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The Effects of Decision-Making and Leadership Styles on Relationships and Perceived Effectiveness in the University Development Context

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The Effects of Decision-Making and Leadership Styles on Relationships and Perceived
Effectiveness in the University Development Context

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Department of Public Relations
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University of South Florida

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**The Effects of Decision-Making and Leadership Styles on Relationships and
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ABSTRACT

This study examined how employees' perceptions of leadership, decision-making, and relationships are associated with their perception of a development operations' effectiveness. Deans, development officers, central development staff, and unit development staff at the University of South Florida were surveyed via email. The results indicated that employees' perceptions of leadership, decision-making, and relationships are strongly related to their perceived job satisfaction, trust, commitment, and control mutuality and consequently their perception of the development operation's effectiveness.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Establishing an effective development operation at a university is important because philanthropic support allows universities to execute initiatives that go beyond the university's existing resources. For instance, private support can help a university increase its volunteer and alumni base, fund innovative research and educational programs, recruit talented faculty and students, and help an institution develop into a prestigious, reputable university. This is especially important at public universities since their budgets come from tuition and fees, sponsored funding, internal reallocations, state funding, and private giving (www.purdue.edu).

Development effectiveness is also critical at universities that are participating in capital fundraising campaigns. Universities participate in these campaigns because it allows them to raise millions, even billions of dollars over several years and helps build prestige and recognition for the university. For instance, at the University of California at Los Angeles, the effectiveness of the development program helped the university raise \$3.05 billion in nine years, making it one of the most successful fundraising campaigns in higher education history (Proctor, 2006). Capital campaigns of \$1 billion or more are becoming more prevalent today, especially at public colleges and universities, because taxpayer support is diminishing and "competition for philanthropic dollars is at an all-time high" (Strout, 2005, p. A34). This means that in today's society, universities with significant philanthropic support have a competitive edge over their peers. For this reason, it is critical that universities have development programs that are highly effective.

Defining and measuring development effectiveness, however, is difficult because it is multidimensional and not reducible to a single measure. This is further complicated by the fact that people socially construct their idea of success (Herman & Renz, 1999). In spite of this challenge, researchers have found that employees' perceptions of organizational structure, leadership style, decision-making processes, and relationships influence their perceptions of organizational effectiveness (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002).

The researcher will review the strength of these theories on organizational effectiveness by surveying development employees at the University of South Florida. This is an ideal research site because the University of South Florida is about to begin a capital campaign to raise somewhere between \$500 million and \$1 billion in private donations. Therefore, in order to execute its campaign goal, the university needs to ensure that all aspects of its internal development operation are effective. By surveying deans, development professionals, and USF Foundation staff, the researcher aims to evaluate their perceptions of USF's leadership, decision-making style, organizational relationships, and the overall perceived effectiveness of the development operation. This study is important because it could determine how to increase the perceived effectiveness of university development operations and therefore help universities cultivate more prestige and recognition.

This study is especially important to public relations practitioners because they are responsible for ensuring employees and external constituents have a positive perception of the organization. Employees' overall perception of the organization is related to their perception of the organization's leaders, decision-making processes, relationships with colleagues and leaders, and by their overall perception of how effective the organization is at helping them achieve their goals and objectives. According to Sriramesh, Grunig, & Dozier (1996), excellent public

relations is possible in both a participatory and authoritarian culture, but the participatory culture correlates more strongly with a symmetrical system of internal communication, organic structure, and job satisfaction. This is most likely because participatory cultures emphasize collective responsibility, decision-making, values, and a common mission. Furthermore, when public relations practitioners focus on the wants, needs, and expectations of organizations and publics, they can achieve the organization's social, economic and political goals (Ledingham, 2003). Therefore, this study could help public relations practitioners improve employees' perceptions of the organization and consequently their perception of their ability to be effective at achieving organizational goals and objectives.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Effectiveness

Several factors influence an organization's effectiveness. Effectiveness is important because the more effective an organization, the better it is at achieving organizational goals and building a positive image in the eyes of its stakeholders.

The different attributes of an organization's internal audiences must be taken into consideration when leaders make decisions about how to run an organization. An organization's image is especially critical to its internal audience, because employees' perception of the organization influences their morale, productivity, goal execution, and overall satisfaction (Mathisen & Einarsen, 2004). Therefore, leaders must evaluate the most effective ways to ensure its employees have a positive perception of the organization. This can be quite challenging since peoples' perceptions are influenced by a wide range of factors and personal attributes; however, researchers have found that organizational structure, leadership style, decision-making processes, and relationships significantly influence employees' perceptions of an organization and, consequently, its effectiveness (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002). These organizational factors will be discussed in detail in the text that follows.

Leadership

Background

University leaders shape the environment and culture of the institution. The president, vice presidents, and deans set the university's mission, vision and goals and consequently the decisions they make influence the productivity and success of their development staff. Many researchers have different ideas about what constitutes effective leadership.

According to Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (1992), for organizations to be excellent they must have a strong participative culture, be organic and innovative, and have leaders who inspire instead of dictate. They argued that leaders should use strategic planning, establish an environment that is socially responsible, place emphasis on quality in all processes and establish a collaborative work environment.

Effective leadership is important because it can facilitate the establishment of successful teams, which in turn can “improve organizational communication, productivity, quality, efficiency, timeliness, customer service, employee morale, and innovation” (Nichol, 2000, p. 3). When management is committed to building strong teams, establishes systems and processes that are conducive to productivity and team-building, and empowers employees to take control of their jobs, they are establishing a culture that drives employees to go above and beyond to make the organization successful.

Communication

Holtzhausen (2002a) found that workplace democracy and democratic leadership styles have a positive effect on employee communication. Workplace democracy was described as a decentralized system that encourages employee participation and symmetrical communication. Holtzhausen found that workplace democracy has a positive impact on organizational trust,

information flow, face-to-face communication, and consequently reduces employees' fear to communicate with superiors. These factors in turn facilitate positive relationships between employees and managers that are based on open communication. Decentralized environments also encouraged employee participation in the decision-making process, which facilitated positive relationships between employees and their superiors.

Shared Vision

Communication seems to have a significant effect on developing and implementing an organization's vision. Farmer, Slater, and Wright (1998) evaluated the ability of mid-sized organization to achieve a shared vision while it was undergoing change with the appointment of a new chancellor. The researchers chose this university at this point in time, because they believed that organizations undergoing change succeed or fail depending on their ability to cope with that change. They believed that a key factor in coping with change was achieving a shared vision throughout all levels of the organization through effective communication.

They found that a leader who decentralized the organization's hierarchy and used effective two-way communication strategies to communicate the vision to the employees was the most effective at facilitating a shared vision in the organization. Specifically, they concluded that employees were more likely to agree with the leader's vision when they received frequent information about the vision from the leader through memos, emails, meetings, and local newspapers. Employees also reported that they preferred to communicate with the chancellor about the institutions agenda rather than with the vice chancellor, deans, department heads, or their colleagues. The researchers suggested that public information officers should help the leader craft messages that are effective at facilitating a shared vision, especially because a shared vision helps nurture a positive work environment.

Work Environment

Today organizations face increased social and economic change and increased competition, especially as society becomes more technologically advanced. Therefore, for organizations to ensure long-term survival and success, they must increase organizational creativity and innovation. Certain environments seem to have an effect on organizations' quality, productivity, innovation, job satisfaction, well being and profit (Mathisen & Einarsen, 2004). The environments that facilitate these positive outcomes are characterized by a commitment to ambitious goals, freedom and autonomy in task decisions and performance, encouragement of ideas, sufficient time for creating ideas, and managers who provide adequate feedback, recognition and rewards for creative work. Furthermore, these environments encourage participation, a shared concern for excellence and performance and support for innovative ideas.

Similarly, employees' perceptions of the work environment have been found to have a moderating effect on goal orientation, self-efficacy and job performance. Positive perceptions of the organization are driven by intraorganizational communication, challenging job assignments, supportive management policies, and appropriate reward practices (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002). Employees who view the environment as supportive have greater beliefs of self-efficacy in achieving goals and performing work tasks.

Leadership Styles

Researchers have also found that different styles of leadership influence employees' perceptions of how to deal with leaders. Deluga (1990) evaluated the different types of leadership styles. Deluga (1990) investigated the effects of transformational, transactional, and laissez faire leadership characteristics on subordinates' approach to influencing their boss. Laissez faire leadership was defined as passive leaders who are reluctant to influence subordinates, give

direction, and make decisions. Transactional leadership was defined as reciprocal leadership in which leaders and subordinates bargain for power and benefits. Finally, transformational leadership was defined as a leader-subordinate relationship characterized by intense emotion where subordinates place a great deal of trust and confidence in the leader.

Deluga (1990) found that employees take a hard influencing approach with laissez faire leaders. The hard approach is used by employees who maintain a strong power position, expect resistance, and hold advantage over their leader. These employees make demands, express emotion and act assertive. This leader-employee relationship can create an uncomfortable organizational environment in which subordinates compete for their boss's power.

Employees used a soft influencing approach with transformational leaders, which involves the use of flattery and friendliness and is used when the subordinate has little power, expects resistance, and is at a relative disadvantage to the leader (Deluga, 1990). This leader-employee relationship can cause an inflated sense of self-image in leaders and trigger denigrating perceptual stereotypes of subordinates. Deluga concluded that the rational approach used with transactional leaders, which is characterized by logical arguments and negotiation, is the most effective at maintaining long-term organizational stability. In this dynamic, leaders and employees share equal power, which helps create a positive environment for employees to succeed.

In contrast, a different study concluded that employees strongly preferred transformational leaders to transactional leaders, although they also sometimes preferred situational leaders who exercised qualities of both types when difficult circumstances arose (Aldoory & Toth, 2004). This study further defined transactional leadership as authoritative leadership that is characterized by certainty, clear direction, and personal oversight and that is the

least supportive of intentional change. Transformational leaders were defined as charismatic leaders who inspire employees to execute challenging goals and feel invested in the organization's mission. There was not much difference between men and women's perceptions, except that women found it slightly more important that leaders know how to establish good rapport and share decision-making power. Both genders agreed that men and women are equally capable of being good leaders.

Furthermore, transformational leadership results in more engaged and devoted employees who go above and beyond the job requirements to achieve organizational goals (Purvanova, Bono, & Dzieweczynski, 2006). In a study that evaluated the effect of leadership style on job satisfaction, it was found that employees who reported to transformational leaders rated their jobs as more challenging, meaningful and significant, and the researchers believed this was in large part due to the fact that their jobs were linked to the broader purpose, goals, and mission of the organization. These employees were more willing to do things that help others when it is not part of their job, work for the overall good of the company, do things to promote the company, and help the company maintain a positive work environment.

In summary, research shows that strategic leadership can facilitate organizational success. This signifies that if university leaders want to secure significant philanthropic support for their institution, they should employ effective leadership strategies that inspire development professionals to succeed. Furthermore, as leaders develop strategies, they should also determine how often to include development professionals in the decision-making process, especially in regards to goal achievement. In the section that follows, research on decision-making is presented to demonstrate how the decision-making process can shape employees' perceptions of the organization and their ability to be effective at their jobs.

Decision-Making

Background

Leaders are responsible for establishing a process by which decisions are made. This process is critical to organizations because it can hinder or facilitate goal execution, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness. Leaders must determine at what level of the organization decisions are made, how much participation and power employees have in the process, and the best approach to making decisions. The research on decision-making attempts to address these issues.

Decision-Making Processes

Today's work environment is becoming increasingly turbulent and therefore managers must take responsibility for making good decisions in order to ensure the organization's survival (Moss & Kinnear, 2007). Managers often have incomplete information and inadequate time to make decisions, and therefore should be decisive because delaying decisions could negatively affect the organization. When making decisions, some researchers suggested that managers should try to gather information from as many levels of the organization as time allows, remember that their information sources might not be trustworthy or accurate, keep in mind that incorrect decisions could have consequences, and understand that a changing work environment could affect their decisions. These researchers also believed that the most important thing was for managers to take responsibility for the outcomes of decisions and not blame others when things go wrong because pointing the finger at others would only erode trust and respect.

Kaval and Voyten (2006) elaborated on how to establish effective processes for making and implementing decisions. They believed that decisions fall into three categories: crisis, operational, and strategic. They defined these terms using a scenario in which a healthcare

organization had 100 open nursing positions and 70% of new hires consistently resigned because of overtime requirements. In this scenario, crisis decisions would be filling the positions quickly to meet patient care demands, operational decisions would concern assessing the issues that caused high turnover, and strategic decisions would be determining how to put the right people in the positions during the nursing shortage. They believed that all three types of decisions should be considered to effectively address the issue, and that it was important to always clearly define the objective while allowing for flexibility in case circumstances changed in the organization.

Organizations should evaluate the nature of their culture and decision-making style and determine which decision-making process is most effective (Kaval & Voyten, 2006). They recommended that managers determine who should be involved in the decision-making process, consider how decisions will affect employees, empower the staff to make and implement decisions, use effective communication to keep leaders and staff informed, and determine what obstacles prevent the organization from effectively making and implementing decisions. They believed that by being more proactive in the decision-making process would help managers reach appropriate conclusions and prevent them from being caught in last minute decision-making.

Decision-Making Pitfalls

Some researchers also believe that managers must embrace risk as an opportunity while avoiding the common pitfalls of making decisions (Kourdi, 2006). The pitfalls included overanalysis, failure to execute decisions, blaming employees for negative outcomes, perpetuating past mistakes, being overcautious and risk averse, giving disproportionate weight to the first information received, giving undue weight to a recent event, seeking information to support an existing decision and overestimating the accuracy of forecasts.

Participatory Decision-Making

Avoiding these pitfalls is critical because managers' everyday decisions can create or destroy a company's strategy (Bower & Gilbert, 2007). The researchers said, "the cumulative impact of the allocation of resources by managers at any level has more real-world effect on strategy than any plans developed at a company's headquarters" (p. 72). Often times companies are made up of several hierarchical layers in which managers at all levels of the organization implement strategies before getting official approval from the top-level chief executive officers. Therefore, "at the same time that corporate staff is beginning to roll out initiatives, operating managers invariably are already acting in ways that either undercut or enhance them" (p. 74). Operating managers can provide corporate management with an integrated picture of what their company could accomplish today and in the future, and therefore management should gather information from their subordinates in order to make strategic decisions.

Furthermore, managers should observe employees to assess the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and then tailor goals, communication, and organizational strategies to the employees (Hatch, 1997). Hatch believed that organizations generally make better decisions when they listen to and collaborate with employees instead of just making decisions independently and persuading employees to adapt.

Fundraising Models

There has been a long-time debate about whether development professionals should have a voice at the leadership level. At the leadership level, development officers are able to play a part in shaping the university's goals and can participate in the decision-making process to determine the most effective way to practice fundraising.

Kelly (1995) argued that employees should have a voice in the decision-making process,

especially when the organization is deciding which kind of fundraising model to practice. This decision is important because the fundraising model determines how development professionals and senior management interact and how the institution interacts with donors in the fundraising process. Some fundraising models are more ethical and effective than others, so it is important to know which model is best and implement it accordingly.

Kelly's (1995) research revealed that the symmetrical model is the most effective fundraising model. In the symmetrical model, the head of the fundraising department is part of the dominant coalition; i.e., management team, and the relationship between development professionals and senior administrators is based on reciprocal communication and trust. This is the only model that correlates positively and significantly with the number of total dollars raised, it has the strongest relation with increased private support, and it allows the university to be the most ethical and socially responsible in its relations with donors.

Although, in a study to determine the types of fundraising models that are actually used by U.S. charitable organizations today, Kelly (1995) found that in 63% of U.S. charitable organizations, the head of the fundraising department is a member of the dominant coalition, but the university uses the asymmetrical model of fundraising. The asymmetrical model is not based on reciprocal communication and trust, and is characterized by unbalanced power and control between senior level administrators and staff. In the remaining 37% of charitable organizations, the head of the fundraising department is not a member of the leadership team and the university uses the press agency model of fundraising. In this model, development propagandizes a philanthropic cause and uses manipulation and emotional appeals to solicit funds from donors. Kelly concluded most charitable organizations do not use the most effective model of fundraising. This means that if universities want to be successful in fundraising, they must re-

evaluate which type of model is most conducive to their development staff's success and make decisions accordingly.

Decision-Making and Job Satisfaction

Pincus, Knipp, and Rayfield (1990) evaluated the relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction. They found that employees' views of communication with their immediate supervisors and top managers, and their ability to participate in the decision-making process was strongly related to their job satisfaction. They found that top management can foster job satisfaction for employees by allowing them to offer input and feedback regularly and by giving them greater ownership in the decision-making process.

The level of employee involvement in the decision-making process seems to be enhanced by superior-subordinate communication (Holtzhausen, 2002a); however, managers should keep in mind that employee involvement does not take place until the employee perceives that involvement. Therefore, managers must evaluate organizational success in terms of their employees' perceptions. When the perceptions of the organization's decision-making process are positive, it leads to increased motivation and productivity, upward and downward communication flow, and job satisfaction. As a result, employees are able to make decisions with higher quality information, adapt better to the organization's internal and external environment, and compete successfully in the market.

Many researchers have found that organizational structure, leadership style, and decision-making have an effect on employee relationships. Positive relationships between employees and managers have been found to affect job satisfaction and organizational success. In the next section, research on organizational relationships is discussed to shed light on its importance to success in university development.

Relationships

Background

Leaders are responsible for establishing a supportive work environment in which employees' have positive interpersonal relationships. This process is critical to organizations because it can hinder or facilitate goal execution, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness. The research that follows attempts to demonstrate the importance of relationships to organizational success.

Researchers have found that relationship management is critical to practicing excellent public relations (Ledingham, 2003). Building and sustaining organization-public relationships requires both effective communication, and positive organizational and public behaviors. When public relations practitioners focus on the wants, needs and expectations of organizations and publics, they can achieve the organization's social, economic and political goals. Practitioners should remember though that organizational relationships involve an ongoing exchange of needs and expectations, can shape peoples' perceptions and behaviors, can change over time, and can be nurtured through mutual understanding and benefit.

Empowerment

If managers and employees have strong, positive relationships and collaborate effectively, it is likely that employees will feel empowered to achieve organizational goals. In a study to evaluate employee empowerment, King and Ernhard (1997) found that the attractiveness of an organization's culture influences employee empowerment, productivity, and loyalty. They discussed how employees move through a process when they develop attraction for an organization. The first step in the process is developing

loyalty toward the organization, the second is value congruence, and the third is affective commitment. They stated that when an employee reaches the final step, affective commitment, they are personally bonded to the organization and willing to perform beyond normal expectations for the good of the organization.

Similarly, a different study found that transformational leadership resulted in more engaged and devoted employees who went above and beyond to achieve organizational goals (Purvanova, Bono, & Dzieweczynski, 2006). These employees perceived their leaders as inspirational and supportive of their ability to achieve lofty goals, and therefore found their work more challenging, meaningful and significant. As a result, employees were willing to go out of their way to help others, work hard to promote the company, and help maintain a positive work environment.

Establishing positive relationships with employees is important because it can help an organization reduce conflict and engender cooperation from its publics (Huang, 2001). Research has shown that there is a significant relationship between symmetrical-ethical communication and interpersonal communication, and between social activities and integrative resolutions. This research demonstrates that effective communication and positive interpersonal relationships helps ensure employees will not turn their back on the organization when conflicts occur.

Furthermore, when employees are satisfied with the organization and believe in its mission, they are committed to its long-term success (Brody, 2002). By using effective two-way communication, managers can establish positive relationships with employees that empower them to succeed. Consistently exceeding employees' expectations for the organization helps ensure employees are satisfied with their jobs and with their

relationships with senior managers, and consequently committed to the organization's mission.

Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction has also been found to increase an organization's revenue (Maitland, 2005). In a study to determine the relationship between growth in net income and employee satisfaction levels, it was found that over a 12-month period, employees with high employee satisfaction outperformed the average rise in net income by 6 per cent, while those with low levels of satisfaction underperformed by 9 per cent. In order to build relationships with employees that increase their job satisfaction, this study suggested that organizations help employees achieve personal growth, establish a culture of collaboration across the organization, communicate effectively with employees, and lead in a way that inspires and excites staff.

The morale of the organization is also a key component of job satisfaction. Positive relationships with senior level administrators based on trust, communication, and recognition are critical to establishing positive morale (Johnsrud and Rosser, 1999). By ensuring employees are satisfied with their jobs, they will be inspired to perform well and will feel they have a stake in the company's success. In contrast, if the organization does not maintain a positive relationship with employees and does something that erodes trust, it is likely that employees will become dissatisfied with the organization and therefore prevent it from effectively executing its mission.

Pincus, Knipp, and Rayfield (1990) investigated the relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction among supervisors of commercial banks in southern California. They found that employees' perceptions of organizational communication

were positively and significantly related to job satisfaction. Specifically, the results indicated that employees' views of communication with their immediate supervisors and top managers, and their ability to participate in the decision-making process was strongly related to their job satisfaction. One of the most consistent findings in the study was that supervisors' job satisfaction was mostly influenced by their communication with top management and their ability to influence workplace decisions, rather than by their communication with their immediate supervisors. This suggests that as individuals rise in the organizational hierarchy, top management should allow them to frequently participate in the decision-making process in order to maintain and foster job satisfaction. Research has also shown that employees are more satisfied with their jobs when they work in environments that facilitate mutual trust and confidence, support for ideas, open relationships, challenge and motivation, commitment to the organization's goals, freedom to seek information and an open exchange of opinions and ideas (Mathisen & Einarsen, 2004).

In a study that investigated the effect of mentor relationships and supportive communication on nurses' job satisfaction, Kalbfleisch and Bach (1998) found that stress, burnout and turnover in the nursing field was significantly related to nurses feeling they worked hard with little recognition, were frequently criticized, and rarely rewarded for their efforts. Their study revealed that job satisfaction was significantly related to supportive communication and positive mentor relationships that encouraged them to do their best, supported them when others criticized, provided them with needed information and defended them when administration made unfair decisions and showed a lack of respect. These studies demonstrate the importance of employees' job satisfaction to the

organization's long-term success. In addition to all of the factors that facilitate employee satisfaction, organizational trust has been found to have a significant impact on relationships in the organization.

Trust

The old models of internal organizational communication do not motivate employees to accomplish management's goals, because they diminish employees' trust and faith in the organization's leadership (E.F. Harshman & C.L. Harshman, 1999). This lack of trust and faith erodes management's credibility and hinders performance at all levels of the organization. Research has shown that large organizations are becoming less hierarchical and are focusing more on empowering employees, teamwork and more integrated internal communication in order to establish positive relationships and achieve success.

Joni (2004) agreed that trust was important because it helps build positive relationships and demonstrates an employee's integrity and expertise. She discussed how managers can establish trust with employees through shared experiences in the workplace and by demonstrating they are knowledgeable in their field. Joni believed that is critical to constantly reassess one's relationships with employees because the level and type of trust changes over time.

Furthermore, in a study that examined the relationship between managerial trust and employee empowerment in 128 manager-employee dyads from 13 different organizations, positive relationships between employees and managers were found to have a significant effect on managerial trust and employee empowerment (Gomez &

Rosen, 2001). This study also argued that organizational and social structure is not as influential in establishing this relationship, although many other researchers argue it is.

Davidson, McElwee, and Hannan (2004) investigated how trust and power are determinants of conflict resolution strategy and outcome satisfaction. They found that equal power and high trust situations influence people to choose more cooperative strategies and to attain more satisfactory outcomes than low trust or unequal power situations. They discussed how high trust relationship dyads used less avoiding and dominating strategies in negotiations, especially when power was equally distributed. The researchers argued that leaders must know how to recognize low trust climates so they can increase trust in their efforts to improve the negotiation process. Since leaders are the most persuasive people in the workplace due to their power status, the researchers believed they would be the most effective at preventing conflict and strengthening morale. Balancing power and improving trust should therefore strengthen relationships and performance outcomes in the organization.

Values

Organizational values also influence organizational performance outcomes (Fitzgerald & Desjardins, 2004). Specifically, organizational values that are congruent with employees' values have a significant effect on employee satisfaction, commitment and performance outcomes. Organizations that communicate and implement shared values effectively are able to get employees more involved in participatory decision-making and more committed to the organization's success. To establish a culture that promotes shared values, managers should integrate values at all levels of the organization and in all processes, including hiring methods, performance management systems, and

promotion and reward criteria. Effectively implementing this value-laden culture encourages positive interactions between employees and between managers and their subordinates.

Managers should also learn to balance values, interests, and power between leaders and employees in the organization in order to achieve harmony in the workplace. Prilleltensky (2000) believed leaders must balance personal and collective wellness (values), pulls to help ourselves and to help others (interests), and the values and interests of the public, workers, and leaders (power). By successfully balancing these aspects of the organization, leaders are able to effectively model value-based practices and foster positive relationships between employees.

The literature makes it evident that employees' perceptions of organizational leaders, decision-making processes, and relationships are strongly related to their perception of the organization's ability to help them be effective at their jobs. Based on the literature, the research questions are:

RQ1: Do USF development employees perceive the leadership style in the USF development operation as transformational or transactional?

RQ2: Do USF development employees perceive decision-making in the USF development operation as participative?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between leadership style, decision-making style, perceived effectiveness and the relationship constructs of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction or commitment?

RQ4: Do USF development employees perceive the USF development operation as having leaders who are effective?

CHAPTER 4:

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to evaluate USF development employees' perceptions of the USF development operation's leadership style, decision-making processes, organizational relationships, and effectiveness in helping employees' achieve goals and objectives. Specifically, the researcher tried to determine if employees' perceived leaders as transformational leaders, if they perceived the decision-making process to be participative, and if they perceived relationships in the USF development operation to be based on control mutuality, trust, satisfaction and commitment. The researcher also attempted to determine if employees perceived the leaders in the USF development operation to be effective at helping them execute development goals and objectives. The final aim of the study was to evaluate the relationship between employees' perceptions of the USF development operation's leadership style, decision-making processes, organizational relationships and leadership effectiveness.

Subjects

The researcher strived for a census of the USF development operation, meaning she tried to obtain participation from every dean, development officer, unit development staff person, and central development staff person in the USF development operation. A census is possible when the actual population is small and the researcher has access to all members of the population under study (Stacks, 2002). Within the development operation, there are a total of 125 people who work in different parts of the development

operation, including central development, the 9 unit development offices, the alumni association, business and financial services, and advancement operations. The researcher obtained a list of participants from the USF development operation's Web site.

Site

The University of South Florida is planning to launch a capital fundraising campaign to raise somewhere between \$500 and \$1 billion. Therefore, USF is trying to ensure that its internal development operation is effective, which includes having great leaders, effective decision-making processes, the right number of motivated staff, and strategic collaboration between all of the development units.

According to Hall (2003), one of the factors that can facilitate or hinder development effectiveness is the structure of the development operation. Unit development officers and chief advancement officers disagree about which office should have primary responsibility for setting development priorities, which coordination and control measures are the most effective, and what kind of communication should exist between the central office and the units, as well as between chief advancement officers and faculty. Since there is not a best-practices model for structuring a development program, each institution must tailor its structure to the unique needs of the development operation and its employees (Hall, 2003).

Currently, USF has a hybrid structure, meaning it is both centralized and decentralized. It is centralized through its central development office. There, the vice president of the entire development operation and the vice president's staff oversee the development operations procedures and make decisions that affect the way development operates. The development operation is decentralized through the associate vice

presidents who manage the individual development units and who work with their own development staff to execute the unit's goals.

Since the USF development operation's structure is both centralized and decentralized, it is likely that there is some disagreement among employees about which type of structure is most effective in helping them achieve their goals and objectives. The structure of the development operation affects the way leaders run the organization, the way decisions are made, and the types of relationships that exist between employees. Therefore, employees' perceptions of these organizational factors are related to their perceptions of the development operation's ability to help them be effective at achieving development goals and objectives. Employees' ability to be effective is extremely important to development leaders, especially now that USF is entering into a capital fundraising campaign. Research on effectiveness reveals that employees are able to be more effective at their jobs when they have positive perceptions of the organization's leadership style, decision-making processes, and organizational relationships (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002). Therefore, the USF development operation is an ideal site to evaluate employees' perceptions of these organizational factors and how they relate to their perceptions of development leaders' ability to help them effectively execute goals.

Research Instrument

To evaluate employees' perceptions of leadership, decision-making, relationships, and the USF development operation's ability to help employees' be effective at executing goals, the researcher emailed a questionnaire to all of the deans, development officers, central development staff and unit development staff in the development operation. The

researcher chose to conduct survey research because it gathers “relatively in-depth information about respondent attitudes and beliefs” (Stacks, p. 175, 2002).

The questionnaire consisted of four sections that evaluated the participants’ perceptions of leadership, decision-making, relationships and leadership effectiveness. The questions were based on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from (*strongly disagree*) to (*strongly agree*) with a mid-point for a neutral response. The constructs in the questionnaire were created based on the theories of leadership, decision-making, relationships, and effectiveness. The development of these questionnaire constructs is discussed in the next section, starting with leadership.

Leadership

Research showed that employees strongly preferred transformational leaders to transactional leaders because these leaders were charismatic and inspired employees fulfill the organization’s mission (Purvanova, Bono, & Dzieweczynski, 2006). Transformational leaders were more likely to share decision-making power, establish good rapport, and communicate regularly with employees about the organization’s purpose, goals, and mission. This transformational leadership style resulted in more engaged and devoted employees who found their jobs more challenging, meaningful and significant. In contrast, transactional leaders were defined as authoritative leaders who made employees feel they had to bargain for power and benefits. These leaders did not inspire employees to go above and beyond to execute the organization’s goal (Purvanova, Bono, & Dzieweczynski, 2006).

Therefore, the leadership section of the questionnaire was designed to determine if employees’ perceived the leaders in the USF development operation as transformational leaders or transactional leaders. To evaluate whether or not employees perceived leaders as transactional,

the researcher asked participants to rate the following items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree:

- The leaders involved in development at USF do not get emotionally involved.
- The leaders involved in development at USF are in control at all times.
- The leaders involved in development at USF offer rewards and incentives.

To evaluate whether or not employees perceived leaders as transformational, the researcher had employees rate the following statements:

- The leaders involved in development at USF think it is important to establish good rapport with development staff
- The leaders involved in development at USF share decision-making power.
- The leaders involved in development at USF practice participative management.

Decision-Making

The decision-making section of the questionnaire was based on Thompson and Tuden's research and Hatch's research. Based on Thompson and Tuden's research, as cited in Hatch (1997), all types of decisions, no matter what the magnitude, play a role in shaping the organization. Therefore, management should observe employees to assess the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and then tailor goals, communication, and organizational strategies to the employees. Managers are more likely to make good decisions when they listen to and collaborate with employees instead of just making decisions independently and persuading employees to adapt.

Therefore, the researcher designed the decision-making section of the questionnaire to determine if employees' perceived the decision-making process as

participative, authoritarian or indecisive. To evaluate participative decision-making, the researcher used the following statements:

- Decision making power is shared by all development professionals, deans, and USF Foundation employees;
- Employees take responsibility for the outcomes and consequences of their decisions.

To evaluate authoritarian decision-making, the researcher used the following statement:

- Decisions about development are made by a few leaders at USF without input from employees involved in development.

Finally, to evaluate indecisive decision-making, the researcher used the following statements:

- Decisions about development are often made at the last minute and with incomplete information.
- Decisions about development are made by trial and error.

Relationships

The relationship section of the survey was based on Grunig and Hon's (1999) research. According to their relationship theory, employees' perceptions of relationships can be measured. Grunig and Hon (1999) used the following elements to measure organizational relationships:

- Control Mutuality: This refers to 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 based on a party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party. There are three dimensions to trust. Integrity refers to the belief that an organization is fair and just. Dependability refers to the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do. Competence is the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do.
- Satisfaction: This relates to 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: This 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.

The researcher adapted Grunig and Hon's relationship theory in her questionnaire in order to evaluate employees' perceptions of control mutuality, trust, commitment and satisfaction. To evaluate perceptions of control mutuality, the researcher used the following statements:

- Employees working in development at USF are attentive to what each other say.
- Employees working in development at USF believe my opinions are legitimate.
- In dealing with people like me, employees working in development at USF have a tendency to throw their weight around.

To evaluate perceptions of trust, the researcher used the following statements:

- Employees working in development at USF treat me fairly and justly.

- Whenever employees make an important decision about development, I know they will be concerned about me.
- The employees working in development at USF can be relied on to keep their promises.

To evaluate perceptions of commitment, the researcher used the following statements:

- I feel that employees working in development at USF are trying to maintain a long-term commitment to me.
- I feel that employees working in development at USF want to maintain a relationship with me.
- There is a long-lasting bond between the employees working in development at USF and me.

To evaluate perceptions of satisfaction, the researcher used the following statements:

- I am happy with USF.
- I have a reciprocal relationship with the employees working in development at USF.
- Most people working in development at USF are happy with their interactions with the organization.

Leadership Effectiveness

The leadership effectiveness part of the questionnaire was based on the literature on effectiveness. According to Nichol (2000), effective leadership is important because it can facilitate the establishment of successful teams, which in turn can “improve

organizational communication, productivity, quality, efficiency, timeliness, customer service, employee morale, and innovation” (p. 3). When management is committed to building strong teams, establishes systems and processes that are conducive to productivity and team-building, and empowers employees to take control of their jobs, they are establishing a culture that drives employees to go above and beyond to make the organization successful.

To evaluate perceptions of effectiveness, the researcher used the following statements:

- Leaders involved in development at USF help the development staff meet their development goals and objectives.
- Decisions about development result in effective strategies for implementation.
- Leaders involved in development at USF use two-way communication to facilitate mutual understanding with development staff.
- Leaders involved in development at USF build strong relationships with development professionals that facilitate goal achievement.
- Leaders involved in development help development staff create the right image for the university in order to raise funds.
- Leaders involved in development help development staff increase alumni, volunteer, and donor support.

In addition to evaluating employees’ perceptions of these organizational factors, demographic information was collected for every participant in order to further analyze the results of the study.

Procedures

The researcher did not pre-test the questionnaire because it was such a small sample. The researcher emailed all 125 development employees to inform them of the study and her desire for their participation before emailing the questionnaire to them. She then sent a second email asking for their participation and told them that their identity would remain anonymous and their responses would be kept confidential. Employees were told that the questionnaire would take 15 minutes to complete and that they could return the questionnaire via email or fax. For employees who participated, the researcher would confirm receipt of the questionnaire and thank them for their participation. The number of participants ended up being 74 employees.

For those who did not respond to the email, the researcher waited a week before emailing them again, and then waited four more days before emailing them a fourth time. Follow up telephone calls were made to the employees who did not respond to the emails. Of the 51 who did not participate in the study, 22 declined participation, 21 never responded, and 8 no longer worked at USF.

Analysis

The researcher first ran frequency statistics to determine the number of employees who were male versus female and who were in certain positions and departments across the university. The statistics also indicated the number of years employees worked at USF and their number of years of experience in fundraising. The researcher then ran descriptive statistics to see what the mean and standard deviation was for each construct and variable in the questionnaire. Next, the researcher ran Cronbach's Alpha to test each construct's reliability, including leadership, decision-making, control mutuality, trust,

commitment, satisfaction, and leadership effectiveness. After testing the reliability, the researcher used Pearson Correlations to determine the significance and strength of the relationships between all of the items. Finally, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to help explain the sources of variance in the relationship of several demographic items with the constructs used in the study.

CHAPTER 5:

RESULTS

This study aimed to evaluate USF development employees' perceptions of the USF development operation's leadership style, decision-making processes, organizational relationships, and effectiveness in helping employees' achieve goals and objectives. Specifically, the researcher tried to determine if employees' perceived leaders as transformational leaders, if they perceived the decision-making process as participative, and if they perceived relationships in the USF development operation to be based on control mutuality, trust, satisfaction and commitment. The researcher also attempted to determine if employees perceived the leaders in the USF development operation to be effective at helping them execute development goals and objectives. The final aim of the study was to evaluate the relationship between employees' perceptions of the USF development operation's leadership style, decision-making processes, organizational relationships and leadership effectiveness.

This section provides the results of this study, starting with a breakdown of the number of people who participated in the study.

University of South Florida Employee Profile

The researcher contacted 125 USF development employees to participate in the study. As previously stated, eight people on the list were no longer working at USF, which brought the population of the study to 117. A total of 74 people ended up

participating, meaning there was a 63.2 percent participation rate. Of the 74 respondents to the survey, 32.4 percent (n=24) were male and 67.6 percent (n=50) were female. Respondents included deans (n=3), development officers (n=25), central development staff (n=26) and unit development staff (n=20). The Central Development Office represented 20.3 percent of the respondents, 17.6 percent were from the Health Sciences Development unit and the remaining respondents were from a range of colleges, departments and units throughout the USF development operation. Participants varied in the number of years they had worked at USF, but 63.5 percent (n=47) worked there for five years or less. The participants also varied in the number of years of experience they had in fundraising, although 49.3 percent (n=36) had 0-5 years of experience and 26 percent (n=19) had 15 or more years of experience. Table 1 provides the number and percentage of people in each demographic.

Table 1. Frequencies

Item	Category	N	Percent
Sex	Male	24	32.4
	Female	50	67.6
USF Position	Dean	3	4.1
	Development Officer	25	37.8
	Central Development Staff	26	35.1
	Unit Development Staff	20	27.0
College/Department/Unit	Central	15	20.3
	Alumni Association	3	4.1
	Business and Financial Services	3	4.1
	Advancement Operations	9	12.2
	WUSF/Public Broadcasting	1	1.4
	Administration	1	1.4
	Arts and Sciences	2	2.7
	Athletics	5	6.8
	Business Administration	3	4.1
	USF Health Development	13	17.6
	Education	2	2.7
	Engineering	2	2.7
	Library	3	4.1
	Visual and Performing Arts	2	2.7
	USF Sarasota Manatee	5	6.8
	USF St. Petersburg	3	4.1
Suncoast Gerontology	1	1.4	
FMHI	1	1.4	
Years at USF	0-5 yrs	47	63.5
	6-10 yrs	13	17.6
	11-15 yrs	5	6.8
	15+ yrs	9	12.2
Years of Experience in Fundraising	0-5 yrs	36	49.3
	6-10 yrs	13	17.8
	11-15 yrs	5	6.8
	15+ yrs	19	26.0

Descriptive Statistics

This study aimed to evaluate the perceptions held by USF deans, development officers, central development staff and unit development staff in regards to the USF development operation. Tables 2 - 5 show the items used to evaluate employees' perceptions of leadership, decision-making, relationships, and effectiveness. As stated previously, each survey statement was based on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from (*strongly disagree*) to (*strongly agree*) with a neutral point for no opinion responses. Each table will be described in detail in the text that follows.

Leadership

Table 2 shows the items used to measure respondents' perceptions of leadership. The respondents rated one of the items slightly higher than the rest, and this was the items that stated, "the leaders involved in development at USF think it is important to establish good rapport with development staff" (m=4.95) Respondents rated two of the items on the lower end of the scale, and these items included the statements, "leaders involved in development at USF are in control at all times" (m=3.80) and that "leaders involved in development at USF offer rewards and incentives" (m=3.60). The remaining three items were rated somewhere in between these two sides of the scale, and these statements included, "the leaders involved in development at USF do not get emotionally involved" (m=4.45), "the leaders involved in development at USF share decision-making power" (m=4.39), and "the leaders involved in development at USF practice participative management" (m=4.32).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Leadership Items

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The leaders involved in development at USF do not get emotionally involved.	73	4.45	1.70
2. The leaders involved in development at USF are in control at all times.	74	3.80	1.54
3. The leaders involved in development at USF offer rewards and incentives.	74	3.60	1.70
4. The leaders involved in development at USF think it is important to establish good rapport with development staff.	74	4.95	1.67
5. The leaders involved in development at USF share decision-making power.	73	4.39	1.62
6. The leaders involved in development at USF practice participative management.	74	4.32	1.61

Decision-Making

Table 3 shows the items used to measure respondents' perceptions of decision-making. The items rated highest included "decisions about development are made by trial and error" (m=4.55), and "employees take responsibility for the outcomes and consequences of their decisions" (m=4.33). The items rated lowest were "decision-making power is shared by all development professionals, deans, and USF Foundation employees" (m=3.12), and "decisions about development are made by a few leaders without input from employees involved in development" (m=3.84). The remaining variable was rated in between these two sides of the scale, and this is the one that stated "decisions about development are often made at the last minute with incomplete information" (m=4.13).

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Decision-Making Items

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Decisions about development are often made at the last minute with incomplete information.	73	4.13	1.72
2. Decisions about development are made by trial and error.	74	4.55	1.58
3. Decision-making power is shared by all development professionals, deans, and USF Foundation employees.	73	3.12	1.46
4. Employees take responsibility for the outcomes and consequences of their decisions.	74	4.33	1.48
5. Decisions about development are made by a few leaders without input from employees involved in development.	73	3.84	1.58

Relationships

Table 4 provides the 12 items used to measure respondents' perceptions of relationships in the USF development operation. Respondents rated three items higher than the rest. These items included "employees working in development at USF treat me fairly and justly," (m=5.09) "I am happy with USF," (m=5.36) and "I have a reciprocal relationship with the employees working in development at USF" (m=4.94). The lowest rated items included "whenever employees make an important decision about development, I know they will be concerned about me" (m=3.66), "most people working in development at USF are happy with their interactions with the organization" (m=4.12), and "I feel that employees working in development are trying to maintain a long-term commitment to me" (m=4.16).

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for Relationship Items

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Employees working in development at USF are attentive to what each other say.	74	4.64	1.56
2. Employees working in development at USF believe my opinions are legitimate.	74	4.87	1.52
3. In dealing with people like me, employees working in development at USF have a tendency to throw their weight around.	73	4.69	1.51
4. Employees working in development at USF treat me fairly and justly.	74	5.09	1.42
5. Whenever employees make an important decision about development, I know they will be concerned about me.	74	3.66	1.63
6. The employees working in development at USF can be relied on to keep their promises.	72	4.22	1.71
7. I feel that employees working in development at USF are trying to maintain a long-term commitment to me.	72	4.16	1.61
8. I feel that employees working in development at USF want to maintain a relationship with me.	73	4.76	1.62
9. There is a long-lasting bond between the employees working in development at USF and me.	73	4.30	1.46
10. I am happy with USF	74	5.36	1.31
11. I have a reciprocal relationship with the employees working in development at USF.	74	4.94	1.28
12. Most people working in development at USF are happy with their interactions with the organization.	74	4.12	1.49

Leadership Effectiveness

As shown in Table 5, six items were used to measure respondents' perceptions of effectiveness. It is important to report the means for all six items, because the researcher's primary aim in this study was to determine how respondents' perceptions of leadership, decision-making and relationships related to their perceptions of the development operation's overall leadership effectiveness. Three of the items were rated slightly higher than the rest, and those included the items that stated "leaders involved in development help the development staff meet goals and objectives" (m=4.54), "leaders involved in development help development staff increase alumni, volunteer and donor

support” (m=4.68), and “leaders involved in development help development staff create the right image for the university in order to raise funds” (m=4.73). The remaining three items were rated lower than the rest, and those included the items that stated “decisions about development result in effective strategies for implementation” (m=4.22), “leaders involved in development use two-way communication to facilitate mutual understanding with development staff” (m=4.23), and “leaders involved in development at USF build strong relationships with development professionals that facilitate goal achievement” (m=4.29).

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations for Leadership Effectiveness Items

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Leaders involved in development help the development staff meet goals and objectives.	74	4.54	1.46
2. Decisions about development result in effective strategies for implementation.	74	4.22	1.43
3. Leaders involved in development at USF use two-way communication to facilitate mutual understanding with development staff.	73	4.23	1.47
4. Leaders involved in development at USF build strong relationships with development professionals that facilitate goal achievement.	74	4.29	1.52
5. Leaders involved in development help development staff create the right image for the university in order to raise funds.	73	4.73	1.59
6. Leaders involved in development help development staff increase alumni, volunteer, and donor support.	73	4.68	1.52

Reliability of Constructs

The researcher then tested the reliability of each construct using Cronbach's Alpha. If the alpha is equal to or greater than (0.70), the construct is considered reliable (Stacks, 2002). As shown in Table 6, the alphas were greater than (0.70) for all of the constructs, meaning they were all reliable. Subsequently the items for each construct were collapsed into a single construct. The only construct that was not reliable was the transactional leadership construct, which had an alpha of (0.24). Because the Indecisive Decision-Making construct consisted of only two items a Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted in stead of a Conbach's alpha. Because the statistical significance and strength of the relationship was strong enough ($r=.60$, $p<.001$), these two items were subsequently collapsed into a single variable. Table 6 presents the alphas for the leadership, decision-making and effectiveness constructs, and their means and standard deviations, as well as the mean and standard deviation for Indecisive Decision-Making.

Table 6. Reliability Analysis of Constructs, Means and Standard Deviations

Construct	Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
Transformational Leadership	.87	4.56	1.45
Participative Decision-Making	.75	3.77	1.23
Indecisive Decision-Making		4.35	1.51
Effectiveness	.94	4.48	1.30
Control Mutuality	.88	4.38	1.21
Trust	.78	4.32	1.34
Commitment	.87	4.40	1.39
Satisfaction	.75	4.81	1.11

Pearson Correlations

The researcher ran Pearsons Correlations to measure the relationship between items (Stacks, 2002). Specifically, these correlations showed the statistical significance and strength of the relationship between items. Table 8 shows that there was a statistically significant relationship between every variable ($p < .001$) and the strength of the relationships was moderate to strong. Stacks (2002) suggests that correlations that are less than or equal to (0.30) are weak, between or equal to (0.40) and (0.70) are moderate, and between or equal to (0.70) and (0.90) are strong.

Based on this standard, the strongest relationships existed between transformational leadership and trust ($r = .78, p < .001$), transformational leadership and commitment ($r = .72, p < .001$), transformational leadership and satisfaction ($r = .76, p < .001$), and transformational leadership and effectiveness ($r = .75, p < .001$). Strong relationships also existed between participative decision-making and effectiveness ($r = .75, p < .001$), control mutuality and trust ($r = .73, p < .001$), control mutuality and satisfaction ($r = .77, p < .001$). There were also strong relationships between trust and commitment ($r = .75, p < .001$), trust and satisfaction ($r = .77, p < .001$), commitment and satisfaction ($r = .72, p < .001$), and satisfaction and effectiveness ($r = .76, p < .001$). The weakest relationship existed between indecisive decision-making and commitment ($r = .32, p < .001$).

Table 7. Pearson Correlations

	Indecisive Decision-Making Index	Participative Decision-Making Index	Control Mutuality Index	Trust Index	Commitment Index	Satisfaction Index	Leadership Effectiveness Index
Transformational Leadership Index	.45 .000	.62 .000	.59 .000	.78 .000	.72 .000	.76 .000	.75 .000
Indecisive Decision Making Index		.58 .000	.49 .000	.47 .000	.32 .000	.52 .000	.61 .000
Participative Decision-Making Index			.65 .000	.65 .000	.50 .000	.65 .000	.73 .000
Control Mutuality Index				.72 .000	.67 .000	.77 .000	.69 .000
Trust Index					.75 .000	.77 .000	.67 .000
Commitment Index						.72 .000	.64 .000
Satisfaction Index							.76 .000

ANOVA Interpretation

To help explain the sources of variance in the relationship of several demographic items with the constructs used in this study, the researcher used one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Based on the factor analysis, the dependent items were transformational leadership, indecisive decision-making, participative decision-making, control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, and effectiveness. The demographic items were used as the independent items, and included sex, position at USF, college/department/unit in which employees worked, years employees worked at USF, and years of experience in fundraising. There were no statistically significant differences between how men and women perceived the different constructs, except in terms of effectiveness ($F=6.818, p<.05$). Men ($m=3.92$) had lower perceptions of effectiveness than women ($m=4.75$).

There was not a statistically significant difference between employees' position at USF and their perception of leadership in the development operation. There also was not

a significant relationship between the area the employee worked in at USF and their perception of leadership in the development operation, but there were significant relationships between the employees' years of experience in fundraising and their perceptions of control mutuality ($F=3.208, p<.05$), commitment ($F=3.671, p<.05$), and satisfaction ($F=6.818, p<.05$). People who had 11-15 years of experience represented 6.8% of the total respondents, while people who had 15 or more years of experience represented 68% of the population. The people who had 11-15 years of experience had lower perceptions ($m=3.42$) of control mutuality than the people who had 15 or more years of experience ($m=5.28$). The group with less experience also had lower perceptions of commitment ($m=3.00$) than the people who had more experience ($m=5.07$). Finally, the group with 11-15 years of experience also had lower perceptions of satisfaction ($m=3.80$) than the group who had 15 or more years of experience ($m=5.32$). In the next section, the researcher will discuss these findings in light of the six research questions the researcher initially posed in order to apply the theories to the research results.

CHAPTER 6:

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that employees' perceptions of leadership, decision making, and organizational relationships is significantly related to their perception of leadership effectiveness. This means that employees believe their perceptions of leadership, decision-making, and relationships in the USF development operation is related to their perceived ability to be effective in achieving development goals and objectives. Employees indicated that they believe leadership effectiveness is strongly related to transformational leaders, participative decision-making, and employee satisfaction. The researcher will discuss the results of the study in light of the research questions.

RQ1: Do USF development employees perceive the leadership style in the USF development operation as transformational or transactional?

The reliability for transactional leadership was extremely low so the researcher could not determine if they perceived the leaders in development to be transactional, because this part of the questionnaire did not effectively measure transactional leadership. As for transformational leadership, employees did not strongly agree or disagree that the USF development operation had transformational leaders. They rated transformational leadership somewhere between "no opinion" and "somewhat agree" (m=4.56). This means that they almost somewhat agree that leaders in development are transformational.

The fact that employees only slightly agreed that leaders in USF development are transformational is problematic for the development operation, because perceptions of leadership influence their productivity, morale, motivation, and goal execution. Furthermore, the data analysis revealed that USF employees thought that transformational leadership was strongly related to trust, commitment, satisfaction, and effectiveness. Therefore, if they do not view leaders as transformational, they will probably not have very positive perceptions of the latter factors.

The research on leadership shows that effective leaders shape the environment and culture of the institution and facilitate the establishment of successful teams which can “improve organizational communication, productivity, quality, efficiency, timeliness, customer service, employee morale and innovation” (Nichol, 2000). Therefore, if the USF development operation wants to improve employees’ perceptions of leadership, it will have to ensure its leaders possess the traits and behaviors that employees consider to be transformational. According to the literature, the USF development operation can cultivate a transformational leadership style by inspiring employees and by linking their jobs to the broader purpose, goals, and mission of the organization (Purvanova, Bono, & Dzieweczynski, 2006). Transformational leaders result in more engaged and devoted employees who go above and beyond the job requirements to achieve organizational goals. Leaders will also need to establish reciprocal relationships based on trust and communication, and provide employees with supportive management policies and appropriate rewards practices so employees feel more confident in their ability to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002). By doing all of these things, leaders will be able to inspire employees to care about the success of the

development operation and motivate them to effectively execute fundraising goals and objectives.

RQ2: Do USF development employees perceive decision-making in the USF

development operation as participative?

When employees reported their perception of participative decision-making, they were somewhere between “no opinion” and “somewhat disagree” (m=3.77). This means that they slightly disagree that decision-making is participative in the USF development operation.

This perception of decision-making means employees do not feel involved in the decision-making process. This is a problem for the USF development operation because employees reported that participative decision-making is strongly related to leadership effectiveness, meaning they believe participative decision-making is associated with their leaders helping them be effective at achieving goals and objectives. Furthermore, research shows that when employees’ perceptions of the organizations’ decision-making process are positive, it leads to increased motivation and productivity, upward and downward communication flow, and job satisfaction (Holtzhausen, 2002). Also, organizations generally make better decisions when they listen to and collaborate with employees instead of just making decisions independently and persuading employees to adapt (Hatch, 1997). Therefore, in order for USF to improve employees’ perceptions of the decision-making process, it should allow employees to participate in the decision-making process, empower the staff to make and implement decisions, use effective communication to keep leaders and staff informed, and determine obstacles that prevent

the organization from effectively making and implementing decisions (Kaval & Voyten, 2006).

By establishing a participative decision-making process, leaders will improve employees' perceptions of the development operation, and consequently their perceptions of effectiveness. Positive perceptions of these factors should make employees more effective at executing the development operation's goals and objectives.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between leadership style, decision-making style, perceived effectiveness and the relationship constructs of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction or commitment?

Since there were four constructs used to evaluate employees' perceptions of the overall relationship construct, they will first be discussed individually and then summarized as a group in terms of what they mean for the USF development operation.

Control Mutuality

Control mutuality refers "to the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another" (Hon & J.E. Grunig, 1999, p. 3). Employees were somewhere between "no opinion" and "somewhat agree" when they reported their perception of control mutuality (m=4.74). This means that they only slightly agreed that relationships in the USF development operation were based on control mutuality. This is important to USF because employees indicated that they believe control mutuality is strongly related to trust, satisfaction, and effectiveness.

USF should take this perception as a warning sign. According to theories on organizational relationships, although some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require that organizations and publics each have some control over the other (Grunig,

1999). This means that employees at USF do not view their relationships with other employees as stable or unstable, but really do not have an opinion either way. Having no opinion is not necessarily negative, but that means it is not a positive perception either. According to a study conducted by Ki & Hon (2007), among all of the factors that affect relationships between employees, “perceptions of satisfaction and control mutuality are the best predictors of a positive attitude toward the organization” and this positive attitude is a “precursor to supportive behavioral intentions toward the organization” (Hon & J.E. Grunig, 1999, p. 1).

Therefore, if leaders at USF want employees to work hard to achieve development goals and objectives, they must ensure employees are satisfied and that relationships between employees are based a well-balanced sharing of power and control. Finding the right balance can prove challenging, but what leaders can do is empower employees by including them in the decision-making process, communicating with them regularly about the organization’s mission and direction, and providing them with the necessary support and resources to do their jobs effectively.

Trust

Employees were somewhere between having “no opinion” and “somewhat agreeing” that relationships in the USF development operation were based on trust (m=4.32). Leaders should take these findings very seriously, because USF employees reported that their perceptions of trust are strongly related to their perceptions of commitment, satisfaction, and effectiveness.

Therefore, if leaders want employees to be effective at their jobs and at achieving the development operation’s mission, they will need to establish relationships

characterized by a higher level of trust. Trust can be established by demonstrating one's ability to deliver on a promise, by communicating regularly and effectively with colleagues, and through other shared experiences in the workplace. One thing leaders should keep in mind is that relationships change over time and so does the level of trust, so it is critical to constantly reassess one's relationships in the organization (Joni, 2004).

Commitment

USF development employees were somewhere between “no opinion” and “slightly agreeing” that relationships in the USF development operation were based on commitment ($m=4.40$). This is important to USF development leaders because employees stated that their perception of commitment is strongly related to their perception of satisfaction. Therefore, if the environment of the development operation does not make employees feel their colleagues and leaders are committed to establishing positive, long-lasting relationships with them, they are less likely to be satisfied with the organization and effective at their jobs.

Leaders set the tone and culture of the organization, so they are responsible for the types of relationships that exist between their employees. In order to improve organizational relationships and make employees feel their colleagues are committed to maintaining those relationships, leaders must set a good example by establishing positive relationships with employees. According to relationship theory, commitment is the extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote (Grünig & Hon, 1999). Leaders can show employees that they believe it is worth spending time on by communicating often with them, giving them ample support and resources to do their jobs, involving them in the decision-making

process, and by allowing employees to evaluate their leadership skills and the aspects of the organization that could use improvement. By engaging in these behaviors, leaders will demonstrate they are interested in a long-lasting relationship with their employees, and therefore employees will be more likely to emulate these same behaviors in their own relationships with colleagues.

Satisfaction

Employees were somewhere between “no opinion” and “somewhat agreeing” that relationships at USF are satisfying ($m=4.81$). This is very important to leaders in the USF development operation because employees indicated that satisfaction is strongly related to their perception of leadership effectiveness, meaning they believe that when they are satisfied with relationships, their leaders are more effective at helping them achieve development goals.

As discussed earlier, satisfaction is one of two factors that significantly influence employees’ attitudes and behaviors toward an organization (Ki & Hon, 2007). Employee satisfaction has been found to increase an organization’s revenue (Maitland, 2005), enhance morale, increase productivity, and empower employees to go above and beyond the normal requirements of their job to make the organization successful (Purvanova, Bono, & Dzieweczynski, 2006). Even more importantly, employees at USF specifically stated that their level of job satisfaction is related to their leaders ability to help them be effective at achieving their goals and objectives. Therefore, if leaders at USF want their employees to be effective at achieving development goals and objectives, they must improve employees’ level of job satisfaction.

Leaders can increase satisfaction by communicating regularly with employees, allowing them to participate in the decision-making process, linking employees' jobs to the broader purpose and mission of the organization, facilitating mutual trust and respect, and by cultivating relationships that make employees feel the organization is committed to their long-term success and growth (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1999). By engaging in these practices, leaders will improve employees' perception of satisfaction and consequently their perception of leaders' ability to help them be effective at their jobs.

RQ4: Do USF development employees perceive the USF development operation as having leaders who are effective at helping them achieve development goals and objectives?

Employees were somewhere between “no opinion” and “somewhat agreeing” that leaders were effective at helping them achieve development goals and objectives (m=4.56). This means that they only slightly agreed that leaders help development staff meet goals and objectives, create the right image for the university in order to raise funds, and help them increase alumni, volunteer, and donor support. It is important to evaluate these findings in light of employees' perceptions of transformational leadership, participative decision-making, and employee satisfaction, because employees indicated that these factors are strongly related to leadership effectiveness.

This implies that leaders in USF development must improve employees' perceptions of these factors in order to improve employees' perceptions of leadership effectiveness. According to research, communicating an organization's vision clearly and empowering employees to achieve goals and objectives is critical to an organization's effectiveness (Ghoshal and Bruch, 2004). In a study that examined the

public relations strategies used to communicate with an organization's audience, goal compatibility was the strongest predictor of effectiveness across strategies (Werder, 2005). Research also shows that employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and effective at achieving goals if they are involved in the decision-making process, inspired by transformational leaders to execute challenging goals, provided with sufficient support and resources, and involved in relationships with their colleagues that are built on trust, commitment, and satisfaction (Potosky & Ramakrishna, 2002). Furthermore, research shows that the symmetrical model of fundraising, which is based on two-way communication and reciprocal relationships, is the only model that correlates positively and significantly with the number of total dollars raised and has the strongest relation with increased private support (Kelly, 1995). Since employees did not perceive leaders to be very effective at helping them execute goals, leaders should try to improve their perceptions by engaging in more transformational leadership, participative decision-making, and relationships characterized by trust, commitment, and satisfaction.

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that USF employees only slightly agree that the USF development operation has transformational leaders, participative decision-making, and relationships based on trust, commitment, and satisfaction. It also revealed that employees do not perceive their leaders to be effective at helping them execute development goals and objectives.

This is important to the USF development operation because employees perceptions of the work environment significantly impact their morale, job satisfaction, trust and productivity. If employees do not have positive perceptions of the environment, they are less likely to be happy in their jobs and less likely to be effective at achieving organizational goals and objectives.

The previous discussions on leadership, decision-making, and relationships makes it evident that there are several things the development operation could do to improve these organizational factors. For one, it could change its leadership style. Leaders could do a better job of outlining the organization's vision and goals, be more transformational and inspire employees to feel they have a stake in the organization's future success, and provide the support and resources so employees feel able to effectively execute the organization's mission. The organization could also change its decision-making process to be more participative so that employees feel they have a voice at the management level and that their opinion matters to their leaders. Finally, the organization could do a better

job of establishing positive relationships with employees so they feel they can trust the organization and that it is committed to their long-term growth and success. By improving employees' perceptions of their relationships with colleagues, it should also improve their perception of job satisfaction.

One factor that has not been mentioned much is the structure of the development operation. The USF development operation is a hybrid structure, meaning it is both centralized and decentralized. It has a central development office that sets the development vision and goals, and oversees the coordination of development activities across the university. There are also development offices in the university's academic colleges and departments, and the development officers in these areas usually report to a dean or director, as well as their leaders at the central development office.

This hybrid structure can sometimes cause tension between deans, development officers, and vice presidents, because while they believe they coordinate and communicate well with each other, each party seldom thinks the other parties collaborate well (Hall, 2002). This hybrid structure also can be challenging for development officers in the academic units because they are working for both the dean of the unit and their leaders at the central development level, and sometimes these leaders have different development goals, fundraising philosophies, visions, leadership styles, and different ways of making decisions.

Therefore, it is likely that this hybrid structure is confusing to employees, especially development officers and staff in the academic units. The complicated structure prevents them from forming an overall perception of the development operation's leadership, decision-making, and relationships because these factors change

according to which level of the organization they are interacting with at the time. Within one day, they could be interacting with central development leaders, deans, and vice presidents of development in the academic units, while also interacting with colleagues and decision-making processes at each of these levels.

This means that the USF development operation must re-evaluate its structure in addition to its leadership, decision-making processes, and relationships if leaders want to improve employees' perceptions of the organization. One thing leaders could do is try to establish a leadership style, decision-making process, and relationships that are more uniform across the organization. For instance, instead of employees reporting to different central development staff, deans, and vice presidents of development, who all have different leadership styles, decision-making processes, and ways of interacting with employees, leaders from across the development organization could work together more to help employees be effective at achieving their goals. Leaders in central development could meet with deans and vice presidents in the individual academic units throughout the year to outline development goals and objectives. For example, central development leaders could meet with the dean of medicine, the vice president of development for medicine, and the development officers and staff in the academic unit to outline goals and objectives for the year, to develop effective strategies to achieve those goals and objectives and to establish ways to evaluate progress toward those goals and objectives. These meetings could take place annually, quarterly, or as needed, and could also provide a chance for all employees around the table to communicate about the challenges and roadblocks they face in effectively achieving their goals. By meeting on a regular basis and outlining goals and priorities as a team, everyone has a clear view of where the

development operation is headed and what they need to do in order to be effective. The central development office could also have development employees complete anonymous evaluations of their peers and leaders on a regular basis in order to uncover the strengths and weaknesses in the development operation's leadership, decision-making, and organizational relationships. These evaluations could help provide insight into the perceptions employees are forming about development, and allow leaders to determine strategies for improving the work environment.

This study is important because it reminds development operations and public relations practitioners that their employees' perceptions of leadership, decision-making, and relationships are strongly related to their perception of leadership effectiveness. If development leaders want development officers and staff to be effective at achieving development goals and objectives, they must have transformational leaders who involve employees in the decision-making process and who establish relationships based on trust, commitment, and satisfaction. It also reminds leaders to find the weaknesses in their structure that hinder communication and goal achievement, and put processes in place that facilitate them. These same concepts apply to effectiveness in other organizations because structure, leadership, decision-making, and relationships are important in any organizational environment. No matter where an employee works, their perceptions of the environment are usually related to their perception of satisfaction and their ability to be effective at their jobs, and therefore it is up to leaders to ensure employees have positive perceptions of the organization.

It is important to mention that there were some limitations in this study. The researcher obtained a 62.2 percent response rate for her survey instead of the 100 percent

she strived for. There were also many more staff who participated in the survey than development leaders. Specifically, only three of the nine deans at USF participated in the study. Furthermore, since this was a quantitative study, the researcher uncovered what kinds of perceptions employees held about the development operation, but was not able to understand why they had these types of perceptions. Future research should use qualitative measures to determine why employees form certain perceptions about the organization. These findings could help a practitioner determine how to cultivate leaders, establish decision-making processes, and nurture relationships that employees perceive in a positive light and that empower them to be effective at their jobs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Survey

This survey is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the M.A. in Mass Communications.

In compliance with the social scientist's code of ethics, the researcher will keep confidential the individual survey documents when the accumulated results of this study are published. Individual respondents to this survey will not be identified in any published report, and these questionnaires will always remain the confidential property of the student and supervising professor.

Your participation in this study is important and will be appreciated. Findings from this study will contribute to the body of knowledge of development practice in the university setting and will provide a deeper understanding of factors that affect practice at the University of South Florida.

Please help by taking 15 minutes from your busy schedule to complete this telephone survey. Items in the questionnaire ask you to answer a question by selecting a number from "1" to "7" that best represents your opinion on a particular topic, with 4 being "no opinion".

THANK YOU in advance for your valuable contribution to our research project.

Demographic Information:

Sex:

Male

Female

Position/Title/Role at USF:

Other:

College/Department/Unit:

Other:

Number of Years at USF:

Other:

Years of Experience in Development/Fundraising:

In the following section, please indicate which option best represents your opinion:

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=somewhat disagree

4=no opinion

5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=strongly agree

LEADERSHIP:

* In this study, the term leader refers to the deans and vice presidents of Advancement who make decisions about development at the leadership level.

Transactional Leaders

1. The leaders involved in development at USF do not get emotionally involved.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. The leaders involved in development at USF are in control at all times.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. The leaders involved in development at USF offer rewards and incentives.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Transformational/Pluralistic Leaders

4. The leaders involved in development at USF think it is important to establish good rapport with development staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. The leaders involved in development at USF share decision-making power.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. The leaders involved in development at USF practice participative management.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Goal Compatibility

7. The leaders involved in development at USF share similar goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. The leaders involved in development at USF have different goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. The leaders involved in development at USF have goals that are compatible to my goals.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

DECISION-MAKING:

Decision-Making Style

10. Decisions about development are often made at the last minute and with incomplete information.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Decisions about development are made by trial and error.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Participatory

12. Decision making power is shared by all development professionals, deans, and USF Foundation employees.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Employees take responsibility for the outcomes and consequences of their decisions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Authoritarian

14. Decisions about development are made by a few leaders at USF without input from employees involved in development.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

RELATIONSHIPS:

Control Mutuality

15. Employees working in development at USF are attentive to what each other say.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. Employees working in development at USF believe my opinions are legitimate.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17. In dealing with people like me, employees working in development at USF have a tendency to throw their weight around.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Trust

18. Employees working in development at USF treat me fairly and justly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. Whenever employees make an important decision about development, I know they will be concerned about me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

20. The employees working in development at USF can be relied on to keep their promises.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Commitment

21. I feel that employees working in development at USF are trying to maintain a long-term commitment to me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

22. I feel that employees working in development at USF want to maintain a relationship with me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. There is a long-lasting bond between the employees working in development at USF and me.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Satisfaction

24. I am happy with USF.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. I have a reciprocal relationship with the employees working in development at USF.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. Most people working in development at USF are happy with their interactions with the organization.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

EFFECTIVENESS:

27. Leaders involved in development at USF help the development staff meet their development goals and objectives.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. Decisions about development result in effective strategies for implementation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. Leaders involved in development at USF use two-way communication to facilitate mutual understanding with development staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

30. Leaders involved in development at USF build strong relationships with development professionals that facilitate goal achievement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

31. Leaders involved in development help development staff create the right image for the university in order to raise funds.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

32. Leaders involved in development help development staff increase alumni, volunteer, and donor support.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Appendix B

Email to Participants

Dear (Name),

I would really appreciate your participation in my thesis survey. I am evaluating development at USF and your answers and identity will obviously remain confidential and anonymous.

Would you mind completing the attached survey and emailing it back to me? I am sure you are very busy but I promise it only takes about 10 minutes and I think your participation would be a valuable contribution to my research.

Thank you so much (name)! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks again! I hope you have a wonderful day!

Sincerely,

Rachael van Loveren