

# COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA PROGRAMME

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

## Who is to blame, the message or the messenger?

A Talk by Professor Taik Sup AUH  
KAIST Graduate School of Information &  
Media Management

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Hostile media perception is the tendency for highly involved partisans to perceive that the media coverage of a controversial issue is biased against their own point of view and supports the other side. This phenomenon was experimentally tested to investigate whether the “target” of such “hostility” is directed towards the media message itself or the messenger conveying the message to the audience.

The experimental stimulus was a well balanced news article containing strong arguments, both supporting and opposing the proposed employment quota system (EQS), a Korean version of the Affirmative Action Program. The EQS provides university graduates outside of Seoul with a favored treatment in their employment opportunities. The article introduced EQS as a government-sponsored bill pending legislation at the National Assembly. Subjects in the experiment were 905 university students, almost equal in numbers between Seoul and outside of Seoul. Subjects read the EQS article attributed to one of the four sources: The Chosun Ilbo, a conservative anti-government daily; The Hangyoreh, a liberal pro-government daily; Media Daum, an Internet portal site; and a student essay in a writing class.

A 3 x 4 design—3 existing attitudes toward EQS (favor, neutral, oppose) x 4 attributed sources (The Chosun Ilbo, The Hangyoreh, Media Daum, and a student)—was employed to test both the main effect and the interaction effect of the “audience” variable (attitudes toward the EQS) and the “source” variable (4 attributed sources) upon biases in the article as perceived by the subjects (measured with four items).

#### About the Speaker:

Professor Taik Sup Auh is a Visiting Professor at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) Graduate School of Information & Media Management in Seoul. Previously, Dr. Auh had been on the faculty of the School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Korea University (1981-2006), teaching mainly research methods and political communication to graduate students and public opinion to undergraduates. He earned his bachelors degree in international relations from Seoul National University in 1965, masters degree in journalism in 1973, and his Ph.D. in mass communication in 1977 from Indiana University. He taught public opinion at Indiana University School of Journalism in the fall semester of 2006.