

## ABSTRACT

Memorable Messages in Anticipatory Socialization: Creating the Professional Identity

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Memorable messages during the anticipatory socialization stage have been understudied in the field of communication. This study examined the role of memorable messages received by individuals as they create their professional identities during the anticipatory socialization stage. The content and function of a memorable message related to the professional identity were elicited from 239 college-enrolled participants. The results indicate that memorable messages do exist in the anticipatory stage of socialization. Further, the results suggest that the participants received messages most often in the home, via face-to-face communication, and from a male most notably their father. The results also show that the most frequently occurring memorable messages and message functions most were associated with decisions of choosing a future career and constructing a positive professional persona.

Memorable Messages in Anticipatory Socialization: Creating the Professional Identity

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of Communication Studies

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Communication plays a large role in the acculturation of an individual into an organization or group in a process known as socialization (Schein, 1968). One form of communication connected to the individual-organization relationship during socialization is the memorable message (Stohl, 1986; Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Nazione, Laplante, Smith, Cornacchione, Russell, & Stohl, 2011; Medved, Brogan, McClanahan, Morris, Shepherd, 2011; Buzzanell, Berkelaar, & Kisselburgh, 2011). According to Stohl (1986), memorable messages are identified by two necessary characteristics. One, “an individual remembers the message for a long period of time and [(two)] perceived the message had a major influence on the course of his or her life” (Stohl, 1986, p. 232).

While memorable messages have been investigated in the socialization process, few studies have examined the impact of this important form of communication in the anticipatory phase of socialization. The anticipatory stage is collective and comprised of the individual’s knowledge and experience prior to organizational entry (Jablin, 1987). It is during this stage that educational institutions, family, friends and peers, media, and part-time jobs socialize individuals into their prospective career choices and actions within their future occupation (Jablin, 1987). Thus, anticipatory socialization aids the individual in forming a professional identity. The professional identity is often identified as the intersection between an individual’s learned experience and conceptions of their future professional working life (Reid, Dahlgren, Petocz, & Dahlgren, 2008). Put simply,

the professional identity is a toolkit of learned experiences from which an individual refers to determine his or her career, actions, and communication within that occupation.

Stohl (1986) claims that memorable messages occur during socialization, but not during the anticipatory stage. This argument may explain the surprising lack of research examining memorable messages during anticipatory socialization about work and the construction of a professional identity. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of whether individuals receive memorable messages during anticipatory socialization, and if so, the unique kinds of memorable messages they hear, and how they function in relation to professional identity. Thus, this thesis also tested Stohl's claim by investigating the intersection of memorable messages and anticipatory socialization by doing so.

### *Anticipatory Socialization and the Professional Identity*

As individuals create their professional identities, they often rely on the information received during the anticipatory socialization process (Jablin, 2001). The purpose of this study is to examine professional identity formation during the anticipatory socialization stage to determine the role that memorable messages play in this process. There are a number of academic works describing the process of socialization (Schein, 1971; Jablin, 1982, 2001). Schein (1968) described socialization as "the process of learning the ropes, being indoctrinated and trained, the process of being taught what is important in an organization or some subunit thereof" (p. 2). Schein (1968) further explained the stages of socialization beginning with vocational or anticipatory socialization. The *anticipatory socialization stage* is a cumulative stage comprised of an individual's learned experiences accumulated prior to entering an organization. This



stage encompasses the influence of educational institutions, family, friends and peers, media, and part-time jobs in socializing individuals' prospective career choices (Jablin, 1987). Following the anticipatory socialization phase is the *encounter* or *entry phase* described as a time during which the individual commences his/her employment. The third phase in the socialization process is the *metamorphosis phase*. During this stage, the individual is an active, participating member of the organization. The final stage of socialization is the *exit stage*. In this stage the individual leaves the organization (Jablin, 2001).

While it is useful to have a basic outline of the stages of socialization, this thesis will focus on the first stage of socialization, known as vocational or anticipatory socialization. Jablin (2001) defines anticipatory socialization as something which “most of us have developed prior to entering any particular organization, a set of expectations and beliefs concerning how people communicate in particular occupations and in formal and informal work settings” (p. 734). In this phase, communication with others influences the development of feelings toward an organization (Jablin, 1987).

Accordingly, Jablin (1982, 1987, 2001) argues that, as children, we are socialized to these expectations prior to taking a full-time paid job with an organization. While in the anticipatory stage, individuals are collecting information from formal and informal sources which eventually influence the choices that are made regarding professional identities (Van Maanen, 1975; Jablin, 2001).

Jablin (2001) points to educational institutions, family, friends and peers, media and part-time jobs as the five sources of anticipatory socialization. During this anticipatory socialization period, Jablin (2001) argues that school is an important

socialization context. Specifically, he argues that schools are the first place in which children are exposed to hierarchical structures and activities involving those within their own age group (Jablin, 2001).

Schools often provide children with their first experiences with standards by which they may judge themselves to others (Jablin, 2001). In particular, school “offers children and adolescents the opportunity to learn how people communicate in different occupational or organizational roles by observing interactions involving students, teachers, the principal, and others” (Levine & Hoffner, 2006, p. 649). Hanson and Johnson (1989) developed the idea that schools influence the strategies individuals employ in the future to lessen their uncertainty while at work. The way individuals reduce uncertainty at work is useful for understanding memorable messages in the anticipatory socialization context. This understanding is helpful because it is during the anticipatory socialization phase that individuals receive messages which enable them to begin formulating their professional identity. Further, Gilardi and Lozza (2009) developed an educational method which builds on the professional identity in college through self-reflection. The authors argue that professional self-reflection in college can be improved with “an inquiring attitude, awareness of one’s own internalized models of professionalism, and the ability to discuss and negotiate with others” (Gilardi & Lozza, 2009, p. 247).

While schools play an important role in socializing children and young adults, family members are also key agents in the socialization process (Buzzanell et al., 2011). Buzzanell et al. (2011) argue that “as children learn about work and careers, their earliest socialization sources are family members” (p. 149). Families, in particular parents, play

one of the more influential roles in influencing a child's career choice (Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001; Otto, 2000; Leifer & Lesser, 1976).

Underscoring the importance of families, multiple studies have sought to understand the influence of parents on their children's occupational choices and organizational roles (Buzzanell et al., 2011; Levine & Hoffner, 2006). For example, Medved et al. (2006) examined "messages about work, family, and balance as a means to contribute to this important dialogue" (p. 162). The authors discovered that men and women received different messages about the work/life balance through parental socialization (Medved et al., 2006). While the influence of family members plays an important and early role in the influence of an individual during the anticipatory socialization stage, peer influences will also begin to sculpt the child's socialization toward employment.

The impact of friends and peers in the anticipatory socialization process is important to understand because the interactions that take place in these relationships help adolescents "learn about work and occupations" (Jablin, 2001, p. 739).

Specifically, adolescents learn about the appeal of different careers through their friends and peers (Peterson & Peters, 1983). Hartup and Moore (1990), also suggest that equality between peers allows each child more responsibility in role construction.

Supportive evidence suggests that the media play an influential role in molding an individual's professional persona during anticipatory socialization (Hoffner, Levine, & Toohey, 2008). Hoffner et al. (2008) argue that "television can be an important learning source about work, but presents a somewhat limited and distorted picture of the work world" (p. 284). For example, studies have found that television informs, influences, and introduces the adolescent to a certain outlook of careers (Signorielli, 1993; King &

Multon, 1996). As such, television is often related to wishful identification. Wishful identification is a reaction by which a person aspires or makes an effort to be like someone else, oftentimes influenced by a character portrayed in the media (Hoffner, 1996). Further, Hoffner et al. (2008) found evidence supporting the claim that television does play a role in anticipatory socialization. The authors discovered that wishful identification was a significant indicator of the jobs and the characters the participants chose as job aspirations and role inspirations (Hoffner et al., 2008). In particular, the authors conclude that “the findings in this study support the view that specific television portrayals contribute to the process of socialization to work” (Hoffner et al., 2008, p. 298). This statement, in accordance with identity theory, supports the notion that people are negotiating their professional identities as they mature from children to fully functioning adults (Gilardi & Lozza, 2009). While the media play a more abstract role in anticipatory socialization, part-time jobs can be viewed as very concrete in their influence of an individual’s creation of a professional persona. In particular, employment in a part-time job can prepare individuals for the roles they will occupy once employed full-time.

Part-time jobs are influential during the anticipatory socialization process, as approximately half of the population aged 16-24 years is employed in a part-time job (Child Trends Data Bank, 2011). The impact of adolescents’ part-time job experiences during the anticipatory socialization process has not been studied at length. However, if the part-time job is of high quality “with the opportunity for skill development” (Levine & Hoffner, 2006, p. 650), research suggests that part-time jobs can contribute to an adolescent’s attitude toward their future career (Levine & Hoffner, 2006). Thus, the

individual may have the opportunity to “learn and apply relational communication skills they may generalize to other work contexts” (Jablin, 2001, p. 739).

Part-time jobs, media, friends and peers, family, and schools are primary sites in which individuals are first prepared for their future careers (Jablin, 2001). One way in which this socialization takes place is through a particular form of communication called the memorable message. This communicative act is influential during the anticipatory socialization process because it is both highly memorable and very meaningful.

Memorable messages are significant in part because they are often received during a challenging time in a person’s life. However, to understand the contributions of memorable messages to the construction of a professional identity, a basic understanding of the function and purpose of the memorable message is required.

### *Memorable Messages*

Stohl (1986) makes the argument about memorable messages that:

The heightened sensitivity and cognitive needs of organizational newcomers suggest that most individuals will recall a message received early in one’s career, [while] the same message, given at a less stressful time, may not be perceived as insightful, important, or meaningful. (p. 236)

As a result, Stohl (1986) argues that, memorable messages are not received during the anticipatory stage. However, the study of memorable messages during the anticipatory socialization phase as they apply to an individual’s professional persona in a full-time, paid occupation has not yet been examined at length. A lack of research in this area does not make the study of this topic any less significant. Therefore, an important purpose of this study was to test Stohl’s (1986) argument about the existence of memorable messages in anticipatory socialization.

One primary function of socialization is to prepare us for our occupational roles (Jablin, 2001). As such, it is important that we understand the role of memorable messages in anticipatory socialization as an aid to the individual's generation of a professional identity. To underline the importance of memorable messages in understanding identity, studies have examined the roles of memorable messages during the socialization process. Stohl (1986) studied the role of memorable messages in the socialization process, and argues that memorable messages provide us with a rich source of information for furthering our "understanding [of] how individuals become acculturated" (p. 246). This claim is significant because the assimilation into organizations for the purpose of work, leisure, or education is a considerably large part of life that impacts and is impacted by communication. Barge and Schlueter (2004) explored the discursive aspects of organizational entry. In particular, the authors examined the memorable messages individuals receive as they enter an organization as part of newcomer socialization (Barge and Schlueter, 2004). This study is important to the scholarship on memorable messages during socialization because the authors provide insight into what memorable messages are received in the workplace as well as the function and context of the message during newcomer socialization (which takes place during the *encounter stage* of socialization). The present study is done in a similar fashion, examining memorable messages during the *anticipatory stage*.

Another study investigated the memorable messages university students receive while managing their current state of being versus their ideal state of being, or the state in which they wish to be in as they face the challenges of college life (Nazione et al., 2011). In this study the authors found that students facing identity conflicts at times of

uncertainty received and retrieved memorable messages to aid in guiding them through their college years (Nazione et al., 2011). In accordance with this study:

Identity theory reinforces the idea that in the absence of specific information about skills and performance levels relevant to the task, participants in a group seeking to solve a collective problem will draw upon cultural memory contained in previous status and esteem allocations to obtain information about possible resources available for the task at hand. (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 292)

The purpose of seeking this information, which can be found in memorable messages, is to reduce uncertainty. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the content and function of memorable messages received during the anticipatory socialization stage, as these messages can be important tools for reducing uncertainty when performing future tasks in full-time work.

The rationale for examining memorable messages is to understand their part in creating an individual's professional identity during the anticipatory socialization stage. A memorable message is defined by Knapp, Stohl, & Reardon (1981) as a declarative statement consisting of two necessary characteristics: (1) a long period of remembrance and (2) strong perceived influence. Nazione, et al. (2011) found that memorable messages are received by college students from family members, academicians, friends, and media when facing challenging and ambiguous situations while in college. This is important to note because it supports the argument that students are receiving memorable messages about their future careers during the anticipatory stage of socialization. Further, the research on memorable messages during the anticipatory socialization phase regarding the creation of a professional identity is significant because of the challenges college students face when preparing for a career (Nazione et al., 2011).

Memorable messages are often linked to feelings of ambiguity about a situation (Stohl, 1986, p. 238). Stohl (1986) argues that “their deep significance lies in the uncertain circumstances surrounding the message” (p. 236). In the recent work on memorable messages and college students, Nazione et al. (2011) explored the messages that college students receive relating to challenges that the students face. In this study, 14.8% of the memorable messages the students received were related to perceived work-related challenges (Nazione et al., 2011). While this study does not explicitly examine the role of memorable messages during the anticipatory socialization process, the results of memorable messages involving work-related challenges support the argument that students do have work-related concerns prior to entering the workforce, and thus may attempt to reduce their uncertainty through communication.

The ambiguous situations that individuals deal with relating to their potential professional identities have the potential to bring forth memorable messages from individuals who want to clarify the future of the individual’s career; and for those who desire to help the individual understand what their professional identity should be going into the workforce. Therefore, the study by Nazione et al. (2011) reinforces the significance of studying the work-related messages college students receive as part of the anticipatory socialization stage. Expounding on the findings of Nazione et al. (2011), the goal of this study is to examine the role of memorable messages in influencing the professional identity during the anticipatory socialization process.

Regardless of the socialization stage in which the memorable messages are presented, the situation is a recurrent theme in studies that examine memorable messages. Knapp et al. (1981) found that memorable messages enable individuals to better their



understanding of certain situations in the future. The subject matter of the messages they examined was associated with conservative values which allowed for the preservation of the social system. The authors also found that the courier of the message was often older and of higher authority (Knapp et al., 1981). Therefore, “the recalled message provided a transcontextual directive and exerted a powerful socializing influence on the respondent” (Stohl, 1986, p. 232). In this sense, messages have often been “deemed memorable because they supplied the individual with the social knowledge and skills necessary to maintain the system and behave as competent members of the organization” (Stohl, 1986, p. 233).

One characteristic which lends itself to the research of memorable messages during the socialization process is one’s identity within the organization (Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Medved et al., 2006; Stohl, 1986). In accordance with identity theory, an individual is continuously building and adapting an identity. Therefore, in order to enter an organization with an identity that exemplifies the roles that the organization requires, a cultivation and knowledge of one’s professional identity is beneficial for the individual to bring to the organization. As argued by the research on anticipatory socialization, an understanding of one’s professional identity can be accrued from multiple sources (Jablin, 2001), and will most likely be received relating to a challenge or during a time of ambiguity in the individual’s life (Stohl, 1986).

#### *Statement of Research Questions*

The purpose of this study was to extend memorable message theory into an understudied area of research inquiry by examining the intersection of memorable messages and anticipatory socialization. In particular, the study examined the kinds of

memorable messages that influence the creation of a professional identity in the anticipatory socialization stage. The professional persona, or professional identity, is recognized as the toolkit an individual applies to organizational entry. Essentially, this professional identity is an accumulation of an individual's life experiences. These life experiences have built upon one another to create an identity that helps the individual negotiate their future occupation. Thus, the anticipatory socialization stage will significantly influence the individual as he or she embarks on the journey through professional life.

Furthermore, the role negotiation that takes place prior to organizational employment entry as described by identity theory states that our identities are formed based on the information communicated to us by others and our reflections of that identity. Thus, the anticipatory socialization stage is an important research site. It is the stage from which individuals begin the process of building the professional identity. Therefore, the memorable messages individuals receive during this stage could be the foundation upon which all other organizational influence rests. Thus, the memorable messages individuals receive during the anticipatory socialization process are an influential part of the creation and negotiation of the professional identity.

Unfortunately, the literature examining the role of the memorable message during the anticipatory socialization stage is undernourished. Therefore, this study will begin to aid in a fuller understanding of the kinds of memorable messages, and the context through which memorable messages are received during anticipatory socialization. The study itself is guided by three research questions.

RQ 1: What kinds of memorable messages are connected to the construction of a professional identity in the anticipatory socialization stage?

RQ 2: What are the functions of memorable messages received during the anticipatory socialization stage in the creation and application of the professional identity?

RQ 3: In what contexts are these memorable messages communicated during the process of anticipatory socialization?

### *Significance of Study*

Through this research, a challenge was posed to Stohl's (1986) argument claiming that messages are not memorable during the anticipatory socialization process. An argument was provided for the memorable message's role in anticipatory socialization through an examination of identity theory. This claim posited that the communication received by individuals will enable them to develop the identity and roles necessary for positive incorporation into their first full-time occupational position. The memorable message and information provided by undergraduate college students on one memorable message related to their professional identities received during their anticipatory socialization phase provides support for the argument that memorable messages are received during anticipatory socialization. The participants of this study, college students, did report receiving memorable messages prior to entering their first full-time, paid career.

College students are an especially rich source of information when studying the formation of a professional identity as many of them are currently in the anticipatory socialization phase. At this point in their lives, most college students have received some

information or advice that is being used as they consider their professional personas. The students' feelings, job prospects, the work environment, relationships with supervisors, and fellow employees, may affect satisfaction and decidedness about a future career path (Bullock-Yowell, Peterson, Reardon, Leierer, & Reed, 2011). In this vein, Bullock-Yowell et al. (2011) argue that "when placed in the situation of having to make decisions in response to career and life stress, individuals engage in the process of career problem solving and decision making" (p. 303). The findings of Bullock-Yowell et al. (2011) indicate that the creation of a professional identity begins during the anticipatory or vocational stage of the socialization process, and that the inherent characteristics of the memorable message lend themselves to helping individuals make decisions about their future careers.

By exploring the role of memorable messages during the anticipatory socialization process, the understanding of the socially constructed and reflexive nature of the professional identity can be more fully understood. For example, knowledge of who provided the message enables scholars and organizations to better understand employee behavior upon entering the organization. Further, examining memorable messages during the anticipatory socialization process allows a greater understanding of the messages individuals rely on to create the identity which they will then utilize when communicating and relating with others in their new occupation.

A clear understanding as to why individuals take certain roles in specific situations can best be explained by identity theory. The purpose for utilizing identity theory to analyze memorable messages in anticipatory socialization is to explain the socially constructed nature of the professional identity and the tools individuals use to

build that identity. The efficacy of memorable messages in influencing an individual's professional identity in a given situation and the significance of memorable messages in enacting that identity are important to study in order to further an understanding of the function of memorable messages received during the anticipatory socialization phase.

According to Gilardi and Lozza (2009), "identity (including professional identity) is a project that is reflexively built" (p. 247). Using this phrase to ground the premise of identity theory, it is important to note that the reflexive position of this theory is significant because it allows for the individual to adapt his or her individual, professional identity based on the communication of others. The discursive nature of this assumption should be considered when examining the memorable messages individuals receive while creating their professional identities in the anticipatory socialization phase.

A theory with roots in George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism, identity theory purports that "identities are internalized role expectations" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). Further, "identity theory generally has focused on role identities" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 289), and when applied to memorable messages in anticipatory socialization, a scholar using identity theory would posit that memorable messages play a part in influencing the role or roles an individual enacts in a given situation. In this case, it would be the professional identity in the individual's future occupation.

According to identity theory, individuals are constantly engaged in a reflective process, negotiating multiple identities and adapting the roles adopted in specific situations. For example, Gilardi & Lozza (2009), who studied the development of undergraduate students' professional identities, argue that self-reflection is extremely important. Therefore, examining the memorable messages individuals receive during the

anticipatory socialization phase provides for better predictions of the roles graduated students will take as they first encounter full-time work for an organization post-graduation.

Identity theory further explains that there can be role conflicts within an individual. One reason these conflicts exist could be due, in part, to discrepancies in the memorable messages received in each of the stages of socialization. In accordance with identity theory, the memorable messages individuals receive during the encounter stage would be different than those the individual received during the anticipatory socialization stage because of the reflexive nature of the identity. Therefore, according to identity theory, the likelihood of the individual receiving a different message as a result of examining his identity in the new context of the organization and adjusting his role accordingly is highly probable. This adjustment would require a new understanding provided by a different memorable message. Therefore, the memorable message an individual receives in one stage of socialization is not generalizable to other stages of the socialization process.

Thus, when applying identity theory to situations in which individuals receive memorable messages about organizational work-life, it is the individual's independent characterization of the self that brings about the formation of the identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). This self-categorization is the manner in which the individual forms his or her own identity. In this vein, Gilardi and Lozza (2009) argue that "the professional identity includes internalized models of professionalism and of the concept of a 'good professional', which arise from experiences and are socially situated" (p. 247).

Memorable messages help to form the role identity individuals take on when they enter an organization. Specifically, “having a particular role identity means acting to fulfill the expectations of the role” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Another identity included in identity theory is the person identity. This identity maintains an individual’s individuality and is associated to a collection of specific attributes (Stets & Burke, 2000). Therefore, “a professional approach to work cannot be reduced to a list of disciplinary knowledge and technical skills: it is also driven by what individuals understand as ‘being a professional’ and how they acknowledge their active roles in building meaning” (Gilardi & Lozza, 2009, p. 247). This additional identity is significant because when we think about the memorable message, one of the primary attributes we ascribe to this communicative act is its ability to build meaning.

The memorable message’s ability to build meaning lends itself to the social construction and reflexivity of professional identity formation as it applies to individual role negotiation. As a result, memorable messages have the potential to mold the character of the individuals on the receiving end. Therefore, as individuals enter organizations, the memorable message will influence their first impressions of the organization and their place within it.

Due to the reflexive nature of the professional identity, the memorable messages received in relation to the professional identity can and do transform the roles taken while influencing actions within an organization. Further, the roles adopted are not static, and the memorable messages received in response to these roles will not remain unchanged. Socialization is a process, and as that process continues, so too do the individual

identities continue to change and to grow, even in the anticipatory stage, especially in the encounter stage.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Methodology

#### *Participants and Setting*

The participants of this study consisted of 321 undergraduate college students recruited from two introductory undergraduate communication classes at a private university in the south-central United States. Since the study was interested in participants who have yet to encounter the workforce as full-time members, 82 of the responses were removed from the data set because the participants had previous or current full-time work experience. As a result, the data examined in this study consisted of the 239 responses from participants who had no full-time work experience. IRB approval was obtained prior to conducting the study. Participants had to be college students at least 18 years old. An announcement about the study was made before the classes began and information packets describing the process and requirements of the study were handed out to all present participants.

Of the respondents, 109 were male (46%), and 127 were female (54%). The average age of the participants was 19.2 (SD = 4.23) with ages ranging from 18 to 22. Participants consisted primarily of college freshmen (41.8%) and sophomores (40.2%) but contained juniors (11%) and seniors (7.2%) as well. 83.6% of the participants had previous part-time work experience and 33.1% were currently employed part-time. Participants with full-time work experience (25.9%) were removed from the data set for this study. 71.2% of the respondents in this study were Caucasian/White/Non-Hispanic,

11.4% were Asian/Asian American, 7% were African American, 6% were Hispanic, with 4.4% other.

### *Procedures*

Previous studies which have examined memorable messages gathered data by distributing surveys asking individuals to describe a memorable message they received (Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Medved et al. 2006). In accordance with the procedures used in these studies, this investigation examined memorable messages through the distribution of a paper and pencil questionnaire. This study first provided the participants with the definition and multiple examples of a memorable message (Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Medved et al., 2006; Nazione et al., 2011). Building on Stohl's (1986) description of the memorable message, the definition of the memorable message was described as being "communicated by anyone and is something an individual believes has impacted the creation of his or her professional identity or some aspect of that identity" (APPENDIX A). The examples included, "Find your passion and go for it no matter what the salary is." "When it comes to being prompt, if you're on time, you're late." "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it." "Be your own boss." "When a job has once begun, never leave it 'til it's done" (APPENDIX A).

Upon reading the description and examples of memorable messages, participants were asked to recall a memorable message, "From the description given in the cover letter, please write down a memorable message that you believe has had an influence on the formation of your professional identity." Respondents were then instructed to explain the function of the message by responding to the question.

Once the participants had (1) written out their memorable message and (2) reported on the function of the message, they were asked to (3) describe, at the time it was received, the context of the message. The context is important to further the understanding of memorable messages received during anticipatory socialization because this stage encompasses such a broad range of time. Participants were also asked to respond to items on the questionnaire reporting (4) who communicated the message to them, (5) the means through which the communication took place and (6) at what age the participant received the message. To make certain that the memorable message was received during the anticipatory socialization process, respondents were asked about any previous or current full-time work experience. Those who confirmed that they had any full-time work experience were removed from the data set. Respondents were also asked to report on demographic information as well. To assess the degree of confidence participants had in retrieving a message, they responded to five seven-point semantic differential scales (agree-disagree; true-false; correct-incorrect; right-wrong; yes-no). The scales were very reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ), with a mean score of 31.51, and showed that participants were very confident in their retrieval of the exact wording of the memorable message.

### *Data Analysis*

The coding process for messages and message functions took approximately one week to complete, and employed a method similar to Barge and Schlueter (2004) in an article on memorable messages in newcomer socialization. Two coders independently and inductively sorted all of the messages and message functions into common categories. Each individual message was coded as one unit and sorted into only one

category. Following the independent sorting of the messages and functions, the coders reconvened and discussed their respective categories. Disagreements between coders over their categories were resolved, and master typologies of messages and functions were constructed. The category systems for the memorable messages accounted for 219/223 or 98% of the total messages and 227/227 or 100% of the total message functions disclosed by participants. Coders then individually coded 25% of the messages (n=56) and functions (n=56) into the typologies to assess intercoder reliability. Cohen's Kappa for the memorable messages was .79 and the Cohen's Kappa for the message functions was .82, which shows acceptable reliability between coders. Coders then placed all of the messages and functions into the master typologies.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Results

#### *Memorable Message Content*

*Research Question #1: What kinds of memorable messages are connected to the construction of a professional identity in the anticipatory socialization stage?*

Eighteen distinct message categories emerged from the content analysis. These categories accounted for 98% of the total messages produced by the research participants and are presented in their descending order of occurrence. Table 1 contains a list of the categories along with examples for each memorable message category and percentages showing each category's share of the total messages.

1. *Do what you love* (n=45). The messages represented in this category urged the respondents to choose a career that would lead to happiness. Often this message advised respondents to choose a career they would love regardless of the salary. Representative messages for this category included, "You will be happier doing something you love, instead of doing something that makes you a lot of money" and "Find your passion and go for it, no matter what the salary is."
2. *Life is what you make of it* (n=23). Messages of this type focused on attitude. Specifically, they informed respondents that the effort they put into life and work is reflected in what they will get out of it. Representative messages found for this category consisted of, "Life is 10% what happens to you, 90% of how you react to it."

3. *God's will* (n=19). The messages in this category advised the respondents to work through and for the Lord. Further, they advised the respondents to find purpose through God, and He will assist them in their endeavors. The messages in this category included, "Dedicate your works to the Lord and your plans will be established."
4. *Do your best* (n=16). Messages in this category advised respondents to do their best, do it right, and never to settle for anything less. The messages were often short and stressed the importance of dedicating oneself to doing the best work possible. Messages illustrated in this category were, "Try your best no matter what because in the end it will be worth it."
5. *Work hard* (n=13). The messages instructed respondents to work hard in their career. Multiple messages informed the respondents that if one works hard, they will succeed. Messages also advised that if one works hard and fails, hard work will still pay off in the future. Messages characterized in this category were "Hard work pays off, even if it takes a while."
6. *Encouragement* (n=12). Messages in this category offered encouragement to the respondents. Specifically, the messages focused primarily on informing the respondents that they can do anything. For example, one message advised, "Don't give up on your dream, even when it seems out of reach because it will be worth it in the end."
7. *Be true to yourself* (n=11). The messages advised respondents that in all of the adversity they might face, to "remember who you are." Further, they focused on stating to stay true to oneself, and not to change for others. One message from this

- category included, “It’s always a mistake to decide what you want to do before you decide who you want to be.”
8. *Be organized* (n=11). The messages in this category were recommendations for participants to be organized and practice time management. Messages in this category included, “Early to bed early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”
  9. *If you never try, you will never succeed* (n=11). The messages for participants focused on the value of trying, concentrating on success as a result. Further, the messages impressed upon the respondents that if they do not try, they will not reach their goals. An example of a message comprising this category is, “If you don’t do anything, you can’t be anyone.”
  10. *Ethics* (n=10). The messages in this category were primarily focused on ethical behavior in the workplace, as well as good character and respect for others. A representative message from this category included, “Always do what you believe is right, and do those things with honesty and integrity.”
  11. *Education is important* (n=9). Messages in this category expressed the importance of working hard in school and getting an education. Of particular significance for the messages in this category was the importance of gaining knowledge and *learning*, not just receiving the degree itself. A message reported for this category was, “Treat college like it’s your career, and you’ll be successful.”
  12. *Future career choice* (n=8). The purpose of the messages in this category was to advise the participants about their future career choice. The messages most often directed the respondents to a specific career choice, focusing on a career that utilized

- specific skills and characteristics. An example message from this category included, “You should try doing something with numbers because you’re good in math. I would recommend accounting.”
13. *Perseverance* (n=7). These messages encouraged respondents to persevere through tough times to reach their goals. The messages most frequently addressed strength and failure. One representative message from this category declared, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it’s the courage to continue that counts.”
  14. *Responsibility* (n=6). The purpose of the messages here focused on finishing what the participants have started, and doing it right. Representative messages from this category include, “Never leave something half-finished, and finish what you started.”
  15. *Be your own boss* (n=6). The messages in this category centered on being in control, and focused on self-leadership. An example message from this category is, “Always be a leader, never a follower.”
  16. *Work smart, not hard* (n=4). Messages of this type concentrated on the way one works. Specifically, participants were advised to use their time wisely by working smartly.
  17. *Attitude* (n=4). Messages representative of this category were about maintaining a positive attitude when working. A message from this category was, “It takes real poise to keep the pressure on when things are going good, and to remain calm and patient when things are going wrong.”



18. *Make connections* (n=4). The messages advised respondents to go out of their way to meet people and make professional connections. Representative messages from this category included, “Market yourself to employers and network.”

19. *Other* (n=4).

Table 1  
Memorable Message Content

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Do what you love	45	20.2	“Do what you love and love what you do.”
Life is what you make of it	23	10.3	“What you get out of something depends on how much you put into it.”
God’s will	19	8.5	“Just keep trying your best and ask God for wisdom along the way.”
Do your best	16	7.2	“Whatever you do, dot it to the best of your ability.”
Work hard	13	5.8	“Hard work beats talent when talent does not work hard.”
Encouragement	12	5.4	“You can do anything you set your mind to.”
Be true to yourself	11	4.9	“Remember who you are.”
Be organized	11	4.9	“Early is on time, on time is late. The real world does not wait for you.”
If you never try, you will never succeed	11	4.9	“Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

(Continued)

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Ethics	10	4.5	“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
Education is important	9	4.0	“If you want to buy nice things, you must make straight As to get that good job.”
Future career choice	8	3.6	“Business is where the true money is.”
Perseverance	7	3.2	“It isn’t about how hard you get hit, but how hard you can get it and keep moving forward.”
Responsibility	6	2.7	“You are 100% responsible for everything in your life, be it good or bad.”
Be your own boss	6	2.7	“Be your own boss.”
Work smart, not hard	4	1.8	“Work smart, not hard.”
Attitude	4	1.8	“If you are going to think, think big.”
Make connections	4	1.8	“It’s not the grades you make; it’s the hands you shake.”
Other	4	1.8	

### *Memorable Message Function*

*Research Question #2: What are the functions of these memorable messages received during the anticipatory socialization stage?*

The categories derived from the function of the memorable message are explained. Table 2 contains examples of each category with corresponding percentages for each typology in descending order.

1. *Decisions related to future career choice* (n=51). Messages functioned to highlight the importance of majors, education, and developing skill sets before choosing and entering a career. Representative functions for this category included, “It has allowed me to seek my passion of helping people in the nonprofit world.”
2. *Do what you love* (n=24). The messages encouraged the participants to choose careers that would make them happy. An example of a functioning message in this category is, “It made me realize that no matter how much money I make or where I live, being happy about what I do every day is most important.”
3. *Work hard* (n=17). These requests were motivational and encouraged participants to work hard and that their hard work would be paid off with success. Message functions in this category included, “It keeps me going and always working as hard as I can even when I want to give up.”
4. *Do your best* (n=17). These messages requested respondents do their best by providing encouragement. Specifically, participants explained at length that they should put forth their best effort when working to be successful and reap the rewards.
5. *Attitude* (n=15). Interpretations of the messages in this category focused on maintaining a positive attitude in adverse situations. Respondents who received these messages understood the importance of a good attitude in maintaining relationships. An example of these responses is, “I manage to do a lot of challenging things because I always have a positive attitude toward life and study.”
6. *Encouraged* (n=15). The messages encouraged respondents not to give up, and to strive for the best because they “can do anything” regardless of the situation.

7. *Identity* (n=14). The respondents who received messages related to identity felt that the messages enhanced individuality and independence. The messages also conveyed the importance of being true to oneself. One example of the reactions related to identity is, “It made me realize that I need to take control of my life.”
8. *Time Management* (n=13). The messages related to time management encouraged respondents to get places early, have their work completed on time, and never to be late. Participants’ reactions to these messages were to be places early, if not on time.
9. *Determination* (n=11). Respondents who received these messages became more determined to finish their work and not to give up. An example reaction representative of this category is, “I never give up.”
10. *Improved character* (n=9). The messages influenced respondents to improve their character and remain accountable in difficult work situations. Responses representative of this category included, “I think being a good and giving person always leads to bigger and better things.”
11. *Motivation* (n=9). The function of the messages from this category resulted in increased motivation from respondents and a willingness to try new things. One reaction to these messages was, “It has helped me to take initiative and act decisively when needed.”
12. *God’s plans* (n=8). These messages encouraged respondents to allow for God’s plans to guide them in their career and career choices. Further, the respondents believed in the importance of devoting their service to the Lord. A reaction from this category is, “This statement has continually reminded me that a combination of hard work and focus on God is the key to success.”

13. *Ethics* (n=7). Interpretations of the messages in this category focused on the importance of ethics in the workplace. Further, respondents understood the importance of respect and courtesy in social situations.
14. *Importance of goals* (n=6). Respondents who received messages related to goals recognized the importance of setting objectives and achieving them. One response relating to the importance of goals was, “It has encouraged me to continue to strive towards my goals in life regardless of the obstacles I must face.”
15. *Think before you act* (n=6). These messages conveyed to respondents that they need to think about their actions before they do anything. The messages were related to interpersonal actions at work as well as work-related decisions. One response was, “Makes me think twice about turning in something that’s not my best work.”
16. *Fate* (n=3). The respondents who received messages about fate believed that everything happens for a reason, regardless of what they do. For example, “It has taught me to accept whatever comes, since everything happens for a reason.”
17. *Work smart, not hard* (n=2). Respondents who received these messages determined that it is better to work smarter, rather and harder, and to exert less time and energy on certain tasks.

Table 2  
Memorable Message Function

Function	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Decisions related to future career choice	51	22.5	“It has helped me narrow down things in my life to what I want to do, not what I thought I had to do.”
Do what you love	24	10.6	“I am going to work in a field I enjoy.”
Work hard	17	7.5	“It showed me that hard work really pays off, and that everything I’m doing has a purpose in the future.”
Do your best	17	7.5	“Pushed me to be the best at what I do.”
Attitude	15	6.6	“It keeps me in an optimistic spirit and so I don’t take things too personally and keeps me from getting too emotional.”
Encouraged	15	6.6	“It has given me the confidence and the drive to achieve whatever I want.”
Identity	14	6.2	“I feel that it has enhanced my individuality.”
Time management	13	5.7	“I’m always 10-15 minutes early wherever I go, and I try to be as prepared as possible.”
Determination	11	4.8	“I never leave a job, and always give it my best until it is finished.”

*(Continued)*

Function	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Improved character	9	4.0	“This statement has influenced me to love morally, acceptable, and excellently within my professional endeavors.”
Motivation	9	4.0	“The message has motivated me to always finish what I start the best that I can.”
God’s plans	8	3.5	“If God has a plan for my life... I can trust He will get me through.”
Ethics	7	3.1	“I never thought too much about business ethics before, but now I try to strive for a set of values that will allow me to be successful.”
Importance of goals	6	2.6	“Gives me the confidence to set goals, while also helping those around me reach their own.”
Think before you act	6	2.6	“It has given me a filter through which to evaluate my decisions.”
Fate	3	1.3	“It has taught me to accept whatever comes, since everything happens for a reason.”

*(Continued)*

Function	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Work smart, not hard	2	0.9	“This had made me realize that it is possible to do certain things or get somewhere not necessarily giving it 110%. If you can do it giving only 50%, then that’s all it takes.”

### *Memorable Message Context*

*Research Question #3: In what contexts are these memorable messages communicated during the process of anticipatory socialization?*

Table 3 contains the data related to the source, context, media, and timeframe of the memorable messages. Chi square analysis revealed men (64.2%) versus women (34.2%) were significantly identified as the source of the memorable message ( $\chi^2 = 22.2$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Fathers (31.4%) were identified significantly more as the sources of the memorable messages ( $\chi^2 = 308.11$ ,  $DF = 12$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). The home was identified significantly more as the context of the memorable message than other contexts ( $\chi^2 = 615.4$ ,  $DF = 11$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). The messages were received significantly more in face-to-face communication (78.5%) versus other media ( $\chi^2 = 800$ ,  $DF = 6$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). In terms of time, the mean time for the memorable message was 15.2 years of age for the receiver of the message.



Table 3  
Memorable Message Context

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1. Who sent the message?</b>		
Dad	73	31.4%
Teacher/Coach	45	19.4%
Mom	40	16.9%
Friend/Peer	19	8.1%
Other Family Member	12	5.0%
Pastor/Religious figure	9	3.8%
Celebrity/Author	8	3.4%
Movie Character	7	3.0%
Grandfather	6	2.5%
Other	6	2.5%
Speaker	4	1.7%
Mentor	4	1.7%
Boss	1	0.4%
<b>2. What was the gender of the message source?</b>		
Male	153	64.2%
Female	81	34.2%
Both	4	1.6%
<b>3. Where was the message received?</b>		
Home	106	47.5%
School	62	27.8%
Other	13	5.8%
Church	7	3.2%
Movie/Television	6	2.7%
Car	6	2.7%
Work	6	2.7%
Book	5	2.2%
Extra-curricular activities outside of school	4	1.8%
Meal	4	1.8%
Telephone	2	.9%
Email/Internet	2	.9%

*(Continued)*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>4. How did you receive this message?</b>		
Face-to-face	186	78.5%
Written	14	5.9%
Lecture/sermon/speech	13	5.5%
Telephone	7	3.0%
Digital/Social media	7	3.0%
Movie/Mass media	7	3.0%
Other	3	1.3%
<b>5. How old were you when you received the message?</b>		
18	39	16.9%
17	33	14.4%
16	33	14.4%
15	30	13.0%
14	16	6.9%
19	16	6.9%
12	16	6.9%
10	9	3.9%
20	8	3.5%
5	6	2.6%
6	6	2.6%
8	6	2.6%
21	3	1.4%
11	3	1.3%
7	3	1.3%
4	2	0.9%
9	1	0.5%

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Discussion

There has been a surprising lack of research examining memorable messages received during anticipatory socialization. According to Stohl (1986), memorable messages do not occur in this stage because they often occur only during times of uncertainty. The role of the memorable message received during the anticipatory socialization stage is important to study because it is the communication from which respondents begin the process of building their professional identities. Therefore, the memorable messages respondents receive during this stage can be the foundation upon which all other organizational influence rests. Thus, memorable messages during this stage are an influential part of the creation and negotiation of the professional identity.

The present study was intended to add perspective on the messages college students have possibly received concerning the professional identity that they will apply to their future, full-time careers. Further, the study aimed to present an understanding of how those messages function, and their role in shaping the actions of individuals in choosing/behaving in their future careers. The study also tested Stohl's (1986) claim about the timeframe in which memorable messages can occur by collecting information related the context of the message at the time it was received. The data from the study highlight a few significant findings regarding the interplay of memorable messages and anticipatory socialization.

First, consistent with the research of Barge & Schlueter (2004), one of the key findings in this research was the high degree of accuracy with which research participants were able to recall a memorable message from the anticipatory socialization phase. This finding provides support for the notion that career advice occurs in the anticipatory socialization stage and disconfirms Stohl's assertion that memorable messages do not occur in the anticipatory stage. Further, the formation of a professional identity occurs well before individuals take on full-time work. The data also show that the majority of individuals received their memorable messages while in high school.

Second, many of the messages identified knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success. These messages included advice to the participants of working hard, doing your best, encouragement, organization, education, ethics, and perseverance. Some other messages encouraged participants to construct meaningful work. These messages encouraged the participants to be true to oneself, be one's own boss, seek spiritual advice, and do what one loves. Taken together, the memorable messages reported in this study advised the participants to work hard, but be passionate about one's professional identity. In accordance with Stohl's (1986) findings, the messages in this study were benevolent and provided an optimistic picture of work as well as constructive advice for participants as they create a meaningful yet successful professional persona. Additionally, the messages provided participants with an optimistic and constructive picture of their future. In this vein, messages advised participants to be passionate, strategic, and optimistic about the future and their work identity.

Third, identifying the function of the messages helped our understanding of how participants made sense of the messages they received during anticipatory socialization.

These results are important to note because identity theory argues that our identities are shaped based on the information communicated to us by others. This is related to Cooley's (1902) concept of the looking-glass self. Cooley found that we perceive ourselves in the same way that others perceive us. Consequently, in viewing the professional identity in this manner, the information that is communicated to individuals is internalized and applied to one's future career choices. In accordance with this theory, individuals are receiving memorable messages from others based on the other's perception of them. Therefore, memorable messages of encouragement are communicated in ways that help others to maintain an optimistic view and positive construction of their professional identity.

Fourth, this study found that significantly more of the memorable messages were delivered via face-to-face communication. This confirms previous research on the valuable richness provided by face-to-face communication as opposed to other media (Barge & Schlueter, 2004; Stohl, 1986). Additionally, most of the memorable messages were delivered by a family member, with the father as the most significant source of the message. This supports previous research which highlights the importance of parental influence on children's occupational and organizational roles (Medved et al., 2006). Further, the findings in this study expand upon the research by Medved et al. (2006) by extending communicative relationships into ongoing conversations about how to engage work. It is interesting to note that fathers continue to be the most influential source in light of the rise of pervasiveness of dual-earner marriages.

Fifth, results of this study both confirm and extend Jablin's (2001) research on the key socialization agents in anticipatory socialization. Jablin (2001) identified five

sources of anticipatory socialization - educational institutions, family, friends and peers, media and part-time jobs- which were confirmed in this study. However, results here indicate that one more socialization agent should be added to his list. This study found that religious figures and institutions were sources of roughly four percent of the messages remembered by participants which is significantly more than part-time work. These messages described the role of God or fate in relation to a future career. In these messages, the participants were advised that their actions and their futures were predetermined or guided by God. They were advised that having faith would direct them on some future constructive professional path.

Given that parents influence were identified as key socialization agents in this study as well as others (Medved et al., 2006; Jodl et al., 2001; Otto, 2000; Leifer & Lesser, 1976), a goal of future research should be a comparative analysis of memorable messages given by fathers versus mothers. In particular, studies should focus on the similarities and differences between the two. Do the memorable messages from fathers differ from those of mothers? Do these messages function differently for their sons and daughters as crucial lessons for success? Answers to these questions will enable us to understand more deeply the connections between work and family and the roles that fathers and mothers take on in the vocational development of their children.

The memorable messages relating to God and religion provide a new context in which memorable messages can be received during the anticipatory stage of socialization. Previous research has claimed that family, educational institutions, friends and peers, media, and part-time jobs are the primary sources of anticipatory socialization (Jablin, 2001). This new finding suggests that religion plays a role in socializing individuals

prior to entering a full-time career. Thus, future studies on anticipatory socialization should take this context into account.

All studies have limitations and this one is no different. This study examined undergraduate college students in introductory communication classes at a medium-size Christian university. Therefore, the sample in this study may not be reflective of students in large university settings. Additionally, the majority of participants in this study were Caucasian freshman and sophomore students. This is limiting because data from such an homogenous sample may not generalize to more diverse populations.

In summary, the occurrence of memorable messages during the anticipatory stage of socialization has been an understudied concept in the field of communication. This study sought to extend the scholarship on socialization and memorable messages by examining the content and function of memorable messages in the anticipatory socialization stage. The results of this study support the claim that memorable messages do occur during anticipatory socialization. In addition, the results suggest that participants receive memorable messages early in the anticipatory socialization stage, via face-to-face communication, from a male, and most frequently from their father. The content of messages reported in this study centered on issues relating to the college students' professional identities. The benevolent nature of these messages contributed to an optimistic outlook of the students on future careers. The results in this study also extend to the scholarship on the work-family relationship. In particular, this study found that conversations with children go well beyond gender differences in the work place and into advice on the vocational.

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### Cover Letter

January 11, 2012

Dear student,

The attached questionnaire pertains to a research study examining the role of communication in the creation of a college student's professional identity prior to full-time employment. I would appreciate it if you might take a few moments and fill out the enclosed survey.

As college students embark on the search for and enter into their first full-time, paid career, they bring with them an accumulation of knowledge learned prior to encountering their new organization. A memorable message is a statement of guidance or advice that has influenced the creation of a professional identity. The professional identity is argued to be the toolkit of learned experiences from which individuals pull to determine their career, as well as their actions and communication within that occupation.

The memorable message can be communicated by anyone and is something an individual believes has impacted the creation of his or her professional identity or some aspect of that identity. Memorable messages might be communicated as: "Find your passion and go for it no matter what the salary is." "When it comes to being prompt, if you're on time, you're late." "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it." "Be your own boss." "When a job has once begun, never leave it 'til it's done."

If you would, please take a few moments to finish the attached questionnaire. Your individual responses will remain anonymous. As you fill out the questionnaire, please read the instructions carefully and answer all of the questions as fully as you can.

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your individual response will remain anonymous. If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please email me at [darby\\_simek@baylor.edu](mailto:darby_simek@baylor.edu). Again, thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Darby R. Simek  
Master of Arts Candidate, Communication Studies  
Department of Communication Studies  
Baylor University  
Waco, TX 76798  
Email: [darby\\_simek@baylor.edu](mailto:darby_simek@baylor.edu)

APPENDIX B

Communication Survey

1. From the description given in the cover letter, please write down a memorable message that you believe has had an influence on the formation of your professional identity.

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2. How has this memorable message influenced your professional identity?

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SECTION I – MESSAGE CONDITIONS

Please check the appropriate response as they relate to the memorable message you described.

1. The person who sent me the message was:

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

2. Who sent the message?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where was the message received? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How did you receive this message? (eg telephone, face-to-face communication, formal written document, email, mass media, social media, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Approximately, how old were you when you received the message? \_\_\_\_\_

6. PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE NUMBERS ON THE SCALE BELOW.

I feel confident in my recollection of the memorable message.

Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

## SECTION II - DEMOGRAPHICS

Please answer the following questions concerning demographics. All information is confidential and anonymous.

1. Age (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

3. Year in School: Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_\_

4. Race \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you have any full-time work experience? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you have any part-time work experience? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you currently employed full-time? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you currently employed part-time? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent Form for Subjects

**Baylor University**  
**Certification of Informed Consent**  
**Principal Investigator: Darby R. Simek, Department of Communication Studies**

This form asks you for your consent to participate in communication research. For this research you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire pertaining to the role of the memorable message in creating the professional identity. The entire questionnaire is two pages in length and should require no more than fifteen minutes of your time.

There will be no physical risks to you at any time. You may elect, either now or at any time while completing the questionnaire, to withdraw your participation without penalty. Your compliance in this study is completely voluntary.

This study meets the American Psychological Association's standards for "Minimal Risk" and poses no major risks or dangers for you as a participant.

We have no interest in knowing how a specific individual responds to the questionnaire. There will be no identifying codes used, so you are guaranteed of complete anonymity..

The results will be tabulated in the coming months, and will be available for you to review, should you wish to see the outcome. However, since no identifying information will be documented, we have no way to inform you of how your individual responses compare with the overall study results. The data will provide for an understanding of communication's role in preparing college students for full-time occupations. Specifically, this data will offer a richer understanding of how individuals are influenced in choosing their future careers and their actions within the job itself.

By signing this form and participating in this study, you are acknowledging that you are at least 18 years of age and able to participate in this study as an adult.

Please direct all inquiries to Darby Simek, a Master's candidate, through Dr. David Schlueter, Department of Communication Studies, Baylor University, P.O. Box 97368, Waco, TX, 76798-7368. Ms. Simek can also be reached at (979) 702 – 1429. Dr. Schlueter may be reached at (254) 710 – 1621.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, or have other questions regarding this research as it relates to you as a participant, please contact the Baylor University Committee for Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Dr. Michael Sherr,

Chair, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97320, Waco, TX, 76798-7320. Dr. Sherr may also be reached at (254) 710 – 4483.

*I have read and understood this form, am aware of my rights as a participant, and have agreed to participate in this research*

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NAME (Signature)

DATE

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