

# Organizational Communication Theory

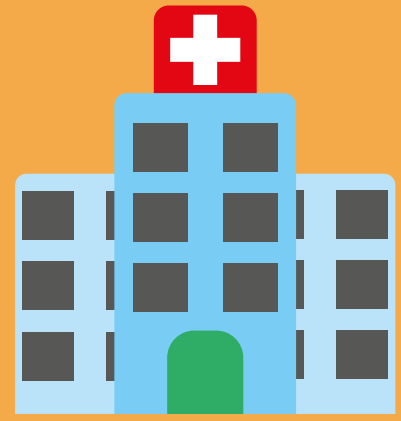
All three theories have traits related to behavior and social environments. However, Organizational Identity Theory is the only one that addresses an employees self-concepts.

## Institutional Theories of Organizational Communication

"Institutions are socially constructed frameworks composed of conventions that prescribe behavior, cognition, and communication in given contexts" (Lammers, 2009, p. 521)

- "Institutions are maintained or changed by people who act and interact with each other" (Lammers, 2009, p. 521).
- Examples: universities, hospitals, church, marriage, voting, markets, governments, and professions
- Rational myths are shared belief that has been untested from an organizations rational function.
- "Ultimately, the institutional approach to organizational communication emphasizes the role of messages external to organizations as impinging on the intentions and behaviors of actors within organizations" (Lammers, 2009, p. 521).
- An institutional view and a cultural approach cannot be distinguished.

Lammers, J. C. (2009). Institutional theories of organizational communication. *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 521-524 <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959384.n196>



## Organizational Identity Theory

"Organizational identity theory (OIT) attempts to address how employees' self-concepts shape and are shaped by the attachments they make in the workplace." (Scott, 2009, p. 717)

- People create models of themselves, the world, and themselves in the world.
- Identities are built from social categories.
- Examples of social categories include race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- "Organizational identification refers to the behavioral process through which preferred identities are accomplished through participation activities that lead to self-evaluation" (Scott, 2009, p. 717).
- When people relate to an organization, their behavioral decisions are in the interests of that organization.
- "Dialogic approaches have begun to show some initial promise as a lens for understanding the role of identification in conflicts and overlaps among the multiple identities that mark public and private life" (Scott, 2009, p. 718).

Scott, C. (2009). Organizational identity theory. *Encyclopedia of Communication Theory*, 717-718. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412959384.n270>



## Social Capital Theory

Social capital is the relationship that an organization has with their environments.

- "It tends to be used to describe the resources of a community and the degree of shared values and trust within it" (Ihlen, 2005, p. 492).
- Types of capital: symbolic (prestige & honor), economic (money & property), social (connections & memberships of groups), cultural (knowledge, skills, & educational qualifications)
- "First, the development of social capital, and through it symbolic capital, seems to be at the heart of public relations. Second, although management is obviously engaged in increasing social capital, it seems to be an exclusive function of public relations to develop programs in this area. Third, Bourdieu's concept of social capital needs to be further elaborated, as it does not lend itself easily to empirical studies of organizations" (Ihlen, 2005, p. 494).
- Social capital and public relations fit together in terms of how relationships are built and their effects on an organization.

Ihlen, Ø. (2005). The power of social Capital: Adapting Bourdieu to the study of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 492-496. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2005.08.007>

