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A Quantitative Assessment of Internal Publics Perception of Their Relationship With the Organization

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A Quantitative Assessment of Internal Publics Perception

of Their Relationship With the Organization

by

Lindsay C. Smith

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Mass Communications
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Dedication

First of all, I would like to thank my Savior, Jesus Christ, for giving me the ability and strength to follow His will for my life. I am thankful for my wonderful parents, Rod and Rhonda Smith, who urged me to continue my education through many times of discouragement. Finally, I dedicate this piece of academia— which represents sacrifice, hard work and determination—to my beautiful baby boy, Jackson Carter.

Acknowledgments

       I would like to express my appreciation to Kelly P. Werder, Ph.D., my mentor and friend, for her encouragement and dedication to this thesis. Her experience and knowledge helped me immensely with its completion. I could not have done it without her. Thank you.

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A Quantitative Assessment of Internal Publics Perception
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Lindsay C. Smith

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on relationships. Specifically, it measures the relationship between the administration of a large public university in the southeastern United States, USF, and its primary internal public— the faculty. The purpose of this study is to measure the quality and type of relationship between an organization and it public, as perceived by the public. This study seeks to replicate and extend previous relational research by examining how the variables of trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction are related to the quality of relationships in organizations. In addition, the type of relationship—communal or exchange—that the faculty has with the university, is examined. This thesis also posits an additional indicator of relationship quality – goal compatibility. Therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of relationship quality between and organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

Explicitly, this study seeks to explore the following:

RQ1: How do faculty employees at a large, Research I university perceive their relationship with the administration in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, with regards to the issue of salary, and what type of relationship—communal or exchange—does the organization and its public have?

The significance of this study lies in its ability to contribute to public relations theory and practice. This research will enrich our understanding of the importance of building strong relationships between organizations and their publics. This study will also build on previous public relations studies of relationship measurement in order to further public relations theory development. From an applied perspective, this research may serve to inform the organization about the quality of its relationship with one of its most important strategic publics.

According to the data analyses, in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, the faculty perceives their relationship to be low quality. In addition, the faculty perceives to have an exchange relationship with the administration.

Chapter 1
Introduction

A growing number of public relations scholars and practitioners are defining public relations as the management of relationships between organizations and publics. Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) define public relations as "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (p. 2). Coombs (2001) defines public relations as the use of communication to manage the relationships between an organization and its stakeholders/publics. Kruckeberg and Starck (1998) state that, "public relations is best defined and practiced as the active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community" (p. 52). These definitions exemplify the paradigmatic shift of the public relations discipline from a journalistic function to a strategic management role.

Moreover, these definitions emphasize three vital elements of public relations – communication, management, and relationships. Communication is vital because it is the most effective strategy for an organization and its stakeholders to share information and engage in dialogue. Public relations is seen as a management function because it involves planning and problem solving and is used to manage the relationship between an organization and its stakeholders. Relationships become the link between an organization

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and its stakeholders. Relationship is defined as the interdependence between two or more people, where the link can be economical, political, social, or even moral. The link is a way to facilitate interaction between two parties (O'Hair, Friedrich, Wienmann, & Wienmann, 1995; Trenholm & Jensen, 1996).

In addition to the management function of planning public relations activities and programs, public relations practitioners must provide positive outcomes of their activities in order to maintain a foothold in the strategic decision-making process of an organization. The outcomes must positively contribute to the bottom line. "The proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships. An organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships" (Center & Jackson, 1995, p. 2).

Therefore, public relations practitioners strive to achieve quality relationships that contribute positively to the bottom line of the organization. As seen in the recent definitions of public relations, relationship is an important term that is receiving much attention from scholars as well as from practitioners.

Recently, an internal study was conducted at a large, Research I academic institution – the University of South Florida (USF), Tampa, Fla. – revealing that the faculty salaries at the university were among the lowest nationally, as well as the lowest among the state of Florida's doctoral universities. The faculty senate of USF passed a resolution urgently requesting action on the part of the administration to form a plan to address the issue of faculty compensation. The plan, which must involve full consultation with faculty representatives, is to raise the weighted mean salary by approximately one-

third. The faculty responded to the plan with comments such as, "Increases in base salaries are needed," and "I have lost a colleague this year…my understanding was that salary was the main issue." One faculty member noted that, "one known factor is a lack of proper salary increases during the years after they (faculty) are hired." These statements are pulled from e-mails in response to the call for action. According to members of the faculty union, the impact of the low salaries has affected faculty retention, morale, and the everyday faculty experience. This issue provides a context for studying the quality of the relationship between the university administration and its faculty.

This study focuses on organization/public relationships. Specifically, it measures the relationship between the administration of a large public university in the southeastern United States, USF, and its primary internal public— the faculty. Public, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a group of persons sharing some characteristics or set of attributes (Heath, 2001). The faculty members examined in this study include assistant, associate and full professors, as well as full time, part time and adjunct instructors at all four campuses of the university – Tampa, St. Petersburg, Lakeland, and Sarasota.

The purpose of this study is to measure the quality and type of relationship between an organization and its public, as perceived by the public. The definition of relationship for the purpose of this study is the perception of a mutually beneficial relationship as defined by four relationship indicators that have been tested previously. Specifically, this study seeks to replicate and extend previous relational research by

examining how the variables of trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction are related to the quality of relationships in organizations. In addition, the type of relationship—communal or exchange—that the faculty has with the university, is examined. This thesis also posits an additional indicator of relationship quality – goal compatibility. Goal compatibility is a unique addition to previous research and promises to add an original and innovative element to the relational perspective.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to contribute to public relations theory and practice. This research will enrich our understanding of the importance of building strong relationships between organizations and their publics. This study will also build on previous public relations studies of relationship measurement in order to further public relations theory development. From an applied perspective, this research may serve to inform the organization about the quality of its relationship with one of its most important strategic publics. The university administration can send out messages and activities to sustain or improve the relationship based on feedback from the study.

The body of literature that has emerged from studying relationship management comprises the relational perspective of public relations. Chapter Two of this study provides a review of literature important to the understanding of the relational perspective and organization-public relationships. Concepts fundamental to public relations theory—relationships, internal communication, symmetrical and two-way communication—are examined. Also included, is information regarding internal/employee communication, as the study focuses on the relationship between an organization and its internal/employee

public. Symmetrical and two-way public relations models are introduced in the literature review to document effective relationship management techniques.

Chapter Three provides the methodology used for this study. Chapter Four provides the results of this study, and Chapter Five offers a discussion of the results of the study.

Chapter 2
Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a review of literature important to the understanding of the

relational perspective and organization-public relationships.

Public Relations

"Research concerning relationship management falls into three categories: (a)

models of the organization-public relationship, (b) relationship dimensions as indicators

of relationship effects, and (c) applications of the relational perspective to various aspects

of public relations practice" (Ledingham, Bruning & Wilson, 1999, p. 168). This review

of literature will concentrate on the above-mentioned categories, and specifically, the

practice of public relations as it relates to relationship management.

From a communication perspective, public relations is viewed as a dynamic

process influenced by the situational interaction of source, message, and receiver

variables as shown in Figure 1 (Werder, 2003). Hazelton and Long (1988) define public

relations as "a communication function of management through which organizations

adapt to, alter or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organizational

goals" (p. 81). Wilcox, Ault, Agee and Cameron (2000) note that, among the various

definitions of public relations that have been posited, this definition best reflects today's

modern practice. "Their approach represents the somewhat newer theory that public

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relations is more that persuasion. It should also foster open, two-way communication and mutual understanding with the idea that an organization also changes its attitudes and behaviors in the process—not just the target audience" (p.4).

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┌─────────────┐                            ┌─────────────┐
│ ┌─────────┐ │      ┌───────────┐         │ ┌─────────┐ │
│ │ Source  │ │      │  Message  │         │ │Receiver │ │
│ └─────────┘ │──────┴───────────┴────────▶│ └─────────┘ │
│             │                            │             │
└─────────────┘                            └─────────────┘
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Figure 1 Communication Process

The traditional view of public relations describes it as a communication activity, primarily press agentry. Public relations practitioners were considered the "journalist in residence" or the "conscience" of the organization (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000). Originally, the field centered on the practice of generating good publicity for the organization. Edward Bernays, Arthur Page, and Harwood Childs saw public relations as a way of balancing the interests of organization and their publics (Cutlip, 1994).

According to J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig and Dozier (2002), public relations professionals aim to help organizations build relationships with their publics, which include various stakeholders and groups. Practitioners build relationships by facilitating communication between subsystems of the organization and its publics, both internal and external. Ultimately, their goals include, managing relationships, shaping public opinion through communication, and resolving conflict.

Wilson (1994) states that practitioners must always have a finger on the public pulse. Practitioners must be one step ahead of their publics, thus allowing them to predict future behavior. Building and maintaining excellent organization-public relationships

paves the way to motivate new behavior, reinforce existing positive behavior and modify

negative behavior (Center & Jackson, 1995).

Relationships

J. E. Grunig (1994) argued that practitioners must be concerned not only with

symbolic relationships between organizations and key publics, but also with the

behavioral relationships that result. Currently, the fundamental goal of public relations is

to build and then enhance on-going or long-term relationships with an organization's key

publics. Relationship is defined as the interdependence between two or more people,

where the link can be economical, political, social or moral, in order to facilitate

interaction between two parties (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996).

Effective public relations practice includes both process and outcome (J. E.

Grunig & Hon, 1999). The term relationship best describes the desired outcome of public

relations practice. Center and Jackson (1995) emphasized the central role of relationships

in public relations management when they stated that, "the proper term for the desired

outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships. An organization with

effective public relations will attain positive public relationships" (p. 2). Some

researchers argue that the results or outcome of the behavioral relationships are far more

important than the symbolic relationship that can exist between an organization and its

publics.

In recent research, it has been debated whether corporations are ultimately

responsible for the communities in which they operate. According to world-renowned

economist, Milton Friedman, the social responsibility of a business is to "maximize its

profits" (Wilson, 2001). The capitalist system, which provides jobs, goods, and services in a free marketplace, is responsible for the tremendous growth and development of society and the comfort of our lives. Relationships with other actors either directly or indirectly affect the profit-making status of a company. "Unhappy employees strike, unhappy communities withdraw tax breaks, unhappy government agencies regulate, and unhappy consumers boycott—making it more difficult for the corporation to operate profitably" (Wilson, 2001, p. 522). The counterpoint is that being socially responsible is actually in the best interest of the organization's bottom line. Wilson (1994) states that public relations practitioners are being expected to help an organization display an image of corporate social responsibility:

> Since …traditional strategic management principles with their over-emphasis on the short-term bottom line are failing to mediate those issues, management is turning to public relations to build relationships with the organization's publics to solve the problems facing the organization's community. (Wilson, 1994, p. 336)

Corporations were first charted in the public interest to meet a public need, to provide a public service. Seen as extensions of the government, corporations performed government—that is, state or public—business (Estes, 1996). Jaworski concluded through research that, "relationship is the organizing principle of the universe" (1996, p. 184). The question then is not whether or not we have relationships in society, but instead what the qualities of those relationships are at any given time. Public relations counselors' role are to ensure that the organization recognizes and accepts its responsibility to engage in cooperative action for the growth, benefit and improvement of

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the community. The corporation will come to realize that a community consist not only

stockholders and investors, but also stakeholders with whom relationships must be

cultivated. Success can be measured in customer and employee satisfaction and the

reduction or elimination of social problems.

First, the corporation should establish a set of corporate values. Peters and

Waterman (1982) found that in organizations with strong overriding corporate values

truly governing policy and practice at all levels, the corporate value set usually consisted

of those core values held by the chief executive officer. Business has a complex relational

role in a society made up of individuals as well as organizational units. Research has

shown that loyalty toward an organization in a community is strengthened by the

community members' perceptions of the organization's openness and its involvement and

investment in, as well as its commitment to, the community (Ledingham & Bruning,

1998).

One must understand that organizations do not need relationships will all publics,

but they do need to prioritize their publics. Organizations should properly scan their

environments to determine their most strategic publics and place them in ranking order.

Then organizations can determine the most effective methods for maintaining these

strategic relationships (J. E. Grunig & Hon, 1999).

Bruning and Ledingham (2000) questioned the influence that organization-public

professional, personal, and community relationships have on key members' satisfaction.

They found respondents' perception of three independent variables combine to influence

key public member evaluations of satisfaction with an organization. Whichever type of

organization-public relationship (OPR) that exists, developing mutually beneficial

relationship building initiatives will help move public relations practice away from the

traditional journalistic approach to a more strategic management style.

Effective relationships help an organization maintain key constituencies and save

money by reducing the cost of litigation, regulation, legislation, pressure campaigns, or

lost revenue that results from bad relationships. They also cultivate relationships with

donors, stakeholders and legislators, thus increasing revenue and increasing user buy-in

(J. E. Grunig & Hon, 1999). J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig and Dozier (2002) show that the

value of public relations comes from the relationships that communicators develop and

maintain with publics. The researchers show that reputation is a product of relationships

and employees largely contribute to an organization's reputation. Effective internal

relationships will make employees more likely to support and less likely to interfere with

the mission of the organization (J. E. Grunig & Hon, 1999). Therefore, internal

relationships are one of the most important to measure (Lindenmann, 1998).

Internal Publics Relationships

Public relations makes an organization more effective when it identifies the most

strategic publics as part of strategic management processes and conducts communication

programs to develop and maintain effective long-term relationships between management

and those publics (J. E. Grunig & Hon, 1999, p.9). Ledingham and Bruning (2000) state,

"to be effective and sustaining, relationships need to be seen as mutually beneficial,

based on mutual interest between an organization and its significant publics" and "the

key to managing successful relationships is to understand what must be done in order to

initiate, develop, and maintain that relationship" (pp. 85-86). Effective relationship management can engender loyalty toward the organization on the part of public members (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998). Ratings of the OPR by public members have been found to serve as a predictor of an indicator of loyalty toward an organization (Ledingham & Bruning, 1997).

Organization or internal / employee public relationships are all too often forgotten when doing a strategic scan of the environment. Public relations management must concern themselves with internal as well as external relationships. Employees are the core of the organization and as such determine the success or failure of the entity. They are the first and most important public for any organization to maintain relationships and communication with (Center & Jackson, 1994).

Howard (1998) states the following concerning the goal of internal communications:

Remember, though, that the goal is not communications for the sake of communications. Rather, it's communications as a tool to help achieve your business goals – and these days, in many organizations, culturally change goals. After all, changing behavior, or preserving the behavior you want, is what employee communication is all about (p. 16).

Informed employees are typically more committed to, satisfied with, and place higher trust in their organizations. Informed employees help an organization develop its goals, sustain its values and achieve consensus with its strategic constituencies (J. E.

Grunig, 1992; Kazoleas & Wright, 2001). Scholarly research largely focuses on the importance of maintaining organization / internal public relationships.

Stroh (2002) attempted to clarify the growing importance of organization-public relationship management during organizational change. The author hypothesized that a positive relationship between an organization and its internal public will lead to greater communication effects and a greater willingness to change. The study found that high participatory communication leads to significantly more control mutuality, trust, higher commitment, and more satisfaction between an organization and its employees. Overall, the attitudes and loyalty of employees are directly influenced by their participation in communication efforts, which in turn directly influences customer care and eventually leads to growth of the bottom line. In addition, building strong relationships and communication programs with employees prevents them from becoming anxious and frustrated, and promotes buy-in to the company and its mission (Kazoleas & Wright, 2001). Building strong relationships involves creating a two-way symmetrical system of communication.

Symmetrical and Two-Way Communication

The excellence theory states that organizations should have a symmetrical system of internal communication. However, most organizations do not because authoritarian dominant coalitions see the approach as a threat to its regime (J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig & Dozier, 2002) Excellence theory findings illustrate that symmetrical and two-way communication models are the most important and typically the most successful methods for an organization to implement when attempting to build long-term relationships with

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employees (J. E. Grunig, 1992). J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) posit that these programs are more ethical and they promote more long-term relationships better than any other model. Two-way symmetrical models attempt to balance the interests of the organization and its publics.

Symmetrical practice yields mixed motives, where loyalty is shown to both the organization and its publics. Symmetrical practices build open, trusting, and credible relationships with strategic employee publics. It also increases employee satisfaction with their individual jobs and the organization, which leads to greater employee loyalty and identity to the organization. Organizations that communicate effectively with publics develop better relationships because management and publics understand one another and because both are less likely to behave in ways that have negative consequences on the interests of the other. Hence, the relationship management perspective posits that a strong public relations program yields better organization-public relationships.

Relational Perspective

The relationship management, or relational, perspective holds that public relations is "the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994, p. 2). In 2003, Ledingham articulated and explicated the theory of relationship management as, "Effectively managing organizational-public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and publics" (p. 190). Public relations balances the interests of organizations and publics through the

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management of organization-public relationships (Ledingham, 2003). The relationship

paradigm provides a framework in which to explore the linkage between public relations

objectives and organizational goals, for constructing platforms for strategic planning and

tactical implementation, and approaching programmatic evaluation in ways understood

and appreciated by the ruling management group or dominant coalition (Ledingham &

Bruning, 2000).

Typically, success is measured when an organization achieves its missions and

goals. Effective organizations achieve their goals when they choose goals that are valued

by both management and by strategic internal and external publics. By doing so,

organizations minimize their publics' interference and maximize their publics' support

(Hunt & J. E. Grunig, 1994). The relational perspective is said to define the

organizational function of public relations, clarify the role of communication within that

function, and provide a process for determining the contribution of public relations to

attainment of organizational goals (Ledingham & Bruning, 1997, 1998, 2000;

Ledingham, 2003).

Ferguson (1984) was the first advocate of the relational paradigm in her call for

researchers to implement interpersonal communication in public relations research.

Ferguson recognized the central role of relationships in public relations. This gave rise to

a major shift in the core focus of the discipline (Ledingham, 2003). Cutlip, Center, and

Broom (1987) advanced the perspective with a relational definition and the relational

perspective emerged as an area for exploration for public relations scholars. Broom and

Dozier (1990) suggested a co-orientational approach to measure organization-public

relationships, rather than communication efficiencies, as a function of public relations evaluation. J. E. Grunig (1992) noted the importance of building relationships with publics that constrain, or enhance the ability of the organization to meet its mission. Ehling (1992) shifted the focus from public opinion manipulation toward a relationship-centered approach. This substantial body of scholarship suggests the importance of relationship management as a general theory of public relations. "The notion of managing organization-public relationships introduced managerial concepts and process to the practice of public relations" (Ledingham, 2003, p. 182). Public relations managers were now called to be proficient in the four-step management process of analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation, like their corporate coworkers.

Dozier (1995) called for the use of communication as "a strategic management function (that helps) manage relationships with key publics that affect organizational mission, goals, and objectives" (p. 85). Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997) constructed a model for developing theory around the notion of relationship management. Central to that model is recognition of the need to identify the antecedents, states, and consequences of organization-public relationships (OPR).

The literature of organization-public relationships draw on a variety of disciplines, including interpersonal communication and relationship building, organizational behavior, marketing, social psychology, to name a few. Ledingham and Bruning (1998) approached the study of organization-public relationships by identifying dimensions of organization-public relationships and by applying the relational perspective to issues such as consumer satisfaction, competitive choice, and media

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relations (1998). Wilson (1994) focused on the relationship between corporations and community within the social responsibility perspective.

In the interpersonal communication literature, Duck (1986) suggested the term relationship not be definable in ways agreeable to empirical observation, "Relationships should be regarded not as permanent things that we investigate clinically, but as potentially changing mental and behavior creations of participants and outsiders" (p. 92). Capella (1991) suggested that understanding relationships requires studying "the association between patterns of message interchange between partners and the partners' experienced state of the relationship" (p. 103). Ballinger (1991) developed a model of public-organizational relationships. "The relational dimensions of Millers and Rogers (1987), intimacy, trust, and control, were thus integrated into a preliminary relational model of public-organizational relationships which also includes the dimensions of perceptions, communication behavior, and relational outcomes" (p. 75).

The dominant paradigm for studying interorganizational relationships draws from resource dependence theory and exchange theory (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). According to resource dependence theory, relationships form in response to an organization's need for resources. Satisfying the need for resources allows an organization to survive, to grow, and to achieve other goals. Exchange theory suggests the voluntary transactions result from knowledge of domain similarity and lead to mutual benefit, as well as to mutual goal achievement (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000).

Most of the scholarship in the area of relationship management exhibits an appreciation for systems theory approach as an overarching construct. Katz and Kahn

(1967) described systems theory as "basically concerned with problems of relationships, of structure, and of interdependence rather than with the constant attributes of objects" (p. 18). Miller (1978) defined a system as "a set of interacting units with relationships among them" (p. 16). The structure of a system is defined by the relationship among the units. System theorists base their definition of systems on the central notion of interdependence of elements. Relationships reflect the conjoint, purposive behaviors of the actors in the relationships. Antecedents to relationships include the perceptions, motives, needs, behaviors and so forth, posited as causes in the formation of relationships. In the open systems model of public relations, antecedents are the sources of change, pressure, or tension on the system derived from the environment (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). The consequences of relationships are the outputs that have the effects of changing the environment and of achieving, maintaining, or changing goal states both inside and outside the organization (Cutlip et al., 1994, p. 213). Figure 2 shows an open systems view of an organization as conceptualized by Hatch (1997, p. 38).
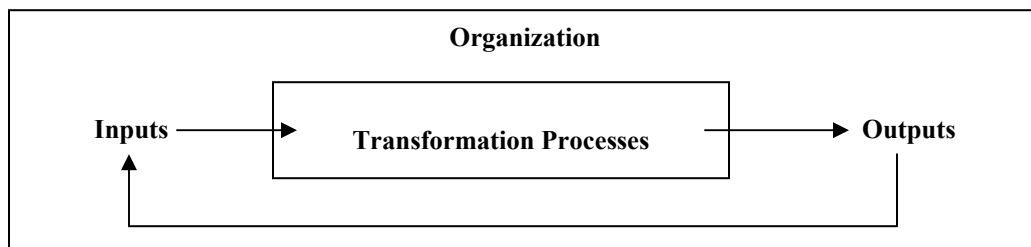
Figure 2 An Open Systems View of the Organization

According to Hazelton and Long, the public relations process consists of "(1) input from the environment (exogenous input) to the system, (2) transformation of inputs into communication goals, objectives, and campaigns, and (3) output, in the form of

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messages, to the target audiences located in internal and external environments. Target audiences reactions to public relations messages provide stimuli or further input for organizational maintenance or adaption, refinement of the public relations process, and alteration of the environment in which the organization exists" (1988, p. 80). Hazelton and Long's public relations process model describes public relations as goal-driven communications strategies used by organizations to interact with target publics existing in their environment.

The relational perspective, which views public relations as the management of organization-public relationships (OPRs), has developed into a prominent area of public relations scholarship. The notion of relationship management brings with it the opportunity for theory-building and cross-discipline integration. Broom, Casey and Ritchey (2000) attempted to define organization-public relationships:

> Organization-public relationships are represented by the patterns of interaction, transaction, exchanges, and linkage between an organization and its publics. These relationships have properties that are distinct from the identities, attributes, and perceptions of the individuals and social collectivities in the relationships. Though dynamic in nature, organization-public relationships can be described at a single point in time and tracked over time. (p. 18)

The authors conclude from their study that conceptualizing organization-public relationships as observable phenomena distinct from their antecedents and consequences, and independent of the parties in the relationship, provides a useful paradigm for research and theory building.

A relationship development rationale for public relations can justify a revenue enhancement paradigm, but probably more indirectly than is assumed by many practitioners who devote attention to media relations, publicity, and promotion. The relationship management literature may include the following terminology: "relationships, shared control, trust, social capital, shared meaning, argumentativeness, listening, openness, mutually beneficial relationships, multiple publics (stakeholders and stakeseekers), epistemological issues of fact, axiological issues of value, ontological issues of choice-based actions, chaos in place of linearity, cognitive involvement, legitimacy gap, problem recognition, constraint, power, and collaborative decision-making" (Heath, 2001, p. 2-3).

The new view of public relations assumes that publics are attracted to and kept by organizations that can create mutually beneficial relationships. Centering attention on publics as the basis for stakeholder relations and the use of systems theory to offer solutions to the problems that organizations create for their publics, researchers seek to empower the publics who want to influence the actions, statements, and policies of organizations. This requires a high-quality communication process—more symmetrical than asymmetrical. To achieve harmony an organization may constantly adapt itself to the ethical preferences of its publics. Public relations is a professional practice that helps organizations and publics to understand each other's interests.

A rhetorical foundation for public relations can explain how statements count in the dialogue by which individual and collective ideas are formed. Ethical standards are

determined as the most admired by the community of interest, defined by dialogue with other members of their community.

> A rhetorical rationale for public relations reasons that the limit of one ethical perspective is the presence of a more compelling one. The limits of the accuracy of one set of facts is the presence of a more compelling set. The limits of commercial and public policy is the presence of a more compelling policy. Thus, rhetoric is dialogic. Ideas and ethical positions are not privileged. Manipulation cannot sustain itself because others will disclose and vilify the manipulator. Selfish interests cannot prevail because advocates will persuasively advance their countervailing interests. (Heath, 2001, p. 4)

This thought presumes that ideas are better for having been deliberated. Rhetorical enactment theory reasons that all of what on organization does and says is a statement. It is a statement that is interpreted uniquely by each market, audience, and public. "Corporations must recognize that the greatest stakeholder—the ultimate environmental constituency—is society itself, to which such corporations are ultimately and irrefutably answerable" (Stark & Kruckeberg, 2001, p. 59). It is the role of the public relations practitioners to learn how to communicate with, rather than to, their publics.

Leichty and Warner (2001) reason that the thoughts of society break into cultural topoi. Topoi is a concept that was used by classical rhetoricians to express the collective and embracing thoughts that lead people to draw one set of conclusions as opposed to another. Simply stated, people arrive at different conclusions because they subscribe to different cultural topoi. Cultural topoi are zones of meaning. One of the daunting

challenges of public relations practitioners is to find points of agreement and to work toward consensus by increasing agreement and reducing disagreement. This approach reasons that organizations are in dialogue with their publics. This dialogue consists of a complex set of arguments that people – individually or collectively – use to achieve social capital. Social capital increases when organizations and people work to add value to society rather than expecting society to conform to their narrow self-interest. Society is stronger when individual interests are melded into community interests. "The ideology of sound collectivism, communitarianism, reasons that society becomes stronger when individuals and organizations shoulder the responsibility of blending their visions to define the ends of society" (Heath, 2002, p. 6).

"Community is seen as necessary to the development of the individual" (Leeper, 2001, p. 97). Thus, public relations is challenged to define itself as a professional practice that stresses "commitment to and the quality of relationships, a sense of social cohesion, the importance of core values and beliefs, balancing rights and responsibilities, citizen empowerment and a broadening of perspective so as to reduce social fragmentation" (p. 99). Coombs (2001) reasons "excellence suggests that communication helps the organization not only to understand but also to negotiate expectations" (p.112). Thus, the dominant model of public relations based on interpersonal communication theory sees the practice as chat, conversation, and accommodation to build mutual benefit between the both parties. Publics influence the practice of public relations. Developing a public-centered view of the practice rather than looking essentially at organizations and taking

an organization-centered view of the practice can enrich theory and practice of the discipline.

The goal is for organizations to communicate well with their publics to ensure each side knows what to expect from the other. This builds relationships and perhaps lessens the negative affect a public can have on an organization's missions and goals. Each side does not always have to agree or get along, as long as they have understanding. Ultimately, communication and compromise are the foundation of public relations (Hunt & J. E. Grunig, 1994). Lindenmann (1998) quotes Kathleen Ward stating, "Positive relationships are those in which both or all parties perceive that they benefit. As in any relationship some accommodations will be called for" (p.19).

Scholars posit that relationship building is reciprocal between two parties. Relationship building is a new concept to contemporary scholars and practitioners because today's publics are more active and interactive than ever before. For this reason, many scholars have shifted their research from measuring communication flows to examining and understanding the variables that influence organization-public relationship building and maintenance (Bruning, 2002).

Relationship Measurement

It was not until recently that the need for long-term relationship measurement has become vital for public relations. Scholars and practitioners wish to answer the question, "How can public relations practitioners begin to pinpoint and document for senior management the overall value of public relations to the organization as a whole?" Public relations is increasingly being evaluated on how it affects the bottom-line of an

organization. For the discipline to receive recognition and respect within an organization, it must contribute to financial outcomes. J. E. Grunig, and Hon (1999) have developed the *Public Relations Relationship Measurement Scale* to ensure an effective determination of the value of public relations to an organization and ultimately society. Bruning and Ledingham (1999) developed the *Multiple-item Relationship Scale* that measures personal, professional and community relationships. This scale provides a basis for linking those relationship types to public behavior. The multiple-item organization-public relationship (OPR) measurement scale is used for determining relationship quality and organization-public agreement (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999). Measuring relationships is important because public relations practitioners and scholars believe that the fundamental goal of the practice is to build and then enhance ongoing or long-term relationships with an organization's key publics.

L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, and Ehling (1992) developed a general premise of how public relations contributes to organizational effectiveness, which they then used to integrate several subtheories of public relations. They concluded that public relations contributes to organizational effectiveness "…when it helps reconcile the organization's goals with the expectations of its strategic constituents. This contribution has monetary value to the organization. Public relations contributes to effectiveness by building quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies" (J. E. Grunig & Huang, 2000, p. 24). In the Excellence Study conducted by L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, and Dozier (1995), research showed that excellent public relations programs were much more likely to have "change of relationship effects" and "conflict avoidance effects" than were less excellent

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programs (pp. 226-229). Most CEO's valued public relations programs when it develops

good relationships with strategic publics – relationships that, in particular, helped the

organization withstand crisis (pp. 230-235).

Short-term output and outcome measurement has been applied for years. Outputs

are usually the immediate results of a public relations program, event or campaign. This

measures how much attention or exposure the organization receives. Outcomes measure

whether the target audience received, paid attention, understood and retained the

messages. They also measure whether the communications materials and messages

resulted in opinion, attitude or behavior change on part of those targeted publics. The

main disadvantage with outputs and outcomes is that they only give information about

the effectiveness of a particular or specific public relations program or event.

Public relations has begun to demonstrate their effectiveness through program

evaluation. Evaluation can be completed by measuring both process and outcome

indicators. Process indicators include, the number of press clippings, content analysis or

the number in attendance at an event. Outcome measurement is a more arduous task.

Lindenmann (1997) notes,

> As important as it might be to measure PR outputs, it is far more important to
>
> measure PR outcomes. These measure whether target audience groups actually
>
> received the messages directed at them…paid attention to them…understood the
>
> messages…and retained these messages in any shape and form. Outcomes also
>
> measure whether the communication materials and messages, which were

disseminated, have resulted in any opinion, attitude, and/or behavior changes on

the part of those targeted audiences to whom the messages were directed. (p. 5)

The communication's processes should be measured as two-way, by looking for

effects on the audience as well as on management. The coorientation model developed by

McLeod and Chaffee (1973) was adapted by Broom (1977) and J. E. Grunig and Hunt

(1984) for public relations study. The two-way relationship variables developed by J. E.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) include: communication (extent of dialogue or mutual exposure),

understanding (shared cognitions), agreement (shared attitudes), and complementary

behavior (p. 134). The coorientation approach is useful is measuring short-term effects.

In order to measure long term relationships, which senior management demands, a

separate conceptualization is necessary. Ferguson (1984) identified five attributes of

relationships: dynamic versus static; open versus closed; the degree to which both the

organization and the public are satisfied with the relationship; distribution of power in the

relationship; and the mutuality of understanding, agreement and consensus. J. E. Grunig,

L. A. Grunig and Ehling (1992) concluded the following attributes as the most important

in measuring the quality of long-term relationships: "reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual

legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction and mutual understanding" (p. 83). Huang

(1997) suggested that trust, control mutuality, relationship commitment, and relational

satisfaction are the most essential and pertinent indicators representing the quality of

organization-public relationships. An organization may be most successful to "the degree

that the organization and publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to

influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another"

(Canary & Spitzberg, 1984, pp. 633-634).

In 2001, Huang developed a cross-cultural, multiple-item scale for measuring the

organization-public relationships, called the *Organization-Public Relationship*

Assessment (OPRA). The scale was developed to fulfill the standards of reliability and

validity in measurement but also to acquire cross-cultural comparability. A positive OPR

has been demonstrated as one of the major contributions of public relations to

organizational effectiveness. J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig, and Dozier (1995) concluded

that public relations increases organizational effectiveness when it builds a "long-term

relationship of trust and understanding" (p.5). Having identified OPR and conflict

resolution as two new variables of public relations effects (Huang, 1997), Huang (1998)

explored successfully the causal relationships between public relations strategies and

OPR. Huang (1999) demonstrated that relationships were key variables mediating the

effect of an organization's public relations strategies on resolving the conflicts between

the organization and its publics.

Bruning and Ledingham (1999) defined OPR as the "state which exists between

an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impacts the

economic, social, political, and/or cultural well-being of the other entity. Huang (1997)

defined OPR from two basic assumptions: Relationships consist of more than one

fundamental feature, and four relational features represent the construct of OPR. Huang

(1998) defined OPR as "the degree that the organization and its publics trust one another,

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agree on one has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another" (p. 12).

J. E. Grunig, L. E. Grunig, and Dozier (1995) concluded that public relations increases organization effectiveness when it builds a "long-term relationship of trust and understanding" (p. 5). Huang (1999) found that relationships were key variables mediating the effect of an organization's public relations strategies on resolving the conflicts between the organizations and its publics. Bruning and Ledingham (1999) defined OPR as the "state that exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity (p.160). Huang (1998) defined OPR as "the degree that the organization and its publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other and commit oneself to one another" (p.12).

The process of developing and maintaining relationships with strategic publics is a crucial component of strategic management, issues management, and crisis management. Porter (1994) found that organizations generally make better decisions when they listen to and collaborate with stakeholders before they make final decisions rather than simply trying to persuade them to accept organizational goals after decisions are made. Public relations makes an organization more effective when it identifies the most strategic publics as part of strategic management processes and conducts communication programs to develop and maintain effective long-term relationships between management and those publics (J. E. Grunig & Hon, 1999, p.9). Ledingham and

Bruning (2000) conclude, "to be effective and sustaining, relationships need to be seen as mutually beneficial, based on mutual interest between an organization and its significant publics" and "the key to managing successful relationships is to understand what must be done in order to initiate, develop and maintain that relationship." Effective relationship management can engender loyalty toward the organization on the part of public members (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998). Ratings of the OPR by public members have been found to serve as a predictor of an indicator of loyalty toward an organization (Ledingham & Bruning, 1997).

In the Excellence Study conducted by L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) the results highlighted the importance of a public relations department participation in strategic decision-making processes of an organization. This is in order to reach maximum organizational effectiveness. The data revealed when public relations was optimal as first, when it identifies the strategic publics that develop because of the consequences that organizations and publics have on each other and second, when it uses symmetrical communication programs to develop and maintain quality long-term relationships with these strategic publics. (p. 548)

Ferguson's (1984) suggestion, and subsequently, Broom, Casey, and Ritchey's (1997) call that the central concept of public relations be relationship between an organization and its publics, is a concept that played a large part in the conceptualization of the Excellence Study. Broom et al. (2000) developed a three-stage model of relationship management, which included antecedents of relationships, concepts of relationships, and outcomes of relationships. J. Grunig and Huang (2000) used that model as a springboard

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to develop a similar three-stage model of the public relations process that incorporated strategic management of public relations, the models of public relations, and relationship outcomes into a single theory. The first stage consisted of environmental scanning to identify the strategic publics with which an organization needs relationships. The second stage incorporated the models of public relations into a set of communication strategies for developing and maintaining relationships with these publics. The third stage consisted of a set of relationship outcomes that could be used to assess the quality of organization-public relationships and, as a result, the contribution of public relations makes to organizational effectiveness (p. 549).

"The public relations program consists of public relations goals, characteristics of solutions, audience analysis, public relations strategies and practical modes of action" (Page, 2000b). Environmental scanning is a research technique that can identify the publics with which an organization needs relationships and the problems or issues that exist or might exist. A public relations staff could then formulate objectives for programs to communicate with these strategic publics. Since the value of public relations to an organization and society exists in the relationships developed with strategic publics, objectives should consist of strategies to develop, maintain and enhance relationships and the relationship outcomes that the organization strives to achieve with these strategies. Strategies to develop and maintain relationships can be specified as process objectives for public relations programs. Relationship outcomes can be specified as outcome objectives. One must recognize that not all public relations strategies, techniques and programs are equally likely to produce quality relationship outcomes. The Excellence Study has shown

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that maintenance strategies that are symmetrical in nature generally are more effective

than asymmetrical strategies (p. 550).

By incorporating theories of conflict resolution and interpersonal communication

into maintenance strategies for organization-public relationships, new theories and

models of public relations can be built. Plowman (1996) and Huang (1997) conducted the

first research using these literatures to expand theories of public relations strategies. The

dialectical/dialogical approach to relationships, developed by Baxter and Montgomery

(1996), recognizes the essential tension in all relationships – of wanting to be together

and, at the same time, desiring autonomy. "Symmetrical communication does not move

relationships inexorably to consensus, equilibrium or harmony. Rather, it is the give-and-

take of persuasion and collaboration that organizations and publics use when they must

interact with each other. Although both might prefer autonomy, they cannot have it

because their actions have consequences on the other. Thus, they struggle to pursue their

self-interest while simultaneously taking the interests of the other into account" (p. 551).

Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) developed a preliminary list of such maintenance

strategies derived from Plowman's and Huang's research and from other academic

studies of relationship and conflict resolution.

Access. Members of public or community or activist leaders provide access to public

relations people. Public relations representatives or senior managers provide

representatives of publics similar access to organizational decision-making processes.

Disclosure or openness. Both organizations and members of public are open and

frank with each other. They are willing to disclose their thoughts, concerns and problems as well as their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each other.

Assurance or legitimacy. Each party in the relationship attempts to assure the other that it and its concerns are legitimate and to demonstrate that it is committed to maintaining the relationship.

Networking. Organizations build networks or coalitions with the same groups that their publics do, such as environmentalists, unions or community groups.

Sharing of tasks. Organizations and publics share in solving joint or separate problems. Examples of such tasks are managing community issues, providing employment, conducting high-quality research and maintaining funding. These are in the interest of the organization, the public or both.

Integrative strategies of conflict resolution. These approaches are symmetrical because all parties in a relationship benefit by searching out common or complementary interests and solving problems together through open discussion and joint decision-making. The goal is a win-win solution that values the integrity of a long-term relationship between an organization and its publics. Integrative strategies are more effective than distributive strategies, which are asymmetrical because one party benefits at the expense of another by seeking to maximize goals and minimize losses within a win-lose or self-gain perspective. Distributive tactics include trying to control through domination, argument, insistence on a position, or showing anger. Other forcing strategies are faulting the other party, hostile questioning, presumptive

attribution, demands or threats. Distributive strategies impose one's position onto that of an adversary without concern for the adversary's position.

Organizations that communicate effectively with publics develop better relationships because management and publics understand one another and because both are less likely to behave in ways that have negative consequences on the interests of the other. As a way to measure relationships as they develop and are maintained rather than waiting to observe the behaviors that may or may not occur as a result of communications programs, J. E. Grunig and Hon developed the *Public Relations Relationship Measurement Scale*. J. E. Grunig and Hon (1999) found that relationships could best be measured by focusing on six particular elements or components. They are exchange relationship and communal relationship, control mutuality, trust, satisfaction and commitment.

There are two primary types of relationships that may exist between an organization and the public – exchange and communal.

Exchange Relationship. In an exchange relationship, both parties gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the futures.

Communal Relationship. In a communal relationship, both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other – even when they get nothing in return. For most public relations activities, developing communal relationships with key constituencies is much more important to achieve than developing exchange relationships.

An exchange relationship takes place when "one party gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future" (J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. 552). Typically this type of relationship is not satisfying enough for publics because they expect an organization to do and give more than the public itself gives. Clark and Mills (1993) point out that most relationships begin as exchange relationships and then develop into communal relationships as they mature. The communal relationship appears to be the most beneficial, especially for the organization, since both the public and the organization are striving for the same goal and will provide benefits when appropriate, without keeping score. J. E. Grunig and Hon (1999) reveal that communal relationships are important if organizations are socially responsible and to add value to society as well as to other organizations. They also greatly reduce the likelihood of negative behaviors from stakeholders. Exchange relationships never develop the same levels of trust and the other three relationship indicators that go with communal relationships. It is important to know how organizational decision-makers see the relationship as well as how the publics see the organization.

As exchange and communal define types of relationships, it is equally important to interpret the quality of relationships. Four elements define the quality of relationships: control mutuality, trust, commitment and satisfaction (J. E. Grunig & Hon, 1999, p.3; J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. 553).

Control Mutuality is the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another. Although some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require that organizations and publics each have some control over the other.

Trust is one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party. There are three dimensions to trust: (1) *integrity*: the belief that an organization is fair and just; (2) *dependability*: the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do; (3) *competence*: the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do.

Satisfaction is the extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced. A satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs.

Commitment is the extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. Two dimensions of commitment are *continuance* commitment, which refers to a certain line of action, and *affective* commitment, which is an emotional orientation.

These variables can be measured quantitatively using J. E. Grunig and Hon's *Public Relations Relationship Measurement Scale* or qualitatively using parameters designed for focused interview-type methodologies (Lindenmann, 1997; J. E. Grunig, 2002). The current study applies quantitative measures.

Ledingham, Bruning, Thomlison, and Lesko (1997) suggested that the concepts of openness, trust, involvement, investment and commitment act as dimensions of the organization-public relationship. Their research suggests a role for communication

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initiatives within the framework of relationship management; in that role, goals are developed around relationships, and communication is used as a strategic tool in helping to achieve those goals. Moreover, while measurement of communication efficiencies should certainly be part of the evaluation process, their importance eventually may rest upon their ability to impact the achievement of relationship objectives. (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998c).

These dimensions were also found to influence perceptions of satisfaction with the organization by public members, influence perceptions of satisfaction with the organization for business owners, managers or both (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998a) and may be more influential that price or product features in predicting consumer behavior (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998). The amount of time in a relationship was also found to be an important perception influencer of the relationship dimensions (Ledingham, Bruning & Wilson, 1998). The authors' research regarding media and community relations suggests the importance of building and maintaining relationships in that context (Ledingham & Bruning, 1997, Bruning & Ledingham 1998a, 1998b).

The notion that managed communication programs can influence perceptions of the organization-public relationship and can impact the behavior of public members supports the hypothesis concerning the strategic role communication plays within the relational perspective to help achieve relationship goals. When an organization engages in action and communication that facilitates a sense of openness, trust, commitment and investment it builds the symbolic and behavioral relationships with key publics that J. E. Grunig (1993) contends are critical to effective organizations (Ledingham & Bruning,

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2000). Research implies that there are economic as well as corporate social responsibility

reasons for organizations to practice two-way symmetrical public relations. The mutual

benefit obtained when an organization emphasizes building and maintaining relationships

indicates that practicing public relations this way can result in benefit for publics

(through organizational support for community activities) and for the organization (in

increased loyalty toward the organization). As Ledingham and Bruning (1998) observed

"organizational…support of the community in which it operates can engender loyalty

toward an organization among key publics when that (support) is known by those key

publics (p. 63). The researchers also stated "public relations is a two-step process, in

which organizations must (1) focus on the relationships with their key publics, and (2)

communicate involvement of those activities/programs that build the organization-public

relationship with members of their key publics (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, p. 63).

Goal Compatibility

Literature shows that effective organizations are able to achieve their goals

because they choose goals that are valued both by management and by strategic

constituencies both inside and outside the organization (J. E. Grunig and Hon, 2002).

Effective organizations choose and achieve appropriate goals because they develop

relationships with their publics. Publics are defined as a group of persons sharing some

characteristics or set of attributes (Heath, 2001).

Research indicates that goal compatibility is an attribute of publics that influences

the public relations behavior of organizations (Page, 2000a). Goal compatibility is the

extent to which the goals or objectives of one party are similar to and coincide with the

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goals and objectives of another party (Page & Hazelton, 1999). According to Page

(2000a), as a construct, goal compatibility is essentially comprised of two general

concepts: compatibility and goals. According to Ickes (1985), compatible relationships

are ones in which members of the relationship get along with each other. Conversely,

incompatible relationships are ones in which the members do not get along with each

other. Ickes explained the underlying complexity in these seemingly simplistic

distinctions by stating that if a relationship is compatible, it is because its members are

congruous (they mesh or fit together), accordant (they are in harmony or in sync with

each other), or agreeing (they share common attitudes, goals and feelings). However, if a

relationship is incompatible, it is because its members are incongruous (they do not mesh

or fit together), discordant (they are out of harmony or out of sync with each other), or

disagreeing (they do not share common attitudes, goals, feelings, etc.). Furthermore, a

compatible relationship suggests that members make an active, intentional attempt to

understand and accommodate each other and have a mutual willingness to share and

suffer together. Thus, the foundation of compatible relationships stems, in part, from the

similarity of goals between parties. It next becomes necessary to identify variables that

characterize goals and determine how these variables relate to compatibility between two

parties.

      Goal compatibility can be conceptualized as an attribute of publics that represent

the degree to which members of a public perceive their goals to be similar to and coincide

with the goals of an organization. Page argued that if members of a public perceive that

an organization's goals are similar to their own, they will likely be more receptive to

messages output from the organization. Conversely, a public will resist messages if its goals are not aligned with those of the organization (Page & Hazelton, 1999; Page, 2000a, 2000b). Furthermore, if an organization and its publics hold, or perceive they hold, incompatible goals, each may block the other from goal attainment (Vasquez, 1996). According to Page (2000b), goal compatibility has been identified as an attribute of publics that has a significant effect on public relations strategy use and effectiveness. In addition, the findings of Page and Hazelton's (1999) research indicate that goal compatibility is a significant predictor of effectiveness for the informative, facilitative, persuasive, promise and reward, threat and punishment, and cooperative problem-solving strategies.

Hypotheses and Research Question

The review of literature has revealed that, in order to be effective and sustaining, relationships need to be seen as mutually beneficial, based on mutual interest between an organization and its significant publics. The key to managing successful relationships is to understand what must be done in order to initiate, develop, and maintain that relationship (Ledingham, 2001). The cumulative effect of this scholarship has been to establish the concept of relationship management as a useful and fruitful perspective for public relations study and education. The relationship management approach is the theoretical framework for this research.

As relationship building is a general paradigm for the study and practice of public relations, the *Public Relations Relationship Measurement Scale* developed by J. E. Grunig and Hon (1999) serves as the basis for measuring the relationship between an

organization and its publics. This study focuses on relationships; specifically it measures the internal relationship between the administration of a large public university in the southeastern United States and its primary public— the faculty. The faculty members included in this study includes assistant, associate and full professors, as well as full time, part time and adjunct instructors at all four campuses of the university. In order to assess the overall relationship quality, the researcher will measure faculty perceptions of the quality and type of relationship with the organization. The definition of relationship for the purpose of this study is the perception of a mutually beneficial relationship as defined by six relationship indicators that have been tested previously. Specifically, this study seeks to replicate and extend previous relational research by examining how the variables of trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction are related to the quality of relationships in organizations. In addition, the communal and exchange types of relationships will aide in the process of examination. Furthermore, this thesis posits an additional indicator of relationship quality – goal compatibility. Goal compatibility is a unique addition to previous research and promises to add an original and innovative element to the relational perspective.

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

In addition, this study applies the relational theory of public relations to a real world situation. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1: How do faculty employees at a large, Research I university perceive their relationship with the administration in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, with regards to the issue of salary, and what type of relationship—communal or exchange—does the organization and its public have?

The researcher chose the four campuses of the University of South Florida, Tampa, Fla., as the research site. The institution is in a unique position; currently, the school ranks lowest in academic pay in the state of Florida.

Chapter 3 will review the methodology of the study, including the methods, procedures, respondents, instrumentation, and data analysis.

Chapter 3
Methods and Procedures

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures that were used in gathering and analyzing data for this study. It describes the respondents selected for this research, the scales and procedures to be used for gathering data, and the methods to be used in the analysis of data.

The purpose of this study is to measure the perceptions of an organization's relationships with key internal constituencies focusing on seven variables – trust, satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality, exchange relationship, communal relationship and goal compatibility. Specifically, this study seeks to replicate and extend previous relational research by examining how the variables of trust, commitment, control mutuality, and satisfaction are related to the quality of relationships in organizations. In addition, the communal and exchange types of relationships will be examined. In addition, this thesis posits an additional indicator of relationship quality – goal compatibility. Goal compatibility is a unique addition to previous research and promises to add an original and innovative element to the relational perspective.

Specifically, this study tests trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality as indicators of relationship quality. In addition, this study posits that goal compatibility

is an additional indicator of relationship quality. Therefore, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of relationship quality between and organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

A descriptive survey attempts to describe or document current conditions or attitudes— that is, to explain what exists at the moment (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000, p. 167). Explicitly, this study explored the following research question:

RQ1: How do faculty employees at a large, Research I university perceive their relationship with the administration in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, with regards to the issue of salary, and what type of relationship—communal or exchange—does the organization and its public have?

Respondents

The 2003-2004 Faculty and Staff phonebook was used as the sampling frame for this study. The phonebook lists the current faculty and staff of the university at the time of publication. As of March 1, 2004, the number of USF faculty members totaled 2,804. The faculty members surveyed includes full professors, assistant professors, associate professors, and instructors. The academic faculty comprises 13 separate schools spread across four campuses. Based on the population size, Austin and Pinkelton (2001)

recommend a sample size of 666 (N=333), chosen by a systematic sampling method with a random start.

Instrumentation

J. E. Grunig and Hon's (1999) *Public Relations Relationship Measurement Scale* was used to measure faculty perceptions of their relationship with the university administration. The scale measures six elements / constructs of relationships: control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship, and communal relationship. In addition, goal compatibility, which was operationalized by Page and Hazelton (1999), was examined in this study. Respondents were asked to rate the level to which they agree with each statement on a seven-point Likert-type scale from one (*strongly disagree*) to seven (*strongly agree*).

J. E. Grunig and Hon's (1999) *Public Relations Relationship Measurement Scale* has been shown to provide a reliable measure for employee relations, as seen in the literature review.

> To be most productive, employees must trust the organization for which they work. Management wants committed employees; often the synonyms used are loyalty and identification with the organization. Job satisfaction is one of the most heavily researched areas of organizational psychology and communication. Employees want a communal relationship with their employers; they want to go beyond exchange of work for pay. Perhaps most importantly, employee empowerment is the buzzword for modern employee relations: Employees want some mutuality of control with senior management. (Grunig & Hon, 1999, p. 24).

The questionnaire consists of 35 statements, developed to test the variables of interest. The rationale used to operationalize the variables is provided below.

Control Mutuality. It is important for organizations to measure relationships because it can provide information about the effectiveness of specific public relations programs and events. Although some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require that organizations and internal publics have some control over the other (Lindenmann, 1999). In order to measure control mutuality, which is defined as the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another, the following statements were used:

1. The administration and faculty are attentive to what each other say.

2. This administration believes the opinions of the faculty are legitimate.

3. In dealing with people like me, this administration has a tendency to throw its weight around.

4. This administration really listens to what faculty have to say.

5. The administration gives faculty enough say in the decision-making process.

Trust. Trust is one party's level of confidence and willingness to open oneself to the other party (Grunig, 1999). There are three dimensions of trust: integrity, which is the belief that an organization is just and fair; dependability, which is the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do; and competence, which is the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do (Lindenmann, 1999). In order to measure trust between the faculty and administration the following statements were used:

1. This administration treats the faculty fairly and justly.

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2. Whenever this administration makes an important decision, I know it will be

    concerned about the faculty.

3. This administration can be relied on to keep its promises.

4. I believe that this administration takes the opinions of faculty into account

    when making decisions.

5. I feel very confident about the competence of the administrator's of this

    university.

6. This administration has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

       Satisfaction. A satisfying relationship is one in which benefits outweigh

the costs (Lindenmann, 1999). To measure satisfaction, the extent to which each

party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the

relationship are reinforced, the following statements were used:

1. I am happy with this administration.

2. Both the administration and faculty benefit from this relationship.

3. Most faculty members are happy in their interactions with this administration.

4. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this administration has

    established with the faculty.

5. Most people enjoy dealing with this administration.

Commitment. Commitment is the extent to which each party believes and feels

that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. To measure

commitment the following statements were used:

1. I feel that this administration is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to the faculty.

2. I can see that this administration wants to maintain a relationship with the faculty.

3. There is a long-lasting bond between this administration and the faculty.

4. Compared to other administrations, I value my relationship with this administration more.

5. I would rather work with this administration than not.

Exchange Relationship. In an exchange relationship, one party gives benefits to the other party because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future (Lindenmann, 1999). To measure the exchange relationship, the following statements were used:

1. Whenever this administration gives or offers something the faculty, it generally expects something in return.

2. Even though I have had a relationship with this administration for a long time, administrators still expect something in return whenever the offer me a favor.

3. This administration will compromise with the faculty when it knows that it will gain something.

4. This administration takes care of faculty members who are likely to reward the administration.

Communal Relationship. For most public relations activities, developing communal relationships with key constituencies is much more important to achieve than

developing exchange relationships (Lindenmann, 1999). To measure communal

relationships, where both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned

for the welfare of the other even when they get nothing in return, the following

statements were used:

1. This administration does not especially enjoy giving others aid.

2. This administration is very concerned about the welfare of the faculty.

3. I feel that this administration takes advantage of faculty members who are

    vulnerable.

4. I think that this administration succeeds by stepping on other people.

5. This administration helps the faculty without expecting anything in return.

Goal Compatibility. Goal compatibility is the extent to which the goals or

objectives of one party are similar to and coincide with the goals and objectives of

another party (Page & Hazelton, 1999). To measure goal compatibility, which is

essentially comprised of two general concepts (compatibility and goals), the following

statements are presented:

1. The administration and the faculty have similar goals.

2. The administration perceives the goals of the faculty accurately.

3. Open communication characterizes the relationship of the administration and

    the faculty.

4. Cooperation characterizes the relationship of the administration and the faculty.

5. The administration and the faculty do not have the same goals.

The goal compatibility statements were included in the questionnaire to test the contribution of this variable as a unique indicator of a relationship. Thus, adding another dimension to relationship measurement. Page (2000) operationalized goal compatibility through several studies and found it to be a key variable between organizations and publics.

Along with the relationship indicators and goal compatibility measurements, respondents were asked a set of demographic questions including at what campus they primarily taught, what level of academia they represent, how many years they have been teaching at this college, gender, amount of decision-making power, and perception of overall relationship. A copy of the questionnaire and the cover letter distributed to the sample can be found in Appendix B.

Procedures

Following the development of the survey instrument, 666 questionnaire packets were sent through intercampus mail to randomly selected faculty members with a cover letter explaining the study (see Appendix B). One week prior to the questionnaire mailing, a letter prefacing the study was sent to the same sample (see Appendix A). Each faculty member selected for inclusion in this sample was mailed a survey packet containing a cover letter explaining the purpose and intent of the study, an instrument developed to measure the variable of interest, and a return envelope. The survey also includes Page's measurement of goal compatibility.

Along with the relationship measurements, respondents were asked a set of demographic questions including the campus where they taught, how many years they

have worked for USF, their rating of the quality of relationship, amount of decision-making power, gender, and academic title.

Multiple contacts were used to increase response rate (Dillman, 2000). A three phase contact strategy was used, including a pre-notification letter, a cover letter and survey, and a reminder postcard. Copies of each item can be found in Appendix A-D. After the questionnaires were returned, the data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then transferred into SPSS 13.0 for Windows for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Participants in the survey responded on a 7-point Likert-type scale to indicate the extent to which they perceived that the indicators of the seven indices listed in Chapter 3 described the administration. Negative indicators of each concept were reversed, and the answers to all of the items measuring each relationship outcome were averaged into single measures of each variable of interest.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were performed to determine the influence of certain demographic characteristics on the relationship constructs, and to determine the statistically significant relationships between constructs and demographics.

To test the reliability of the relationship measurement instrument, Cronbach's Alpha and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients were calculated. These tests were followed by the ANOVA and t-tests to determine the relationships between variables. Chapter Four will present the results of the data analysis outlined in this chapter.

This chapter summarizes the data collected for this study and presents the results of the data analysis outlined in Chapter Three. It reveals the response statistics and explains the scales used in the analysis of data.

This study tests trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality as indicators of relationship quality. In addition, this study posits that goal compatibility is an additional indicator of relationship quality. Specifically, this study explores the following hypotheses:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

The purpose of this study is to measure the quality and type of relationship between an organization and its public, as perceived by the public. Therefore, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1: How do faculty employees at a large, Research I university perceive their relationship with the administration in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, with regards to the issue of salary, and

what type of relationship—communal or exchange—does the organization and its public have?

Response Statistics

The total sample size for the intercampus mail survey was 666. The prenotification letter served to eliminate invalid listings prior to sending the survey package. Specifically, 27 letters were undeliverable due to incorrect addresses. Fourteen more prenotification letters were returned because the faculty member no longer worked for the university. This resulted in a valid sample size of 625. Of this number, 197 completed or partially completed and returned the questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 31.5% and a completion rate of 28.5%. Due to the nature of the survey instrument, partially completed questionnaires were used in the data analysis, so the number of respondents varied for each statistical test used for data analysis.

A number of faculty members (n=11) refused to complete the survey, stating they did not feel the topic of the survey applied to them or that they felt the administration referred to in the survey was unclear. This resulted in a refusal rate of .0176%. No contact was made with the remaining 428 faculty members, producing a noncontact rate of 68.48%. Austin and Pinkelton (2001) state that 333 completed surveys are necessary for probability-based survey results with a +/-5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level. However, some scholars rely on survey response rate to determine the generalizability of the study results. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), a reasonable response rate for mail surveys is one to four percent (pp. 193-194). The

response rate of 31.5% obtained for this study was considered adequate to continue with the data analysis.

Demographic Data

Before beginning the analyses of the hypotheses and research question, standard descriptive statistics were performed on the data. Descriptive statistics reduce data to allow for easier interpretation. The instrument used in this study measured six demographic variables. Of these, three were categorical variables that examined gender, academic title, and campus where that respondent primarily worked. In addition, three continuous variables examined years as a faculty member, amount of decision-making power, and overall relationship with the USF administration. The categories used for academic title and campus were derived from the USF telephone book. All results reflect the valid sample.

Frequency distributions were run on the three categorical variables. A frequency distribution is a table of scores ordered according to the magnitude and frequency of occurrence. Of the 197 respondents, 59.9% (n=118) were male and 39.1% (n=77) were female. One percent of the respondents did not indicate their gender. The respondents' indication of gender is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of Gender

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	77	39.1	39.1	39.1
	Male	118	59.9	59.9	99.0
	99	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	197	100.0	100.0	

To measure the distribution among various types of academic titles, individuals were asked to indicate their title. Nearly 35 percent of faculty members indicated their title was professor (n=68). The second highest categories of respondents were associate (n=58) and assistant (n=45) professors. A very low number of instructors completed the survey (n=24), with one percent of respondents failing to indicate their academic title. The results of the academic title of respondents are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Frequency of Academic Title

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Professor	68	34.5	34.9	34.9
	Associate Professor	58	29.4	29.7	64.6
	Assistant Professor	45	22.8	23.1	87.7
	Instructor	24	12.2	12.3	100.0
	Total	195	99.0	100.0	
Missing	9	2	1.0		
Total		197	100.0		

In addition to gender and academic position, the respondents were asked to indicate what campus they taught at the bulk of the time. The majority of respondents, or 86.3 percent, indicated that they taught mainly at the Tampa campus (n=170). The second highest category of respondents indicated that they taught at the St. Petersburg campus (8.6%). The Sarasota (n=4) and Lakeland (n=2) campuses had very low response rates,

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respectively. The initial database did not contain many faculty members from the
Sarasota and Lakeland campus. Therefore, the low response rate is not surprising. Two
percent of the population did not indicate at which campus they taught. The results of the
campus affiliation of respondents are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Frequency of Campus Affiliation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Tampa	170	86.3	88.1	88.1
	Sarasota	4	2.0	2.1	90.2
	St. Petersburg	17	8.6	8.8	99.0
	Lakeland	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	193	98.0	100.0	
Missing	9	4	2.0		
Total		197	100.0		

Relational Variables

Descriptive statistics were run on the seven items—trust, commitment,
satisfaction, control mutuality, communal relationship, exchange relationship, and goal
compatibility. Descriptive statistics reduce data to allow for easier interpretation.

Six items were used to measure the variable of trust. The means and standard
deviations for each item are shown in Table 4. Generally, means for all items measuring
trust are below the scale midpoint (4), indicating low agreement. The highest mean was
3.86 for the statements: "The USF administration treats the faculty fairly and justly," and
"The USF administration has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do." The lowest
mean was 3.40 for the statement, "Whenever the USF administration makes an important
decision; I know it will be concerned about the faculty."

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics - Trust

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The USF administration treats the faculty fairly and justly	196	3.86	1.842
Whenever the USF administration makes an important decision; I know it will be concerned about the faculty	196	3.40	1.717
The USF administration can be relied on to keep its promises	197	3.62	1.762
I believe that the USF administration takes the opinions of the faculty into account when making decisions	196	3.67	1.883
I feel confident about the USF administration's skills	197	3.49	1.851
The USF administration has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do	197	3.86	1.687

Five items were used to measure the variable of control mutuality. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Table 5. Generally, means for all items measuring control mutuality are below the scale midpoint, indicating low agreement with this item. The highest mean for this variable was 3.77 for the statement, "The USF administration believes the opinions of the faculty are legitimate." The lowest mean was 3.11 and for the statements: "In dealing with the faculty, the USF administration has a tendency to throw its weight around," and "The USF administration gives the faculty enough say in the decision-making process."

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics – Control Mutuality

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The USF administration and the faculty are attentive to what each other say	196	3.59	1.657
The USF administration believes the opinions of the faculty are legitimate	196	3.77	1.717
In dealing with the faculty, the USF administration has a tendency to throw its weight around	197	3.11	1.641
The USF administration really listens to what the faculty have to say	196	3.43	1.722
The USF administration gives the faculty enough say in the decision-making process	196	3.11	1.702

Five items were used to measure the variable of commitment. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Table 6. The lowest mean was 3.09, indicating low agreement for the statement, "There is a long-lasting bond between the USF administration and the faculty. The second highest mean was 4.11 for the statement, "I can see that the USF administration wants to maintain a relationship with the faculty." The highest mean, and well above the midpoint, was 4.92 for the statement, "I would rather work with the USF administration than not." The two highest means indicate moderate agreement with the items.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics - Commitment

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel that the USF administration is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to the faculty	197	3.73	1.885
I can see that the USF administration wants to maintain a relationship with the faculty	196	4.11	1.849
There is a long-lasting bond between the USF administration and the faculty	196	3.09	1.704
Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with the USF administration more	192	3.23	1.769
I would rather work with the USF administration than not	191	4.92	1.816

Five items were used to measure the variable of satisfaction. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Table 7. Generally, means for all items measuring satisfaction are below the scale midpoint, indicating low agreement with this item. Only one statement reached slightly over the scale midpoint. One statement was extremely low, as compared to the other variables. Ranking in order from lowest to highest mean, the statements are as follows: "Most people enjoy dealing with the USF administration" (2.90); "Most of the faculty are happy in their interactions with the USF administration" (3.03); "Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship the USF administration has established with the faculty" (3.32); "I am happy with the USF administration" (3.53); "Both the USF administration and the faculty benefit from this relationship" (4.13).

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics - Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am happy with the USF administration	196	3.53	1.833
Both the USF administration and the faculty benefit from this relationship	190	4.13	1.885
Most of the faculty are happy in their interactions with the USF administration	196	3.03	1.419
Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship the USF administration has established with the faculty	195	3.32	1.706
Most people enjoy dealing with the USF administration	194	2.90	1.442

Five items were used to measure the variable of communal relationship. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Table 8. These means were interesting as two of the items reached above the scale midpoint and one item was the lowest out of all the variables tested, indicating high agreement with generally all items, but one. The highest mean was 4.35 for the statement, "I think that the USF administration succeeds by stepping on other people." The lowest mean was 2.48 for the statement, "The USF administration helps the faculty without expecting anything in return."

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics – Communal Relationship

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The USF administration does not especially enjoy giving others aid	191	3.83	1.423
The USF administration is very concerned about the welfare of the faculty	192	3.42	1.753
I feel that the USF administration takes advantage of people who are vulnerable	194	4.08	1.801
I think that the USF administration succeeds by stepping on other people	194	4.35	1.778
The USF administration helps the faculty without expecting anything in return.	194	2.48	1.355

Four items were used to measure the variable of exchange relationship. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Table 9. Generally, means for all items measuring exchange relationship are high above the scale midpoint, indicating strong agreement with this item. The highest mean out of all variables occurred for the item, "The USF administration takes care of people who are likely to reward the organization" (5.08). The lowest mean was 4.86 for the item, "Even though the faculty have had a relationship with the USF administration for a long time, the administration still expects something in return whenever it offers the faculty a favor."

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics – Exchange Relationship

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Whenever the USF administration gives or offers something to the faculty, it generally expects something in return	192	5.07	1.460
Even though the faculty have had a relationship with the USF administration for a long time, the administration still expects something in return whenever it offers the faculty a favor	190	4.86	1.434
The USF administration will compromise with the faculty when it knows that it will gain something	191	4.92	1.149
The USF administration takes care of people who are likely to reward the organization	192	5.08	1.461

Five items were used to measure the variable of goal compatibility. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Table 10. Generally, means for all items measuring goal compatibility are below the scale midpoint, indicating low agreement with this item. The highest means were 3.43 and 3.41 for the statements: "The USF administration perceives the goals of the faculty accurately," and "The USF administration and faculty have similar goals," respectively. The lowest mean occurred for the statement, "The USF administration and the faculty have the same goals" (3.05).

Table 10 Descriptive Statistics – Goal Compatibility

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The USF administration and the faculty have similar goals	192	3.41	1.740
The USF administration perceives the goals of the faculty accurately	194	3.43	1.631
Open communication characterizes the relationship of the USF administration and the faculty	193	3.01	1.665
Cooperation characterizes the relationship of the USF administration and the faculty.	193	3.11	1.640
The USF administration and the faculty have the same goals	191	3.05	1.657

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the five items to determine the instrument's

reliability for measuring relationships. The research supports the instrument created by J.

E. Grunig and Hon (1999), as the reliability alphas are high. This adds to the reliability of

the measures they propose. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency

of the multiple-item goal compatibility measure. According to Wimmer and Dominick

(2001), a commonly held standard for reliability alphas is .75 or higher. Carmines and

Zeller (1979) stated that reliability alphas should not fall below .80 for widely used

scales. Similarly, Berman (2002) stated that alpha values between .80 and 1.00 indicate

high reliability.

The alpha for the variable trust was high at .920. The alpha for control mutuality was also high at .886. The alpha for commitment was .874. The alpha for satisfaction was .931. The alpha for goal compatibility was .912.

The overall mean scores for each of the collapsed scales are shown in Table 11. Again, all means are low except for the exchange relationship measure. This identifies the relationship between the administration and faculty most closely resembles an exchange relationship. However, the low mean scores for the remaining variables indicate that this relationship needs work—from an organizational management perspective.

Table 11 Overall Scale Means

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TRUST	194	3.6555	1.51400
CONTROL	193	3.4052	1.40096
COMMITMENT	187	3.8246	1.47467
SATISFACTION	188	3.4149	1.47485
COMMUNAL	190	3.9329	1.43733
EXCHANGE	188	4.9450	1.13443
GOALCOMPATIBILITY	190	3.2116	1.43548
Valid N (listwise)	178		
Years at USF	193	11.63	8.916
Decision-making power	193	4.71	2.653
Overall relationship	191	5.62	2.409
Valid N (listwise)	187		

ANOVAs

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were performed on the data to determine if a significant relationship exists between the faculty and administration. A series of one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to determine if demographic characteristics were

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linked to certain relational attributes. Using the relational attributes as dependent variables and title, gender, and campus as independent variables, the results did not prove to be significant.

A series of one-way ANOVAs were run with the relational variables as dependent variables and demographic variables as independent variables. First, an ANOVA was run with the variable trust (Table 12) and did not prove to be significant.

Table 12 Independent Variable - Trust   **ANOVA**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TRUST	Between Groups	12.309	4	3.077	1.351	.253
	Within Groups	428.267	188	2.278		
	Total	440.575	192			
CONTROL	Between Groups	11.367	4	2.842	1.455	.218
	Within Groups	365.112	187	1.952		
	Total	376.479	191			
COMMITMENT	Between Groups	5.878	4	1.470	.671	.613
	Within Groups	398.608	182	2.190		
	Total	404.487	186			
SATISFACTION	Between Groups	15.204	4	3.801	1.773	.136
	Within Groups	390.143	182	2.144		
	Total	405.346	186			
COMMUNAL	Between Groups	10.346	4	2.586	1.254	.290
	Within Groups	379.642	184	2.063		
	Total	389.988	188			
EXCHANGE	Between Groups	3.159	4	.790	.608	.658
	Within Groups	236.597	182	1.300		
	Total	239.756	186			
GOALCOMPATIBILITY	Between Groups	3.338	4	.835	.398	.810
	Within Groups	385.491	184	2.095		
	Total	388.830	188			

The ANOVA ran for the number of years at USF is shown in Table 13.
Satisfaction was the only variable that was close to being significant at .089.

Table 13 Independent Variable – Years at USF   ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TRUST	Between Groups	97.582	34	2.870	1.341	.118
	Within Groups	331.667	155	2.140		
	Total	429.249	189			
CONTROL	Between Groups	71.227	34	2.095	1.098	.341
	Within Groups	293.792	154	1.908		
	Total	365.019	188			
COMMITMENT	Between Groups	85.796	34	2.523	1.207	.221
	Within Groups	311.421	149	2.090		
	Total	397.217	183			
SATISFACTION	Between Groups	94.289	34	2.773	1.400	.089
	Within Groups	297.193	150	1.981		
	Total	391.482	184			
COMMUNAL	Between Groups	61.137	34	1.798	.850	.704
	Within Groups	321.431	152	2.115		
	Total	382.568	186			
EXCHANGE	Between Groups	36.079	34	1.061	.791	.786
	Within Groups	199.906	149	1.342		
	Total	235.985	183			
GOALCOMPATIBILITY	Between Groups	84.557	34	2.487	1.258	.176
	Within Groups	300.459	152	1.977		
	Total	385.016	186			

The ANOVA ran using the independent variable gender is shown in Table 14. Again, satisfaction was very close to being significant at .064.

Table 14 Independent Variable - Gender   ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TRUST	Between Groups	2.845	2	1.423	.618	.540
	Within Groups	439.547	191	2.301		
	Total	442.392	193			
CONTROL	Between Groups	4.550	2	2.275	1.161	.315
	Within Groups	372.285	190	1.959		
	Total	376.835	192			
COMMITMENT	Between Groups	8.108	2	4.054	1.882	.155
	Within Groups	396.379	184	2.154		
	Total	404.487	186			
SATISFACTION	Between Groups	11.935	2	5.967	2.796	.064
	Within Groups	394.824	185	2.134		
	Total	406.758	187			
COMMUNAL	Between Groups	4.198	2	2.099	1.016	.364
	Within Groups	386.259	187	2.066		
	Total	390.457	189			
EXCHANGE	Between Groups	.406	2	.203	.156	.855
	Within Groups	240.248	185	1.299		
	Total	240.654	187			
GOALCOMPATIBILITY	Between Groups	1.779	2	.889	.429	.652
	Within Groups	387.676	187	2.073		
	Total	389.455	189			

The ANOVA ran using the independent variable campus is shown in Table 15. The results of this analysis did not prove to be significant.

Table 15 Independent Variable - Campus   ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TRUST	Between Groups	9.361	4	2.340	1.015	.401
	Within Groups	431.115	187	2.305		
	Total	440.476	191			
CONTROL	Between Groups	3.111	4	.778	.389	.816
	Within Groups	371.393	186	1.997		
	Total	374.503	190			
COMMITMENT	Between Groups	12.304	4	3.076	1.420	.229
	Within Groups	392.041	181	2.166		
	Total	404.345	185			
SATISFACTION	Between Groups	8.157	4	2.039	.930	.448
	Within Groups	396.817	181	2.192		
	Total	404.974	185			
COMMUNAL	Between Groups	5.097	4	1.274	.606	.659
	Within Groups	384.572	183	2.101		
	Total	389.669	187			
EXCHANGE	Between Groups	8.143	4	2.036	1.591	.179
	Within Groups	231.610	181	1.280		
	Total	239.754	185			
GOALCOMPATIBILITY	Between Groups	4.657	4	1.164	.561	.692
	Within Groups	380.121	183	2.077		
	Total	384.779	187			

Correlation Coefficients

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated on the measures of trust, satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, as well as the exchange and communal relationship variables, to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the variables of interest and the continuous variables: years at USF, decision-making power, and overall quality of the relationship. Commonly symbolized as r, the correlation varies between -1.00 and $+1.00$. A correlation coefficient of $+1.00$ indicates a perfect positive correlation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003) For the behavioral sciences, correlation coefficients of .10, .30, and .50, irrespective of sign, are typically interpreted as small, medium, and large coefficients, respectively (Green, Salkind, & Akey, 2000). Berman (2002) stated that values of r^2 above .40 are considered strong, and those above .65 are considered very strong.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant positive correlation of trust between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r=.369 & .622, p=.000). These results indicate that trust and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary positively; that is, as one goes up, the other goes up too. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a negative (-.052), indicating that the variables vary inversely. That is, one measure is high, the other is low. Table 16 shows the measures of association between trust and the three continuous variables.

Table 16 Correlation Analysis - Trust

		TRUST	Years at USF	Decision-making power	Overall relationship
TRUST	Pearson Correlation	1	-.052	.369(**)	.622(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.472	.000	.000
	N	194	190	191	189
Years at USF	Pearson Correlation	-.052	1	.192(**)	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.472		.008	.793
	N	190	193	189	188
Decision-making power	Pearson Correlation	.369(**)	.192(**)	1	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008		.000
	N	191	189	193	190
Overall relationship	Pearson Correlation	.622(**)	.019	.605(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.793	.000	
	N	189	188	190	191

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant positive correlation of control mutuality between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r=.365& . 645, p=.000). These results indicate that control mutuality and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary positively; that is, as one goes up, the other goes up too. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a negative (-.057), indicating that the variables vary inversely. That is, one measure is high, the other is low. Table 17 shows the measures of association between control mutuality and the three continuous variables.

Table 17 Correlation Analysis – Control Mutuality

		CONTROL	Years at USF	Decision-making power	Overall relationship
CONTROL	Pearson Correlation	1	-.057	.365(**)	.645(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.433	.000	.000
	N	193	189	190	188
Years at USF	Pearson Correlation	-.057	1	.192(**)	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.433		.008	.793
	N	189	193	189	188
Decision-making power	Pearson Correlation	.365(**)	.192(**)	1	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008		.000
	N	190	189	193	190
Overall relationship	Pearson Correlation	.645(**)	.019	.605(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.793	.000	
	N	188	188	190	191

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant positive correlation of commitment between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r=.365 & .695, p=.000). These results indicate that commitment and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary positively; that is, as one goes up, the other goes up too. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a negative (-.041), indicating that the variables vary inversely. That is, one measure is high, the other is low. Table 18 shows the measures of association between commitment and the three continuous variables.

Table 18 Correlation Analysis – Commitment

		COMMITMENT	Years at USF	Decision-making power	Overall relationship
COMMITMENT	Pearson Correlation	1	-.041	.356(**)	.695(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.581	.000	.000
	N	187	184	184	183
Years at USF	Pearson Correlation	-.041	1	.192(**)	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.581		.008	.793
	N	184	193	189	188
Decision-making power	Pearson Correlation	.356(**)	.192(**)	1	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008		.000
	N	184	189	193	190
Overall relationship	Pearson Correlation	.695(**)	.019	.605(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.793	.000	
	N	183	188	190	191

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant positive correlation of satisfaction between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r=.391 & .691, p=.000). These results indicate that satisfaction and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary positively; that is, as one goes up, the other goes up too. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a negative (-.058), indicating that the variables vary inversely. That is, one measure is high, the other is low. Table 19 shows the measures of association between satisfaction and the three continuous variables.

Table 19 Correlation Analysis – Satisfaction

		SATISFAC TION	Years at USF	Decision-making power	Overall relationship
SATISFACTI ON	Pearson Correlation	1	-.058	.391(**)	.691(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.435	.000	.000
	N	188	185	185	183
Years at USF	Pearson Correlation	-.058	1	.192(**)	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.435		.008	.793
	N	185	193	189	188
Decision-making power	Pearson Correlation	.391(**)	.192(**)	1	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008		.000
	N	185	189	193	190
Overall relationship	Pearson Correlation	.691(**)	.019	.605(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.793	.000	
	N	183	188	190	191

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant positive correlation of goal compatibility between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r=.337 & .569, p=.000). These results indicate that goal compatibility and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary positively; that is, as one goes up, the other goes up too. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a negative (-.089), indicating that the variables vary inversely. That is, one measure is high, the other is low. Table 20 shows the measures of association between goal compatibility and the three continuous variables.

Table 20 Correlation Analysis – Goal Compatibility

		GOALCOMP ATIBILITY	Years at USF	Decision-making power	Overall relationship
GOALCOM PATIBILITY	Pearson Correlation	1	-.089	.337(**)	.569(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.228	.000	.000
	N	190	187	187	186
Years at USF	Pearson Correlation	-.089	1	.192(**)	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228		.008	.793
	N	187	193	189	188
Decision-making power	Pearson Correlation	.337(**)	.192(**)	1	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008		.000
	N	187	189	193	190
Overall relationship	Pearson Correlation	.569(**)	.019	.605(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.793	.000	
	N	186	188	190	191

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant positive correlation of communal relationship between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r=.317 & .613, p=.000). These results indicate that communal relationship and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary positively; that is, as one goes up, the other goes up too. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a negative (-.031), indicating that the variables vary inversely. That is, one measure is high, the other is low. Table 21 shows the measures of association between communal relationship and the three continuous variables.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient test revealed a significant negative correlation of exchange relationship between the variables decision-making power and overall relationship (r= -.033 & -.211, p=.000). These results indicate that exchange relationship and decision-making power and overall relationship are related and that they vary inversely; that is, as one goes up, the other goes down. However, the number of years the respondent taught at USF was a positive (.115), indicating that the variables vary positively. That is, one measure is high, and the other is high. Table 21 shows the measures of association between exchange relationship and the three continuous variables.

Table 21 Correlation Analysis – Communal and Exchange Relationships

		COMMUNAL	EXCHANGE	Years at USF	Decision-making power	Overall relationship
COMMUNAL	Pearson Correlation	1	-.427(**)	-.031	.317(**)	.613(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.678	.000	.000
	N	190	187	187	188	186
EXCHANGE	Pearson Correlation	-.427(**)	1	.115	-.033	-.211(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.121	.658	.004
	N	187	188	184	186	183
Years at USF	Pearson Correlation	-.031	.115	1	.192(**)	.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.678	.121		.008	.793
	N	187	184	193	189	188
Decision-making power	Pearson Correlation	.317(**)	-.033	.192(**)	1	.605(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.658	.008		.000
	N	188	186	189	193	190
Overall relationship	Pearson Correlation	.613(**)	-.211(**)	.019	.605(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.004	.793	.000	
	N	186	183	188	190	191

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Tests of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were presented in this study:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

To test H1, regression analyses were run on the coefficients. The independent variables of satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality, and trust were examined to measure the dependent variable of overall relationship quality. All variables, beside trust, were found to be positive predictors of overall relationship quality (F=44.920, df=4, p=.000). In order of significance, they are: 1) commitment, 2) satisfaction, and 3) control mutuality. Table 22 shows the regression model for the four variables. Trust proved to be a negative predictor. This indicates an inverse relationship, meaning as overall relationship quality went up; trust went down. Commitment was the only highly significant variable within the model. The predictors accounted for 50.9 percent of the unique variance in relationship quality (R=.714, R-Sq=.509). These findings indicate support for H1.

Table 22 Regression Analysis – Relationship Variables

	Beta Coef.	t-ratio	Sig.
Trust	-.053	-.398	.691
Control Mutuality	.137	1.042	.299
Commitment	.377	3.179	.002
Satisfaction	.280	1.845	.067

To test H2, a regression analysis was run. The independent variable, goal compatibility, was examined to measure the dependent variable of overall relationship. These variables were found to be positive predictors of overall relationship quality (F=88.255, df=1, p=.000). Table 23 shows the regression model for the single variable. This finding indicates support for H2.

Table 23 Regression Analysis – Goal Compatibility

	Beta Coef.	t-ratio	Sig.
Goal Compatibility	.569	9.394	.000

Test of Research Question

The researcher proposed the following research question:

RQ: How do faculty employees at a large, Research I university perceive their relationship with the administration in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, with regards to the issue of salary, and what type of relationship—communal or exchange—does the organization and its public have?

According to the data analyses, in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, the faculty perceives their relationship to be low quality. In addition, the faculty perceives to have an exchange relationship with the administration.

This chapter summarized the statistical data obtained from the study. Chapter Five discusses the results of the study, explains the limitations of this thesis, and suggests

areas for future research.

Chapter 5
Discussion

This chapter will review the data analysis results presented in Chapter Four and present the researchers discussion.

This study focused on relationships; specifically it measured the relationship between the administration of a large public university in the southeastern United States, USF, and its primary internal public— the faculty. Specifically, this study tested trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality as indicators of relationship quality. In addition, this study hypothesized that goal compatibility is an additional indicator of relationship quality. Therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of

relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an

organization and its publics.

In addition, this study applies the relational theory of public relations to a real world situation. Therefore the following research question is proposed:

RQ1: How do faculty employees at a large, Research I university perceive their

relationship with the administration in terms of trust, commitment, satisfaction,

control mutuality, and goal compatibility, with regards to the issue of salary, and

what type of relationship—communal or exchange—does the organization and its public have?

The mean scores showed that the faculty perceived their relationship to the administration to be very poor. Specifically, the respondents indicated that they held an exchange type of relationship with the administration. In an exchange relationship, one party give benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future. USF needs to recognize that simply holding an exchange relationship with its employees will not enhance the overall relationship, and will eventually lead to dissatisfaction, distrust, disloyalty, and manipulation. Therefore, the administration needs to work on a developing a communal relationship, in which both parties provide benefits to the other because they are generally concerned for the welfare of the other—even when they do not get anything in return. Organizations benefit by building a reputation for being concerned about communal relationships and encounter less opposition and more support over the long term from their publics (Grunig & Hon, 1999).

Organizations that communicate effectively with publics develop better relationships because management and publics understand one another and because both are less likely to behave in ways that have negative consequences on the interests of the other. The researcher suggests that the administration adopt maintenance strategies developed by Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) and derived from Plowman and Huang's research and from other academic studies of relationship and conflict resolution.

They include:

Access. Members of public or community or activist leaders provide access to public relations people. Public relations representatives or senior managers provide representatives of publics similar access to organizational decision-making processes.

Disclosure or openness. Both organizations and members of public are open and frank with each other. They are willing to disclose their thoughts, concerns and problems as well as their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each other.

Assurance or legitimacy. Each party in the relationship attempts to assure the other that it and its concerns are legitimate and to demonstrate that it is committed to maintaining the relationship.

Networking. Organizations build networks or coalitions with the same groups that their publics do, such as environmentalists, unions or community groups.

Sharing of tasks. Organizations and publics share in solving joint or separate problems. Examples of such tasks are managing community issues, providing employment, conducting high-quality research and maintaining funding. These are in the interest of the organization, the public or both.

Integrative strategies of conflict resolution. These approaches are symmetrical because all parties in a relationship benefit by searching out common or complementary interests and solving problems together through open discussion and joint decision-making. The goal is a win-win solution that values the integrity of a long-term relationship between an organization and its publics. Integrative strategies are more effective than distributive strategies, which are asymmetrical because one party benefits at the expense of another by seeking to maximize goals and minimize

losses within a win-lose or self-gain perspective. Distributive tactics include trying to control through domination, argument, insistence on a position, or showing anger. Other forcing strategies are faulting the other party, hostile questioning, presumptive attribution, demands or threats. Distributive strategies impose one's position onto that of an adversary without concern for the adversary's position.

The survey population, consisting of faculty members of USF, were asked to respond to a set of questions on a seven point scale to indicate the extent to which they believed that the indicators in the seven indices described their administration. The results compared the faculty's perception of their relationship with the administration. Keep in mind that the sample is not representative of the general population. Although respondents were chosen randomly from the campus phone book, not all faculty members were still there from that year, faculty members are usually very busy, and mail surveys are typically low. As a result the mean scores shown in the Chapter Four apply to only 197 people in the sample. However, the results are logical and might not differ greatly if the response rates were higher.

Specifically, this study tested trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality as indicators of relationship quality. In addition, this study posits that goal compatibility is an additional indicator of relationship quality. The following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality are indicators of relationship quality between and organization and its publics.

H2: Goal compatibility is an indicator of relationship quality between an organization and its publics.

Reliability alphas for each of the variables of trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality and goal compatibility were highly significant, indicating that these measures could be used to examine relationships. However, trust was a low indicator. As these measures have been tested previously and proved reliable, there may be a problem in the study's methodology. Goal compatibility had the strongest relationship indicator for the administration. This finding suggests that the faculty perceived their goals to be the similar to the goals of the administration.

In the descriptive statistic section for the variable trust, one item was extremely high at 4.92. The statement was, "I would rather work with the USF administration than not." The mean for this statement may be high if the respondent felt the question meant that instead of working with the USF administration they were unemployed. However, for most statements the means were low. Especially for the statement, "Most people enjoy dealing with the USF administration," which had a mean of 2.90. Therefore, according to these two statements, even if they do not enjoy dealing with the administration, they still feel as if they would rather work at USF.

Another interesting statistic that further shows that the administration and faculty hold an exchange relationship comes from the statement, "The USF administration helps the faculty without expecting anything in return." The mean score for this statement was 2.48, indicating that the most respondents felt that the faculty expects something in return the majority of the time.

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The majority of the respondents in this study indicated their title as professor and associate professor. Many of these individuals also serve administrative roles at the university, which may have skewed the results upward.

The correlations had the same findings for the variables trust, control mutuality, commitment, satisfaction, and goal compatibility. All were positive correlations—as one increases, the other increases. This means that the more decision-making power the individual has, the more he/she is involved in the administration. "Years at USF" did not seem to make a difference, as none of the correlations were significant. One would surmise that the longer someone is with an organization, the more trust, commitment, satisfaction, control mutuality, and goal compatibility, they would have. Such is not the case in this situation.

Limitations of the Study

The biggest disadvantage of the mail survey was the low return rate. Typically, the return rate for mail surveys is five to 40 percent (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 184). This study had a return rate of 31.5%, which was high according to Wimmer and Dominick (2003).

In addition, the phone book used for the survey was not the most recent edition. Thus, the surveys that were returned and that indicated the wrong address and people who were no longer employed with the university.

A number of individuals indicated that they did not understand to whom the administration referred. Although the majority of respondents were either male, full professors, and from the Tampa campus, this may not be representative of the general

population as demographic data for the sample frame was not available to the researcher for comparison purposes. In addition, many of the respondents indicated that their answers would reflect their specified campus' administration and not that of the main campus (Tampa). Respondents felt that their views differed dramatically between how their relationship was with their own campus administration and that of the main campus administration Specifically, the respondents had differing perceptions depending on whom the administration referred. Respondents indicated that their relationship was different for the president of the university, provost, dean, or college administrator.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to contribute to public relations theory and practice. This research will enrich our understanding of the importance of building strong relationships between organizations and their publics. This study will also build on previous public relations studies of relationship measurement in order to further public relations theory development. From an applied perspective, this research may serve to inform the organization about the quality of its relationship with one of its most important strategic publics. The university administration can send out messages and activities to sustain or improve the relationship based on feedback from the study.

Future Research

An additional variable that may play a role in relationships between an organization and publics are two dynamics of the commitment variable – length of commitment and intensity of commitment. Future research examining these variables may show why it was more significant.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to contribute to public relations theory and practice. This research enriched our understanding of the importance of building strong relationships between the academic staff members and school. This thesis can be developed into a longitudinal study investigating multiple institutions across the United States, in order to examine relationship quality at the university level. The researcher would also conduct a second mailing of the survey to increase the response rate and further provide reliable results.

These findings produced quantifiable evidence of the perceptions that publics have of their relationship with an organization. The results of this evaluation can be used for program management in public relations. The significance of this study lies in its ability to contribute to public relations theory and practice. This study will also build on previous public relations studies of relationship measurement in order to further public relations theory development. From an applied perspective, this research may serve to inform the organization about the quality of its relationship with one of its most important strategic publics. The university administration can send out messages and activities to sustain or improve the relationships based on feedback from the study.

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Appendices

Appendix A

January 11, 2005

«First_Name» «Last_name»
«PositionTitle»
«Department»
«Box #»

Dear «First_Name» «Last_name»:

A few days from now you will receive in the intercampus mail a request to fill out a brief questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by a graduate student at the University of South Florida (USF).

The questionnaire concerns the practice of public relations. Specifically, it investigates USF faculty member's perceptions of their relationship with the USF administration.

I am writing in advance because many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one that will help public relations researchers and practitioners determine relationship indicators to improve the relationship quality between the organization and publics whom they serve. In addition, for academia, understanding relational indicators will help us in our efforts to teach others.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is only with the generous help of people like you that this research can be successful.

Sincerely,

Lindsay C. Smith, Master's Candidate

January 14, 2005

«First_Name» «Last_name»
«PositionTitle»
«Department»
«Box #»

Dear «First_Name» «Last_name»:

I am a graduate student in the School of Mass Communications at the University of South Florida. I am conducting thesis research that investigates the perception of relationships between the faculty and administration of this university. As a faculty member, you have been selected to participate in this study. I need your assistance in discovering your perceptions of the relationship you hold with the USF administration. Your cooperation will add valuable insight into the practice of public relations.

The enclosed questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. Your input is vital to this research. Please take a few minutes to contribute to the understanding of organization-public relationships. The information you provide will be held in strict confidence. The responses to the survey will not be linked to individuals and no further tracking of the responses will occur. You may obtain a copy of the results of this study.

The questionnaire is composed of questions relating to your perception of certain relationship attributes. You are asked to indicate from one to seven the extent to which you agree that each item describes your relationship with the administration of USF.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed envelope by Friday, January 28. The few minutes you spend now will help us do a better job of educating those who are following you. Thank you in advance for your cooperation – I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Lindsay C. Smith, Master's Candidate

Enclosures

RELATIONSHIP MEASUREMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is composed of a series of statements dealing with the perception of relationships. Specifically, the survey investigates six previously studied relational attributes and a seventh additional component. This study examines the relationship between the USF faculty and USF administration at this time. This research is a thesis project being conducted by a graduate student at the University of South Florida School of Mass Communications. Your responses to the questionnaire will remain completely confidential. Thank you, in advance, for completing this questionnaire.

Section I: Relational Attributes

The following items are statements describing your relationship with the USF administration. Using the following scale, please mark the numeral response to each statement in the blank that precedes it.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly disagree, 4 = Undecided, 5= Slightly agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly agree

1. ____ The USF administration treats the faculty fairly and justly.

2. ____ Whenever the USF administration makes an important decision; I know it will be concerned about the faculty.

3. ____ The USF administration can be relied on to keep its promises.

4. ____ I believe that the USF administration takes the opinions of the faculty into account when making decisions.

5. ____ I feel confident about the USF administration's skills.

6. ____ The USF administration has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.

7. ____ The USF administration and the faculty are attentive to what each other say.

8. ____ The USF administration believes the opinions of the faculty are legitimate.

9. ____ In dealing with the faculty, the USF administration has a tendency to throw its weight around.

10. ____The USF administration really listens to what the faculty have to say.

11. ____ The USF administration gives the faculty enough say in the decision-making

    process.

12. ____ I feel that the USF administration is trying to maintain a long-term

    commitment to the faculty.

13. ____ I can see that the USF administration wants to maintain a relationship with

    the faculty.

14. ____ There is a long-lasting bond between the USF administration and the

    faculty.

15. ____ Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with the USF

    administration more.

16. ____ I would rather work with the USF administration than not.

17. ____ I am happy with the USF administration.

18. ____Both the USF administration and the faculty benefit from this relationship.

19. ____ Most of the faculty are happy in their interactions with the USF

    administration.

20. ____ Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship the USF

    administration has established with the faculty.

21. ____ Most people enjoy dealing with the USF administration.

22. ____ The USF administration does not especially enjoy giving others aid.

23. ____ The USF administration is very concerned about the welfare of the faculty.

24. ____ I feel that the USF administration takes advantage of people who are

    vulnerable.

25. ____ I think that the USF administration succeeds by stepping on other people.

26. ____ The USF administration helps the faculty without expecting anything in

    return.

27. ____ Whenever the USF administration gives or offers something to the faculty, it

    generally expects something in return.

28. ____ Even though the faculty have had a relationship with the USF administration

    for a long time, the administration still expects something in return

    whenever it offers the faculty a favor.

29. ____ The USF administration will compromise with the faculty when it knows

    that it will gain something.

30. ____ The USF administration takes care of people who are likely to reward the

    organization.

31. ____ The USF administration and the faculty have similar goals.

32. ____ The USF administration perceives the goals of the faculty accurately.

33. ____ Open communication characterizes the relationship of the USF

    administration and the faculty.

34. ____ Cooperation characterizes the relationship of the USF administration and the

    faculty.

35. ____ The USF administration and the faculty have the same goals.

Section II: Demographics

Listed below are a few demographic questions that will help us to better understand your answers. Please answer these questions to the best of your knowledge.

1. Which of the following best describes your position at the university?

    a. Professor

    b. Associate Professor

    c. Assistant Professor

    d. Instructor

2. How many years have you been a faculty member at USF? _____

3. What is your gender?

    a. Female

    b. Male

4. What campus do you teach at the majority of the time?

    a. Tampa   b. Sarasota   c. St. Petersburg   d. Lakeland

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very little and 10 being extensive, please rate your amount of decision-making power.

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very poor and 10 being very good, how would you rank your overall relationship with the USF administration?

    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

Appendix D

Last week a questionnaire seeking your input about the practice of public relations was mailed to you. You were selected as part of carefully chosen sample of faculty members of the University of South Florida.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. I am especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your thoughts that we can understand how to improve organizational communication.

If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please contact me at (727) 488-3707 or email LindsayC_Smith@hotmail.com and I will send you another one.

Lindsay C. Smith, Master's Candidate
School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida

Lindsay