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Managing the Relationship between Hispanic Voters and the State of Florida: A Quantitative Survey Analysis

Selena M. Gonzalez
University of South Florida

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Managing the Relationship between Hispanic Voters and the State of Florida:

A Quantitative Survey Analysis

by

Selena M. Gonzalez

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a concentration in Strategic Communication Management
Department of Communication
College of Arts & Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Kelly Page Werder, Ph.D.
Kelli Burns, Ph.D.
Roxanne Watson, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the relationship between registered voters of minority groups and the government of the states they reside in has become increasingly complex due to controversial legislation proposed and often passed in these states. Specifically, some states have passed laws that make it more difficult for Hispanic/Latinx residents to live and work. In particular, Florida has enacted legislation that makes it more difficult for members of the minority groups to vote, drive, and gain access to healthcare. Much of this legislation impacts the Hispanic/Latinx community, which can influence perceptions of the relationship this racial minority has with Florida's state government. Using the theoretical foundation provided by Organization-Public Relationship Management (OPR), this thesis aims to better understand the relationship that Hispanic/Latinx registered voters have with Florida's state government. Specifically, an exploratory probability survey of registered voters in Pinellas County (N=XXX) was conducted to measure perceptions of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality with Florida's state government in order to compare relational outcomes between Hispanic/Latinx and Caucasian racial groups. Results indicate that perceptions of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality with Florida's state government are significantly lower among Hispanic/Latinx registered voters than Caucasian registered voters in Pinellas County. Although the results of this exploratory study are not generalizable to the larger population of registered voters in Pinellas County, findings suggest that there are differences in relational quality experienced by minority residents and Caucasian residents with Florida's state government. This research contributes to better understanding of the minority experience in Florida and identifies communication

strategies that aim to increase perceptions of relational quality between the Hispanic/Latinx voter community and Florida's state government. In addition, future qualitative research is suggested to uncover the underlying reasons for these differences and quantitative research to achieve more participation from the Hispanic/Latinx community and data that is generalizable to the larger population of residents of the Florida.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In our ever-changing society, a specific reliance is reserved for acknowledging the needs of those who exist in it and what their perspectives can offer to the higher powers under which they live, work and improve as individuals. One such example of this is the overwhelming existence of research and experimental analyses that have placed minority groups in the United States of America at the forefront. This research has often expanded upon the varying voting trends of groups in areas that are often considered politically polarized. Understanding the constant changes in voter trends across these groups can prove significance in efforts to create the necessary campaigns and access to resources that would not otherwise be available for those in need. Similarly, the examination of these trends could prove successful in terms of what policymakers, as well as political communication strategists, should take heed of as they approach important periods of the election campaign cycle.

Minority groups in densely populated states, referred to as 'swing states' in election seasons, are no anomaly toward the progressively growing arena of communication research from political perspectives; strategic communication, in essence, is only part of a larger foundation that is created to understand and influence citizens. Conducting research of this nature can be tedious, as it must account for how the voting community responds to the organization sponsoring the research, which can be seen as bias. The differences in lived experience for minority groups in specific regions of the country has been extensively examined, particularly in recent years as changes in American politics have reached varying degrees of

intensity for many; voters are often challenged to align their political perspectives toward either side of the existing political spectrum: extremely conservative, or extremely liberal (also commonly referred to as ‘right-wing’ or ‘left-wing’ politics by American political experts and commentators). Such challenges have opened the door to ambiguous attitudes regarding what policies or laws are right or wrong, good or bad for certain minority groups who may face adversities in their communities. Adversities that, due to the complicated and morally ambiguous political history of the United States, have existed long before the current rise of such polarizing elections in recent years. While continuous strides have been made regarding the liberties for minority groups in America, particularly in the Southern regions of the nation which harbor difficult histories for several racial groups, there are still racial struggles experienced by the Hispanic and Latinx-American population, as illustrated by in American media coverage.

To further understand these differences and conduct comprehensive research to investigate minority populations, it is imperative to designate a specific state in which the Hispanic/Latinx population is large and growing. The state of Florida can be recognized as an ideal candidate for research of this degree. A peninsula positioned just north of the Caribbean islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Florida’s Hispanic/Latinx population is one of the largest in the country, measured at 27.1% out of an overall total of 22,444,823 according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2022. In recent years, Florida’s government and legislature has been heavily scrutinized in the media due to the proposals of several seemingly discriminatory bills signed into law by the controversial incumbent Florida governor Ron DeSantis and his administration. According to various media coverage in politically polarized regions of America, Hispanic/Latinx voter communities may face disproportionate difficulties or have less trust in their governmental establishments. In addition, relational variables identified by

the Organization-Public Relationship Management (OPR) theory can be used to quantitatively measure the relationship between Hispanic/Latinx registered voters in Pinellas County and Florida's state government.

Hispanic/Latinx communities in Florida include a diverse array of backgrounds, cultures, and political affiliations. Understanding the perceived degree of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality of the Hispanic/Latinx population with Florida's state government is imperative for understanding how to improve the relational quality Florida experiences with its Hispanic/Latinx residents. This study seeks to provide insights that will contribute more to the conversation surrounding what government policies, communication strategies and engagement initiatives will serve the positively for this community in the future.

Purpose & Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the dynamic relationship between the Hispanic/Latinx residential population of Florida and the state's government, utilizing a quantitative survey analysis as the primary research method. Specifically, this study will apply the theoretical framework provided by problem recognition and organization-public relationship (OPR) to better understand the Hispanic/Latinx voter community's perceptions of the state of Florida. This study seeks to integrate these theories to understand how the independent and dependent variables of each interact to influence perceptions of an organization.

This research is important for understanding the perceptions of the Hispanic/Latinx voter population in Pinellas County, Florida as it will seek to provide actionable insights that can inform better policy decisions and community engagement initiatives for this community. The goal is to encourage a more inclusive, representative political system in Pinellas County for this demographic; encouraging more conscious messaging in strategic communication campaigns, as

well as informed media coverage as they pertain to this population group, can be advantageous to all involved.

Strategic communication messaging, in essence, can be characterized by the importance of purpose. Utilizing purpose when creating campaigns and messaging in media, especially when discussing the hardships a community may face, can be an incredible turning point for how we navigate what needs to change for this community going forward. In volume sixteen of the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, purpose is described as “an all-encompassing principal that guides an organization’s strategies, policies, initiatives, and operations” (Basu, 2018). The overarching purpose of this study is to analyze the survey responses of Hispanic/Latinx voters in Pinellas County and determine what they mean for how the current Florida administration is impacting their lives. The messaging and campaigns that currently exist regarding this specific community could benefit greatly from the results of this study, as they can alter their purpose in accordance with what this community needs and how their stories can be expressed in a positive way through media coverage.

Media coverage of the issues surrounding the Hispanic/Latinx community in Florida has been considered polarizing in the past. Utilizing the responses to the survey questions as an outlet for expressing the issues that exist within this community can in turn result in more of an understanding of how their struggles can be outlined positively in political campaigns and messaging going forward. Thus, creating a sound environment for the affected community.

To accomplish the goals of this research, the following research question is explored: What relational perceptions of Florida’s state government exist among Hispanic/Latinx voters in Pinellas County, Fla., and how do these perceptions differ from those of Caucasian voters?

This research question will be informed by a conducting a survey that seeks to support the following hypotheses:

H1: Perceived trust in Florida's state government will be lower among Hispanic/Latinx Pinellas County registered voters than Caucasian voters.

H2: Perceived satisfaction with Florida's state government will be lower among Hispanic/Latinx registered voters than Caucasian voters.

H3: Perceived commitment to Florida's state government will be weaker among Hispanic/Latinx registered voters in Pinellas County than Caucasian voters.

H4: Perceived control mutuality in the State of Florida will be lower among Hispanic registered voters in Pinellas County than Caucasian voters.

An empirical analysis of the data collected through Qualtrics software and SPSS 29 testing was conducted to uncover whether these research hypotheses are supported. For this area of academic research, surveys are an effective tool for collecting data on a wider scale because they offer a structured approach that can assess attitudes, preferences, and behaviors among specific populations. A survey of all registered voters in Pinellas County, Florida, will be conducted to identify the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the voters to uncover what differences may lie in how the Hispanic/Latin community assesses the state government versus how the Caucasian voter population does.. The survey questionnaire will include various items to assess the variables that may influence the relationship between Florida's state government and Hispanic/Latinx voters in either positive or negative ways. This relationship is one that is very critical due to how tensions have risen recently regarding policies such as Senate Bill 1718, which "amends various Florida statutes to address provisions related to individuals in this state who may be unauthorized aliens" according to the Florida Senate internet database. This bill

introduced various new policies and protocols regarding undocumented Florida citizens in Florida, including but not limited to not allowing hospitals to reveal immigration status or refuse care, punishments for undocumented employees who falsify documents to obtain employment and employers who knowingly hire someone who is undocumented, and the banning of transporting undocumented immigrants into Florida (not within or out of the state).

The online survey questionnaire, containing items adapted from previous research applications of relationship management theory and organization-public relationship management, has been administered to the existing community of registered voters in Pinellas County, Florida. The primary objectives of this study are to examine the factors influencing the political engagement and preferences of Pinellas County voters and to assess how the state's recently controversial status has affected this relationship. In the realm of academic research, this topic has been studied extensively; however, with rising political tension and unrest in recent years (this unrest can be highlighted by the language and intent of Senate Bill 1718) it is imperative to have a current, theoretically grounded view of the perceptions of the voter communities toward Florida's state government and its lawmaking as of late.

The current political climate of Florida is considered uneven, and news stories sourced for the following chapters reveal that legislature such as Senate Bill 1718, and the policies that resulted because of it, could introduce tensions and anxieties in Hispanic/Latinx voters.

Recognizing the issues that arise from policies such as this and utilizing problem recognition and relationship management to determine what influences voters to rally for or against them is crucial in any political climate. While the knowledge derived from this research will be of academic relevance, it is also of significant practical importance. Providing guidance for policymakers and government officials, in the form of a survey upheld by valid responses from

registered voters, will prove valuable for those working toward a more responsive government. This study will be conducted to enlighten society can find a new understanding of this affected minority group facing unprecedented challenges and a complicated future, should conditions not change for the better. This study utilizes a quantitative survey consisting of questions for all registered voters in Pinellas County, inquiring of viewpoints regarding Florida's state government. Dissecting the functionality of problem recognition, constraint recognition, level of involvement and goal compatibility will assist in the overall construction of the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire intended to uncover the answers to imperative questions regarding how the Hispanic community in Florida reacts to different variables that may affect their lives

In summary, exploring the relationship between Hispanic/Latinx voters in Pinellas County, Florida and the state's government through a quantitative survey research model, this research will aim to uncover critical issues in contemporary American politics and overall civil engagement. Utilizing theories like relationship management and problem recognition will construct a comprehensive foundation for uncovering what issues these responses may be highlighting in relation to this complex political relationship.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature examined in this chapter offers credible insight to support the purpose of this study and its accompanying method; utilizing problem recognition and relationship management to uncover what the targeted community—Hispanic/Latinx individuals in Pinellas County—believes regarding policy and law reform of the organization that can affect them in what can be examined as a positive or a negative.

Through a systemic exploration of studies that are already relevant to the subject matter and related methodologies, this research can uncover deeper insight into the established dynamics of a study regarding this subject matter. As this segment of the Florida population continues to grow, understanding their unique needs, experiences and perspectives is of high importance. Examining an existing body of literature on this subject will assist in identifying key themes, trends and possible gaps that may exist in the existing knowledge surrounding these topics. A comprehensive plan of research and accompanying method for collecting data will contribute to the development of informed policies and initiatives that can enhance life in Florida for Hispanic individuals who may have found themselves disenfranchised or overlooked in Florida's current society.

Examining the Hispanic community's relationship with the State of Florida

The tensions and uncertainties that may exist in the Hispanic community regarding certain policies and culture practices in Florida have been covered extensively in different avenues of media. Examining this media is imperative to fully understanding the nuances that

exist in this conflict and impact of them that surrounds this community. One of the most polarizing issues that surrounds not only Florida citizens, but American Hispanic/Latinx citizens in general, is immigration policy and the complicated possibility of reform in the coming years. The struggles that undocumented Hispanic/Latinx citizens face are staggering, as the constant threat of deportation and the separation of them from everything they have come to know in America looms over them. This issue has been one of constant tension in the United States government, as well as one that varies state by state. In a state like Florida, with an ever-growing population made up heavily of primarily Hispanic/Latinx immigrants, this conflict is one that can understandingly inspire stress amongst the Hispanic/Latinx community not only in the Pinellas County, but all across the state.

As reported by the Associated Press, a new immigration law put in place by the DeSantis administration “criminalized transporting immigrants lacking permanent legal status into the state, invalidated any U.S. government identification they might have and blocked local governments from providing them with ID cards” (Salomon, 2023). Under the threatening shadow of this new legislature, it has become increasingly difficult for Hispanic/Latinx citizens in Florida to complete normal tasks like not getting regular medical checkups, enrolling their children in school, or even taking trips to the supermarket. Many have even gone as far as leaving the state altogether, seeking refuge in surrounding areas where the immigration laws are far less extreme.

Additionally, Florida hospitals that receive Medicaid are now mandated to inquire about immigration status prior to administering aid for those who need it, creating significant anxiety for those who many face a medical emergency. The DeSantis administration put forth this law “in hopes of appealing to conservative voters and has criticized President Joe Biden’s

administration for the massive influx of migrants at the southern border” (Salomon, 2023).

Salomon (2023) goes on to interview several different undocumented citizens who have expressed significant hardship in their own lives due to this legislature. Including, but not limited to: a mother of four fleeing the violence in Honduras and losing her painting job due to not having a driver’s license, a 22-year-old college student canceling all travel plans with their family due to fear of being detained when they return (despite being born in central Florida), and a Mexican man who was arrested and detained when returning from a work trip in Georgia due to having window tints that were darker than the legal limit.

These experiences are unique to many but echo the same troubling reality for all undocumented Hispanic/Latinx individuals living in Florida; utilizing theory such as problem recognition will be valuable in identifying these fears in the participants of this study and seek to find solutions to remedy these valid concerns in the future. Additionally, the current immigration legislation can become a source of mental or emotional stress for undocumented Hispanic/Latinx immigrants in the state of Florida. The anxieties that this legislature may inspire could spell disaster for their daily lives, physical health and mental well-being. In an article authored by KFF, it is examined that “the combination of increased fears and new requirements for hospitals to collect information on immigration status will likely lead families to avoid seeking health care for themselves and their children” (Artiga, Pillai).

With increased stress placed upon receiving necessary healthcare, will soon come new disadvantages for the state’s economy and workforce. Those who fear facing deportation as a result of receiving care in these medical practices will soon not be well enough to go to work or participate in society as a whole. This possibility is significantly concerning given how much Hispanic/Latinx immigrants currently contribute to Florida’s economy and workforce. As of

2022, almost three quarters of nonelderly and noncitizen immigrants work, making up 11% of the state's overall nonelderly adult workforce (Artiga, Pillai). The number of these workers has only increased in practically every industry, with 37% in agriculture, 23% in construction, and 14% in both service and transportation according to the 2021 American Community Survey.

Limiting the access to crucial medical aid for those in these industries will only create a domino effect that will very negatively impact Florida's workforce and economy, which is why it is so imperative to listen to the concerns of the undocumented and prevent further anxieties that will continue to worsen as more legislature like Senate Bill 1718 is put in place.

Relationship management and problem recognition will continue to be the most imperative tools we have in literature to decipher what the results of this study will mean for undocumented Hispanic/Latinx citizens in Florida and how their lives have been impacted so far and how they will hopefully improve in the years to come.

In conclusion, this literature review will offer crucial insight regarding theories that will offer a more nuanced understanding of the issues that have been impacting the lives of the survey participants in this study. Problem recognition and relationship management theories are merely tools which will be used to identify the issues that currently exist in this population and will hopefully result in finding solutions that will remedy these problems and create an equal voter-organization relationship between both Hispanic/Latinx and Caucasian voter communities. The problems this community face may be nuanced, but they are not incapable of impacting the state as far as the economy and workforce is concerned.

Organization-Public Relationship (OPR) Management Theory

Relationship management is a theoretical perspective that allows the measurement of the quality of a relationship between two entities, that will be heavily utilized in the bounds of this

study. To understand the differences in how much the Hispanic/Latinx citizens of Pinellas County trusts their government, versus how the Caucasian community trusts this entity, relationship management will serve as a suitable foundation for the analyzation of the questionnaire's results. Differences in these two communities' survey results Relationship management is a concept that emphasizes the importance of building, managing, and maintaining relationships between two separate publics (Kim, 2011). Utilizing this concept in the context of this study can emphasize what outstanding differences could exist between the Hispanic/Latinx residents of Pinellas County and the state's government. The state's controversial policies that affect their livelihoods, as well as the discrimination they may face at the hands of those who are not Hispanic/Latinx, could support the idea that this voter community does not share equal life experiences with that of the Caucasian voter community.

Problem recognition is a similar yet unique concept as opposed to relationship management. While relationship management typically encompasses the relationships between two separate publics in research, problem recognition can be used to identify the existing difficulties and issues between several publics and their constituents. However, it can be generalized down to the interactions between two main components: the desired state and the actual state (Burner & Pomazal, 1988).

For the purposes of this study, the desired state would be their complicated and oftentimes difficult experiences living in the state. Identifying the individual experiences of those who will answer the questions on the survey questionnaire will aid this research in recognizing the overall problem in hopes that future research efforts will be able to produce results that can remedy the issues; thus, creating a more livable and less anxiety-inducing quality of life for Hispanic/Latinx Florida residents. Utilizing relevant theories in a study of this caliber requires an

extensive knowledge of research that has come before it. Namely, research that can assist in the overall understanding of the subject matter that is being analyzed. There is extensive research that exists regarding pressing issues such as discrimination and poor life quality for minority groups in the state of Florida; this research can be properly analyzed using theories and concepts from strategic communication.

Integrating organizational-public relationship management into the survey design to understand the viewpoints of Hispanic/Latinx and Caucasian individuals in Pinellas County can provide a structured framework for identifying and segmenting the data accordingly. These results could result in fostering positive relationships between the organization and voters, while serving as a sound foundation for future qualitative research that will uncover why these differences exist at all.

Relationship Management: A General Theory of Public Relations

Relationship management is described to represent “a fundamental change in the function and direction of public relations, a movement away from traditional impact measurements, such as the quantity of communication messages produced or number of stories placed in the mass media” (Ledingham, 2006). Utilizing the relationship perspective in an academic study of this nature is imperative because it can be applied to other functions in the field such as crisis and issues management; two factors that, in essence, may also be applied to the current political unrest and day-to-day anxieties that minority groups in Florida experience. The relationship management between the state’s government and Hispanic/Latinx citizens is one that is severely flawed; therefore, creating a survey that will gauge the reactions and emotions of Hispanic/Latinx individuals in Pinellas County will be a useful tool to repair the relationship going forward.

Customer Relationship Management Theory and Research in the New Millennium: Directions for Future Research

According to the Journal of Marketing Communications, relationship management theory is analyzed through the lens of millennial (2000-2014) customer relationship marketing, or CRM. From a market perspective, the theory is one that can be used to interpret the relationship between a company and its customer. CRM is defined as “a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring, retaining, and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the company and customer” (Parvatiyar & Shief, 2001).

Additionally, CRM is often used to explain why businesses “adopt the theory to create and manage relationships with their customers more effectively” (Debnath, Datta & Mukhopadhyay, 2016). Similarly, to that of market research, the method used for this study aims to measure the relationship between the state of Florida and its legislature, against the ideas, opinions and emotions of Hispanic/Latinx individuals who have experienced hardship and discrimination as a result of ongoing stressors and underlying hostility that exists within the state’s foundation. This relationship can be further understood through the analyzation of research that is comparatively similar in nature, like market research that compares a company’s relationship to that of its consumers; one cannot exist without the other, and the same can be said of Florida and its ever-growing diverse population. The key to uncovering why this relationship is so challenged lies in autopsying the origins of these hardships and uncovering how these factors came to be for the citizens of Pinellas County.

Escalation: The Role of Problem Recognition and Cognitive Bias

Problem recognition is explored as a concept that is inextricably linked to another concept that explains how and why recognizing issues in a relationship is crucial to its survival: the cognitive bias. Cognitive bias and escalation can be used to understand why relationships may falter due to “the lack of conceptual clarity regarding how much negative feedback is required and indeed whether the decision maker must even be aware of the negative feedback” (Keil, Depledge, & Rai, YEAR, p. 391–421). These theories, in tandem with one another, fall within the realm of this proposal because in order to understand the difficulties that the Floridian Hispanic/Latinx population faces daily, the government of the state must first acknowledge the feedback that is acquired from various research techniques (focus groups, survey questionnaires, etc.) Before the problem can be fully recognized and solved, the cause must be willing to acknowledge the effects. The study also mentions that biased beliefs can result in aggravated problems, which in turn can create an exacerbated problem out of one that was not inherently pressing. This can be due to cognitive bias, which is always present in decision making.

A Pattern-Recognition Theory of Search in Expert Problem Solving

A study conducted at the University of Nottingham analyzed the meaning of problem recognition in relationships through the scope of the very similar template theory, in order to understand how uncovering patterns in certain problems can lead to solutions. Gobet explains that the template theory “accounts for the slight skill difference in average depth of search found in [chess players], as well as for other empirical data” (Gobet, 2010). While this study utilized sophisticated software and an empirical approach to the analyzation of chess, the same can be said of research conducted to extract results from those who are experiencing hardship due to many external influences; results that can vary depending on how intense these external

influences may seem to those who are affected by them. Problem recognition, in short, is a concept that can be applied to a variety of factors in everyday life.

Message Strategy and Involvement

In the study titled, “Motivating Publics to Act: An Analysis of Message Strategy and Involvement on Relational Outcomes and Communication Behavior,” by K.P. Werder and M. Mitrook (2011), a 2 x 6 factorial design was utilized to test the main and interactional effects of public relations strategies and issue involvement on relational outcomes and communicational behavior. The results of the study revealed that elements such as trust, control mutuality and commitment are influenced the most by issue involvement, which in turn influence communication behavior. The study further examines the reality this specific area of inquiry “focuses on the message variable in the communication process, rather than source and receiver variables, which have historically been the unit of analysis in public relations scholarship” (p. 3-4).

Additionally, similar studies that have utilized survey methodologies have come to related conclusions that these strategies have separate characteristics that make them unique. The document also expressed the importance of environmental dimensions that can influence communication processes. The very essence of public relations relies heavily on the environments in which issues are present. What happens in the world around us and its consequences are inextricably linked to the ways in which we can resolve these issues in the future.

Additionally, the study found that “the purpose of public relations is to develop and manage relationships, not control public opinion through persuasion” (Ehling, 1992). In the context of this study, the relationships being managed in question are that of the current Florida

legislature versus the public opinion of Hispanic/Latino citizens in Pinellas County. The goal is not to control the opinions of the sample size, but rather to record their feelings regarding current legislature being put in place by the DeSantis administration that can be perceived as discriminatory or hateful toward the Hispanic/Latino Floridian community.

Decomposing Impression from Attitude in Relationship Management Outcomes

Relationship management theory is expanded in this study “regarding the linkages concerning relationship quality outcome, impression, attitude, and behavior” (Ki & Nekmat 686-687). Testing these variables as they pertain to the relationship management theory further indicated that items such as satisfaction, control mutuality, and trust are crucial in determining the state of relational quality between two variables.

Control mutuality is described as the dimension that “explains the power dynamics in relationships...how much each party of the relationship agrees on his or her rightful power to influence each other” while satisfaction, in contrast, “measures the degree to which each party involved in a relationship demonstrates favorable feelings toward the other” (p. 687). Trust is underlined by integrity, dependability, and competence as it “addresses the confidence and willingness of both parties to open up to one another” (p.88).

As a result of these operationalizations, the study found that the relationship between an individuals’ perceived relationship management quality of an organization juxtaposed to their behavioral intention is not necessarily a direct link. This revelation supports past research and similar studies which found that relationship management is significant in affecting all bottom-line outcomes (p. 698). These findings are relevant to the content of this proposal because the very essence of relationship management, as well as the elements that underline its importance

(satisfaction, trust, etc.) are key factors that may be missing in the relationship between the current Florida legislature and the Hispanic/Latino community in Pinellas County.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The method that this study utilized to produce the desired results and contribute a sound foundation for future research on this topic, is that of a survey questionnaire. The survey consists of demographic questions, as well as measurements that focused primarily upon information seeking and processing by way of sophisticated SPSS software. The surveys use a sample sourced mainly from Pinellas County registered voter lists, which included valid email addresses that could be used to properly distribute the survey tool. This sampling method was used in order to center the demographic in one area of Florida and acquire less generalized and more specific results. In theory, this survey will aim to conduct an exploratory quantitative analysis rather than a qualitative analysis, although based on the responses from the questionnaire, the residents' personal testimonies will still meaningful information for future research to build on going forward. Each survey question will include a target focus regarding the respondents' personal opinions regarding the state government. This chapter will proceed to test and respond to the hypotheses and research questions that were previously listed in the first chapter. Figure 1 shows the relationship management model that was utilized to construct the survey items, from which the data was extracted and analyzed.

Table 1: Relationship Management Theory Models of Perception

	Traditional model	Human relations model	Human resource model
Assumptions	<p>Florida immigration policies are inherently distasteful to most Hispanic/Latinx voters</p> <p>Few want or can handle policies that require understanding, solutions, and safety for immigrants in Florida</p>	<p>People want to feel important and not othered by their own society and governmental figures</p> <p>The needs of a targeted minority group are more important than keeping up a certain appearance for political approvals</p>	<p>Florida should not become a distasteful or dangerous place for minority groups to live, work and raise their families</p> <p>Hispanic/Latinx individuals want to contribute to society and live safe, meaningful lives in Florida</p> <p>Most political figures in the state can and should exercise more compassionate and helpful legislature to improve the lives of Hispanic/Latinx citizens, both documented and undocumented.</p>

Table 1: (Continued)

<p>Policies</p>	<p>The current administration in Florida’s basic task should be to closely gauge and determine what policies will be helpful for certain demographics</p> <p>The current administration must create policies that are not discriminatory or hurtful in any nature, and that enhance this demographic’s way of life in the state.</p> <p>They must establish these policies and enforce them firmly and fairly</p>	<p>The current administration in Florida’s basic task is to make their citizens feel safe and protected by their government and policies</p> <p>The current administration must allow their people to voice their fears and concerns, and exercise priority and fairness in their legislatures</p>	<p>The current administration’s basic task is to acknowledge how laws such as Senate Bill 1718 can be harmful to Hispanic/Latinx citizens who happen to be undocumented</p> <p>The current administration must create an environment that is beneficial to all of its inhabitants, not just certain members of society</p> <p>The current administration must encourage full participation on important matters and continually allow for fair and just legislature</p>
<p>Expectations</p>	<p>Hispanic/Latinx voters in Florida can tolerate the administration if the treatment of their neighbors is fair and just.</p>	<p>Sharing information and creating policies that help Hispanic/Latinx individuals in Florida will satisfy their basic need to belong and know they are essential to Florida’s diverse society.</p> <p>Satisfying the needs of this demographic will increase morale, and the physical/mental health of Hispanic/Latinx citizens. Additionally, it will reduce the chances of resistance to authority figures.</p>	<p>Expanding new bills that seek to enhance life for Hispanic/Latinx citizens rather than disrupt their lives</p> <p>Life for Hispanic/Latinx citizens in Florida may improve as a by- product of the administration making better choices when signing n legislature regarding this demographic</p>

Instrumentation

This instrumentation section outlines the instruments that were used for the data collection portion of this study. Additionally, it will include their validation, as well as the data analysis methods that will be used once the results are extracted from the desired sample and further emphasizing the variable-centric and descriptive nature of the study. The research will employ a comprehensive array of instruments, including a survey and statistical analysis techniques, to investigate and measure the attitudes of the study participants. The instrumentation process will be conducted systematically by variable to ensure a thorough, organized and overall rigorous examination of the data. The data collection instruments that were used are as follows:

1. **Survey Questionnaire:** This instrument will serve as the primary data collection tool and will be designed to gather information regarding various attitudes, beliefs and opinions related to how the current political climate in Florida has affected Hispanic/Latinx individuals in Pinellas County specifically. The survey will include numerical, Likert-type scales in order to record the responses to each question as it personally pertains to each participant. The survey will be created using Qualtrics software that is sophisticated enough to extract the desired sample and acquire the relevant results.
2. **Demographic questions:** Demographic questions in the beginning of the survey will serve as tools for each potential participant to disclose what racial or ethnic group they belong to. The socio-demographic variables that will be determined with the use of this tool are age, gender, education level, and other relevant factors. This information will be used for subgroup analysis and to identify potential covariates.

To measure the variables of interest, items were adapted from previous research (Hon & Grunig, 1999) to apply to the context of this study. Specifically, 20 items were used to measure the variables of interest in this study. The following items were used to measure trust:

1. Florida's state government treats people like me fairly and justly.
2. Whenever Florida's state government makes important decisions, I know it will be concerned about people like me.
3. Florida's state government can be relied on to keep its promises.
4. I believe that Florida's state government takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.
5. I feel very confident about Florida's state government's capabilities.
6. Florida's state government has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

The following items were used to measure commitment:

1. I feel that Florida's state government is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.
2. I can see that Florida's state government wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.
3. There is a long-lasting bond between Florida's state government and people like me.
4. Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with the current Florida legislature more.
5. I would rather work together with Florida's state government than not.

The following items were used to measure satisfaction:

1. I am happy with the state of Florida's current policies regarding people like me.
2. People like me benefit from the current policies in place. In the state of Florida.
3. Most people like me are happy in their interactions with Florida's state government and their policies.
4. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship that Florida's state government has established with people like me.
5. Most people enjoy dealing with this organization.

The following items were used to measure control mutuality:

1. Florida's state government and publics are attentive to what each other say.
2. Florida's state government believes the opinions of the public are legitimate.
3. Florida's state government really listens to what the public has to say.
4. Florida's state government gives the public enough say in the decision-making process.

Sample Selection and Procedure

Participants for the survey were drawn from the population of Pinellas County registered voters (N=813,539) who listed email addresses (n= 121,685) in their public data. According to the Pinellas County's website (2024), populations statistics indicate that 82% of the population is Caucasian, while only 10.9% are Hispanic/Latinx. Therefore, a decision was made to oversample in order to gain as many Hispanic/Latinx participants as possible, based on the population statistics, as well as to account for an anticipated low response rate. Thus, a random sample of 20,000 registered voters with email addresses was drawn, in the hopes of garnering a total 10% response rate (2,000), with 10% Hispanic/Latinx participants (200). Participants were contacted

via email through the Qualtrics distribution function. The survey was only sent to those who had valid and active emails available, resulting in 1,370 invalid contacts being excluded from the sample, and a final sample size of 18,630. A personalized initial request for participation was sent, followed by two reminders at 3-day intervals.

Of those contacted, 393 participants accessed the survey (2.11%); however, only 342 participants completed the survey (1.84%), and only 335 usable responses (1.80%). The results were examined and the number of responses in each racial category was sufficient to perform analysis of variance between racial groups, thus data analysis proceeded with examination of demographic characteristics of the sample, scale reliability assessment, and testing of hypotheses. While the low response rate is a limitation of this study, and the results are not generalizable to the larger population, the decision was made to proceed with data analysis in order to gain exploratory insight into differences that may exist in the relational quality between racial groups.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 29. This software package is both robust and user-friendly and allowed a wide range of statistical analyses. A *p*-value of .05 or less was required to achieve significance in all data analysis.

Descriptive statistics will be used to characterize the participants in the completed sample. All items used to measure the variable of interest were subjected to scale reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine difference in mean scores for the variables of interest across racial groups. The research in this

study is characterized as a descriptive study design that examines the relational perceptions of the Hispanic/Latinx community towards the state of Florida government.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This study seeks to further understanding of the relational perceptions of Hispanic/Latinx registered voters toward Florida's state government. This chapter reviews the results of the data analysis conducted to examine the hypotheses of interest.

Demographic Information

Conducted entirely through use of Qualtrics survey software and analyzed with SPSS empirical software, the results offer credible insight toward how different communities have responded to Florida's state government. Specifically, those of Caucasian and Hispanic/Latinx descent, whose responses will be deemed paramount to uncover what differences in their variables may exist. Other demographic groups that were measured include African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Mixed, and those who preferred not to disclose their racial or ethnic identity.

Of the 342 responses, varying degrees of frequencies in responses to each item. From the collected frequencies and descriptive tables, it was determined that 5.5% of the sample size were responses from Hispanic/Latinx individuals in Pinellas County, at a frequency of 15, while 78.8% of responses recorded were from Caucasian voters with a frequency of 215. These measurements emphasize the existing difference in population count between Hispanic/Latinx registered voters and Caucasian votes, which was expected due to the overall population of Pinellas County.

Table 2: Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hispanic / Latinx	15	4.5	5.5	5.5
	Black or African American	5	1.5	1.8	7.3
	Caucasian	215	64.2	78.8	86.1
	Pacific Islander	1	.3	.4	86.4
	Asian	4	1.2	1.5	87.9
	Mixed	11	3.3	4.0	91.9
	Prefer not to answer	22	6.6	8.1	100.0
	Total	273	81.5	100.0	
Missing	System	62	18.5		
Total		335	100.0		

The demographics present a comparative analysis of responses from both race and ethnic groups in the sample; out of 273 valid responses, Hispanic/Latinx respondents constitute a smaller fraction with 15 individuals representing 4.5% of the total valid responses. With 215 valid responses, Caucasians make up a substantial 64.2% of the overall results. Cumulatively, Hispanic/Latinx respondents account for only 5.5% up to their point of distribution, while Caucasians cover a vast majority of 78.8%, indicating disparity in representation.

The gender of the respondents was 27.8% female (n=76) and 67.8% male (n=185).

Twelve respondents preferred not to indicate their gender. Respondents were generally educated, with 78.3% having an Associate's Degree or higher educational achievement. Education levels for each demographic group revealed that 5.5% had a high school diploma/GED, 13.2% had some college education, 11.7% had an Associate's degree, 30.4% had a Bachelor's degree, 16.7% had a Master's degree and 9.6% had a PhD or equivalent.

Table 3: Education Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High school diploma or GED	15	4.5	5.5	5.5
	Some college	36	10.7	13.2	18.7
	Associate's degree	32	9.6	11.7	30.4
	Bachelor's degree	102	30.4	37.4	67.8
	Master's degree	56	16.7	20.5	88.3
	Ph.D. or equivalent	32	9.6	11.7	100.0
	Total	273	81.5	100.0	
Missing	System	62	18.5		

Similar demographics existed within the measurements of approximate household income, with 5.7% earning below \$25,000 and 8.3% earning the most- \$151,000 to \$175,000.

Table 4: Approximate Annual Household Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below \$25,000	15	4.5	5.7	5.7
	\$26,000-\$50,000	33	9.9	12.5	18.2
	\$51,000-\$75,000	38	11.3	14.4	32.6
	\$76,000-\$100,000	55	16.4	20.8	53.4
	\$101,000-\$125,000	29	8.7	11.0	64.4
	\$126,000-\$150,000	25	7.5	9.5	73.9
	\$151,000-\$175,000	22	6.6	8.3	82.2
	Over \$200,000	47	14.0	17.8	100.0
	Total	264	78.8	100.0	
Missing	System	71	21.2		
Total		335	100.0		

Average household annual income varied greatly in the sample. Of those who participated in the study, 53.4% of respondents earned below \$100,000 annually.

The majority of respondents, totaling 61 individuals (18.2%), identify their political views at a moderate level, labeled as category 4. This indicates a central tendency towards moderate

political views within the sampled population. When combined, the moderate categories represent 53.3% of the sample. Lower frequencies exist on the polarized ends of the spectrum; 7.2% identified as ‘Extremely Liberal’, while 4.2% identified as ‘Extremely Conservative’. 19.4% of the respondents did not provide valid responses, which could indicate a lack of political engagement or uncertainty in political self-identification.

Table 5: Political Views

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely Conservative	14	4.2	5.2	5.2
	2	46	13.7	17.0	22.2
	3	39	11.6	14.4	36.7
	4	61	18.2	22.6	59.3
	5	46	13.7	17.0	76.3
	6	40	11.9	14.8	91.1
	Extremely Liberal	24	7.2	8.9	100.0
	Total	270	80.6	100.0	
Missing	System	65	19.4		
Total		335	100.0		

Email emerges as the most frequently used platform amongst respondents with a mean score of 3.57 (SD = 1.188), suggesting a relatively high level of engagement among users. TV is measured just underneath this value at 3.15 (SD = 1.132), indicating continued relevance as a popular medium which respondents utilize to access political news and updates. Traditional media scores for radio and newspaper exhibit even lower scores; 2.38 (SD = 1.210) and 2.20 (SD = 1.277), respectively. That new media such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and X (formerly known as Twitter) measured even lower scores in comparison to their predecessors could indicate that the surveyed population may use these platforms less frequently to receive their

news and information. Preferences are shifting more toward digital media, albeit with varying degrees of engagement across different platforms.

Table 6: Social Media Usage

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Email	267	1	5	3.57	1.188
TV	266	1	5	3.15	1.132
YouTube	264	1	5	2.55	1.283
Radio	265	1	5	2.38	1.210
Facebook	265	1	5	2.36	1.304
Newspaper	266	1	5	2.20	1.277
Newsletter	266	1	5	1.94	1.008
Podcasts	261	1	5	1.85	1.163
Instagram	264	1	5	1.65	1.057
X (formerly Twitter)	263	1	5	1.54	1.022
Tik-Tok	263	1	5	1.28	.826
Valid N (listwise)	256				

Item Descriptive and Scale Analysis

The raw item statistics for the items measuring the variables of interest are provided in the tables below. Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess scale reliability for the items used to measure the variables of interest. All scales achieved a Chronbach’s alpha score above .70. Trust was measured using five items adapted from OPR (source). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for these five items was .976 suggesting strong internal consistency. The four items that measured commitment yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of .76, which could be strengthened by omitting item COMIT4. Therefore, the item was omitted from further analysis and the resulting three items were collapsed into a composite measure with a Cronbach’s Alpha score of .938.

Table 7: Reliability

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TR2 Whenever Florida's state government makes important decisions, I know it will be concerned about people like me.	294	1	5	3.55	1.535
TR5 I feel confident about the capabilities of Florida's state government.	294	1	5	3.44	1.642
TR1 Florida's state government treats people like me fairly and justly.	294	1	53.27		1.545
TR3 Florida's state government can be relied on to keeps its promises.	294	1	53.20		1.484
TR4 Florida's state government has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	294	1	52.70		1.442

Table 8: Commitment

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COMMIT2 There is mutual respect between Florida's state government and people like me.	294	1	53.52		1.589
COMMIT1 I feel that Florida's state government is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.	294	1	53.49		1.637
COMMIT3 I value my ability to participate in Florida's state government.	289	1	52.24		1.312
COMMIT4 My rights as a citizen of Florida are important to me.	289	1	51.20		.687

Table 9: Satisfaction

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SAT3 Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship that Florida's state government has established with people like me.	274	1	53.53		1.567
SAT2 I feel supported by Florida's state government.	289	1	53.48		1.588
SAT4 Florida's state government creates policies that generally benefit people like me.	274	1	53.46		1.574
SAT1 I am happy with the state of Florida's policies regarding people like me.	289	1	53.43		1.634

Table 10: Control Mutuality

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CM1 Representatives of Florida's state government listen to the needs of people like me.	289	1	5	3.60	1.551
CM4 I feel represented by Florida's state government officials.	274	1	5	3.55	1.612
CM3 Florida's state government believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.	274	1	5	3.42	1.575
CM2 I would feel comfortable voicing my opinions about Florida's state government in a public manner.	274	1	5	2.47	1.470

Table 11: Goal Compatibility

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GC3 Florida's state government and I want the same future for the state.	274	1	5	3.59	1.631
GC1 I mostly agree with the policies that Florida's state government proposes.	289	1	5	3.57	1.630
GC2 My goals are compatible with the goals of Florida's state government.	289	1	5	3.56	1.574

H1.1 posited that trust in the Florida state government will be lower in the Hispanic/Latinx community than it is in the Caucasian community. Results of one-way ANOVAs indicated that significant differences existed in trust, $F(6, 317) = 4.652, p < .001$, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality due to race. Specifically, the results indicated that mean scores for perceived trust among Hispanic registered voters was significantly lower than perceived trust for Caucasian registered voters (Mean Diff. = -0.89085, $p = .013$). These results provide support for H1.1. Results of ANOVA indicated significant differences in perceived message effectiveness due to message strategy type $F(6, 278) = 2.790, p = .012$, partial $\eta^2 = .058$. Approximately 6% of the variance in perceived message effectiveness was due to message strategy type. The threat and punishment strategy produced the highest mean ($n = 40, M = 4.71, SD = 1.323$), followed by the informative ($n = 43, M = 4.59, SD = 1.272$), facilitative ($n = 38, M = 4.20, SD = 1.152$), persuasive ($n = 41, M = 4.19, SD = 1.316$), promise and reward ($n = 44, M =$

4.16, $SD = 1.553$), and cooperative problem solving strategy ($n = 40$, $M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.143$). The Levene's Test was not significant, $F(6, 272) = 1.293$, $p = .260$, so Gabriel's pairwise comparison test was used for post-HOC analysis to adjust for unequal cell sizes. The results indicated that the threat and punishment strategy (Mean Diff. = 1.07, $p = .011$) and the informative strategy (Mean Diff. = 0.954, $p = .035$), produced significantly higher observed mean scores for perceived strategy effectiveness than the control treatment. These results provide partial support for H1. The mean score for those who responded to survey item EMOTREV2 (which measures those who feel they are being treated with contempt), the mean score was recorded at 3.30. This measurement partially supports the overarching belief that minority groups in Pinellas County face disadvantageous treatments by Florida's state government. H2.2 posited that perceived satisfaction would be lower among Hispanic/Latinx voters, and this was supported as the mean score of this variable was measured at 2.73 (less than, not equal to the Caucasian mean score of 3.68). The 95% Confidence interval also indicated a lower score for satisfaction in Hispanic/Latinx correspondents at 1.8263, lower than that of Caucasian respondents (3.4830). One-way ANOVA test results for satisfaction revealed a mean score between groups of 10.262 < .001, $F(4.582)$. Post-HOC test results boasted a higher mean difference of -1.31667, similar to that of Black/African American respondents while the mean difference for Caucasian voters was lower at -.94690, partially supporting H2.2.

Commitment was measured with similar means, bearing a Cronbach's Alpha score of .747, suggesting a lesser amount of internal consistency than that of trust. At .517 for COMMIT1 measuring level of commitment (< 5.25, .728, and .822 for other commitment variables) the Cronbach alpha test concluded a lower score if items were to be deleted. This variable similarly exhibited a variance of 7.193. Satisfaction displayed a Cronbach's Alpha score of .978, also

suggesting sound internal consistency within responses. Mean difference for commitment variables was measured at the same rate for Hispanic/Latinx respondents and Caucasians, with a score of $-.86202^*$ (indicating that the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level). Control mutuality's Cronbach's alpha score leveled at $.885$, lower than that of trust and satisfaction but higher than satisfaction. Mean difference for Hispanic/Latinx and Black/African American respondents was the same at -1.000 . CM2-4 indicated the same measure of 274, with a mean of 3.60 . While goal compatibility was approached as an exploratory method for this study and thus, not included in the listed hypotheses, its Cronbach's Alpha score was revealed to be $.976$, also indicating strong consistency like that of its predecessors. GC2, which measured if respondents' goals were compatible with Florida's state government's goals, displayed $n(289)$ and a mean of 3.56 , with a standard deviation of 1.574 , lower than that of GC3 (1.631) and GC1 (1.630).

Table 12: Mean, Std. Deviation

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TRUST	Hispanic / Latinx	15	2.5333	1.44156
	Black or African American	5	3.5600	.72664
	Caucasian	215	3.4242	1.29144
	Asian	5	3.3200	1.50067
	Mixed	11	2.4182	1.33103
	Prefer not to answer	22	2.3273	1.64177
	Total	273	3.2469	1.37269
	M Fixed Effects od Random el Effects			1.32880
	COMMIT	Hispanic / Latinx	15	2.4000
Black or African American		5	3.3333	1.05409
Caucasian		215	3.2620	1.23470
Asian		5	2.8667	1.26051
Mixed		11	2.5455	1.66181
Prefer not to answer		22	2.2424	1.40363
Total		273	3.0977	1.31180
M Fixed Effects od Random el Effects				1.27635
SATISFACTION		Hispanic / Latinx	15	2.7333
	Black or African American	5	4.0500	1.12361
	Caucasian	215	3.6802	1.46725
	Asian	5	3.5000	1.46842
	Mixed	11	2.7500	1.76423
	Prefer not to answer	22	2.3750	1.61789
	Total	273	3.4890	1.54508
	M Fixed Effects od Random el Effects			1.49660
	CONTROLMUTUALITY	Hispanic / Latinx	15	2.8667
Black or African American		5	3.8667	1.16905
Caucasian		215	3.7194	1.42384
Asian		5	3.4667	1.70945
Mixed		11	2.8788	1.75292
Prefer not to answer		22	2.4394	1.66631
Total		273	3.5336	1.52102
M Fixed Effects od Random el Effects				1.47837

Table 12 (Continued)

GOALCOMPATIBILITY	Hispanic / Latinx	15	2.7556	1.81032
	Black or African American	5	3.7333	1.09036
	Caucasian	215	3.8047	1.47498
	Asian	5	3.4667	1.81965
	Mixed	11	2.9394	1.69848
	Prefer not to answer	22	2.4242	1.74326
	Total	273	3.5934	1.57788
	M Fixed Effects			1.52645
od Random				
el Effects				

Table 13: ANOVA

Sum of Squares		Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
TRUST	Between Groups	41.072	5	8.214	4.652	<.001
	Within Groups	471.448	267	1.766		
	Total	512.520	272			
COMMIT	Between Groups	33.099	5	6.620	4.064	.001
	Within Groups	434.963	267	1.629		
	Total	468.062	272			
SATISFACTION	Between Groups	51.311	5	10.262	4.582	<.001
	Within Groups	598.031	267	2.240		
	Total	649.342	272			
CONTROLMUTUALITY	Between Groups	45.726	5	9.145	4.184	.001
	Within Groups	583.549	267	2.186		
	Total	629.276	272			
GOALCOMPATIBILITY	Between Groups	55.080	5	11.016	4.728	<.001
	Within Groups	622.121	267	2.330		
	Total	677.201	272			
POLITICS How would you describe your political views?	Between Groups	34.082	5	6.816	2.450	.034
	Within Groups	734.603	264	2.783		
	Total	768.685	269			
COMMIT4 My rights as a citizen of Florida are important to me.	Between Groups	2.109	5	.422	.872	.501
	Within Groups	129.210	267	.484		
	Total	131.319	272			

Table 13 (Continued)

CM2 I would feel comfortable voicing my opinions about Florida's state government in a public manner.	Between Groups	7.915	5	1.583	.726	.604
	Within Groups	582.129	267	2.180		
	Total	590.044	272			
EMOT1 Florida's state government treats people like me with dignity.	Between Groups	45.766	5	9.153	3.839	.002
	Within Groups	636.564	267	2.384		
	Total	682.330	272			
EMOT2 REV I feel that Florida's state government treats people like me with contempt.	Between Groups	32.857	5	6.571	2.703	.021
	Within Groups	649.063	267	2.431		
	Total	681.919	272			

Hispanic/Latinx respondents exhibited notably lower mean scores across multiple dimensions, indicating less favorable perception of the state government compared to that of Caucasian respondents. In terms of Trust, mean score for Hispanic/Latinx is measured at 2.53, significantly lower than the Caucasian score of 3.42. Similarly, under commitment, a mean score of 2.40 was recorded against the Caucasian score of 3.26. The trend continues for both satisfaction and control mutuality, with Hispanic/Latinx means of 2.73 and 2.87 compared to 3.68 and 3.72 for Caucasians. These disparities highlight the gap in governmental perceptions between these two voter groups; Hispanic/Latinx voters have less confidence in the state's ability to address their needs and fulfill its commitments. In turn, these results could reflect underlying issues such as systemic inequality, lack of representation, or a general sense of disenfranchisement within Pinellas County's Hispanic/Latinx voter population. The ANOVA results reinforce the significance in these differences, with p-values well below 0.05 across most dimensions, indicating that the variations between groups are statistically significant. This

underscores the importance of Florida’s state government to address disparities to improve these values among all demographic groups.

Table 14: Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons							
LSD							
Dependent Variable	(I) What is your race?	(J) What is your race?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
TRUST	Hispanic / Latinx	Black or African American	-1.02667	.68619	.136	-2.3777	.3244
		Caucasian	-.89085*	.35486	.013	-1.5895	-.1922
		Asian	-.78667	.68619	.253	-2.1377	.5644
		Mixed	.11515	.52748	.827	-.9234	1.1537
		Prefer not to answer	.20606	.44494	.644	-.6700	1.0821
COMMIT	Hispanic / Latinx	Black or African American	-.93333	.65911	.158	-2.2310	.3644
		Caucasian	-.86202*	.34085	.012	-1.5331	-.1909
		Asian	-.46667	.65911	.480	-1.7644	.8310
		Mixed	-.14545	.50666	.774	-1.1430	.8521
		Prefer not to answer	.15758	.42738	.713	-.6839	.9990
SATISFACTION	Hispanic / Latinx	Black or African American	-1.31667	.77284	.090	-2.8383	.2050
		Caucasian	-.94690*	.39967	.019	-1.7338	-.1600
		Asian	-.76667	.77284	.322	-2.2883	.7550
		Mixed	-.01667	.59409	.978	-1.1864	1.1530
		Prefer not to answer	.35833	.50113	.475	-.6283	1.3450
CONTROL MUTUALITY	Hispanic / Latinx	Black or African American	-1.00000	.76343	.191	-2.5031	.5031
		Caucasian	-.85271*	.39480	.032	-1.6300	-.0754
		Asian	-.60000	.76343	.433	-2.1031	.9031
		Mixed	-.01212	.58685	.984	-1.1676	1.1433
		Prefer not to answer	.42727	.49502	.389	-.5474	1.4019
GOAL COMPATIBILITY	Hispanic / Latinx	Black or African American	-.97778	.78825	.216	-2.5298	.5742
		Caucasian	-1.04910*	.40764	.011	-1.8517	-.2465
		Asian	-.71111	.78825	.368	-2.2631	.8409
		Mixed	-.18384	.60594	.762	-1.3769	1.0092
		Prefer not to answer	.33131	.51112	.517	-.6750	1.3377

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In the Post-Hoc test analysis, it was revealed that Hispanic/Latinx trust scores averaged a low mean difference of -0.89 ($p = 0.013$) in comparison to Caucasian correspondents. The mean

difference for commitment also reflects this disparity with lower levels of commitment in the Hispanic/Latinx respondents averaging -0.86 ($p = 0.012$). Satisfaction and control mutuality continue this trend with Hispanic/Latinx voters at -0.95 ($p = 0.019$) for the former and -0.85 ($p = 0.032$) for the latter. Goal compatibility, which assesses alignment with goals or values, had a mean difference of -1.05 ($p = 0.011$); this figure indicates that Hispanic/Latinx respondents feel less aligned with the goals being measured compared to that of Caucasians.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Each survey item meticulously sorted by Qualtrics software extended further understanding to how the overall voter community lent its opinions regarding Florida's state government. After extensive analysis of the survey results utilizing SPSS 29 software, it is revealed that of the sample size of 342 respondents, 5.5% of the voter community in Pinellas County that responded is of Hispanic/Latinx descent. 5.2% of the respondents identified as 'extremely conservative', while 8.9% of the respondents identified as 'extremely liberal' in their political tastes. Response quality of the surveys was recorded at 95%. Trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality and goal compatibility were measured utilizing H, ANOVA and Cronbach's Alpha tests, at varying rates for each racial group that responded: trust in Hispanic/Latinx respondents was measured at a mean of 2.53 and a standard deviation of 1.44. Commitment was similarly recorded at 2.40 for the former and 1.43 the latter, maximizing at 4.67; this amount was lower than that of their counterparts of other racial groups, excluding Black/African American respondents but also lower than Caucasia voters, which was hypothesized and supported accordingly. Satisfaction in Hispanic/Latinx voters was recorded at a mean of 2.73, the lowest amount for the category. Control mutuality was hypothesized to be low in Hispanic/Latinx voter respondents, and this theorization was supported as the mean was recorded at 2.86; again, the lowest of all other means. While the standard deviation of responses was higher, the maximum remained at 5.00 with all other respondents.

Conducting research in this manner has further enriched the possibility for further

conversations about what people, specifically in counties such as Pinellas, need from their government to improve their lives. While the quantitative evidence may suggest a hardened look upon what the future looks like for Hispanic/Latinx voter communities, it should also be perceived as proper inspiration for reconstructing how the state government communicates and interacts with this group. Similarly, it must extend an understanding as to what the numbers are more disproportionate when compared to that of Caucasian registered voters. Acknowledging what may not be working for everyone equally and enacting the proper procedures to remedy it is very crucial for the survival of the organization and its constituents; utilizing research such as this as a tool for improvement in governmental spaces can only benefit everyone involved. Hispanic/Latinx voters make up a considerable part of the population in Pinellas County; therefore, the comfort that is afforded to other groups should also be extended to them as well as their needs.

Conducting this research has also opened the door for other possibilities such as widening the scope of survey research for minority groups to those who may feel less represented. Specifically, those who do not belong to one community. In states as culturally diverse as Florida, most racial populations do not identify themselves under a singular ethnicity or background; many individuals are both. For example, some could be racially Caucasian but ethnically Hispanic/Latinx, or Afro-Latinx. Accounting for these differences of identity in future research will be beneficial toward understanding how different minority groups experience varying circumstances that in turn, influence their political attitude and voter trends. While this study only encompasses the difference that are juxtaposed between Hispanic/Latinx and Caucasian voters, reflecting the experiences of other groups could offer significant data to both communication and political research.

Limitations & Future Research

This study sought to better understand the relational quality of Hispanic/Latinx residents with Florida's state government. While the sample size was small, and the number of Hispanic/Latinx participants was low (n=15), this research produced enough data to run standard ANOVA tests that detected significant difference in racial groups across all of the relational variables. The results of this survey are not generalizable to the larger population of registered voters in Pinellas County; however, the results point to a problem in the perceptions Hispanic/Latinx residence have of their relationship with Florida's state government. This problem requires further investigation through qualitative interview and focus group research to uncover the underlying causes of the differences that minority groups experience in the relational quality they experience with the state. In addition, more rigorous quantitative research is needed to more fully understand the perceptions of minority communities and how widespread negative perceptions are. Then communication strategies can be employed to increase levels of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality experienced in these communities.

Conclusions

In summary, this research has intended to analyze the very complex and intricate relationship dynamic that exists between the Hispanic/Latinx voters in Pinellas County, Florida and Florida's state government. Using a quantitative survey analysis as the primary research method, this study has unraveled each facet that exists in this vital connection of counterparts. Additionally, it has uncovered the significant difference in trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality that exists between Caucasian voters and Hispanic/Latinx voters alike. While the proposed hypotheses in this study were supported by the data, more work must be done to answer the question of why these differences in numbers exist on a qualitative level. This

research and its findings reveal a significantly nuanced perspectives that highlight both areas of approval and concern. The data indicates that while there is a general sense of civic engagement and equal acknowledgement of the state's efforts in certain policy areas, there remains a substantial amount of skepticism amongst this voter group. A demand for greater inclusive policy, as well as improved responsiveness from state officials, must be the next course of action in Pinellas County as it pertains to its Hispanic/Latinx voter community. This underscores the importance of political tools such as targeted outreach and policy adjustments which will better address the needs of this community and repair its relationship with Florida's state government rather than harm it. Furthermore, utilizing a sound theoretical framework to approach these issues from a researcher standpoint can only assist in the cause. Specifically, utilizing problem recognition to identify what may be lacking in these communities and how to remedy that in the future. There is an immense significance that exists in this study as it is being conducted under the always changing, and sociopolitical landscape that exists in the state of Florida; a state that, in recent years, has been marred by high political tensions surrounding the selected demographic group. It is imperative to recognize how interesting this juxtaposition is, as Florida has always been marked by its rich diversity in culture and political dynamism. Utilizing a theoretical framework that is comprised of problem recognition and relationship management has significantly aided the effort to comprehend how this relationship equally affects its counterparts and what can be done to repair the relationship in the areas where it lacks cohesion and understanding. Utilizing a quantitative survey analysis methodology has provided statistically valid and reliable findings as they relate to the overall subject matter. These findings will not only provide extensive nuance and depth to the existing body of knowledge surrounding this topic, it will also seek to provide practical implications for community leaders, government

officials and policymakers alike. The overall goal will be to hopefully foster a more inclusive and responsive political system for affected Hispanic/Latinx individuals in the state of Florida.

This research is not only an academic endeavor; it is a call to action for the advancement of Florida's democracy and the overall wellbeing of a community that has undoubtedly faced certain hardships and negative impacts to their well-being as citizens of this state. As Florida remains rich with cultural diversity and differing political perspectives, enhancing this relationship that has altered in recent years is a most understandable and commendable exploration. This study will aspire to contribute extensive knowledge and viewpoints in the hope that the information acquired will inspire a safe, healthy and fearless quality of life for the Hispanic/Latinx community as it only continues to grow. The state of Florida will only benefit from becoming a place that values all the voices of its constituents, no matter their cultural background, immigration status, or personal identity.

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