attitude toward Korea, they still showed quite favourable judgments of the credibility of the newspapers. That is, 10 out of 12 subjects changed their credibility judgment with 5 of these 10 subjects giving more positive and the other half giving more negative judgments of credibility. That is to say, middle involvement subjects were not biased to persist with their original attitude, but rather paid more attention to the content of news. As was shown in their attitude change, they analysed the content of the news actively without concern for whether the news agreed or disagreed with their opinion, nor with any visible difference between the high and low credibility newspapers. The results showed that a large number of subjects who changed their attitude following the news also gave positive judgements for news credibility. Therefore, this result provided further evidence for the argument that middle involvement receivers have a tendency to look for information and ideas actively to assess and revise their own opinion, instead of strongly holding onto their own opinions of issues. Accordingly the news which provides more useful information to them is

more likely to encourage positive judgements and increased credibility from the receiver.

Lastly, with <u>low involvement</u> subjects, while the changes were not as great as with the middle involvement subjects, there were some visible effects for news which <u>agreed or disagreed</u> with their original attitude toward Korea in both the <u>high and low</u> credibility newspaper.   With the pro-attitudinal news, the subjects showed a favourable assessment of credibility for not only the high credibility newspaper but also the low credibility newspaper, even though the subjects changed their attitude only with the high credibility newspaper.   This is a different result from the predictions in the literature. According to previous studies, low involvement people have relatively lower knowledge of an issue, and so are far less interested in the issue and have little no motivation to think about the issue, causing them to depend on source credibility. However, in this study, low involvement subjects showed favourable evaluations not only of the high credibility newspaper but also the low credibility newspaper.

Regarding news which <u>disagreed</u> with their original attitude toward Korea, low involvement subjects showed a different tendency.   That is to say, 9 out of 12 subjects changed their credibility judgments about the newspapers after they were exposed to counter-attitudinal news toward Korea.   With the high credibility newspaper, they gave a more positive credibility judgment, but with the low credibility newspaper, almost all of them gave a more negative credibility judgment of the news.   Although again, due to the small number of subjects, this result does not allow for generalisations to be made about changes in newspaper credibility ratings by low involvement respondents it does

provide some support for the argument that with the counter-attitudinal news, low involvement students trust the news in the high credibility newspaper more than their own knowledge of Korea.   As a result, they often change their attitude following the tone of the news in the high credibility newspaper and also give favourable assessment of credibility of the high credibility newspaper even when exposed to counter-attitudinal news.   In addition, it is believed that this tendency to depend on source credibility is clearer in counter-attitudinal news because they are aware of their lack of knowledge of the issue, and they have minimal interest in the issue.

As some researchers argue, credibility is not a stable attribution that a person assigns consistently to a channel, but rather credibility is highly situational and receivers' various backgrounds such as their involvement, motivation or personal stake in an issue are important predictors of their trust in media converge of that issue.   Thus, in the current study there was a strong relationship between the subjects' credibility judgement of the newspapers and their degree of involvement toward Korea.   In addition, there were differences in the subjects' credibility judgements of the high or low credibility newspapers depending on their degree of involvement.

Generally, although this study confirmed the results predicted in the literature, there were some limitations and unexpected results, such as high involvement subjects' failure to demonstrate strong reactions against the news source even with counter-attitudinal content.   Again this result might be explained by the fact that the issue of Korea was a non-controversial international issue and the lower changes in attitudes may have been caused by their lack of knowledge of Korea when compared

with issues they consider to be of more daily importance. Therefore, with this result, it can be suggested that the relationship between credibility judgement of the newspapers and subjects' degree of involvement is flexible depending on the characteristics of the issue. That is, for issues such as foreign country news, high involvement subjects are not critical toward news even when it <u>disagrees</u> with their original attitude toward an issue. In other words, they do not hold extremely polarized attitudes towards the issues, and so they are more flexible to accept other opinions and information about the issue and thus are less likely to alter their evaluations of newspaper credibility.

## 5.2 Post-hoc findings

### 5.2.1 Newspaper reading habits of students

According to the results of the survey, 9 in 10 university students (in South-East Queensland) read newspapers with about 7 in 10 students reading newspapers more than three times per week. In addition, about 5 in 10 students read one newspaper and 4 in 10 read two or more newspapers, suggesting a high percentage of newspaper reading habits among the students. Moreover, quite a large number of the students read not only one newspaper. As the survey did not ask where the students read the newspapers it is difficult to ascertain with any degree of certainty, but this may have been partially due to the availability of newspapers around campus, such as in students' break rooms or libraries.

Regarding the reason why the students planned to read newspapers, most students said they read newspapers because reading newspapers was important in providing them

with up-to-date news and helping them in their daily lives.   In addition, many students said they read newspapers for in-depth analysis of issues.   However, according to the results, the editorial views in newspapers did not have any influence on students' choice of a particular newspaper.   In addition, even though their general judgements of 'fairness' or 'bias' were quite critical, the students were not concerned whether the news stories were objective or were presented in a balanced way when they planned to read newspapers.   Therefore, when the students planned to read newspapers, they were more concerned with having up-to-date news or useful information for their daily lives than the objectiveness of the news stories or the editorial views.

## 5.2.2 Selecting a newspaper depending on topic

As the results showed in Chapter 4, there is a difference between the students' perception of high credibility newspaper and their most frequently read newspaper. The students showed differences in their selection of the most credible newspaper, depending on the topic.   The students were required to choose newspapers depending on the topic, including local news, state news, national news, international news, business/ finance news, health/ medical news, crime/ natural disaster news and sports/ entertainment news.   Generally, the students chose their local newspaper regarding topics which were directly related to their residential location such as local or state news, or sport news.   For example, most students who live in Brisbane area chose *The Courier-Mail* for their local and state news, and the students from the Gold Coast selected *The Gold Coast Bulletin* for their local news.   However, ironically a large number of these students selected *The Courier-Mail* or *The Gold Coast Bulletin* as their low credibility newspaper.   Regarding topics which were indirectly related to them,

such as international news, health/ medical news, or crime/ natural disaster news, the students selected *The Australian* as their high credibility newspaper.   With business/ finance news, they selected *The Financial Review*, even though it is likely that many of the students did not often read it.

Accordingly, these results suggested that students select which newspaper to read based on whether a particular newspaper is able to provide them with up-to-date news or information which is directly related to their residential area and daily lives.   That is, if a newspaper provides enough up-to-date news or information about their local and daily lives, the students often select this newspaper to read even if they believe that it is less credible.

## 5.2.3 The credibility judgements of students' most frequently read newspaper

In order to determine the credibility judgements of students' most frequently read newspaper, a 14-item question was administered to the students.   As the results showed, it was difficult to determine clearly which items had a greater effect on judgements of credibility because the range of the mean for each item were quite small (between 2.5 and 3.5), rather than strongly leaning one way or the other.   Considering the ranges of the mean for each item, it is possible that the students' views of their most frequently read newspaper were not seriously positive or negative.   Despite this, the mean for bias, fact, fairness and accuracy had a noticeable tendency towards the negative side.   In addition, a significant number of respondents also believed their most frequently read

newspaper did not respect people's privacy.  For the basic measure of credibility, narrowly defined as whether a newspaper is believed by its readers, the students showed stronger reactions to items such as 'fairness', 'bias', 'fact', or 'accuracy'.   As shown in previous studies (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Roberts & Leifer, 1975; Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986; D'Alessio & Allen, 2000), for media credibility, people generally heavily scrutinise for accurate and unbiased reporting.   This study showed a similar tend. When analysing the respondents' survey papers, there was a larger range of variation for 'fairness', 'bias', 'fact', 'accuracy' and 'quality of reporting' than for many other issues. Generally, the students who selected *The Courier-Mail* as their low credibility newspaper showed more critical responses than others.   Other items such as 'morality', 'patriotism', 'reporter's training' and 'quality of reporting' generally received positive feedback from the students.   However, an analysis of students' responses showed there was more care taken over the responses for 'fairness', 'bias', 'fact', or 'accuracy' than other items, in which they often simply repeated the same ranking for a number of issues (response bias).

Overall, the students' credibility judgments about their frequently read newspaper were not obviously negative.  Even though their frequently read newspaper and their low credibility newspaper were the same, generally, the students were satisfied with their frequently read newspaper, and this tendency proved through the figures for reliability. On a scale of 1 to 5, the rating 3.26 for 'reliability' showed that the readers gave positive responses.   Accordingly, it could be said that the university students in South-East Queensland were generally satisfied with their frequently read newspaper and therefore relied on the contents of the newspaper.   This may be, however,

explained by the fact that *The Courier-Mail* is one of the only newspapers for the state of Queensland. As a result the students selection of *The Courier-Mail* as their most credible newspaper for local or state news might be in part due to a lack of competition, and this also may have influenced their positive assessment of 'reliability' of *The Courier-Mail.*

## 5.2.4 Attitude change of the students with neutral original attitude

Students who had a neutral original attitude toward Korea could not be investigated in the same way as students with a positive or a negative original attitude in that they could not be divided into groups where they were exposed to news which supported or differed from their original attitude toward Korea. Therefore, this section discusses briefly the students' general attitude changes after exposure to news of Korea, and the relationship between the students' attitude change and their involvement with Korea.

As the result showed, 50% of students changed their original attitude after exposure to positive or negative news about Korea in the high or low credibility newspapers. All of these students changed their original attitude following the tone of the news story. That is, after they were exposed to positive news, they changed their original attitude positively. The effect of the news article on their attitude was more noticeable in the high credibility newspaper. In addition, they received more influence with news which contained the reporter's own opinion than from neutral news. These results suggest that 'source credibility' and 'reporter's voice in news' have a particularly strong effect on students with a neutral original attitude. In addition, this tendency was clearly evident in neutral original attitude students who had <u>middle and low</u> involvement unlike

<u>high</u> involvement students who rarely changed their original attitude after exposure to news.

## 5.2.5 Credibility judgments of students with neutral original attitude

There were consistent changes in the attitudes of the students with a neutral original attitude. A particularly large number of students showed changes in their credibility judgment after exposure to negative tone news in the low credibility newspaper.

Unlike the many students who mainly changed their attitude after exposure to news in the high credibility newspaper, the low credibility newspaper received more positive assessment after exposure to news than the high credibility newspaper. It is quite difficult to predict the cause of this tendency. Because they did not have a favourable or unfavourable image of Korea, it is difficult to say if they assessed credibility of the newspaper depending on whether the news was pro-attitudinal or not and there must be a range of factors which affected credibility assessments of the newspaper by these students. Again, one possible explanation might be the fact that there was less room for giving a higher post-reading score for the high credibility newspaper than the low credibility newspaper. Alternatively, even though the students were in the neutral attitude group, the grouping masks individual differences in attitude which would have been present., with some students leaning towards the positive side and other students leaning toward the negative side. Accordingly, even though the students were grouped in the neutral original attitude group, they showed different reactions with the positive or negative tone of news depending on the characteristics of their attitude. In addition, the degree of interest or degree of usefulness of the content of the news, or even the

reporter's writing styles might have affected their credibility assessments of the newspapers.

Overall, one interesting result with the study was that the subjects' credibility judgments were not the same.   That is, in this study, five items were used to measure credibility and the mean of five items were used to compare the subjects' credibility judgment of the newspapers. Accordingly, even though the means of the five items were the same before and after they were exposed to news, almost all of the items completed by the respondents regarding credibility assessments were different.   In addition, with news which agreed with their original attitude toward Korea, many students who changed their attitude following the tone of news gave a more positive assessment of credibility for 'good quality reporting.'

## 5.3   Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Perhaps one of the biggest limitations with the present study is the lack of a clearly defined "high" credibility and "low" credibility newspaper.   As the results showed, the difference between the newspapers that were selected (i.e., *The Australian* and *The Courier-Mail*) was not large, and in fact *The Courier-Mail* was rated as the second highest by respondents when asked about their high credibility newspaper. However, as has been raised at several points throughout the thesis, given the regional nature of newspapers in Australia, the newspapers that would be considered as candidates for credibility are very few, and *The Courier-Mail* is the most widely read state-based newspaper in Queensland. As such, it is natural out of the choice of newspapers that *The*

*Courier-Mail* would receive the positive rating that it did as a high-credibility newspaper.   Given, however, that it ranked at the top of the list for the low-credibility newspapers, for the purpose of this study it was selected as the low-credibility source, but it is acknowledged that the difference is relative and is far from an absolute difference.

A second limitation is that in order to clearly measure the different results caused by the nature of issues in the news, a comparison of both the non-controversial news selected for this study (i.e., international news about South Korea) and controversial news such as abortion or smoking would be required.   If two different issues were compared, it would be far easier to generalise regarding the nature of the issue in the news as a factor which influences the subjects' attitude change and credibility judgement of newspapers.

In addition to the small initial sample, the number of students who had high involvement with Korea and had a negative original attitude towards Korea was small. In order to keep a balance in the number of subjects in each category, it was necessary to reduce the number of the subjects in the experimental phase.   Finally, the limited number of the subjects and the non-random sampling means that the results, while informative and indicative, are not legitimately generalisable.

# 6.    Conclusion

This study examined media credibility and attitude change from the perspective that media credibility is not entirely a characteristic of the media but is also a receiver-centred construct.    Therefore, it also focused on investigating how receivers evaluate media credibility.    In particular, it looked at credibility in terms of particular receiver variables: involvement in the broader area of the subject of the newspaper story (including knowledge or direct and indirect experience), attitudes toward the broader area (Korea and Koreans), attitude congruence with the tone of newspaper stories, and general patterns and preferences in newspaper reading.    Unlike previous studies which have mainly dealt with controversial or plausible/implausible issues, this study was related to international news (about South Korea) which was considered as non-controversial, unobtrusive, and not high in ego involvement.    Thus the study aimed to investigate informative issues which most people would gain through mainly through the news media, which would realistically be considered as comprising the majority of what readers are exposed to in the news media.    While of course there is always a proportion of articles on topics which would be controversial to different receivers, in general most news coverage includes informative-type articles from which receivers can gain information or experience indirectly.    Therefore, the significance of this paper lies in the fact that it aims to shed light on the issues of media credibility and attitude change as a result of informative articles as opposed to controversial issues.

Regarding the relationship between the degree of receiver involvement in an issue and attitude change, this study generally confirmed the result of previous studies. However

there were some differences in the results of this study compared with these studies as well, in particular with regard to high involvement receivers, who did not persist with their original attitude after they were exposed to counter attitudinal news. Instead, the results suggested that they received some influence on their attitude from news containing the reporters' own opinion. This tendency was also present in their credibility judgements. High involvement receivers did not show the expected strong reactions against the news source even with counter-attitudinal content, but rather, they were more likely to undergo change in their position toward Korea.

This result could be explained by the characteristic of the issue as non-controversial. With this type of non-controversial or informative issue, even high involvement receivers may be aware of their lack of knowledge of the issue or have less interest toward the issue, and as such, are less critical toward news coverage with a counter attitudinal position and are more flexible in accepting information or the reporter's opinion.

In addition, with low involvement receivers, there were unexpected results when compared with the outcomes of previous studies. Contrary to the belief that low involvement people in general depend on source credibility because of their lower knowledge of, interest in or lack of motivation to think about the issue, they gave a more favourable evaluation of credibility for the low credibility newspaper if they agreed with the tone of the stories presented..

Therefore, this study supported the view that the degree of receiver involvement in an

issue has a strong influence in the judgement of media credibility and on attitude change. However, with non-controversial or more informative issues such as international news, the media has a continual influence on receivers' attitudes toward the issue as well as their credibility judgements of the news source regardless of their degree of involvement with the issue. That is to say, unlike more controversial issues, message receivers do not hold their opinions when the news is informative and were more likely to doubt their own existing knowledge and change their attitudes following the content of the media reports.

Every second, there are a lot of things happening around the world that we do not and cannot know about.   We get most of our information indirectly through news media, and rely heavily on the news for our perspective of the world.   It must be understood, however, that of course news media cannot possibly show us everything that happens each day and it becomes the task of the media to determine which of the day's events should receive our attention.   Through this process, no one doubts that the media influences or controls us in various ways, leading us to form attitudes, judgements and perceptions of issues.   Conversely, depending on our social situation or our background knowledge and experiences, we personally decide which news should be rejected or accepted, and this influences us in determining what sources we view as credible or not credible.   Reciprocally, judgements about source credibility influence our acceptance or otherwise of what is reported.   The relationship between the media, the receiver and the credibility of the media is neither linear nor static..

If we reflect back on Gunther's (1987) statement that it is what audiences do with news,

as well as what news people do with news, that accounts for judgements of trust in mass media, we can see that the key players are the news audience and the news people (i.e., the media organisations).   This study, however, suggests that we must also consider the importance of the issue itself, given that we perceive the coverage of media issues differently depending on the controversial or non-controversial nature of what we are exposed to in the media. Given that the majority of what we read in the news media is informative news coverage, there is a need to consider how large the influence of attitude change prompted by controversial issues really is in the general scope of our daily intake of news coverage. Although receivers may alter their attitudes and their credibility judgements as a result of controversial issues, this study suggests that we are more likely to be affected by the content of the message for informative, often mundane, news, regardless of the credibility of the source. Thus, we may be able to restate Gunther's claim as it is what audiences do with news, what news people do with news, as well as the degree of controversiality of the issues in the news that accounts for judgements of trust in mass media.   Further, "what audiences do with news" is a function of, among other things, their existing knowledge and attitudes.

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**APPENDICES**

# APPENDIX A: Newspaper Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to learn about newspaper reading habits of university students.   I would appreciate it if you could answer ALL questions accurately and honestly.   If there are some questions you are not certain about, just mark the answer that comes closest to how you feel.   I want to assure you that your identity will not be revealed. There is nowhere in this survey where students are required to provide personal details.   Thank you for your cooperation.

*Question 1:   Do you read newspapers?*

- a).   Yes
- b).   No

*Question 2:   If Yes, on average, how often do you read newspapers per week?*

- a).   Once a week
- b).   Twice a week
- c).   Three times a week
- d).   Four times a week
- e).   Five times a week
- f).   Six times a week
- g).   Every day
- h).   Other (please state : _____ )

*Question 3:   If Yes, on average, how many newspapers do you read per day?*

- a).   One newspaper
- b).   Two newspapers
- c).   Three newspapers
- d).   More than three newspapers

*Question 4: How much of the following reasons apply to you personally when you plan to read newspapers?   Please rank the following reasons in the order of importance – using the scale of '1' to '5', where '1' means the particular reason does not matter at all to you and '5' means that it matters a lot to you.*

| | Doesn't matter | | | Matter a lot | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a). Reading newspapers helps me in my daily living | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b). Reading newspapers provides me with good conversation topics | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c). Reading newspapers helps me feel closer to my community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d). Reading newspapers provides me with up-to-date news | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e). Reading newspapers provides me with in-depth analysis of issues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f). I read a particular newspaper because I agree with the editorial view | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g).   I read newspapers because the news stories are objective and do not contain the reporters' opinion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h).   I read newspapers because the stories are presented in a balanced way | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

*Question 5: As far as you can recall offhand, have you ever read conflicting or different reports of the same story in different newspapers?*

    a).   Yes

    b).   No

*Question 6: If you read different reports of the same event in the following newspapers, which one would you be **most** inclined to believe?*

    a).   *The Australian*       b).   *The Age*       c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*

    d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*

    g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other _____

*Question 7: If you read different reports of the same event in the following newspapers, which one would you be **least** inclined to believe?*

    a).   *The Australian*       b).   *The Age*       c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*

    d).   *The Courier-Mail*    e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*

    g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other _____

*Question 8: If you had to choose one source for each of the following, which newspaper\* would you choose? (please circle the name of the newspaper – choose one only for each)*

\* Please note that this is a study of Australian-based newspapers

A: Local News     a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  _____

B: State News     a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  ___

C: National News     a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  ___

D: International     a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  ___

E: Business/finance   a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  ___

F: Health/medical    a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  ___

G: Crime/natural     a).   *The Australian*     b).   *The Age*   c).   *The Sydney Morning Herald*
                              d).   *The Courier-Mail*     e).   *Financial Review*     f).   *The Sun-Herald*
                              g).   *Daily Telegraph*     h).   Other  _____

H: Sports/  a). *The Australian*  b). *The Age*  c). *The Sydney Morning Herald*
d). *The Courier-Mail*  e). *Financial Review*  f). *The Sun-Herald*
g). *Daily Telegraph*  h). Other  _____

*Question 9:*
Overall, which newspaper do you read more frequently? *(please write down the name of the newspaper – write <u>one</u> only)*

---

*Question 10:*
*Here are some pairs of words and phrases with opposite meanings.  Please circle the number in between each pair that best represents how you feel about **your most frequently read newspaper**.  For example, the first set of words is 'fair' and 'unfair'. If you think the newspaper is extremely fair, you should circle '1'.  If you think the newspaper is extremely unfair, you should circle '5'.  Or, you can circle any number in between.*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Extremely **fair** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **unfair** |
| B. | Extremely **unbiased** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **biased** |
| C. | Extremely **accurate** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **inaccurate** |
| D. | Tells the **whole** story very well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't** tell the **whole** story at all |
| E. | **Respects** people's **privacy** very well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't respect** people's **privacy** at all |
| F. | **Cares** very much about what the reader thinks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't care** about what the reader thinks |
| G. | **Separates facts** from opinion very well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Too much **reporter's opinion** than facts |
| H. | Extremely **Sensationalised** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't sensationalised** at all |
| I. | Extremely **moral** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **immoral** |
| J. | Extremely **Patriotic** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **unpatriotic** |
| K. | Extremely **factual** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **opinionated** |
| L. | Concerned mainly about the **public interest** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Concerned mainly about **making profits** |
| M. | Reporters are **well trained** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Reporters are **poorly trained** |
| N. | Very **good quality** of reporting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Very **poor quality** of reporting |

*Question 11:  Overall, how would you rate the **reliability of your most frequently read newspaper**? (By reliable, we mean "dependable".)*

Not at all reliable  1  2  3  4  5  Very reliable

*Question 12:   Has your most frequently read newspaper ever contained news reports of events or issues that you had personal knowledge of?*

    a).    Yes

    b).    No

---

(If your answer to Question 12 is YES)

*How fair was the coverage about which you had personal knowledge?*

        Very **fair**       1      2      3      4      5      Very **unfair**

*How accurate was the coverage about which you had personal knowledge?*

        Very **accurate**       1      2      3      4      5      Very **inaccurate**

---

*Question 13: Have you any experience with Korea?*

    a).    Yes

    b).    No

---

(If your answer to Question 13 is YES)

*How have you gained this experience?*

    *1. Have travelled to Korea,*

    *2. Have Korean friends or neighbours,*

    *3. Have read a book about Korea(ns),*

    *4. Have watched TV programmes about Korea(ns)*

    *5. Other.*

---

*Question 14: Please circle the correct answer for each question.*

*1. Where is South Korea's capital city?*
    1). Seoul        2).Pusan        3).Pyeongyang        4). I don't know

*2. What is a famous South Korean automobile company?*
    1). Proton        2). Isuzu        3).Hyundai        4). I don't know

*3.  In what year was the World Cup Soccer competition held in Korea?*
    1). 1994        2). 1998        3). 2002        4). I don't know

*4. What language is used in mostly in South Korea?*
    1). Japanese        2). Korean        3). Chinese        4). I don't know

*5. What is a famous martial art in Korea?*
    1). Karate        2). Savat        3). Taekwondo        4). I don't know

*6. What is 'Kim-chi'?*
    1). Place        2). Dance        3). Food        4). I don't know

*7. Who is South Korea's president?*
    1). Kim Dae-Jung    2). Roh Mu-Hyon    3). Kim Jong-Il    4). I don't know

*8. What is South Korea's currency?*
    1). Won    2). Yuan    3). Rupee    4). I don't know

*9. What is South Korea's highest mountain?*
    1). Halla-san    2). Fuji-san    3). Aso-san    4). I don't know

*10. What country invaded Korea in 1910?*
    1). America    2). Japan    3). China    4). I don't know

*Question 15:*

*Here are some statements which describe about Korea and Korean people. Please circle the number after each statement that best represents how you feel about **Korea and Korean people**. For example, the first statement is 'Korean people are dedicated to their country'. If you think Korean people are dedicated to their country, you should circle '1'. If you think Korean people are not dedicated to their country, you should circle '5'. Or, you can circle any number in between.*

| | Strongly agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Korean people are dedicated to their country. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Korean people are friendly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Korean people are family oriented. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Korean people are conservative. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Korean people are hard working. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Korean people are impulsive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Korean people are aggressive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Korean people are dishonest. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Korean people are quick tempered. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Korean people are reliable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Korea is stable politically. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Korea has a lot of demonstrations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Korea is safe to travel to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Korea has a lot of internal conflicts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Korea has an improving economy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Now, just a few final questions for classification purposes only.

*Question 16:    Please indicate your gender (circle one):*

    a).   Female
    b).   Male

*Question 17:    Please write down your university and major:*

    University:_____        Major_____

*Question 18:*    *Where do you live? (please write down the suburb only):*

_____

*Question 19:*    *What is your age (please circle one)?*

    a).   Under 20
    b).   21-25
    c).   26-30
    d).   31-35
    e).   36-40
    f).   41-45
    g).   46-50
    h).   Over 50

## *Thank you for completing this survey!*

If you are interested in the next stage of this study, please write your email address. Please note that your email address will never be passed to any third party, and will only be used for this study.   Your continued assistance would be very greatly appreciated.

E-mail                                                                                        address:

_____

# APPENDIX B: Experiment Questionnaire for *The Australian*

The purpose of this survey is to learn about newspaper reading habits of university students. I would appreciate it if you could answer ALL questions accurately and honestly. If there are some questions you are not certain about, just mark the answer that comes closest to how you feel. I want to assure you that your identity will not be revealed. There is nowhere in this survey where students are required to provide personal details. Thank you for your cooperation.

*Question 1:*
*Here are some pairs of words and phrases with opposite meanings. Please circle the number in between each pair that best represents how you feel about the news articles in*
The Australia *what you read? For example, the first set of words is 'fair' and 'unfair'. If you think the newspaper is extremely fair, you should circle '1'. If you think the newspaper is extremely unfair, you should circle '5'. Or, you can circle any number in between.*

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Extremely **fair** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **unfair** |
| B. | Extremely **unbiased** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **biased** |
| C. | Extremely **accurate** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **inaccurate** |
| D. | Extremely **factual** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **opinionated** |
| E. | Very **good quality** of reporting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Very **poor quality** of reporting |

*Question 2:*

*Here are some statements which describe about Korea and Korean people. Please circle the number after each statement that best represents how you feel about **Korea and Korean people.** For example, the first statement is 'Korean people are dedicated to their country'. If you think Korean people are dedicated to their country, you should circle '1'. If you think Korean people are not dedicated to their country, you should circle '5'. Or, you can circle any number in between.*

| | Strongly disagree | agree | | | | Strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Korean people are dedicated to their country. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2. Korean people are friendly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 3. Korean people are family oriented. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 4. Korean people are conservative. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 5. Korean people are hard working. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Korean people are impulsive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Korean people are aggressive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Korean people are dishonest. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Korean people are not quick tempered. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Korean people are unreliable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Korea is unstable politically. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Korea has a lot of demonstrations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Korea is safe to travel to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Korea has a lot of internal conflicts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Korea has an improving economy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

*Thank you for completing this survey!*

# APPENDIX C: Experiment Questionnaire for *The Courier Mail*

The purpose of this survey is to learn about newspaper reading habits of university students.   I would appreciate it if you could answer ALL questions accurately and honestly.   If there are some questions you are not certain about, just mark the answer that comes closest to how you feel.   I want to assure you that your identity will not be revealed. There is nowhere in this survey where students are required to provide personal details.   Thank you for your cooperation.

*Question 1:*
*Here are some pairs of words and phrases with opposite meanings.   Please circle the number in between each pair that best represents how you feel about the news articles in*
*The Courier-Mail* *what you read?   For example, the first set of words is 'fair' and 'unfair'.   If you think the newspaper is extremely fair, you should circle '1'.   If you think the newspaper is extremely unfair, you should circle '5'.   Or, you can circle any number in between.*

|    |                          |   |   |   |   |   |                            |
|----|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| A. | Extremely **fair**       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **unfair**       |
| B. | Extremely **unbiased**   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **biased**       |
| C. | Extremely **accurate**   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **inaccurate**   |
| D. | Extremely **factual**    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **opinionated**  |
| E. | Very **good quality** of reporting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Very **poor quality** of reporting |

*Question 2:*

*Here are some statements which describe about Korea and Korean people.   Please circle the number after each statement that best represents how you feel about **Korea and Korean people.**   For example, the first statement is 'Korean people are dedicated to their country'.   If you think Korean people are dedicated to their country, you should circle '1'.   If you think Korean people are not dedicated to their country, you should circle '5'.   Or, you can circle any number in between.*

|                                              | Strongly disagree agree |   |   |   | Strongly |
|----------------------------------------------|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1. Korean people are dedicated to their country. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Korean people are friendly.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Korean people are family oriented.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Korean people are conservative.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Korean people are hard working.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Korean people are impulsive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Korean people are aggressive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Korean people are dishonest. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Korean people are not quick tempered. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Korean people are unreliable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Korea is unstable politically. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Korea has a lot of demonstrations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Korea is safe to travel to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Korea has a lot of internal conflicts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Korea has an improving economy. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

*Thank you for completing this survey!*

**Article: Positive, *The Australian***

Please read the following news article.   The following article is on Thursday, at 4th July, 2002 from *The Australian.*   *The Australian* was selected as a high credibility newspaper by the majority of university students in South-East Queensland who responded to the first survey.

*The Australian*

4th July, 2002    Thursday

**HEADLINE:** *Country drive of Korean kind - Asia's moment of truth*
**REPORTER:** Stephen Lunn
**SECTION:** FINANCE; Pg. 26

Patriotic consumers saved the day, but now it's time South Korea let in the world, writes Stephen Lunn

SOUTH Korea's rapid economic turnaround after the regional meltdown five years ago has, at its core, an X factor that restricts its utility as a model for other recovering Asian nations.   That X factor is sociological rather than fiscal. It is the Korean people and their astonishing drive.   Certainly, the South Korean Government has done its part to facilitate the recovery and fireproof the nation from a repeat dose of the bad medicine it took in 1998, when the economy contracted by more than 6 per cent, the stock market crashed and nearly two million people were out of work.

It delivered on the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund in exchange for $US19.5 billion in emergency bail-out money, in particular forcing ailing banks to close or merge and spending about $US150 billion on cleaning out bank bad debts, which in turn freed up capital for good investments.   After being caught so spectacularly by the currency speculators in 1998, it drastically increased its foreign exchange reserves from a week's supply to the current $US108 billion ($193 billion), the world's fifth largest cash reservoir.   And it opened up the nation to greater foreign investment, though many foreign analysts believe Korea still has some way to go on that front.

But it is the zeal with which the Korean people have set about working to make their country an Asian economic force, that sense of collective progress, which is perhaps unique in the region, not seen since Japan of the 1950s and 60s.
"South Korea's recovery from the crisis is very much like the performance of its team in the World Cup," IMF Asia-Pacific director Kunio Saito says, with the World Cup soccer co-hosts outperforming all expectations to reach the final four.

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"There is a uniquely Korean element of concentration, focus and drive to reach its goals. "It's something everyone in the region can admire, but can't necessarily deliver," Saito says.

ANZ Bank general manager for Korea Phil Michell agrees.
"As a people the Koreans are totally dedicated to their country. You can see that in the support for the World Cup team, and the same applied nearly five years ago for Korea Inc."
Korea bounced back from a horrific 1998 to record 10.9 per cent growth in 1999 and 8.8 per cent in 2000. Last year the economic growth rate eased off to 3 per cent, partly due to a worldwide slowdown and exacerbated by some high-profile failures in the technology area due to softer than anticipated export demand.   But analysts are tipping a 6-7 per cent growth rate for 2002, higher than the Government's own 5 per cent estimate.   Long-time Korea analyst James Rooney from Deloitte Consulting believes the nation could, within 10 years, use its position as a gateway between China and Japan to catapult it into one of the world's top 10 economies.

"Korea may be the sixth or seventh largest economy in the world, instead of the 13th it is today," Rooney says.
South Korea's economic landscape has changed markedly since 1997-98.   While exports powered the economy out of trouble in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, the nation has become wary of its exposure to international economic pressures.
Last year 69 per cent of gross domestic product was domestic consumption, led by strong surges in household consumption and construction.
"They did the right thing for their country as a people, only buying Korean," Michell says.
"It has been an impediment for foreign companies trying to set up here, but the increase in domestic consumption has been a key to the recovery."   South Korea is not without problems. The second stage of the banking reforms requires more privatisation after the Government took control of about half the lending institutions.

Finding buyers has been tough.

The prospect of inflation looms and, further, the nation's militant unions (witness the taxi strike in the week before the World Cup) still have the capacity to stifle growth.
"During the last decade, Korea experienced an extraordinary rate of wage increases far in excess of productivity growth," Rooney says.
He says South Korea has so far got it about half right. It has put out the bushfires but needs to capitalise on its strong position, using the country's clear expertise in the new technology sector as its battering ram.
"The benchmarks of success will be measured in terms of how much foreign companies want to come to Korea to conduct business, sell their products, or develop new technology," he says.

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Please read the following news article.  The following article is on Tuesday, at 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2002, from *The Australian*.   *The Australian* was selected as a high credibility newspaper by the majority of university students in South-East Queensland who responded to the first survey.

*The Australian*

**January** 29, 2002, Tuesday

**HEADLINE:** Graft crisis pushes Kim on reshuffle
**SOURCE:** MATP
**SECTION:** WORLD; Pg. 8

SOUTH Korean President Kim Dae-jung faced mounting pressure yesterday to name a new cabinet as corruption scandals touching his family and closest advisers became the biggest crisis of his term.
A reshuffle will go ahead this week but a planned cabinet meeting today has been postponed, a presidential official said.
"Even if the whole cabinet does not tender its resignation, the reshuffle will be carried out," the official said.
In March last year, Mr Kim replaced the whole security and foreign team in his cabinet after the inter-Korean peace process began faltering over Washington's tough stance towards North Korea.
Mr Kim was also forced to replace five ministers last September following a rebellious national assembly vote against his unification minister, the key planner of policy towards North Korea.

With a year of his five-year term remaining, the Nobel peace prize winner needs another fix for his sagging credibility.
Mr Kim made the fight against corruption one of his key tasks when he took office, but his administration has been shaken by several scandals, which have led to the resignation of finance, intelligence and even presidential officials in recent months.
South Korea's top prosecutor and a former presidential spokesman are among those who have quit recently.

Pressure has increased since the President's top economic adviser, Lee Ki-ho, who has ministerial ranking, admitted last week he was implicated in a "treasure boat" scandal involving a nephew of Kim's wife, Lee Hee-ho.
The adviser, one of South Korea's two most important economic officials, said he had introduced the nephew to intelligence authorities in late 1999.
The nephew, Lee Hyung-tack, then used the national spy agency to get help from government officials in searching for a boat laden with gold bullion, which at the time was believed to have sunk off the southern coast.

The economic adviser's admission bolstered allegations that the nephew abused his links to the President to mobilise the spy agency and other departments.

The navy was asked to lend manpower and equipment. But the spy agency has failed to verify the nephew's claim that the boat contained about 10 trillion won ($1.49 billion) worth of jewels and gold.

The main opposition Grand National Party has insisted "other key figures" around Mr Kim were involved in what it called a stock price-rigging scheme to raise political funds. The share price of the company behind the treasure hunt rose dramatically early last year.

Ruling and Opposition parties have called on the President to carry out a sweeping ministerial reshuffle, in particular targeting Finance and Economy Minister Jin Nyum.

"We hope for a new cabinet that will complete policies being pushed by the 'Government of the People' and correct trials and errors made by the Government," the ruling Millennium Democratic Party said.

Please read the following news article. The following article is on Wednesday, at 5th February, 2002 from *The Courier-Mail*. *The Courier-Mail* was selected as a low credibility newspaper by the majority of university students in South-East Queensland who responded to the first survey.

### The Courier Mail

February 5, 2002, Wednesday

**HEADLINE:** Kia serves an ace
**WRITER:** Mike Duffy
**SECTION:** MOTORING; Pg. C03

Kia claims Rio is the best-selling four and five-door range in the light-car sector

KIA'S sponsorship of the Australian Open tennis championships at Melbourne Park, reputed to have cost $10 million, looks to have been a good deal.
With the world captivated by the superlative performances of Andre Agassi and Serena Williams, it was probably one of the bargain promotional packages of the year.
The South Korean car maker certainly is better known for the venture and its image has been nicely polished by the association.

Now, Kia will use that exposure to underpin the launch of several new products this year, with an updated Rio, top and right, to be followed by the new Sorento four-wheel-drive sports wagon, below.
The new Rio, with fresh styling, more equipment and added features, will arrive at the same $14,990 price as its predecessor.
The value of the model is underscored by the inclusion of airconditioning, central locking, power steering and a CD player.
The car gets a new tail and the hatchback benefits from minor rear-end revision.
The redesign of the dashboard has been aimed at making it more versatile and easier to use, as well as improving aesthetics.

Several new features and improved surface finishes enhance the fascia.

There are now two glove boxes ahead of the front passenger seat, the centre console has two cup holders and the door pockets are larger than on the previous Rio.
Minor changes have been made to the 71kW 1.5-litre M-Tech engine which powers both models, resulting in improved performance and better economy.
The Rio's MacPherson strut front suspension has been modified, with new three-point mounting. The struts also are 10mm longer for improved compliance.
The entire suspension has been strengthened, with better sound-proofing to reduce road

noise in the cabin.
Safety has been enhanced by a more rigid body and the front brake discs are bigger.

Kia claims Rio is the best-selling four and five-door range in the light-car sector.
Last year, Rios accounted for 5836 of the brand's total Australian sales of 12,237.
Rio is a particularly well-specified car. An automatic transmission, which adds $2000 to the price, and metallic paint, which costs $150, are the only options.
The changes sharpen and freshen the Rio's looks for improved road presence.
On first driving impressions, changes to the suspension and body rigidity result in a more precise model which points and tracks with greater authority.

Good use of the five-speed manual transmission delivers fairly good performance.
The ride quality is generally good and handling excellent.
Mechanical noise intrusion still is a touch on the high side -- but we are talking about a car which costs $14,990 with airconditioning, so perhaps the criticism is a tad harsh.

Please read the following news article.  The following article is on Tuesday, at 21st May, 2002 from *The Courier-Mail*.   *The Courier-Mail* was selected as a low credibility newspaper by the majority of university students in South-East Queensland who responded to the first survey.

### *The Courier Mail*

May 21, 2002, Tuesday

**HEADLINE:** Koreans tell visitors to eat their words, not pets
**SECTION:** WORLD; Pg. 8

SEOUL: With World Cup crowds about to bear down on South Korea, the country's pet lovers have rallied to combat the image of Koreans as dog-meat eaters, arguing that one person's meal is another's pet.

"The people who eat dog meat are less than 10 per cent of the population," said Cheon Yoon-kyong, one of more than 100 Koreans who marched with their pets in Seoul yesterday, 12 days before the start of the tournament.

"With the World Cup soccer finals coming up, media and foreigners are saying that all South Koreans eat and approve of dog meat," he said.
Certain breeds of dog are raised to be eaten in South Korea, notably in pohintang -- literally "body preservation stew" -- a delicacy which some advocates say is healthy.
Big dogs walked along with the protesters who carried banners reading: "We are not food" and "No dog meat!".

The march was followed by a display of grisly photos showing the butchering of dogs.
Although the tradition of eating dog meat continues in South Korea, more and more Korean families raise the animals as pets instead, with some two million dogs in the country of 48 million people.
But South Korea also has about 4000 registered restaurants specialising in dog meat and many more which offer it among other dishes.

What causes particular alarm abroad and among animal rights activists in South Korea is the way dogs are killed to make the meat more tender -- sometimes by beating, burning or hanging, methods which are illegal but have proved hard to curb.

Early this year, about 100 dog-meat restaurant owners held a convention to plan how to promote dog meat to foreign tourists during the Cup.

# APPENDIX E: Newspaper Survey Coding Frame

**Columns**

**1-3      Students Number**

**4          Do you read newspapers?**                    **Yes**              **No**

                                                                              1                      2

**5          How often do you read newspapers per week?**

   Once a week      Twice a week         Three times a week         Four times a week
        1                      2                           3                              4

   Five times a week            Six times a week            Every day                Other
        5                            6                          7                          9

**6     How many newspapers do you read per day?**

   1    newspaper      2 newspapers            3 newspapers        More than 3 newspapers
        1                      2                           3                          4

**7-14      Reasons for reading newspapers**

   Reading newspapers helps me in my daily living
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

   Reading newspapers provides me with good conversation topics
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

   Reading newspapers helps me feel closer to my community
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

   Reading newspapers provides me with up-to-date news
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

   Reading newspapers provides me with in-depth analysis of issues
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

   I read a particular newspaper because I agree with the editorial view
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

   I read newspapers because the news stories are objective and do not contain the
   reporters' opinion
   Doesn't matter    1          2          3          4          5          Matter a lot

I read newspapers because the stories are presented in a balanced way ☐

Doesn't matter    1       2       3       4       5       Matter a lot

**15**    **Experience of conflicting or different reports of the same story in different newspapers**       **Yes**       **No** ☐

                                               1               2

**16**    **High credibility newspaper** ☐

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Australian | The Age | The Sydney Morning Herald |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Courier-Mail | Financial Review | The Sun-Herald |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Daily Telegraph | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Other |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

**17**    **Low credibility newspaper** ☐

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Australian | The Age | The Sydney Morning Herald |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Courier-Mail | Financial Review | The Sun-Herald |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Daily Telegraph | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Other |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

**18-25**    **Choice of source for subject**

**18**    **Local news** ☐

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Australian | The Age | The Sydney Morning Herald |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Courier-Mail | Financial Review | The Sun-Herald |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Daily Telegraph | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Other |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

**19**    **State news** ☐

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Australian | The Age | The Sydney Morning Herald |
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Courier-Mail | Financial Review | The Sun-Herald |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Daily Telegraph | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Other |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

**20**    **National news**    ☐

The Australian         The Age              The Sydney Morning Herald
1                      2                    3

The Courier-Mail       Financial Review     The Sun-Herald
4                      5                    6

Daily Telegraph        The Gold Coast Bulletin    Other
7                      8                    9


**21**    **International news**    ☐

The Australian         The Age              The Sydney Morning Herald
1                      2                    3

The Courier-Mail       Financial Review     The Sun-Herald
4                      5                    6

Daily Telegraph        The Gold Coast Bulletin    Other
7                      8                    9


**22**    **Business/finance news**    ☐

The Australian         The Age              The Sydney Morning Herald
1                      2                    3

The Courier-Mail       Financial Review     The Sun-Herald
4                      5                    6

Daily Telegraph        The Gold Coast Bulletin    Other
7                      8                    9


**23**    **Health/medical news**

The Australian         The Age              The Sydney Morning Herald
1                      2                    3

The Courier-Mail       Financial Review     The Sun-Herald
4                      5                    6

Daily Telegraph        The Gold Coast Bulletin    Other
7                      8                    9


**24**    **Crime/natural disaster news**    ☐

The Australian         The Age              The Sydney Morning Herald
1                      2                    3

The Courier-Mail       Financial Review     The Sun-Herald
4                      5                    6

Daily Telegraph        The Gold Coast Bulletin    Other
7                      8                    9

**25**     **Sports/ Entertainment news** ☐

| The Australian | The Age | The Sydney Morning Herald |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Courier-Mail | Financial Review | The Sun-Herald |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Daily Telegraph | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Other |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

**26**     **The most frequently read newspaper** ☐

| The Australian | The Age | The Sydney Morning Herald |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The Courier-Mail | Financial Review | The Sun-Herald |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Daily Telegraph | The Gold Coast Bulletin | Other |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

**27-40     Credibility judgement for the most frequently read newspaper**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely **fair** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **unfair** | ☐ |
| Extremely **unbiased** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **biased** | ☐ |
| Extremely **accurate** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **inaccurate** | ☐ |
| Tells the **whole** story very well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't** tell the **whole** story at all | ☐ |
| **Respects** people's **privacy** very well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't respect** people's **privacy** at all | ☐ |
| **Cares** very much about what the reader thinks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't care** about what the reader thinks | ☐ |
| **Separates facts** from opinion very well | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Too much **reporter's opinion** than facts | ☐ |
| Extremely **Sensationalised** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **Doesn't sensationalised** at all | ☐ |
| Extremely **moral** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **immoral** | ☐ |
| Extremely **Patriotic** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **unpatriotic** | ☐ |
| Extremely **factual** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Extremely **opinionated** | ☐ |
| Concerned mainly about the **public interest** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Concerned mainly about **making profits** | ☐ |
| Reporters are **well trained** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Reporters are **poorly trained** | ☐ |

Very **good quality**
of reporting                  1      2      3      4      5      Very **poor quality**
                                                                     of reporting          [ ]

**41**      **Reliability of the most frequently read newspaper**      [ ]

         Not at all reliable  1      2      3      4      5      Very reliable

**42**      **Experience of news reports of events or issues students had personal**
         **knowledge or experience of in conflicting or different reports of the**
         **same story in their most frequently read newspapers**

              **Yes**                    **No**          [ ]

                 1                      2

**43**      **How fair was the coverage about which the students had personal**

         **knowledge?**

         Very **fair**       1      2      3      4      5      Very **unfair**      [ ]

**44**      **How accurate was the coverage about which the students had personal**

         **knowledge?**

         Very **accurate**   1      2      3      4      5      Very **inaccurate**  [ ]

**45**      **Have students any experience with Korea?**      **Yes**      **No**      [ ]

                                                              1            2

**46**      **How have students gained this experience?**      [ ]

              Have travelled to Korea                         1
              Have Korean friends or neighbours               2
              Have read a book about Korea(ns)                3
              Have watched TV programmes about Korea(ns)      4
              Other                                                        5

**47**      **Involvement of Korea**              [ ]

              Low involvement      Middle involvement      High involvement

                    1                      2                      3

## 48-62    Attitude toward Korea

Korean people are dedicated to their country. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are friendly. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are family oriented. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are conservative. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are hard working. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are impulsive. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are aggressive. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are dishonest. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are quick tempered. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korean people are reliable. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korea is stable politically. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korea has a lot of demonstrations. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korea is safe to travel to. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korea has a lot of internal conflicts. ☐
  Strongly agree    1     2     3     4     5    Strongly disagree

Korea has an improving economy.　□

Strongly agree　　1　　　2　　　3　　　4　　　5　　Strongly disagree


**63　Category of attitude toward Korea**　　□

Positive attitude　　　　　Neutral attitude　　　　　　Negative attitude

　　1　　　　　　　　　　　　2　　　　　　　　　　　　　3


**64　Gender**　□

Female　　　　　Male

　1　　　　　　　2


**65　University**

University of Queensland　　　　Queensland University of Technology

　　　　1　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　2

Griffith University (Brisbane)　　　Griffith University (The Gold Coast)

　　　　3　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　4

Bond University

　　5


**66　Residence**　□

Brisbane　　　　　　The Gold Coast　　　Other

　1　　　　　　　　　　2　　　　　　　3


**67　Age**　□

Under 20　　21-25　　　26-30　　　31-35　　　36-40
　1　　　　　2　　　　　3　　　　　4　　　　　5

41-45　　　46-50　　　Over 50
　6　　　　　7　　　　　8

# APPENDIX F: Newspaper Questionnaire Coding Frame

**Columns**

**1-3**    **Students Number** ☐☐☐  **999** (999 = missing)

**4-8**    **Pre-treatment credibility judgment** (9 = missing)

**Fair**                   ☐

Extremely **fair**  1  2  3  4  5    Extremely **unfair**

**Unbiased**                 ☐

Extremely **unbiased**  1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **biased**

**Accurate**                 ☐

Extremely **accurate** 1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **inaccurate**

**Factual**                 ☐

Extremely **factual**  1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **opinionated**

**Good/ poor quality**            ☐

Very **good quality**          Very **poor  quality**
  of reporting  1  2  3  4  5     of reporting

**9-13**    **Post-treatment credibility judgment** **(9 = missing)**

**Fair**                   ☐

Extremely **fair**  1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **unfair**

**Unbiased**                 ☐

Extremely **unbiased** 1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **biased**

**Accurate**                 ☐

Extremely **accurate** 1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **inaccurate**

**Factual**                 ☐

Extremely **factual** 1  2  3  4  5   Extremely **opinionated**

**Good/ poor quality**            ☐

Very **good quality**          Very **poor quality**
  of reporting  1  2  3  4  5     of reporting

**14-28**    **Pre-treatment attitude figure** (9 = missing)

Korean people are dedicated to their country.   ☐

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5 Strongly disagree

Korean people are friendly.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are family oriented.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are conservative.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are hard working.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are impulsive.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are aggressive.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are dishonest.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are quick tempered.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are reliable.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korea is stable politically.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korea has a lot of demonstrations.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korea is safe to travel to.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korea has a lot of internal conflicts.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korea has an improving economy.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

**29-43**          Post-treatment attitude figure   (9 = missing)

Korean people are dedicated to their country.

Strongly agree         1        2        3        4        5  Strongly disagree

Korean people are friendly.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are family oriented.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are conservative.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are hard working.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are impulsive.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are aggressive.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are dishonest.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are quick tempered.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korean people are reliable.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korea is stable politically.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korea has a lot of demonstrations.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korea is safe to travel to.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korea has a lot of internal conflicts.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

Korea has an improving economy.

Strongly agree         1       2       3       4       5   Strongly disagree

# APPENDIX G: Details of Subjects

## Details of Subjects

### 1. University

| University Name | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| University of Queensland | 110 | 23.8 |
| Queensland University Technology | 104 | 22.5 |
| Griffith University Brisbane campus | 108 | 23.4 |
| Griffith University Gold Coast campus | 72 | 15.6 |
| Bond University | 68 | 14.7 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

### 2. Residency

| Area | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Brisbane | 302 | 65.4 |
| Gold Coast | 147 | 31.8 |
| Other | 13 | 2.8 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

### 3. Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 216 | 46.8 |
| Female | 246 | 53.2 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

### 4. Age Groups

| Gender | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Under 20 | 330 | 71.4 |
| 21 – 25 | 62 | 13.4 |
| 26 – 30 | 34 | 7.4 |
| 31 – 35 | 19 | 4.1 |
| 36 – 40 | 8 | 1.7 |
| 41 – 45 | 4 | 0.9 |
| 46 – 50 | 3 | 0.6 |
| Over 50 | 2 | 0.4 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

# Newspaper reading habits of subjects

## 1. Reading Newspaper

| Do you read newspapers? | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 418 | 90.5 |
| No | 44 | 9.5 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 2. Frequency of reading newspapers per week

| How often do you read newspapers per week? | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Once a week | 36 | 7.8 |
| Twice a week | 74 | 16 |
| Three times a week | 118 | 25.5 |
| Four times a week | 103 | 22.3 |
| Five times a week | 48 | 10.4 |
| Six times a week | 25 | 5.4 |
| Everyday | 34 | 7.4 |
| No response | 24 | 5.2 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 3. Amount of newspapers to read per week

| How many newspapers do you read per week? | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| One newspaper | 229 | 49.6 |
| Two newspapers | 174 | 37.7 |
| Three newspapers | 41 | 8.9 |
| More than three newspapers | 12 | 2.6 |
| No response | 6 | 1.3 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## Most credible newspaper depending on topics

### 1. Local news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 14 | 3.0 |
| The Age | 3 | 0.6 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 5 | 1.1 |
| The Courier-Mail | 307 | 66.5 |
| Financial Review | 14 | 3.0 |
| The Sun-Herald | 1 | 0.2 |
| Daily Telegraph | 20 | 4.3 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 91 | 19.7 |
| No response | 7 | 1.5 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

### 2. State news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 37 | 8 |
| The Age | 3 | 0.6 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 5 | 1.1 |
| The Courier-Mail | 348 | 75.3 |
| Financial Review | 12 | 2.6 |
| The Sun-Herald | 0 | 0 |
| Daily Telegraph | 4 | 0.9 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 32 | 6.9 |
| No response | 21 | 4.5 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

### 3. National news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 304 | 65.8 |
| The Age | 15 | 3.2 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 28 | 1.1 |
| The Courier-Mail | 87 | 66.5 |
| Financial Review | 9 | 3.0 |
| The Sun-Herald | 4 | 0.2 |
| Daily Telegraph | 2 | 4.3 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 2 | 4.3 |
| No response | 11 | 2.5 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 4. International news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 257 | 55.6 |
| The Age | 17 | 3.7 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 38 | 8.2 |
| The Courier-Mail | 104 | 22.5 |
| Financial Review | 25 | 5.4 |
| The Sun-Herald | 6 | 1.3 |
| Daily Telegraph | 4 | 0.9 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 5 | 1.1 |
| No response | 5 | 1.1 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 5. Business/ finance news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 132 | 28.6 |
| The Age | 5 | 1.1 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 62 | 13.1 |
| The Courier-Mail | 94 | 20.3 |
| Financial Review | 157 | 34.0 |
| The Sun-Herald | 2 | 0.4 |
| Daily Telegraph | 5 | 1.1 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 4 | 0.9 |
| No response | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 6. Health/ medical news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 224 | 48.5 |
| The Age | 21 | 4.5 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 35 | 7.6 |
| The Courier-Mail | 139 | 30.1 |
| Financial Review | 2 | 0.4 |
| The Sun-Herald | 6 | 1.3 |
| Daily Telegraph | 11 | 2.4 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 5 | 1.2 |
| No response | 19 | 4.1 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 7. Crime/ natural disaster news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 198 | 42.8 |
| The Age | 14 | 3.0 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 26 | 5.6 |
| The Courier-Mail | 195 | 42.3 |
| Financial Review | 5 | 1.1 |
| The Sun-Herald | 3 | 0.6 |
| Daily Telegraph | 12 | 2.6 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 5 | 1.1 |
| No response | 4 | 0.9 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

## 8. Sports/ entertainment news

| Newspaper name | Number of students | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| The Australia | 94 | 20.3 |
| The Age | 12 | 2.6 |
| The Sydney Morning Herald | 25 | 5.4 |
| The Courier-Mail | 299 | 64.7 |
| Financial Review | 0 | 0 |
| The Sun-Herald | 5 | 1.1 |
| Daily Telegraph | 9 | 1.9 |
| The Gold Coast Bulletin | 10 | 2.2 |
| No response | 8 | 1.7 |
| Total | 462 | 100 |

# APPENDIX H: Student's Credibility Judgments of Newspapers
**Students' credibility judgment of high and low credibility newspaper.**
**(Positive original attitude holding group)**

| Involvement | News paper | ADA | Fair/ unfair | | Unbiased/ Biased | | Accurate/ inaccurate | | Factual/ opinionated | | Good Q report | | M | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| | High | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| | C | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2.6 | 3.4 |
| High | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.6 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 | 3.4 |
| | | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | High | 0.13 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| | C | 0.06 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.6 | 2.4 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| | | 0.14 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.6 |
| Middle | | 0.07 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3.4 | 3.6 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.4 |
| | High | 0.14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.6 | 2.4 |
| | C | 0.13 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Low | | 0.06 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.2 | 2 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.4 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.4 | 4 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3.6 | 4 |

* It used the scale of '1' to '5', where '1' means strongly agree with the item and '5' means strongly disagree with the item about credibility of high- and low credibility newspaper. Accordingly, **low** number in 'Means' indicates that the statement receive positive agreement from subjects.

* 'ADA' means 'Absolute value differentiation between pre-attitude and post-attitude'. 'M for C' means 'means for 5 items of credibility judgment'.

**Students' credibility judgment of high and low credibility newspaper.
(Neutral original attitude holding group)**

| Involvement | News paper | ADA | Fair/unfair | | Unbiased/biased | | Accurate/inaccurate | | Factual/opinionated | | Good Q report | | M | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| | High | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 | 3.2 |
| | C | 0.07 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.4 | 2.4 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0.07 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| High | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 | 3 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.4 | 3.2 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.4 | 3.2 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.4 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | High | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | C | 0.06 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| | | 0.07 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Middle | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.6 | 3 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3.2 | 3.6 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3 |
| | High | 0.13 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.4 | 2.4 |
| | C | 0.14 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.4 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 | 3 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.4 | 3 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.6 |
| Low | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 | 3 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | C | 0.06 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.4 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 | 4 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.4 | 3.4 |

* It used the scale of '1' to '5', where '1' means strongly agree with the item and '5' means strongly disagree with the item about credibility of high- and low credibility newspaper. Accordingly, **low** number in 'Means' indicates that the statement receive positive agreement from subjects.

* 'ADA' means 'Absolute value differentiation between pre-attitude and post-attitude'.　'M for C' means 'means for 5 items of credibility judgment'.

**Students' credibility judgment of high and low credibility newspaper.**
**(Negative original attitude holding group)**

| Involvement | News paper | ADA | Fair/unfair | | Unbiased/biased | | Accurate/inaccurate | | Factual/opinionated | | Good Q report | | M | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| | High | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2.8 | 3.8 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.6 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| High | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 | 4 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.4 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 | 3.2 |
| | High | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 |
| | C | 0.07 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.4 | 2.8 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| | | 0.14 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| Middle | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 | 3 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 | 3.8 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 |
| | | 0.07 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2.8 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3.4 | 3 |
| | High | 0.13 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.8 | 2.4 |
| | C | 0.13 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2.6 | 2 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.6 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Low | | 0.07 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2.4 |
| (n=12) | Low | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3.2 | 3.6 |
| | C | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3.2 | 3.6 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| | | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | 0.06 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3.4 | 2.6 |

* It used the scale of '1' to '5', where '1' means strongly agree with the item and '5' means strongly disagree with the item about credibility of high- and low credibility newspaper. Accordingly, **low** number in 'Means' indicates that the statement receive positive agreement from subjects.

* 'ADA' means 'Absolute value differentiation between pre-attitude and post-attitude'. 'M for C' means 'means for 5 items of credibility judgment'.