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A Quantitative Assessment of Public Relations Practitioners' Perceptions of Their Relationship with the Organization They Represent

by

Jill Boudreaux

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

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wonderfully supportive family, friends and professors. To my beautiful family, especially my loving mom, dad, and nanny, thank you for being so supportive over the past three years. You guys are my true inspiration.

To all of my friends, especially Rachael; I am truly blessed to have you in my life. You are a beautiful, intelligent and fun woman. Your inner beauty surpasses the outward appearance and your caring support has truly touched me in the deepest way. I have enjoyed sharing my master's experience with you and I wish you all the best of luck with your own thesis. I also wish you a very bright and successful future in the field of public relations.

I would like to extend the deepest possible thanks to all of the professors in the Mass Communication program at USF that have inspired me to question the truth, search for answers and strive to become the best student and professional I can be. Each of you has inspired me in a great way. I look forward to taking the knowledge learned in your classrooms into the real world. Thank you all.

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A Quantitative Assessment of Public Relations Practitioners' Perceptions of Their Relationship with the Organization They Represent

Jill B. Boudreaux

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to identify how public relations practitioner roles and organizational decision-making style impact the relationship that is shared between the practitioner and the organization they represent. Based on Internet survey research methods, research findings indicated that organizational decision-making style was a minimal factor in influencing the relationship shared between the practitioner and the organization they represent. Practitioner role did, however, have a significant influence on the levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality between the practitioner and the organization they represent. Low response rates prevents confident generalization of the results of this study to the entire Public Relations Society of America population. Findings support the relational theory of pubic relations. Specifically, trust, commitment, satisfaction and control mutuality influence the quality of the relationship between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she works for. Public relations practitioner roles, manager or technician, were also found to have a significant influence on the relationship. The rational model for organizational decision-making style also influenced relationship quality.

Chapter 1: The Problem

The practice of public relations is, to a large extent, heavily dependent upon the practitioner's management of the relationships between an organization and its key public(s). Public relations is defined as the "management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985). Center and Jackson (1995) argued that the proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships. They stated that an organization with effective public relations will attain positive public relationships (p. 2).

This study uses the relational perspective of public relations to examine the relationship between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she works for. Specifically, this study examines three variables that are posited to influence the relationship between the public relations practitioner and his or her organization by measuring three primary constructs. The constructs that will be measured will include public relations roles, organizational decision-making styles, and relational factors.

In the conduct of inquiry about public relations practices, perhaps no concept has proven so theoretically and empirically useful as organizational roles (Broom & Dozier, 1995). The roles that public relations practitioners enact are "at the nexus of a network of concepts affecting professional achievements of practitioners, structures, and processes of the function in organizations, and organizational capacities to dominate or cooperate with their environments" (Dozier, 1992, p. 327). Practitioner roles are indicators of whether public relations units participate in the strategic decision making of the dominant coalition or simply execute decisions made by others (Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1986). Roles are linked to environmental scanning (Dozier, 1987, 1990), issues management (Lauzen, 1992), and models of public relations practice (J.E. Grunig & L.A. Grunig, 1989). Roles contribute to the salaries of public relations practitioners and how much satisfaction practitioners derive from public relations work (Broom & Dozier, 1986). Of the 1,700 individual characteristics of 283 organizations examined in the Excellence Study (J.E. Grunig, 1992; International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation, 1991), knowledge to enact the manager role was the single most powerful correlate of excellence in public relations and communication management.

As a management function, public relations practitioners must participate in the governance of organizations. Participation can take the form of a communication liaison role in which the practitioner creates opportunities for management and key publics to communicate with each other (Broom & Dozier, 1995). Participation can involve a role of facilitating processes whereby the dominant coalition (including public relations management) makes decisions about public relations issues. Participation can also take the form of expert prescription; the practitioner makes policy decisions about the organization's public relations programs and is held accountable for their success or failure (Broom & Dozier, 1995). The organizational public relations function also may include environmental scanning, issues management, program monitoring, media relations activities, and impact evaluation (Broom & Dozier, 1995). The public relations function is key to organizational feedback, acting as the eyes and ears of organizations as well as their mouthpieces (J.E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The technical task of creating and disseminating communication, especially mediated communication, is core to the public relations function. The public relations technician provides technical communication services to the organization. These practitioners have been characterized as ‘journalists in residence’ and are traditionally practitioners with extensive experience with media relations activities, editing, copy writing, photography, graphic design, and other media production for the organization.

In addition to organizational public relations roles, the organizational decision-making process will be tested to determine if it is an influencing factor on the relationship between the public relations practitioner and his or her organization. This study will strive to determine the type of decision-making style used by the organization, as well as the public relations practitioner’s perceived level of involvement in the process. By examining the role an organizations’ public relations practitioner plays in the decision-making process, the study will try to identify four organizational decision-making styles. Once the organizational decision-making style is identified, the study will use the information gathered to understand the dynamics of the relationship that is shared between an organization and its public relations practitioners.

According to J.E. Grunig and L. Hon’s (1999) Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations, long-term relationships with key constituencies can best be measured by focusing on six very precise elements or components of the relationship that exist. This study examines three of the six relationship elements. The literature has illustrated that good relationships with employees increases the likelihood that employees will be satisfied with the organization and their jobs, making them more likely to support and less likely to interfere with the mission of the organization they represent (J.E. Grunig & Hon, 1999).

This study strives to contribute to the public relations literature by identifying: (1) the predominant public relations role played by practitioners working in today's organizations; (2) by understanding and illustrating the most frequent decision-making styles used by today's organizations; (3) by identifying how today's public relations practitioners perceive their relationship with the organizations they currently represent. Online survey research will be used to collect data from the study's population of interest. Internet surveys offer advantages to researchers because of the speed in which surveys are returned. Additionally, Internet surveys allow the researcher to automatically import survey responses into statistical analysis software (Stacks, 2002).

This study is important because it will contribute to the current public relations roles, organization decision-making style, and relationship components literature by identifying how public relations practitioners' roles impact the relationship they have with the organization they represent based on how their organization makes decisions. This study will provide public relations practitioners and scholars with a better understanding of the dynamics of the practitioner-organizational relationship.

In the following chapters of the study, a review of pertinent literature grouped around three major themes will be provided. Themes addressed in Chapter Two will cover public relations roles, organizational decision-making styles, as well as key literature addressing the concept of relationships from different theoretical backgrounds.

Chapter Three presents the methodology used for this study. A thorough description of the method selected is presented, the design of the study is addressed, and both the sample and population are described in detail. Furthermore, the measurement instrument and data collection procedures are provided. Chapter Four presents the analysis of the data. In addition, trends are identified and hypotheses are addressed. Chapter Five contains conclusions drawn from this study, limitations of the study, and future recommendations for this particular area of inquiry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Practitioner Roles

The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationship between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she represents. This will be achieved by identifying the role the public relations practitioner plays in his or her organization, how the organization makes decisions, and measuring the practitioners' perceived levels of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality regarding their organization.

This section of the literature examines the role the public relations practitioner plays within his or her public relations department. Research on public relations roles is one of the most frequently addressed topics in public relations research literature (Pasadeos, Renfro, & Hanily, 1999). Research on the roles of public relations practitioners has been important to the body of knowledge in pubic relations for several reasons (Toth, Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1998). One main reason public relations roles research is important is because research on roles made it possible to link public relations work to a broader investigation of how excellent public relations departments were structured in organizations (Dozier, L.A. Grunig, & J.E. Grunig, 1995). Public relations roles are "abstractions of behavior patterns of individuals in organizations" when practicing public relations (Dozier, 1992). In his study Dozier argued that public relations roles set apart individuals in organizations as well as define the expectations organizations have of their employees. Dozier stated that public relations roles are the key to understanding the function of public relations. Holtzhausen, Petersen, and Tindall (2003) defined roles as repetitive actions that are performed to set forth a system of practice, or model. Individual practitioner roles would, therefore, facilitate models of public relations practice.

Public relations practitioners must be sensitive to the public(s) or organization(s) needs when they are given a role to play within the organization they represent. Such sensitivity, which involves role taking, is especially important when a practitioner acts as a communication manager -- assessing, reacting to, and devising ways of relating to publics and clients in a dynamic, ongoing way (Broom & Dozier, 1986).

Descriptive research on public relations roles is necessary because a lot of meaningful information is lost by categorizing practitioners as either managers or practitioners (Leitchy & Springston, 1996). Research on public relations roles began in 1979 with Broom and Smith's exploratory study of clients' perceptions of practitioner job tasks. In this study, Broom and Smith proposed the existence of four public relations roles. The four roles identified were the expert prescriber, problem-solving process facilitator, communication process facilitator, and communication technician.

The expert prescriber is the role where the practitioner is responsible for describing and solving public relations problems independently. The expert prescriber "operates as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions. The client, or management, is often content to leave public relations in the hands of the 'expert' and to assume a relatively passive role" (Toth, et al. 1998).

Next, Broom and Smith (1979) identified the problem-solving process facilitator role where the practitioner collaborates with organizational members to solve public relations problems. The problem-solving process facilitator serves as a member of the management team, guiding others through a rational problem-solving process that may involve all parts of the organization in the public relations planning and programming process. In this role, the practitioner collaborates with line management throughout the process of defining and solving organizational problems.

Third, Broom and Dozier (1986) identified the communication process facilitator role where the practitioner works to ensure two-way communication between the organization and its publics. The communication facilitator casts the practitioner as a sensitive 'go-between' or information broker (Broom & Smith, 1979). Toth argued that this practitioner serves as a liaison, interpreter, and mediator between the organization and its publics. Broom and Dozier (1986) argued that practitioners in this role serve as boundary-spanners putting the practitioner in collaborative relationships with both management and the organization's various publics.

Finally, Broom and Dozier (1986) identified the communication technician, who is responsible for producing and disseminating organizational messages. The communication technician provides the specialized skills needed to carry out the organizations' public relations program. Broom and Smith (1979) originally argued that rather than being part of the management team, technicians are concerned with preparing and producing communications materials for the public relations effort.

In a later study, Broom (1982) acknowledged that practitioners often perform multiple roles, but he argued that a practitioner can be classified according to the role he or she plays more frequently. Similarly, subsequent research revealed that while practitioners play different roles, they could be classified according to a dominant role profile (Anderson & Reagan, 1992). Dozier (1983) supported Broom's (1982) argument by concluding that the four-role typology could be collapsed into the two roles of public relations manager and public relations technician. Dozier stated that, "variance in practitioner role activities can be parsimoniously accounted for through two basic organizational roles: managers and technicians" (Dozier, 1992). Several additional studies were conducted and demonstrated that these two factors were stable across time and different practitioner samples. Additionally, the two-role typology of manager and technician permitted a way to operationalize the concept of roles so future researchers could learn how specific roles were linked to the perceptions of the organizational dominant coalition and the use of the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models of public relations. Grunig, Toth and Hon (2001) argue however, that the two major roles that have been identified are not mutually exclusive.

Pamela Creedon (1991) argued against what she considered a false dichotomy created by discussing the two dominant roles for public relations practitioners. Creedon believed that emphasis on two discrete roles has lead to a "hierarchy of two seemingly dissimilar roles -- the manager who decided policy and the technician who implements 'his' policies". To illustrate this notion of the false dichotomy, Creedon offered a counter perspective stating that some technicians' process information, some produce creative products, and some mange the process as well as produce the product. Creedon also argued that decision-making activity exists in other apparently non-managerial categories, variously described as linking, liaison, or the information processor role. Furthering this argument, L.A. Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2001) argued that public relations practitioners tend to carry out both managerial and technical tasks.

Broom and Dozier (1995) tested the four-role typology and found that roles are predicted by salary, with the managerial role being valued more than the technician role. Based on their survey, they concluded that professional experience also had an impact on the role a practitioner plays within an organization. Broom and Dozier defined professional experience as “the number of years the respondent had worked full time in public relations.” Gender is an additional area perceived to influence practitioner roles.

Toth and L.A. Grunig (1993) stated that breaking down the two most parsimonious role categories of manager and technician by gender was important because the body of knowledge was missing several findings. Findings missing failed to account for women doing both the technical and managerial functions under a management dimension for less money. Additionally, the authors stated that the findings did not account for men doing more managerial tasks in the technician ranks that prepared them for managerial positions. Weaver-Lariscy, Sallot and Cameron (1996) found that women and men in public relations perceive their professional worlds differently. They found that men perceive greater gender salary equity, equal opportunity for advancement, and do not fear low salaries emerging as women enter the field. Women, on the other hand, experienced salary inequities and unequal advancement opportunities. Therefore, the scholars argued, women did not perceive a just and equitable standard across the profession.

Broom and Dozier's studies promoted a worldview of a two-tier career ladder in public relations wherein public relations practitioners ascend from the technician to the managerial role (L.A. Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001). Still, their research has contributed profoundly to the understanding of gender and the glass ceiling because that a "changing technician role to the predominantly managerial role is a transition based in favor male practitioners" (1986).

In the field of public relations, the range of communication tasks can be discussed in terms of the basic roles of public relations practitioners (Kelleher, 2001). Manager and technician roles are among the most robust constructs in public relations research. Manager and technician roles refer only to the primary functions of a public relations practitioner. That is, public relations people normally do not function only as managers or only as technicians, but primarily as managers or primarily as technicians, illustrating the idea that public relations roles are not mutually exclusive as argued by L.A. Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2001.

The Public Relations Manager Role

Research conducted by Dozier (1984) stated the communications manager served as the problem solver, decision-maker and planner. Practitioners serving as the public relations manager within an organization are expected to be knowledgeable about innovations in public relations and are expected to demonstrate leadership in new approaches to old problems (Dozier, 1984). Broom and Dozier (1986) extended their definition of the public relations manager incorporating Druck and Hiebert's (1979) professional perspective on roles in their guidebook for professional growth, which was produced under the auspices of the Public Relations Society of America's National

Professional Development Committee. Broom and Dozier (1986) argued that Druck and Hiebert's guidebook provided a useful introduction to empirical roles research, because the guidebook makes explicit the relation between practitioner roles and professional growth. By using the guide that was established by Druck and Hiebert, Broom and Dozier defined the public relations manager as the senior professional that has worked more than 17 years in lower-level roles and now holds a top management position. They contend the public relations manager serves as the senior advisor and policy maker running the public relations unit. These managers are recognized as experts on public affairs, public opinion, and issues management. The professional manager directs operations in the public relations department, conducts research and evaluation, plans programs, develops budgets, and manages personnel.

Public relations managers tend to participate in the organizational decision-making process. Broom and Dozier (1986) argued that participation in the organizational decision-making process is characterized as the extent to which practitioners participate in meetings with management about adopting new policies, discussing major problems, adopting new procedures, implementing new programs, and evaluating the results of programs. They argued that such participation has important implications for the professionalization of the practice, as well as for the professional growth of individual practitioners. Based on the results of their 1986 study, Broom and Dozier found that public relations managers generally experience high levels of job satisfaction.

Johnson and Acharya (1985) said practitioners in the manager role predominantly make policy decisions and are held accountable for program success or failure. These practitioners are primarily concerned with externally-oriented, long-term decisions.

Additionally, a separate study conducted by Dozier and J.E. Grunig (1986) found public relations managers identify which strategic publics are important to organizations, conduct research, and make strategic policy decisions. They argued that these practitioners are involved in the work of the organization, not just the public relations department.

Lauzen (1994) argued that managers develop a broad understanding of external issues through exposure to strategic decision-making, personal aspirations and competencies. Lauzen (1994) found managers are typically responsible for issue identification and analysis and are responsible for incorporating the issues information into a strategic plan, making public relations practitioners very involved in the decision-making process. One part of this process is boundary spanning. Leichty and Springston (1996) have defined the role of boundary spanning as the "persons who convey information and influence between the constituent group and outside groups and vice versa." This functional definition emphasizes the communication and relational processes of public relations rather than the production of communication pieces (Ankney, R. & Curtin, P., 2002). Ankney and Curtin argue that two of the primary aspects of the boundary spanner role is to reduce conflict and to bring disparate groups together. They accomplish these goals through collaboration, communication, and participatory decision-making (Wyatt, Smith, & Andsager, 1996).

Broom (1997) conceived of practitioners as consultants to dominant coalitions, with each role providing a distinct form of assistance (J.E Grunig, L.A. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Therefore, a management-oriented public relations department is engaged in a number of tasks – both proactively and reactively – stemming from the function of the organization (Berkowicz & Hristodoulakis, 1999).

A study conducted by Anderson and Reagan (1992) tried to add another dimension the field of public relations roles with regard to the manager role. This study evaluated the practitioner's use of technology correlated with the roles they play within their organization. Anderson and Reagan (1992) considered practitioner's use of new technology to be an important indicator of professional growth, especially if used in strategic planning. They argued that the use of new technologies for decision-making is likely to lead to membership in the organization's dominant coalition, thereby granting further status and power to the practitioner, and in turn making the organization more responsive to the needs and concerns of key publics.

Dozier (1995) stated that new technologies may help practitioners do an existing function or perform an existing role better, faster, and/or more efficiently. Anderson and Reagan (1992) found that scores on the public relations manager role were significantly and positively related to the use of teleconferencing, computerized appointment software and facsimile. Additionally, they found managers were doing more literature and statistical information database searches, accounting, market data searches, demographic data searches, public affairs policy planning, communication goal setting, new product launches and budgeting/tracking expense activities.

Thompson originally developed the concept of the dominant coalition in 1967. Thompson defined the dominant coalition as an influential group of constituencies, influencing the organization's highest management and external publics with influence on the organization. Furthermore, Pennings and Goodman (1983) theorized that an organization will adopt public relations goals when the public relations department and external constituencies become a part of the dominant coalition. It is important for the dominant coalition of the organization to understand the meaning of communication excellence and should demand the same through a series of shared expectations (Dozier, L.A. Grunig & J.E. Grunig, 1995). Public relations and communications departments may have the core knowledge to practice excellent communication, but senior management and the dominant coalition must share a common understanding about the role and function of communication.

Dozier, L.A. Grunig, and J.E. Grunig (1995) argued that there are several components needed for the public relations department to influence the dominant coalition of an organization. The first component of excellence is departmental power, or the ability for the public relations department to influence the dominant coalition. Second is the demand-delivery loop. Senior managers demand two-way practices from their communicators to persuade and negotiate, and top communicators are aware of this. Third, organizational role played by the top communicator is key. Top communicators may have formal decision-making authority for communication policy; they may be responsible for program success or failure. Finally, powerful communication departments are valued and supported by dominant coalitions. Communication departments need power within senior management in order to make strategic contributions. These contributions, in turn, lead to greater power and influence in management decision-making.

Dozier, L.A. Grunig, and J.E. Grunig (1995) argued that there is a need for powerful communication departments in organizations because it is necessary when implementing excellent communication programs. The power of communication departments is frequently informal. This means that excellent communication departments, usually through top communicators, influence the decision-making of dominant coalitions without having any formal power to do so. The dominant role played by top communicators, either manager or technician, provides key indicators of the communication department's power. Serving in the manager role means that top communicators influence key strategic decisions of dominant coalitions. Serving in the technician role means that top communicators implement, as service providers, decisions made by other senior managers. When top communicators play the technician role predominantly, much can be deduced about how dominant coalitions regard the communication function.

Public Relations Technician Role

The role of communication technician refers to the practitioner as a technical services provider, generating the collateral materials needed to implement a communication or public relations program planned through another communication role (J.E. Grunig, L.A. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Dozier (1984) argued that the communication technician would be conceptualized as the 'beginning professional' expected to undertake basic research in the preparation of public relations materials. The public relations technician is the practitioner who writes the news release or designs the brochure, handling graphics and the production of materials.

Using Druck and Hiebert's (1979) professional perspective on roles in their guidebook for professional growth, Broom and Dozier (1986) defined public relations technicians as staff professionals who are in junior management positions with about two years experience. The technician sees himself, as do others, in rather limited non-management roles related to their specialized skills in writing, editing, and working with the media. Management relies on practitioners in this role to implement public relations programs for the organization.

Dozier (1987) found top practitioners who assume or who are cast in the technical role are often excluded from the strategic organizational decision-making. Dozier suggested that public relations practitioners enacting the technician role predominantly make strategic program decisions necessary to the internal functioning of their department. Technicians make sure that projects are completed on time and on budget. Arguably, technicians hold a narrow worldview due to their limited exposure to organizational issues, and in part, due to their own aspirations and competencies (Lauzen, 1992).

Strategic management and planning are high-level organizational functions tightly linked to excellence in public relations and communication management (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995). Higgins (1979) defined strategic management as the "process of managing the pursuit of the accomplishment of organizational mission coincident with managing the relationship of the organization to its environment". Dominant coalitions engage in strategic planning when they make strategic decisions in a proactive manner. Steps in strategic planning include determining the organizations mission, developing the organizational profile with environmental opportunities, identifying best options consistent with mission, choosing long-term goals, developing short term objectives, implementing programs and evaluating success or failure. Communication becomes a strategic management function when communication programs help manage relationships with key publics that affect organizational mission, goals, and objectives. Strategic public relations and communication management involve top communicators in the highest management roles in an organization, and help the dominant coalitions assess the external environment and respond to it appropriately.

Lauzen (1994) found technicians to be responsible for monitoring issues in the organization's environment, as well as, designing messages communicating the organization's position on a particular issue. Additionally, Lauzen (1994) found that the technician is involved in informal "seat-of-the-pants" environmental scanning. Berkowitz and Hristodoulakis (1999) argued that public relations technicians provide services such as writing, editing, photography, media contracts, and production of publications.

Because both public relations managers and technicians make decisions daily that are vital to the success and well being of their public relations departments, it is important to evaluate the decision-making process at the organizational level. It has been cited in the research that public relations managers have a tendency to participate in the strategic organizational decision-making process more than a technician would. Additionally, Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2001) argued that women must work harder than men to become involved in the organizational decision-making process. These researchers conducted a focus group and found that getting into the managerial role and becoming part of an organization's dominant coalition is strictly up to women. One participant of the researchers focus group said, "If you want to move ahead, you have to have courage, to constantly push. One clear step is to go to the immediate supervisor and then list ways you can help the organization" (p. 327).

The purpose of this study is to identify the role the public relations practitioner plays in his or her organization, to identify how the organization makes decisions, and to measure the perceived levels of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality from the practitioners point of view regarding their organization. A complementary taxonomy addressing organizational decision-making style exists in the organizational management literature. This information will be presented, in depth in, the next section of the literature review.

Organizational Decision-making Styles

An additional area deserving exploration is the area of organizational decision-making styles. Based on the type of decision-making style used by the organization, the researcher will measure the perceived impact a particular decision-making style has on the practitioners' perception of the relationship they have with the organization. Hatch (1997) contends that decisions of all types and magnitudes shape and form organizations, and in this sense you can look at the organization as a locus for decision-making activity. This is the perspective of organizational decision-making theory.

In 1910, John Dewey suggested four phases of reflective thought: first was suggestion, wherein the mind leaps to a possible solution; second, there is the intellectualization of the felt difficulty into a problem or question; third Dewey said, there is the development of a hypothesis; and fourth he argued that there is reasoning or mental elaboration of all of these elements followed by a testing of the hypothesis (Dewey, 1933).

In order to understand the process of decision-making, one must first become familiar with information processing and thinking at the individual level. Scholars such as Massimo Egidi (1992) have theorized problem solving and decision-making in terms of game theory. Games and puzzles are a fruitful area for studying and formalizing human behavior as characterized by two different ‘extreme typologies’. On the one hand, the mere performance of routines; on the other, the creative and explorative behavior of searching for new routines and new methods to solve problems (Egidi, 1992). He noted that this distinction is crucial for understanding of decision makers’ behavior in the real business world.

Because decision-making takes place within all organizational departments at all levels, it is important to understand the concept of differentiation. Division of labor and differentiation within organizations is also a part of the decision-making process because different employees perform different organizational functions. Hatch (1997) states that organization theorists often claim that organizations form around tasks that are too large for individuals to perform by themselves. The advantage of organizations over individuals, theorists explain, comes for the pooling of different skills and abilities, also known as differentiation. The process of differentiation is also directly related to an organizations social structure. Clegg (1990) argued that the more differentiation within an organization, the better and more modern the organization would be.

It is important to understand that all decisions an organization makes for the individual/employee ordinarily specifies the individual’s function, allocates organizational authority, and sets other limits to the individual’s choice as needed to coordinated the activities of several individuals in the organization (Simon, 1997). Decisions made within an organization must be communicated downward from the decision-makers to all other employees in the organization. This notion of downward communication from the decision-maker to other members of the organization is directly related the different roles individuals play within the organization. Simon argued that decisions reached in the higher ranks of the organizational hierarchy will have no effect upon the activities of operative employees unless they are communicated downward.

The first aspect of organizational structure is the hierarchy of authority. According to Max Weber (1946, 1947) hierarchy reflects the distribution of authority among organizational positions. Authority grants the position holder certain rights including the right to give direction to others, and the right to punish and reward. These rights are called positional powers because they belong to the position, rather than to the position holder. When individuals leave their positions, their authority remains behind to be taken up by the next person that fills the position.

According to Hatch (1997) division of labor defines the distribution of responsibilities within the organization. This means that the division of labor is embodied in the manner by which organizational activities and tasks are divided up and assigned to different members of the organization. This notion of division of labor is directly related to the social structure of the organization. The division of labor concerns the ways that jobs are grouped into organizational units such as departments or divisions.

A decision can be defined as a specific commitment to action usually a commitment of resources (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976). The term organization, for purposes of this study, will refer to the pattern of communications and relations among a group of human beings, including the processes for making and implementing decisions (Simon, 1997). Simon argued that this pattern provides to organization members much of the information and many of the assumptions, goals, and attitudes that enter into their decisions, and provides a set of stable and comprehensible expectations as to what the other members of the group are doing and how they will react to what one says and does.

Simon (1997) argued that the actual physical task of carrying out an organization's objectives falls to the person at the lowest level of the administrative hierarchy, arguably the public relations technician. In the study of organizations, the operative employee must be at the focus of attention, for the success of the structure will be judged by his performance within it. Simon argued that insight into the structure and function of an organization can best be gained by analyzing the manner in which the decisions and behavior of such employees are influenced within and by the organization.

To become an outstanding decision manager, Yates (2003) argued that the manager must develop a deep appreciation for what decision problems and processes really involve. Yates defines the decision-making process as ways that deciders go about resolving the cardinal decision issues as they arise in the decision problems that confront them. When organizations engage in decision-making activity, Yates argued that there are ten cardinal decision issues that must be considered by all individuals involved in the decision-making process.

Yates' ten cardinal decision issues are as follows:

(1) Need: why are we (not) deciding anything at all?

(2) Mode: who (or what) will make this decision, and how will they approach that task?

(3) Investment: what kinds and amounts of resources will be invested in the process of making this decision?

(4) Options: what are the different actions we could potentially take to deal with this problem we have?

(5) Possibilities: what are the various things that could potentially happen if we took that action – things they care about?

(6) Judgment: which of the things that they care about actually would happen if we took that action?

(7) Value: how much would they really care – positively or negatively – if that happened?

(8) Tradeoffs: how should we make tradeoffs that are required to settle on the actions we will actually pursue?

(9) Acceptability: how can we get them to agree to this decision and this decision procedure?

(10) Implementation: How can we get our decision 'done,' or can we get it 'done' after all?

Yates argued that for each of these ten issues, facilitating better decision-making involved being aware of how actors in the organization usually resolve issues, common errors that actors in the organization make during the decision-making process, countermeasures, the decision-making manager, can take to prevent these errors from occurring and steps managers can take to encourage exceptionally effective ways of resolving the issues for the betterment of the organization.

Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret (1976) have conceptualized strategic decision-making including elements of novelty, complexity, and open-endedness, because the organization usually begins with little understanding of the decision situation it faces or the route to the solution. In addition, it has only a vague idea of what that solution might be and how it will be evaluated when it is developed (p. 250). In their article, they argued that in many decision-making situations, the decision-makers face uncertainty and ambiguity when trying to make a decision. The authors stated that decisions may be characterized by the stimuli that evoked them along a continuum.

They argued that due to the different decisions that must be made by organizations, decision solutions may be classified by solutions in four ways. They argued first, that the solutions may be given fully developed at the start of the process. Second, they argued that solutions may be found ready-made, that is, fully developed, in the environment during the decision-making process. Third, the authors argued that custom-made solutions may be developed especially for the decision. Finally, the authors argued that the solution may combine ready-made and custom-made features – ready-made solutions are modified to fit particular situations.

The identification phase in the strategic decision-making process comprises two routines in the Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret (1976) study. First is decision recognition, which is characterized as the routine in which opportunities, problems, and crises are recognized, evoking decisional activity. The authors argued that the need for a decision is identified as a difference between information on some actual situation and some expected standard. Because of this, the authors stated that the decision process is evoked by many stimuli, originating both inside and outside the organization. Problem, opportunity, and crisis decisions are most clearly distinguished in the recognition routine. This ideal is directly related to the boundary spanning role of the public relations practitioner. Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret (1976) said opportunity decisions are often evoked by an idea, perhaps a single stimulus, although it may remain dormant in the mind of an individual until he is in a position to act on it. On the other hand, crisis decisions are typically triggered by single stimuli. They present themselves suddenly and unequivocally, and require immediate attention. In the center of the continuum are problem decisions. These decisions typically require multiple stimuli.

The development phase can be described in terms of two basic routines. First is search. Search is evoked to find ready-made solutions. The search routine is comprised of four types of behaviors. First is memory search. Memory search is the scanning of the organization's existing memory, human or paper (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976). The second search behavior is passive search, characterized as waiting for unsolicited alternatives to appear. Third is trap search which involves the activation of 'search generators' to produce alternatives. Finally there is active search behavior. The authors describe this as the direct seeking of alternatives, either through scanning a wide area or focusing on a narrow one (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976). Next is design. Design is used to develop custom-made solutions or to modify ready-made ones. The last step in the decision process is the selection phase. The selection phase consists of three sequential routines: determination of criteria for choice or screen, evaluation of the consequence of alternatives in terms of the criteria or evaluation-choice, and the making of a choice or authorization (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976).

Empirical literature suggests that selection is typically a multistage, iterative process, involving progressively deepening the investigation of alternatives. The decision-making process is characterized by several dynamic factors. The delineation of steps in almost any strategic decision-making process shows that there is not a steady, undisturbed progression from one routine to another; rather, the process is dynamic, operating in an open system where it is subjected to interferences, feedback loops, dead ends, and other factors (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976). The authors argue that dynamic factors influence the strategic decision-making process in a number of ways. They posited that these factors cause the process to speed up, branch to a new phase, to cycle within one or between two phases, and to recycle it back to an earlier point in the process.

Simon (1997) argued that real behavior, even that which is thought to be 'rational,' possesses many elements of disconnectedness that are not present in this idealized picture. Rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow on each choice. Rationality also requires a choice among all possible alternative behaviors. Additionally, Simon (1966) argued that problem solving and decision-making involve means-ends analysis on the part of the decision-maker. Simon organized the means-end analysis as follows: first, the present situation or problem is compared with the desired situation (problem goal), and one or more differences between them are noticed. Second, memory is searched for an operator or operators associated with one of the difference that has been detected. Finally, an attempt is made to apply the operator to change the present situation.

Early research on organizational decision-making reported four decision models. The four most prominent decision-making models include the rational decision-making model, the trial-and-error decision-making model, the coalition model, and the garbage can model. All four types of decision-making models can occur within any organization, simultaneously. This can be envisioned as all of the decisions being made throughout an organization at the organizational level of analysis (March & Simon, 1958). All four decision-making models involve the concepts of goals and ambiguity agreement in terms of the decision that needs to be made.

The rational decision-making model is characterized as a process that takes place when there is agreement on the goals and/or the problems that need addressing. Complete information is required and this process implies a complete lack of ambiguity because everyone agrees on how to pursue the goal or resolve the issue (Hatch, 1997). Rationality is concerned with the selection of preferred behavior alternatives in terms of some system of values whereby the consequences of behavior can be evaluated (Simon, 1997). Additionally, Simon argued that there are a number of distinct types of rationality. A choice can be regarded as rational if it serves a purpose and is conscience and deliberate. Many types of rationality can be seen within organizations.

The trial-and-error decision-making model takes place when there is agreement on the goals or nature of the problem, but disagreement on how to achieve the goals or resolve the issue. Access to information is low and decision-makers tend to make smaller, incremental decisions instead of designing a comprehensive blueprint (Hatch, 1997). Simon (1966) argued that problem solving and decision-making involves a highly selective trail-and-error search for solution possibilities. Simon clarified this idea by stating that the terms “highly selective” and “trial-and-error” may seem contradictory. Simon argued that the two terms are not contradictory, but rather that problem-solving and decision-making require a trial-and-error approach in that decision-makers do not go directly to a solution without traversing and retracting some blind alleys -sometimes many, sometimes few. It is important to note that a modest number of possible solutions can be considered, and there is no way of telling whether a given solution is the best, since many other possible solutions must, perforce, go unexamined. Simon argued that human problem solvers, or decision-makers, search for a solution that is ‘good enough’ by some predetermined criterion. This process is called satisficing. Satisficing is a concept that is widely applicable in problem domains where the number of possible solutions is far to great to permit exhaustive search.

The coalition model can be used when there is a lack of agreement about goals to be pursued or issues to be addresses. Those members of the organization in the most powerful positions tend to dominate this decision-making process (Hatch, 1997). Political activity is a major factor that must be considered when organizations engage in decision-making activity by way of the coalition model. Pettigrew (1972) argued that political activities are a key element in strategic decision-making. Political activities reflect the influence of individuals who seek to satisfy their personal and institutional needs by the decisions made in an organization. These individuals may be inside or outside the organization, what ties them to the decision process is their belief that they will be affected by the outcome (Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret, 1976). The authors also argued that the political activities of these individuals serve to clarify the power relationships in the organization; they can also help to bring about consensus and to mobilize the forces for implementing the decision. Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Theoret said political activity generally manifests itself in the use of the bargaining routine among those who have some control over choices.

Finally, the garbage can model can be used when there is high uncertainty and high ambiguity. Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) argued that to understand the decision-making process within an organization one can view a choice opportunity as a garbage can into which various kinds of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated. In the garbage can model, a decision is an outcome or interpretation of several relatively independent streams within an organization. This decision-making model is used when the environment is poorly understood or when key decision-makers are not available to participate in decision-making. This process forces decision-making to become random, and decision-making becomes an area of conflict (Hatch, 1997).

Research conducted by Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) found that there are two major phenomenon occurring when organizations make decisions using the garbage can model. The first phenomenon is the manner in which organizations make choices without consistent, shared goals. Situations of decision-making under goal ambiguity are common in complex organizations. The second phenomenon occurring is the way members of an organization are activated. Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) argued that this entails the question of how occasional members become active and how attention is directed toward, or away from, a decision.

Another concept that must be considered involved in the decision-making process is communication. Simon (1997) defined communication as any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of an organization to another. Simon argued that without communication, there can be no organization, for there is no possibility then of the group influencing the behavior of the individual. Communication in an organization must be a two-way process: it comprehends both the transmittal to decisional center of orders, information, and advice; and the transmittal of the decisions reached from this center to other parts of the organization. Simon stated that, it is a process that takes place upward, downward, and laterally throughout the organization. Two types of communication Simon discussed are formal and informal communication. Formal communication involves oral communication between members of the organization, memoranda and letters, paper-flow, records and reports, and manuals. Simon argued that informal communication channels are used to facilitate the flow of communication, advice, and even orders. According to Simon, the informal communication system is built around the social relationships of the members of the organization.

In terms of communication flow, Simon argued information does not automatically transmit itself from its point of origin to the rest of the organization. He emphasized that the individual who first obtains the information must transmit it. According to Simon, information tends to be transmitted upward in the organization only if: (1) its transmission will not have unpleasant consequences for the transmitter; or (2) the superior will hear of it anyway from other channels, and it is better to tell him or her first; or (3) it is information that the superior needs in his dealings with his own superiors, and he or she will be displeased if he or she is caught without it. Simon stated that it has been shown that the specialization of decision-making functions is largely dependent upon the possibility of developing adequate channels of communication to and from decision-making centers within the organization.

After evaluating the different types of decision-making processes that are available to organizational decision-makers, as well as the how public relations roles impact the level of involvement in the organizational decision-making process, it is important to address how these two areas impact the relationship shared between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she represents. It has been argued in the roles literature that both the public relations manager and the public relations technician may become involved in the organizational decision-making process at some level. It has also been argued that public relations managers are more likely to become a vital part of the organization's dominant coalition, and that technicians may make minor strategic decisions necessary to sustain the day-to-day operation of their particular public relations department. The purpose of this research is to determine how public relations roles and organizational decision-making styles impact the relational variables developed by J.E. Grunig and L. Hon (1999). The relational perspective of public relations will be addressed in the following section.

Relationship Perspective and Public Relations

The purpose of this study is to identify the role the public relations practitioner plays in his or her organization, to identify how the organization makes decisions, and to measure the perceived levels of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality from the practitioners point of view regarding their organization. The next section of the literature review will address the relationship components found in public relations relationships.

Many scholars and public relations practitioners say that public relations is all about building and maintaining an organization's relationships with its publics (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000). Center and Jackson (1995) emphasized the central role of relationships in public relations management by stating that the proper term for the desired outcomes of public relations practice is public relationships. These scholars also argued that an organization with effective public relations will attain positive relationships with key publics. L.A. Grunig, J.E. Grunig and Ehling (1992) proposed a mix of attributes, perceptions, and constructs to measure relationships.

> Researchers and practitioners could use any of these concepts to measure the quality of the strategic relationships of organizations, but we suggest that the following are most important: reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding (p. 83).

Ferguson (1984) emphasized a need for the definition and measurement of relationships between organizations and their publics. Ferguson's (1984) suggestions, however, mix characteristics of relationships with perceptions of the parties in relationships, as well as constructs based on the reports of those in relationships.

Broom (1977) found that although definitions of public relations include terms such as relationships and mutual relations, the practice more typically deals with measuring, analyzing and influencing public opinion (p. 111). Broom argued that public relations scholars say the function of public relations is to establish and maintain communication linkages between an organization and its various publics in order to maintain mutually beneficial relationships. He went further to argue that this view of public relations calls for measuring the relationships in the social system composed of an organization and its publics. Broom went on to suggest intrapersonal measures of "perceptions of agreement" in addition to actual agreement, for calculating coorientation indices of relationships.

Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (2000) found that a number of fields other than public relations also use relationships as a central concept. The following is a review of literature regarding relationships taken from interpersonal communication, psychotherapy, interorganizational relationships, and systems theory.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication scholars operationally define a relationship as a measure of participants' perceptions or as a function of those perceptions. Throughout the interpersonal communication and interaction literature reviewed by Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (2000), the definition of relationships included both behavioral and cognitive elements. Surra and Ridley (1991) defined "degree of relationships" as comprising observable "moment-to-moment interaction events" and "intersubjectivity" or "cognitive interdependence" (p. 37). Surra and Ridley (1991) suggested that relationships are both objective realities and subjective realities. They argued that these realities provide the context within which each partner in the relationship "know how to behave toward the other and to understand, predict, and interpret the others behavior…" (p. 38).

Millar and Rogers (1976) cast relationships in a symbolic interaction perspective arguing that people become aware of themselves only within the context of their social relationships. They stated that these relationships, whether primarily interpersonal or role specific, are bestowed, sustained, and transformed through communicative behaviors. Duck (1973) argued that relationships do not exist outside of the cognition and the values of the interactors. Social relationships must be defined in terms of the individual's viewpoint. Andersen (1993) stated "relationships are the combined product and producers of both the interpersonal interactions and the cognitive activity of the interactants" (p. 2). Capella (1991) suggested that understanding relationships requires studying "the association betweens patterns of message interchange between partners and the partners' experienced state of the relationship" (p. 103).

Huston and Robins (1982) studied close relationships and argued that other scholars studying relationships should typically treat relationships as combinations of subjective and objective attributes associated with the participants and with their interaction. They stated that:

> Relationship properties are recurrent patterns of interpersonal or subjective events. These patterns can be discerned only by reference to samples of interactions or of subjective experiences at the event level. When we speak of data about relationships, we include not only overt interpersonal activity but also cognitions and emotions that result from or contribute to such activity.

Berscheid and Peplau (1993) offered a list of properties useful for classifying a relationship as "close": (1) the individuals have frequent impact on each other, (2) the degree of impact per occurrence is strong, (3) the impact involves diverse kinds of activities for each person, and (4) all of these properties characterize the interconnected activity series for a relatively long duration of time.

Millar and Rogers (1987) proposed nine indices for measuring relationships, all but one of which are based on measures taken from one of the relationship members. Ballinger (1991) adapted Millar and Rogers relational communication perspective to propose a nine cell relational model of public-organizational relationships. Ballinger integrated the relational dimensions of intimacy, trust, and control into this modified model. The dimensions of perceptions, communication behavior and relational outcomes were also included. Now that the interpersonal relationship perspective has been addressed, the next section will focus on the psychotherapy perspective of relationships.

Psychotherapy Perspectives

Psychotherapy also employs the concept of relationships as central to both study and practice, particularly the relationship between counselor and client. This field also mixes subjective and objective indicators to represent the existence and nature of relationships (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). Gelso and Carter (1985) defined the counselor-client relationship as "the feelings and attitudes that counseling participants have toward one another, and the manner in which these are expressed" (p. 159).

Gelso and Carter (1985) included three elements of relationships in their definition: First, they described the "working alliance as…an emotional alignment that is both fostered and fed by the emotional bond, agreement on goals, and agreement on tasks" (p. 163). Second, they defined the transference relationship, or unreal relationship, as representing the displacement of feelings from previous relationships onto the therapist, and vice versa. Third, they referred to the real relationship as "something that exists and develops between counselor and client as a result of the feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and actions of each toward the other" (p. 185). Sexton and Whiston (1994) used Gelso and Carter's (1985) three-part definition to develop their own definition of relationships. Sexton and Whiston's (1994) definition mixes perceptions with interaction and even the environment. "Those aspects of the client and counselor and their interaction that contribute to a therapeutic environment, which in turn may influence client change" (p. 8).

In 1994, Gelso and Carter revisited their 1985 definition of client-counselor relationship. They concluded that humanistic therapists define the client-counselor relationship in terms of the counselor's perception of empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard and congruence. Gelso and Carter's (1994) revised definition mixes perceptions of relationships with participants' expressions of those perceptions. They defined the client-counselor relationship as "the feelings and attitudes that counseling participants have toward one another, and the manner in which these are expressed" (p. 297). Because relationships are an aspect of several areas of study, it is also important to briefly address the interorganizational relationship perspective.

Interorganizational Relationship Perspective

The study of interorganizational relationships (IORs) does not employ subjective, introspective attributes to describe relationships. Rather, organizational theorists focus on organizational behavior (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). Theoretically, organizations enter relationships because of their dependence on other organizations for resources (Hougland & Sutton, 1978; Van de Ven, 1976). The emphasis is on the exchange of resources. "An interorganizational relationship occurs when two or more organizations transact resources (money, physical facilities, and materials, customer and client referrals, technical staff services) among each other" (Van de Ven, 1976, p. 25).

Van de Ven and Walker (1984) specified three conditions, one of which must be present for the formation of IORs. First, a scarcity of resources may cause an organization to become dependent on another. Second, a requirement for specialized skills or services needed to fulfill obligations may cause IORs. Third, relationships may result when organizations operate in similar domains in which they have similar clients, similar services, similar skills, or similar needs. Under the third condition, the resulting relationships may take the form of competition.

The term linkages appears frequently in discussion of IORs (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). Oliver (1990), for example, summarized the literature on IORs as the "relatively enduring transactions, flows, and linkages that occur among or between an organization and one or more organizations in its environment" (p.241). Oliver's "contingencies of relationship" formation can be recast as characteristics of linkages or exchanges. These include necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability, and legitimacy. Necessity refers to the quality of the relationship derived from legal or regulatory requirements. Asymmetry refers to the potential exercise of power or control over another organization or its resources. Reciprocity refers to cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among organizations, rather than domination, power and control. Efficiency refers to arrangements that are the consequences of the need to improve internal input/output ratios. Stability refers to the relative predictability of interorganizational relationships in the face of environmental uncertainty. Legitimacy refers to aspects of interorganizational relationships that lend justification and the appearance of agreement with prevailing norms, rules, beliefs, or expectations of external constituents (Oliver, 1990, pp. 243-246).

The dominant paradigm for studying IORs draws from resource dependency theory (Aldrich, 1976; Lincoln & McBride, 1985) and exchange theory (Cook, 1977; Levine & White, 1961; Stearns, Hoffman, & Heide, 1987). According to resource dependency theory, relationships form in response to an organization's need for resources. Satisfying the need for resources allows an organization to survive, to grow, and to achieve other goals. Relationships consist of the transactions involving the exchange of resources between organizations (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000).

Exchange theory suggests that voluntary transactions result from knowledge of domain similarity and lead to mutual benefit, as well as to mutual goal achievement. Broom, Casey & Ritchey noted that exchange theorists define relationships in terms of the voluntary transactions and of the mutuality of interests and rewards. Relationships involve interaction between two or more key players. Since there is often exchange involved between parties one may view a relationship as part of a larger system. This is the primary reason why the systems theory perspective is discussed in the following section.

Systems Theory Perspective

Katz and Kahn (1967) described systems theory as basically concerned with problems of relationships, structure, and of interdependence, rather than with the constant attributes of objects (p.18). Miller (1978) defined a system as a set of interacting units with relationships among them (p.16). Miller also stated that relationships can be empirically observed using spatial, temporal, spatiotemporal, and causal qualities (p. 17). Relationships also take on symbiotic and parasitic forms to perform processes which one element in the relationship lacks (p. 18). The structure of a system is defined by the relationship among the units. To the extent that communication is the primary exchange in social systems, it serves as a major determinant of both relationships and the overall functioning of most systems (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000).

Klir (1991) pointed out that there are two basic types of systems -- those concerned with the things in the system and those concerned with the relations among the things. Klir argued that the relations of phenomena are independent of the things that comprise the system. Relationships, then, reflect, the conjoint, purposive behaviors of the actors in the relationships (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). The imagery of systems theory also suggests a concept of relationships similar to those in the literature on interorganizational relationships - Relationships represent the exchange or transfer of information, energy, or resources. Therefore, the authors argued that the attributes of those exchanges or transfers represent and define the relationship. At the level of organization-public systems, the attributes of linkages among the participants describe the relationships within the system as well as the structure of the system.

In summary, Walton (1969) argued that communication is the most significant factor accounting for the total behavior of the organization and that the dynamics of the organization can best be understood by understanding its systems of communication (p. 109). Ehling (1992) said that the primary end state of public relations is the maximization through communication of the differences between cooperation and conflict. As such that cooperation becomes the prime benefit (p. 633). The communication linkage represents interactions aimed at attaining mutual goals, patterns that develop through the division of tasks and functions among the communicators, and qualities that separate from the those of communicators (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000)

Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations

Stemming from research on excellence in public relations and communication management conducted for the IABC Research Foundation, researchers began searching the public relations literature on what it meant for an organization to be effective (L.A. Grunig, J.E. Grunig & Ehling, 1992). The researchers believed it was necessary to understand what it means for an organization to be effective before they could explain how public relations could make an organization more effective. Over the long-term, the literature showed that effective organizations were able to achieve their goals because they choose goals that are valued both by management and by strategic constituencies both inside and outside the organization. According to the researchers, when organizations choose such goals, they minimize efforts of publics to interfere with organization decisions and maximize support from publics. The researchers also noted that the process of developing and maintaining relationships with strategic publics is a crucial component of strategic management, issues management, and crisis management.

Additionally, most management decision-makers believe that they choose goals and make decisions that are best for the organization and that they, rather than publics, know what decisions are best (L.A. Grunig, J.E. Grunig, & Ehling, 1992). The researchers argued that most organizations generally make better decisions when they listen to and collaborate with stakeholders before they make final decisions rather than simply trying to persuade them to accept organizational goals after decisions are made (Porter, 1990). Public relations makes an organization more effective; therefore, when it identifies the most strategic publics as a part of strategic management processes and conducts communication programs to develop and maintain effective long-term relationships between management and those publics (J.E. Grunig, & Hon, 1999). Organizations that communicate effectively with publics develop better relationships because management and publics understand one another and because both are less likely to behave in ways that have negative consequences on the interests of the other.

In-depth interviews of the most excellent public relations departments in the excellence study showed that good communication changes behavior of both management and publics; therefore, it results in good relationships. Previous research suggests that the value of public relations can be determined by measuring the quality of relationships between organizations and their strategic publics. Because organizational employees and public relations practitioners, particularly, desire positive relationships with the organizations they represent, it is important that the organization understand the dimensions of the relationship existing between the organization and the public relations practitioner. Good relationships with employees increases the likelihood that employees will be satisfied with the organization and their jobs, which makes them more likely to support and less likely to interfere with the mission of the organization.

J.E. Grunig and Hon (1999) posited that there is a need for research exploring and measuring the success or failure of long-term relationships between public relations practitioners and the organizations they represent. With this said, Hon and J.E. Grunig found, through their research, that perceptions regarding an organization's longer-term relationships with key constituencies can best be measured by focusing on six very precise elements or components of the relationships that exist between an organization and its key constituencies. For purposes of this study four of the six elements will be tested. In order to understand why there is a need to look at these six precise elements lies in the importance of the relationships that are present between an organization and its public relations practitioners.

The first of the relationship elements is control mutuality. Control mutuality can be defined as the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another (J.E. Grunig, & Hon, 1999). The authors argued that some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require that organizations and publics each have some control over the other. The second element is trust. Trust is defined as one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party. There are three dimensions to trust. The three dimensions are integrity, dependability, and competence. J.E. Grunig and Hon (1999) defined integrity as the belief that an organization is fair and just. Dependability is 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.

The next relationship element is satisfaction. Satisfaction is defined as the extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are enforced. A satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs. Finally, there is the element of commitment. Commitment is the extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. There are two dimensions of commitment. The first dimension is continuance commitment. Continuance commitment refers to a certain line of action. Secondly there is the dimension of affective commitment. Affective commitment refers to an emotional orientation.

Relationships form when the public relations practitioner has the expertise to identify the strategic publics with whom an organization should have relationships. Relationships form because one party has consequences on another party. In public relations, the most obvious example of a strategic relationship occurs when an organization affects a public or a public affects an organization. Relationships in public relations can be two-party or multiple-party relationships. These relationships are situational because relationships can come and go as situations change. Relationships are also behavioral because they depend on how the parties in the relationship behave toward one another.

This review of the literature reveals the need to further examine the relationship between public relations roles, organizational decision-making style, and public relations relationship components. To meet this objective, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypotheses

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality are predictors of relationship quality.

H2: Public relations practitioner role is a predictor of relationship quality.

P2.1. Managerial role is a positive predictor of relationship quality.

P2.2 Technical role is a negative predictor of relationship quality.

H3: Organizational decision-making style influences relationship quality.

Chapter Three of the study presents the methodology used in the research. A thorough description of the method selected is presented, the design of the study is addressed, and both the sample and population are described in detail. Furthermore, the measurement instrument and data collection procedures are presented.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she represents. This was achieved by identifing the role the public relations practitioner plays in his or her organization, identifying how the organization makes decisions, and measuring the perceived levels of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality from the practitioners' point of view regarding their organization.

The following hypotheses were tested:

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P2.1. Managerial role is a positive predictor of relationship quality.

P2.2 Technical role is a negative predictor of relationship quality.

H3: Organizational decision-making style influences relationship quality.

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used to examine these hypotheses and propositions. It explains the general research design, instrumentation, sampling, data collection, pretest, response statistics, and data analysis for this study.

A survey of public relations practitioners was conducted to measure public relations roles, organizational decision-making style, and relationship components. According to Stacks (2002), “a survey is a method of gathering relatively in-depth information about respondent attitudes and beliefs” (p. 175). Additionally, surveys are fairly long and complicated attempts to gauge how the public perceives an issue or event or person, and they allow researchers to probe in a controlled and prescribed way why respondents feel the way they do about certain issues that impact the work they do (Stacks, 2002).

The survey used in this study was both descriptive and analytical, allowing the researcher to analyze two public relations roles, four organizational decision-making styles, and four components of relationships. Descriptive surveys are used to document current circumstances and conditions, and generally describe what exists in a population (Austin & Pinkleton, 2000). Analytical surveys, on the other hand, “attempt to explain why certain circumstances, attitudes and behaviors exist among members of a specific population” (p. 137).

Systematic random sampling methods were used to select a sample from the population of interest. The use of proper sampling methods is one of the most critical aspects of any research project and an especially important characteristic of scientific survey research (Austin & Pinkleton, 2000). An Online survey was used to collect data for this study. The survey instrument and all supporting materials are included in Appendix A of this study. The following section describes the instrumentation in detail.

Instrumentation

The study is comprised 43 items covering each of the three areas discussed in the previous chapter. No identifiers were collected from survey participants in the questionnaire. In order to measure practitioner roles, the researcher used measures developed by Broom and Dozier (1995). The researcher used information found in the organizational theory literature to test four decision-making processes – the rational model, the coalition model, the trail-and-error model, and the garbage can model (Hatch, 1997). These items measured the practitioner's perception of how the organization makes decisions. Measures developed by J.E. Grunig and Hon (1999) were used to measure aspects of the relationship between the practitioner and the organization. Relationship measures to be tested include trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality. All responses were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

The introduction to the instrument explained the purpose of the research to the survey population. The following instructions for responding to the items were provided:

> A public relations graduate student in the School of Mass Communication at the University of South Florida is conducting this survey. The research will aid the graduate student in not only completing a graduate thesis, but will provide invaluable insight to the public relations field, as well as the current public relations body of literature. If you could please take a few minutes to answer the following questionnaire, your responses will be greatly appreciated. The success of this survey depends on the cooperation of public relations practitioners like

you. All responses will remain confidential, and there will be no attempt made to contact you personally. Your identity will not be included as part of the data.

The instrument contained items that measured the variables of public relations roles, organizational decision-making style, and relationship components. These items are discussed in detail in the following three sections.

Public Relations Roles Items

Items developed by Broom (Broom, 1982; Broom & Smith, 1979) measured different role activities of public relations practitioners. Broom conceptualized practitioners as consultants to senior management, providing services and/or influencing processes. According to the literature (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1992), practitioners act as expert prescribers when management treats them as experts with the experience and savvy to prescribe solutions to public relations problems or issues (Dozier & Broom, 1995). The problem-solving process facilitator helps management work through public relations problems to a satisfactory solution. Whereas expert prescription leads to passive management involvement in solving public relations problems, problem-solving process facilitation seeks active management involvement in collaborative problem-solving process that leads to strong management "ownership" of solutions reached. The communication facilitator acts as a go-between, creating opportunities for senior management to hear from key publics and key publics to hear from management. The communication technician provides technical communication services to the organization once management has made decisions.

Broom operationalized six measures for each of the conceptual roles. The 24-item set has been used in scores of practitioner roles studies since first developed in the late

1970s (Dozier, 1992). Broom (1980, 1982) first noted the intercorrelation of the three conceptual roles of expert prescriber, problem-solving process facilitator, and communication facilitator. Dozier (1993) conducted exploratory factor analysis of three separate surveys to conclude that expert prescription, process facilitation, and communication facilitation constitute conceptually distinct components of a single organizational role, the public relations manager. Subsequent studies tended to support this empirical generalization (Anderson, Reagan, Sumner & Hill, 1989; Dozier, 1984, 1992). These three conceptualizations of the manager role were used to create a multi-item scale to measure the public relations manager role.

The following items were included in the scale:

1. I plan action strategies for solving public relations problems.
2. I diagnose public relations problems and explain them to others in the organization.
3. I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's public relations program.
4. I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.

The following items were used to measure the public relations technician role:

1. I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials.
2. I produce brochures, pamphlets, and other publications.
3. I maintain media contacts to place press releases.
4. I edit and/or rewrite the materials written by others in the organization.

Decision-making Style Items

Items used to measure organizational decision-making style were borrowed from Hatch (1997) and Bell, Golombisky, and Holtzhausen's (2001) Communication Rules Manual. There are several steps that must be taken when an organization needs to make a decision. The steps of the process are as follows: first, the problem or situation must be defined. Second, senior managers must collect and analyze relevant information that serves as the framework for decision-making; third, it is critical that the decision-maker(s) generate and evaluate as many alternatives as possible, considering as many positive and negative consequences as possible; fourth, criteria must be established for selecting possible alternative solutions; fifth, decision-maker(s) must select the best alternative as they relate to the organization's objectives; and finally, the decision that was made must be implemented throughout the organization (Bell, Golombisky & Holtzhausen, 2001).

As noted by Hatch (1997), rational decision-making is limited by imperfect and incomplete information. The decision-making process is characterized as ambiguous and uncertain. Ambiguity exists when decision-makers are unclear about which goals to pursue or which problems are the most important (Hatch, 1997). Uncertainty is present in most decision-making situations. Hatch (1997) stated that uncertainty is present when decision-makers lack information and disagree on how organizational goals should be reached. For purposes of the research, the researcher looked at four different decision-making styles including the rational model, the trial and error model, the coalition model, and the garbage can model.

Rational Model Items

The first decision-making style is the rational decision-making style. The rational decision-making style takes place when there is agreement on the organization's goals and/or the problems that need addressing (Hatch, 1997). This decision-making style requires complete information, even when the problem is complex. The rational decision-making style also implies complete lack of ambiguity because all decision-makers agree on how to pursue the goal or resolve the issue. Decision-makers using the rational model normally proceed with assurance when making decisions (Hatch, 1997; Bell, Golombisky & Holtzhausen, 2001). The following items were used to measure the rational decision-making model.

1. In my organization, we always have complete information when we make decisions.
2. My colleagues and I mostly agree on the goals we need to reach.
3. Everyone mostly knows what decisions have been made and how to proceed.
4. Once decisions are made in this organization, they are final.

Trial-and-error Items

The second decision-making style is the trial-and-error decision-making style. This process takes place when there is agreement on the goals or nature of the problem, but disagreement on how to achieve the goals or resolve the issue (Hatch, 1997). Decision-makers have little access to information, and ambiguity is unimportant. Finally, decision-makers make smaller, incremental decisions instead of designing a comprehensive blueprint (Hatch, 1997). The following items were used to measure the trial and error decision-making model.

1. Although my organization agrees on goals and problems, it disagrees on how to reach the goals or solve the problems.
2. This organization often lacks information when it makes decisions.
3. In my organization there is frequent disagreement about how to reach our goals.
4. In my organization, we tend to make small, less important decisions rather than big ones.

Coalition Model Items

The third decision-making style is the coalition decision-making style. The coalition model is used when there is lack of agreement about goals to be pursued or issues to be addressed. Organizational members in the most powerful positions tend to dominate this decision-making style. Participants using the coalition model can get involved in organizational politics by forming alliances with individuals that have less interest in achieving a goal or solving a problem (Hatch, 1997). These small alliances join forces with other interest groups to form a coalition. Hatch (1997) contended that coalition-forming is based on behind-the-scenes negotiations to represent all coalition interests. This approach emphasizes that participants should accommodate others' alternatives (Hatch, 1997). The following items were used to measure the coalition decision-making model.

1. There are a lot of politics involved in decision-making in my organization.
2. There is often a lack of agreement about the goals to be pursued or the issues to be addressed.
3. In my organization, the people with the most power make the decisions.
4. There is a lot of negotiation in decision-making in my organization.

Garbage Can Model Items

The final decision-making style of interest for this study is the garbage can model. This model is most appropriate when there is both high uncertainty and high ambiguity (Hatch, 1997). This model is most often used when the environment is poorly understood or when the key decision-makers are not available to participate in the decision-making process. Decision-making using this model becomes random and choices and decisions do not solve the problem; some problems are never solved; and solutions are proposed where no problem exists. Some problems end up being resolved by chance and decision-making using this model becomes an area of conflict (Hatch, 1997). The following items were used to measure the garbage can decision-making model.

1. There is often a lack of agreement in my organization.
2. Everyone in the organization makes his or her own decision without consulting anyone else.
3. Problems in my organization often go unresolved.
4. Decision-making is an area of conflict in my organization.

Relationship Measurement Items

Relationships are a vital component to an organization's public relations program. J.E. Grunig and Hon (1999) stated that the fundamental goal of public relations is to build and then enhance on-going or long-term relationships with an organization's key constituencies. They assorted that perceptions regarding an organization's longer-term relationships with key constituencies can be measured by focusing on elements or components of the relationship that exist.

The process of developing and maintaining relationships with strategic audiences is a crucial component of strategic management (J.E. Grunig & Hon, 1999). Organizations make better decisions when they listen to and collaborate with stakeholders before decision-making, rather than trying to persuade stakeholders to accept goals after decisions have been made. J.E. Grunig and Hon found that relationships develop better over a long term when organizations have consistent, short-term communications objectives. They also found that good relationships with organizational employees increases job satisfaction, and concluded that it is important to keep in touch with the status of relationships with key organizational stakeholders.

According to J.E. Grunig and Hon (1999), the elements of relationships include trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality. Items to measure these constructs were developed and tested by J.E. Grunig and Hon and are replicated here with modifications. The researcher removed the phrase “people like me” from the items in order to encourage all respondents to participate in the study.

Trust Items

The first variable to be examined was trust. J.E. Grunig and Hon defined trust as one party’s willingness to open up to the other party. They also suggest that trust embodies integrity; which is the belief that the organization is fair and just. Organizations should be dependable and do what they say they will do (Hatch, 1997). This dependability is an additional component of trust as defined by J.E. Grunig and Hon. The following items were used to measure the degree of trust the pubic relations practitioner has for the organization they represent.

1. This organization treats its public relations practitioners fairly and justly.

2. Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about the public relations department.
3. This organization can be relied on to keep its promise.
4. I feel very confident about this organization's skills.

Commitment Items

The second variable that was measured is commitment. Commitment is the extent to which each party believes and feels the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. The two dimensions of commitment are continuance, which refers to a certain line of action, and affective commitment, which is an emotional orientation (J.E. Grunig & Hon, 1999). The following items were used to measure commitment.

1. I feel that this organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment with its public relations department.
2. I can see that this organization wants to maintain a relationship with its public relations practitioners.
3. There is a long-lasting bond between this organization and its public relations practitioner.
4. I would rather work for with this organization than not.

Satisfaction Items

The third relational variable measured in this study is satisfaction. Satisfaction is the extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced (J.E. Grunig & Hon, 1999). The authors argue that a satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the cost. The following items were used to measure satisfaction.

1. I am happy with this organization.
2. Both the organization and I benefit from the relationship.
3. Most people enjoy dealing with this organization.
4. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this organization has established with me.

Control Mutuality Items

The final relationship variable to be measured was control mutuality. Control mutuality is the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another. J.E. Grunig and Hon (1999) argued that some imbalance is natural and stable relationships require the parties to have some control over each other. The following items were used to measure control mutuality.

1. This organization and its public relations practitioners are attentive to what each other say.
2. In dealing with its public relations practitioners, this organization has a tendency to throw its weight around.
3. This organization really listens to what public relations practitioner have to say.
4. The management of this organization gives its public relations practitioners enough say in the decision-making process.

Demographics

In addition to the primary variables of interest, the study also examined demographic variables of the public relations practitioners sampled. Practitioners were asked three demographic questions measuring both categorical and continuous variables. Categorical items included gender, accreditation status, position/title, salary, education, and organization type. Continuous variables included tenure in current positions and years of experience in public relations. The categorical variable response categories used in this study matched demographic variables used by PRSA to gather information from its members.

The operationalization of variables in this study produced 43 items for the three areas of interest (public relations roles, organizational decision-making styles, and relational variables) and three demographic items, resulting in a 46-item questionnaire. The next section describes the sampling procedures used to select participants for this study.

Sampling Procedures

To measure public relations practitioner perceptions of practitioner roles, organizational decision-making style, and relational variables, members of the Public Relations Society of America were selected as the population of interest. The Public Relations Society of America currently has more than 20,000 members, making it the largest professionally-based public relations membership organization in the world. Currently, PRSA members represent a variety of different types of organizations including corporations, counseling firms, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, hospitals, educational institutions, associations and professional service firms (PRSA Web site, February, 2005).

The sampling population for this study included public relations practitioners listed in the 2003-2004 Public Relations Society of America's Membership Register known as *The Blue Book*. The register lists the name, title, employing organization, and contact information for all members of PRSA. Generally, contact information for PRSA members includes a mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address. The register also lists the accreditation status of PRSA members. Austin and Pinkleton (2001), and Dillman (2000, as cited in Werder, 2002) reported that, for a population of 20,000, a final sample size of 377 is needed to produce findings with a +/- 5 % margin of error at a 95% confidence level. Therefore, 377 was set as the minimum number of questionnaire responses needed to produce meaningful results.

Previous studies using this population as a sample frame reported low response rates. Aldoory and Toth (2002) conducted a survey using a nationwide sample of PRSA members as their population. Having sent 4,000 surveys to PRSA members, they received 864 completed questionnaires, which yielded a response rate of 22%. To confirm that the low response rate did not reflect a discrepancy between their sample and the population, they ran frequencies and found that the returned sample had characteristics similar to the PRSA membership on the whole (p. 110). Aldoory and Toth (2004) conducted an additional study using PRSA practitioners as the population of interest. They distributed 4,000 printed questionnaires to a systematic random sample of current PRSA members. They received a total of 864 completed yielding a 22% response rate.

Additionally, Werder (2005) distributed online questionnaires to 895 PRSA members. Of these, 386 were invalid contacts, resulting in a valid sample of 509. Of these, 128 practitioners completed the online questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 25.1% and a completion rate of 14.3%.

As a result, the survey response rate was projected to be approximately 30%, and it was determined that 1,150 PRSA members were needed for the study to achieve the 377 requested responses.

The names of 1,150 public relations practitioners were randomly selected from *The Blue Book* using a random sampling method with a systematic start. Systematic random sampling was used because a complete listing of all current PRSA members was available to the researcher. Systematic random sampling involves selecting units from a population based on some system (Stacks, 2002). A skip interval was calculated based on previous research involving this population. According to Stacks (2002), it is important to give every member of the population an equal chance of being selected. When the skip interval was calculated, the researcher selected the interval and rounded up as recommended in Stacks (2002).

Public Relations Society of America members listed in *The Blue Book* appear in alphabetical order, so a sampling interval was calculated to ensure complete and comprehensive coverage of the sampling frame. The geographical parameters of this study were limited to the United States. Practitioners listed with a postal address outside of the United States were excluded from the sample. Educators and retirees were excluded from the sample, because they are less likely to currently be practice public relations in an organizational setting. The next section describes the procedures to collect data for this study.

Data Collection Procedures

An inspection of the contact information provided by PRSA members indicated that most practitioners in the sample listed an e-mail address. According to Stacks (2002)

Internet surveys have both advantages and disadvantages similar to other types of survey methods. Depending on the population being surveyed, Internet surveys can make data collection faster and easier. However, there are concerns all researchers must address when using Internet survey methods.

One concern with Internet surveys is a lack of confidentiality. Stacks (2002) stated that it is very important for researchers to hire a reliable firm to create the Internet survey's website because there is no guarantee of anonymity or confidentiality that can be provided to survey respondents. Stacks stated "it is important to note that most MIS departments have the capability of tracing e-mails and site visitors" (p. 183). An additional disadvantage stems from the sophistication it takes to answer an Internet survey. Additionally, a researcher must recognize that not all members of the population have access to a computer. Stacks stated that as people become more adept with technology and using the computer, several disadvantages of the methodology will disappear.

Internet surveys do offer certain advantages to the researcher, however. Advantages lie in the speed in which surveys are returned. Internet surveys also allow the researcher to automatically import survey responses into statistical analysis software.

Precautions were taken by the researcher to reduce sources of error when surveying the population. Dillman, Tortora, and Bowker (1998) suggest that researchers strive to design respondent-friendly Internet surveys. The authors define respondent-friendly design as the construction of Web questionnaires in a manner that increases the likelihood that sampled individuals will respond to the survey request, and that they will do so accurately, i.e., by answering each question in the manner intended by the surveyor.

Design features that are difficult to understand, take excessive time for people to figure out, embarrass people, and are uninteresting to complete, are expected to decrease people's likelihood of responding to Internet questionnaires.

Dillman, Tortora, and Bowker (1998) give researchers criteria for creating well-designed, respondent-friendly Web questionnaires. Respondent-friendly design will take into account the inability of some respondents to receive and respond to Web questionnaires with advanced programming features that cannot be received or easily responded to because of equipment, browser, and/or transmission limitations. Additionally, the authors state that HTML (Hypertext Mark-up Language) is used to create Web pages on the Internet. The increased ability of designers to use color, innovative question displays, split screens, embedded programs (applets), animation, sound tracks, and other advanced features that are not available in a paper questionnaire requires respondents to have more powerful computers and better software. Because of the numerous design options available, researchers must be cognizant that some respondents may not be able to respond to Internet surveys, because of technical incompatibilities that may exist. If this is the case, there is an increased chance for nonresponse error to occur.

The second criterion offered by Dillman, Tortora, and Bowker (1998) stated that respondent-friendly design must take into account both the logic of how computers operate and the logic of how people expect Internet surveys to operate. Furthermore, this means that effective communication is necessary to assist the respondent in learning how to take all of the computer actions necessary for responding to a survey efficiently and accurately. The authors state that these actions include tasks such as knowing when to click and double-click the mouse, when to use the return key, when and how to use a scroll bar, and how to change the size of windows. Web surveys that ignore these needs seem destined to discourage responses from less computer-literate members of the population, thus producing nonresponse error as well as poor measurement. Respondent-friendly design is aimed at reducing both of these important types of survey error. Additionally, it is recommended that the Internet survey be pretested for factors that could impede respondent access prior to administration.

Online Survey Administration

Public relations practitioners who listed an e-mail address in *The Blue Book* were surveyed using an online mode of administration. In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, online survey responses were not linked to e-mail addresses in any way. This was done in order to avoid ethical issues related to collecting information from unknown respondents. The researcher designed the online survey with four Web pages connected through hyperlinks that appeared as buttons on the computer screen. The first Web page served as an introduction page. The top of the page featured a headline that read “Organizational decision-making style, practitioner roles, and your relationship with your organization.” This was followed by an explanation of the purpose of the survey, a statement of appreciation for participating, a statement of confidentiality, and an e-mail address respondents could use to contact the researcher if problems occured when competing the questionnaire. A “continue” button was clearly labeled to take participants to the next section of the questionnaire.

The second Web page included brief, clearly written instructions addressing how respondents should go about completing the survey. Participants were told to use their mouse to click the appropriate response box when answering questions. A button labeled "start" lead participants to the third Web page, which contained the Internet questionnaire.

Practitioners were contacted three times. The words "Public Relations Research" was contained in the subject line of each e-mail message sent. Practitioners were contacted at the beginning of June with a prenotification e-mail informing them of the purpose of the survey and alerting them to expect a future request for survey participation. The message contained a personalized header that included the practitioner's first and last name, title, and organization. The text of the prenotification e-mail read as follows:

> Sometime next week you will receive an e-mail message requesting that you complete a brief online questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by a graduate student at the University of South Florida. The questionnaire concerns the practice of public relations. Specifically, it investigates how organizational decision-making styles and practitioner roles impact the relationship shared between the practitioner and the organization. I am writing in advance because many people are busy and like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one that will help public relations researchers and practitioners understand how organizations make decisions, and how those decisions impact the relationship between the practitioner and the organization. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is only with the help of generous people like you that this research can be successful.
>
> Informed consent statement: This research is being conducted under the

supervision of Dr. Kelly P. Werder, School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., CIS 1040 Tampa, FL 33620-7800. Your responses will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time without consequence. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this research and you will receive no compensation for your participation. If you have any questions concerning the procedures used in this study, you may contact me via e-mail at Jillboudreaux@tampabay.rr.com. Questions or concerns about your rights as a participant can be directed to the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board at (813) 974-9343.

Practitioners were contacted five days after sending the prenotification letter. Practitioners received an e-mail message requesting their participation in the survey. A personalized letter was sent to all practitioners in the population asking them to access the survey Web site, completing the items as honestly as possible. A hyperlink to the Web site was provided in the e-mail transmission to facilitate practitioner's connection to the site. The letter read as follows:

I am a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am writing you to ask for your help in research that investigates the practice of public relations. As a member of PRSA, you are part of a carefully selected sample of public relations practitioners who have been asked to assist with this survey. This study is an important one that will help public relations researchers and practitioners understand practitioner roles, how organizations make decisions, and the relationship that exists between practitioners and the organizations they represent. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete, and your responses will remain completely confidential. Your name will never be connected to your responses in any way. Please read the informed consent statement for information on your rights as a participant in this study. Please take a few minutes to contribute to the growth of your profession by completing the questionnaire at the Web address below. This link will no longer be active after July 18, 2005.

Survey URL - *Paste this link your Web browser page to access to the survey.*
http://compassmetrics.custhelp.com/cgibin/compass_metrics.cfg/websurveys/ws?_133=81

Sincerely,

Jill Boudreaux

M. A. Candidate

School of Mass Communications

University of South Florida

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One week after the e-mail request for participation was sent, practitioners received a reminder e-mail message. The message read as follows:

Recently, I asked you to participate in research about the practice of public relations. As a practitioner, you are the most knowledgeable of sources of information about how public relations concepts are applied in the real world.

I am a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am trying to gain a greater understanding regarding how organizational decision-making and public relations roles impact the relationship between practitioner and their organizations.

The informed consent statement below explains your rights as a participant in this study. Please take a few minutes to contribute to the growth of your profession by clicking on the link below and completing the questionnaire. Many thanks to those of you who have all ready completed this questionnaire. This link will no longer be active after July 18, 2005.

Survey URL - *Paste this link your Web browser page to access to the survey.*
http://compassmetrics.custhelp.com/cgibin/compass_metrics.cfg/websurveys/ws?_133=81

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Data Analysis

Approximately 1,150 e-mail surveys were sent to public relations practitioners listed in the 2003-2004 PRSA *Blue Book*. Once practitioners responded to the e-mail survey, their responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS, version 13. Data analysis began with obtaining descriptive statistics for the data set. After analyzing the descriptive statistics, the researcher tested for Chronbach's alpha, followed by factor analysis. To ensure the reliability of the measures designed, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine how the variables under study form subgroups among themselves, and whether or not, or to what extent the variables belong together. Factor analysis was used because it is a multivariate statistical procedure used to reduce and condense the data, it identifies how certain constructs form groups, and allows the researcher to investigate the relationships between variables (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Factor analysis places different variables into groups, allowing the researcher to come up with labels/concepts for the groups statistically.

After obtaining descriptive statistics and Chronbach's alpha, and conducting factor analysis, regression analysis was used to identify relationships between variables. Specifically, regression analysis was used to examine H1 and how the independent variables of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality influence the relationship quality. Regression analysis was also used to test H2, that practitioner role is a predictor of relationship quality, and H3 that organizational decision-making style is a predictor of relationship quality.

Prior to data analysis response statistics were calculated to determine the gereralizability of the results to the larger population. Of the total sample of 1,150 practitioners for the online survey, 250 had invalid e-mail addresses. This resulted in a valid sample of 900 practitioners. Of these exactly 200 completed the online questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 22.2%. Twenty-five practitioners refused to participate in the study, resulting in a refusal rate of 2.7 %.

The response statistics for this study are provided in Table 1. It should be noted that the total number of online survey respondents (*n*=200) produced a response rate of 22.2% and constitutes 1% of the total sample frame of 20,000 PRSA members.

Table 1 Survey Response Statistics

Variable	**Online Survey**
Undeliverable	250
Valid Sample	900
Refusals	25
Responses	200
Auto Replies	98
Other Replies	99

The response rates for this study is similar to the response rates reported by Aldoory and Toth (2004) and Werder (2005) for this population; therefore, the decision was made to proceed with data analysis. The next chapter contains the results of this study.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the public relations literature by identifying: (1) the predominant public relations role played by practitioners working in today's organizations; (2) by understanding and illustrating the most frequent decision-making styles used by today's organizations; (3) by identifying how today's public relations practitioners perceive their relationship with the organizations they currently represent. To meet this objective, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1: Trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality are predictors of relationship quality.

H2: Public relations practitioner role is a predictor of relationship quality.

P2.1. Managerial role is a positive predictor of relationship quality.

P2.2 Technical role is a negative predictor of relationship quality.

H3: Organizational decision-making style influences relationship quality.

All data analysis in this study were conducted using SPSS version 13. The level of significance accepted by the researcher was .05. Because of the nature of the survey instrument, partially completed questionnaires were used in the data analysis, so the number of respondents varied for each statistical test.

Descriptive Statistics and Frequencies

Prior to hypotheses testing frequencies and descriptive statistics were obtained for the data. These are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Public Relations Roles

The descriptive statistics for the public relations roles items are presented in Table 2. For the manager items (M) the highest mean score (m=6.14) was obtained by M1 "I plan action strategies for solving public relations problems." The lowest mean score (m=5.37) was produced for M4 "I diagnose public relations problems." The average mean for the manager items was m= 5.70. After condensing the four manager items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.70.

Of the technician items tested (T), the highest mean score (m=5.75) was obtained for T4 "I edit and/or rewrite the materials written by others in the organization." The lowest mean score (m=5.25) was obtained by T2 "I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications." The average mean for the technician items was m=5.55. After condensing the technician items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.46.

Decision-Making Styles

The descriptive statistics for the decision-making style items are shown in Table 3. There were a total of four organizational decision-making styles tested in this study including the rational model (R), the trial and error model (T/E), the coalition model (C) and the garbage can model (G).

For the four decision-making style items tested, the following results were obtained. For the rational items (R) the highest mean score (m=6.37) was obtained by R1 "In my organization, we always have necessary information before we make decisions."

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for the Public Relations Roles Items (Manager (M) and Technician (T))

Roles Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
M1: I plan action Strategies for Solving public relations problems	201	6.14	1.146
M2: I create opportunities for management	201	5.58	1.156
M3: I take responsibility for my PR program	199	5.72	1.446
M4: I diagnose PR problems	199	5.37	1.481
T1: Produce PR materials	198	5.83	1.167
T2: Produce Brochures	200	5.25	2.002
T3: Maintain Media Contacts	199	5.74	1.715
T4: Edit/rewrite materials	200	5.75	1.431

The lowest mean score (m=3.72) was produced for R4 "Once decisions are made in this organization, they are final." The average mean for the rational items before they were condensed was m= 5.08. After condensing the four rational items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.03.

Of the trial and error items tested (T/E), the highest mean score (m=3.91) was obtained for T/E1 "Although my organization agrees on goals and problems, it disagrees on how to reach the goals or solve the problems." The lowest mean score (m=3.17) was obtained by T/E3 "This organization often lacks information when it makes decisions." The average mean for the trial and error items before it was condensed was m=3.49.

After condensing the four trial and error items into a single item, the average mean was m=3.51.

For the coalition items (C) the highest mean score (m=5.32) was obtained by C4 “In my organization, the people with the most power make decisions.” The lowest mean score (m=3.11) was produced for C3 “There is often lack of agreement about the goals to be pursued or the issues to be addressed.” The average mean for the coalition items before being condensed into a single item was m= 4.39. After condensing the four coalition items into a single item, the average mean was m=4.38.

Of the garbage can items tested (G), the highest mean score (m=3.65) was obtained for G1 “There is often lack of information in my organization.” The lowest mean score (m=2.50) was obtained by G4 “Everyone in my organization makes his or her own decisions without consulting anyone else.” The average mean for the garbage can items before being condensed into a single iteam was m=3.23. After condensing the four garbage can items into a single item, the average mean was m=3.21.

Relational Perspective Items

For the relational perspective the following items were tested, and the following results were revealed. The descriptive statistics for the relational perspective items are illustrated in Table 4. There were a total of four relational perspective items tested in this study including the trust (T), commitment (Comm), satisfaction, (S), and control mutuality (CM).

For the four decision-making style items tested, the following results were obtained. For the Trust items (T) the highest mean score (m=5.68) was obtained by T3 “This organization can be relied on to keep its promise.” The lowest mean score (m=4.55) was produced for T2 “Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about the public relations department.” The average mean for the trust before being condensed into a single item was m= 5.29. After condensing the four trust items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.29.

Of the commitment (Comm) items, the highest mean (m=5.78) was obtained for Comm4 “I would rather work for this organization than not.” The lowest mean (m=5.03) was obtained for Comm3 “There is a long-lasting bond between my organization and its public relations practitioners.” The average mean for these items before being condensed was m=5.45. After condensing the four commitment items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.46.

For the satisfaction items (S) the highest mean score (m=5.83) was obtained by S4 “Both the organization and I benefit from the relationship.” The lowest mean score (m=5.57) was produced for S3 “Most people enjoy dealing with this organization.” The average mean for the satisfaction items before being condensed was m= 5.69. After condensing the four satisfaction items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.70.

Of the control mutuality can items tested (CM), the highest mean score (m=5.56) was obtained for CM1 “This organization and its public relations practitioner are attentive to what each other say.” The lowest mean score (m=3.06) was obtained by CM4 “When dealing with its public relations practitioners, this organization has a tendency to throw its weight around.” The average mean for the control mutuality items before being condensed was m=3.06. After condensing the four control mutuality items into a single item, the average mean was m=5.22.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Decision-Making Style Items (Rational (R), Trail-and Error (T/E), Coalition (C) and Garbage Can (G) Decision-making Style)

Decision-Making Style Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
R1: Have necessary information	200	6.37	.887
R2: Colleagues agree on goals	198	5.68	.991
R3: Know what decisions have been made	200	4.55	1.466
R4: Decisions made are final	199	3.72	1.443
T/E1: Disagree on how to reach goals	199	3.91	1.560
T/E2: Small decisions are made, rather than big ones	198	3.62	1.678
T/E3:Organization lacks information when making decisions	198	3.17	1.616
T/E4: Disagreement on how to reach goals	200	3.27	1.468
C1: Politics are involved in decision-making	200	4.91	1.798
C2: Negotiation involved in decision-making	199	4.22	1.548
C3: Lack of agreement about goals to be pursued	199	3.11	1.569
C4: People with power make decisions	197	5.32	1.497
G1: Lack of information	198	3.65	1.693
G2: Problems go unresolved	201	3.57	1.728
G3: Decision-making is an area of conflict	198	3.21	1.550
G4: Everyone makes their own decision	200	2.50	1.425

Demographics

The frequencies for the nominal demographic were also obtained. The demographic characteristics of the sample in this study were compared to those reported in the PRSA *Blue Book*. Enough similarity was found to provide support for the findings of this study.

The gender variable was examined first. Frequencies for gender are reported in Table 5. Of the 200 respondents to the online survey, 65% (n=131) were women, and 35% were men (n=70).

Next, the APR status of practitioners was examined. A total of 47.8% (n=96) of practitioners reported they were APR certified, making the majority, 50.7% (n=102), uncertified. Three participants (n=3) chose not to report their APR status accounting for 1.5% of the sample population.

Finally respondents were asked to report what type of organization they work for. Frequencies for the organization type variable are reported in Table 6. Categories used for organization type derived from PRSA and included: agencies, corporations, health and welfare, government, associations, educational institutions, and other. A total of 12.9% (n=26) worked for agencies, 27.9% (n=56) worked for corporations, 12.4% (n=25) worked for health and welfare organizations, 11.9% (n= 24) worked for the government, 7.5% (n=15), 16.9% (n=34) worked for educational institutions, and 10.4% (n=21) worked for other types of organizations.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Relational Variable Items (Trust (T), Commitment (Comm), Satisfaction, (S), and Control Mutuality (CM))

Relational Perspective Items	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
T1: Treats practitioners fairly and justly	200	5.43	1.433
T2: Org. concerned about PR department	199	4.55	1.597
T3: Org. keeps promises	200	5.68	1.476
T4: Confident with org. skills	200	5.51	1.345
Comm1: Maintains long-term commitment	200	5.42	1.433
Comm2: Org. wants to maintain relationship	199	5.60	1.255
Comm3: long-lasting bond	198	5.03	1.477
Comm4: Work with org. than not	199	5.78	1.463
S1: Happy with organization	200	5.72	1.343
S2: Pleased with established relationship	199	5.65	1.370
S3: People enjoy dealing with org.	199	5.57	1.249
S4: Both benefit from relationship	198	5.83	1.167
CM1: Attentive to what each other say	200	5.56	1.286
CM2: Practitioners have say in decision-making	197	5.11	1.670
CM3: Listens to what practitioners say	199	5.28	1.501
CM4: Org. throws its weight around	197	3.06	1.579

Table 5 Frequencies for Gender

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Female	131	65.2
Male	70	34.8
Total	201	100.0

ANOVAs were used to identify differences between gender and APR status. ANOVA results suggest significant difference between women and men for the manager role, technical role and the trust relational variable. Men had significantly higher means for the managerial activities than women, and women had higher means for the technical activities than men. Additionally, men had significantly higher mean scores on the trust variable. Regarding APR status, only the managerial role produced significant differences between practitioners who are accredited and those who are not.

Scale Reliability Analysis

Following an examination of the descriptives and frequencies, Chronbach's alpha was used as a measure of reliability for the multi-item scales used to test the variables of interest. Stacks (2002) suggest that "correlations below $\pm$.30 are 'weak,' between $\pm$.40 and $\pm$.70 'moderate,' between $\pm$.70 and $\pm$.90 'high,' and above $\pm$.90 'very high.' Reliability analysis and factor analysis were used to make a judgment regarding which items should be included in the final scale for each variable.

Table 6 Organization Type

Organization Type	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Agencies	26	12.9
Corporations	56	27.9
Health and Welfare	25	12.4
Government	24	11.9
Associations	15	7.5
Educational institutions	34	16.9
Other	21	10.4
Total	201	100.0

First, Chronbach's alpha was obtained to determine the reliability of items used to measure the public relations roles. The managerial alpha was .753. According to Stacks (2002), this alpha level is acceptable. The technician alpha was .587, indicating low reliability. Table 7 presents the alphas for practitioner role items.

Table 7 Practitioner Role Alphas

Variable	Alpha
Manager	.753
Technician	.587

Next, factor analysis of the eight items used to measure roles was conducted. A rotated component matrix was obtained. To be retained, an item had to be $\pm$.60 on a component and not greater than $\pm$.40 on any other component. Analysis revealed seven of the manager and technician items met this requirement; however, one item (T2) failed the test. This item was dropped and not included in further analysis. Table 8 presents results of the factor analysis of the roles items used in this study.

The scale reliabilities for the 16 items used to measure organization decision-making style were examined next. The Chronbach's alpha for the rational decision making style was .429. The alpha for the trial and error decision-making style was .727. The alpha for the coalition decision-making style was .594. The alpha for the garbage can decision-making style was .780. Table 9 presents these findings.

Factor analysis of the 16 decision-making style items was conducted next. Table 10 presents the loadings. After assessing these results one item was dropped from the rational model item set which increased the alpha to .588.

Table 8 Factor Analysis for Managerial and Technician Items

Manager/Technician Item	Component 1	Component 2
I plan action strategies for solving PR problems	.778	-.017
I create opportunities for management to hear the views of internal and external publics	.696	-.069
I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's PR department	.717	.120
I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.	-.214	.749
I diagnose PR problems and explain them to others in the organization	.817	.144
I maintain media contacts to place press releases*	.280	.560
I edit and rewrite the materials written by others	.254	.611
I handle the technical aspects of producing PR materials	-.093	.725

*This item was dropped from the item set and was not used for further analysis.

Next, the scale reliabilities for the relational variables were assessed. Chrobach's alphas for the relational variables were all fairly strong, ranging from .788 to .852. The alpha for trust was .788. The alpha for commitment was .845.

Table 9 Decision-Making Style Alphas

Decision-Making Style	Alpha (α)
Rational	.588
Coalition	.594
Trial and Error	.727
Garbage Can	.780

The alpha for satisfaction was .847. The alpha for control mutuality was .852. Table 11 presents these results.

Factor analysis of the 16 items of the relational variables resulted in two factors; however no discernable patterns could be identified. The factor loadings for the relational variables are presented in Table 12.

Finally, the reliability of the items used to measure practitioners' perceptions of the overall quality of their relationship with the organization was assessed. The items were averaged to create a single measure for relationship quality. The alpha for the three items was .799

Hypotheses Testing

As an initial step in testing the hypotheses proposed in this study, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships that were present between the variables. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Stacks and Hocking (1999) suggest that correlations below +.30 are 'weak', between +.40 and +.70 'moderate,' are between +.70 and +.90 'high,' and above +.90 'very high.'

The data analysis revealed a significant positive correlation (r=.296) between the manager role and the rational decision-making style. Significant negative correlations were found between the manager role and the other three decision-making models. A nonsignificant positive correlation (r=.092) was found between the technician role and the rational decision-making style. Nonsignificant negative correlations were identified between the technician role and the other three decision-making style models. trial and error decision making-style.

Table 10 Factor Analysis for Decision-Making Styles

(Rational Items (R), Trial and Error (T/E), Coalition (C), and Garbage Can (G) Items)

Decision-Making Style Items	**Component 1 Conflict Model**	**Component 2 Political Model**	**Component 3 Rational Model**	**Component 4 Autocratic Model**
R1: Have necessary information	**-.753**	.172	-.141	.037
R2: Colleagues agree on goals	-.106	.046	**-.920**	-.048
R3: Know what decisions have been made	-.422	-.276	-.555	-.001
R4: Decisions made are final	-.079	-.103	-.002	**.824**
T/E1: Disagree reaching goals	.352	.387	.123	.328
T/E2: Small decisions are made, rather than big ones	.580	.265	.189	.306
T/E3:Organization lacks information when making decisions	**.822**	.097	.046	.013
T/E4: Disagreement on how to reach goals	.503	.306	.495	.153
C1: Politics are involved in decision-making	.209	**.677**	.228	.168
C2: Negotiation involved in decision-making	.012	**.848**	-.065	-.068
C3: Lack of agreement about goals to be pursued	**.750**	.263	.167	.053
C4: People with power make decisions	.230	.209	.072	**.686**
G1: Lack of information	**.708**	.309	.223	.105
G2: Problems go unresolved	**.718**	.307	.100	.112
G3: Decision-making is an area of conflict	**.672**	.380	.125	.022
G4: Everyone makes their own decision	.583	-.105	.157	.152

The data analysis revealed significant positive correlations between the manager role and all of the relational variables. The technician role had a nonsignificant positive correlation with the trust variable (r=.015) and nonsignificant negative correlations with all of the relational variables. These results are presented in Table 13.

The data analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the rational decision-making style and each of the relational variables, r=.630 for trust, r=619 for commitment, r=.636 for satisfaction and r=635 for control mutuality. Significant negative correlations were found between the trial and error decision-making style and each of the relational variables, r=-.624 for trust, -.595 for commitment, r=-.637 for satisfaction, and r=-.631 for control mutuality. Significant negative correlations were found between the coalition decision-making style and each of the relational variables, r=-.514 for trust, r=-.500 for commitment, r=-.547 for satisfaction, and r=-.541 for control mutuality.

Table 11 Relational Variable Alphas

Relational Perspective Components	**Alpha**
Trust	.788
Commitment	.845
Satisfaction	.847
Control Mutuality	.852

Significant negative correlations were found between the garbage can model and each of the relational variables, r=-.647 for trust, -.585 for commitment, -.634 for satisfaction, and -.628 for control mutuality. These results are presented in Table 14. Significant positive correlations were found between trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality and overall relationship quality. These results are presented in Table 15.

To test the hypotheses proposed, multiple regression analysis was performed. H1 posited that trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality are predictors of relationship quality. To test H1, measures of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality were entered as independent (predictor) variables and overall relationship quality was entered as the dependent variable. The results were significant, $\underline{R}^2$=.736, adjusted $\underline{R}^2$= .729, $\underline{F}$(4,160)=111.479, $\underline{p}$=.000, indicating that nearly 74% ($\underline{R}^2$=.736) of the variance in quality of relationship is explained by the relational variables of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality.

Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual relational variables in predicting relationship quality. The measures of trust and satisfaction were the only variables that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $\underline{t}$(163)=2.713, $\underline{p}$=.007 for trust, and $\underline{t}$(163)=5.773, $\underline{p}$=.000 for satisfaction. Specifically, the satisfaction variable accounted for 48% (β=.482) of the unique item variance. The regression coefficients are shown in Table 16. These results provide support for H1.

H2 posited that public relations practitioner role influences practitioners' perceptions of the quality of their relationship with the organization. To test H2, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted. For each test, measures of managerial and technical roles were entered as independent (predictor) variables and one relational variable was entered as the dependent variable. Z-scores were used to collapse the overall relationship scale.

Table 12 Factor Analysis for the Relational Variable Items

(Trust (T), Commitment (Comm), Satisfaction, (S), and Control Mutuality (CM))

Relational Perspective Items	**Component 1** **Communal Relationship**	**Component 2** **Symmetrical Relationship**
T1: Treats practitioners fairly and justly	**.727**	.398
T2: Org. concerned about PR department	**.707**	.261
T3: Org. keeps promises	.339	**.766**
T4: Confident with org. skills	.195	**.727**
Comm1: Maintains long-term commitment	**.822**	.356
Comm2: Org. wants to maintain relationship	**.829**	.351
Comm3: long-lasting bond	.654	.431
Comm4: Work with org. than not	.181	**.811**
S1: Happy with organization	.474	.766
S2: Pleased with established relationship	.641	.599
S3: People enjoy dealing with org.	.292	.539
S4: Both benefit from relationship	.348	**.778**
CM1: Attentive to what each other say	**.785**	.152
CM2: Practitioners have say in decision-making	**.844**	.270
CM3: Listens to what practitioners say	**.707**	.261
CM4: Org. throws its weight around	.532	.395

Table 13 Public Relations Roles and Relational Variable Correlations

		Manager	Technician
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.395(**)	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.838
	N	197	196
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.388(**)	-.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.340
	N	195	192
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.400(**)	-.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.509
	N	193	191
Control Mutuality	Pearson Correlation	.442(**)	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.606
	N	192	190

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 14 Organizational Decision-Making Styles and Relational Variable Correlations

		Rational Model	**Trial and Error Model**	**Coalition Model**	**Garbage Can Model**
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.630(**)	-.624(**)	-.541(**)	-.647
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	195	192	193	194
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.619(**)	-.595(**)	-.500(**)	-.585
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	192	189	190	192
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.636(**)	-.637(**)	-.547(**)	-.634
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	191	188	190	191
Control Mutuality	Pearson Correlation	.635(**)	-.631(**)	-.541(**)	-.628
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	190	188	188	189

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

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 15 Relational Variables and Overall Relationship Correlations

		Overall Realtionship
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.770(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	177
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.782(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	174
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.830(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	172
Control Mutuality	Pearson Correlation	.709(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	171

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 16 Standardized Regression Coefficients for Relational Variables and Overall Relationship Quality

Relational Variable	Beta (β)	T	Significance
Trust	.212	2.713	.007
Commitment	.155	1.629	**.105**
Satisfaction	.482	5.773	.000
Control Mutuality	.065	.888	**.376**

The first regression analysis measured the influence roles have on trust. The results were significant, $\underline{R}^2$=.162, adjusted $\underline{R}^2$=.153, $\underline{F}$(2,192)=18.528, $\underline{p}$=.000, indicating that 16% ($\underline{R}^2$=.162) of the variance in trust is associated with practitioner role. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual role predictors. The measure of managerial role was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $t(193)=6.082$, $p=.000$. Specifically, the managerial role accounted for 40% ($\beta=.402$) of the unique item variance and the technician role accounted for less than 1% (β .001) of t .018. These results provide support for H2.

The next regression analysis measured the influence practitioner role has on commitment. The results were significant, $R^2=.159$, adjusted $R^2=.150$, $F(2,191)=17.865$, $p=.000$, indicating that nearly16% ($R^2=.159$) of the variance in commitment is associated with practitioner role. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual role predictors. The measure of managerial role was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $t(190)=5.887$, $p=.000$. Specifically, the managerial role accounted for 39% ($\beta=.393$) of the unique item variance. The public relations technician role was negatively associated with commitment and produced a weak Beta ($\beta=-.084$), $t=-1.265$. These results provide support for H2.

The next regression analysis measured the influence practitioner role has on satisfaction. The results were significant, $R^2=.168$, adjusted $R^2=.159$, $F(2,189)=18.914$, $p=.000$, indicating that nearly 17% ($R^2=.168$) of the variance in satisfaction is associated with practitioner role. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual role predictors. The measure of managerial role was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $t(188)=6.106$, $p=.000$. Specifically, the managerial role accounted for almost 41% ($\beta=.408$) of the unique item variance. The public relations technician role was negatively associated with satisfaction and produced a weak Beta (β=-.067), t=-1.007.These results provide support for H2.

The next regression analysis measured the influence practitioner role has on control mutuality. The results were significant, R^2=.206, adjusted R^2=.197, F(2,188)=24.088, p=.000, indicating that nearly 20% (R^2=.206) of the variance in control mutuality is associated with practitioner role. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual role predictors. The measure of managerial role was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, t(187)=6.918, p=.000. Specifically, the managerial role accounted for almost 45% (β=.452) of the unique item variance. The public relations technician role was negatively associated with control mutuality and produced a weak Beta (β=-.054), t=-819.These results provide support for H2.

The next regression analysis measured the influence practitioner role has on the overall relationship. The results were significant, R^2=.234, adjusted R^2=.225, F(2,173)=26.181, p=.000, indicating that nearly 23% (R^2=.234) of the variance in satisfaction is associated with practitioner role. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual role predictors. The measure of managerial role was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, t(172)=7.085, p=.000. Specifically, the managerial role accounted for almost 47% (β=.474) of the unique item variance. The public relations technician role was negatively associated with overall relationship quality and produced a weak Beta (β=-.110), t=-1.644.These results provide support for H2.

H3 posits that organizational decision-making style influences relationship quality. To test H3, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted. For each test, measures of organizational decision-making were entered as the independent (predictor) variable and relational variables were entered as the dependent variable.

The first regression analysis measured the influence of organizational decision-making style on trust. The results were significant $\underline{R}^2$=.547, adjusted $\underline{R}^2$=.537, $\underline{F}$(4,180)=53.174, $\underline{p}$=.000, indicating that nearly 55% ($\underline{R}^2$=.547) of the variance in trust is associated with the organizational decision-making style. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual relationship predictors. The measure for the rational decision-making style was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $\underline{t}$(179)=5.152, $\underline{p}$=.000. Specifically, the rational decision-making style accounted for almost 33% (β=.348) of the unique item variance. The trial and error decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}$(179)=-2.210, $\underline{p}$=.028. The coalition decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}$(179)=-1.722, $\underline{p}$=.087. The garbage can decision-making style variable also negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}$(179)=-2.210, $\underline{p}$=.028. These results provide support for H3.

The next regression analysis measured the influence of organizational decision-making style on commitment. The results were significant $\underline{R}^2$=.493, adjusted $\underline{R}^2$=.482, $\underline{F}$(4,178)=42.335, $\underline{p}$=.000, indicating that 49% ($\underline{R}^2$=.493) of the variance in commitment is associated with the organizational decision-making style. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual relationship predictors. The measure for the rational decision-making style was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $t(177)=5.583$, $p=.000$. Specifically, the rational decision-making style accounted for almost 40% ($\beta=.405$) of the unique item variance. The trial and error decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $t(177)=-2.032$, $p=.044$. The coalition decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $t(177)=-1.779$, $p=.077$. The garbage can decision-making style variable also negatively influenced trust, $t(177)=-.819$, $p=.414$. These results provide support for H3.

The next regression analysis measured the influence of organizational decision-making style on satisfaction. The results were significant $R^2=.543$, adjusted $R^2=.532$, $F(4,178)=51.612$, $p=.000$, indicating that 54% ($R^2=.543$) of the variance in satisfaction is associated with the organizational decision-making style. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual relationship predictors. The measure for the rational decision-making style was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $t(177)=5.293$, $p=.000$. Specifically, the rational decision-making style accounted for 36% ($\beta=.364$) of the unique item variance. The trial and error decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $t(177)=-2.557$, $p=.011$. The coalition decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $t(177)=-2.310$, $p=.022$. The garbage can decision-making style variable also negatively influenced trust, $t(177)=-1.055$, $p=.293$. These results provide support for H3.

The next regression analysis measured the influence of organizational decision-making style on control mutuality. The results were significant $R^2=.535$, adjusted $R^2=.524$, $F(4,176)=49.480$, $p=.000$, indicating that nearly 54% ($R^2=.535$) of the variance in control mutuality is associated with the organizational decision-making style. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual relationship predictors. The measure for the rational decision-making style was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $\underline{t}(175)=4.654$, $\underline{p}=.000$. Specifically, the rational decision-making style accounted for 32% ($\beta=.324$) of the unique item variance. The trial and error decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}(175)=-2.309$, $\underline{p}=.022$. The coalition decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}(175)=-2.789$, $\underline{p}=.006$. The garbage can decision-making style variable also negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}(175)=-1.294$, $\underline{p}=.197$. These results provide support for H3.

The final regression analysis measured the influence of organizational decision-making style on the overall relationship. The results were significant $\underline{R}^2=.450$, adjusted $\underline{R}^2=.436$, $\underline{F}(4,159)=31.735$, $\underline{p}=.000$, indicating that 45% ($\underline{R}^2=.450$) of the variance in the overall relationship is associated with the organizational decision-making style. Standardized coefficients (Betas) were examined to determine the relative strength of the individual relationship predictors. The measure for the rational decision-making style was the only variable that made a significant contribution to the prediction equation, $\underline{t}(158)=4.852$, $\underline{p}=.000$. Specifically, the rational decision-making style accounted for almost 40% ($\beta=.400$) of the unique item variance. The trial and error decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}(158)=-1.261$, $\underline{p}=.209$. The coalition decision-making style variable negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}(158)=-1.474$, $\underline{p}=.142$. The garbage can decision-making style variable also negatively influenced trust, $\underline{t}(158)=-1.172$, $\underline{p}=.243$. These results provide support for H3.

The next chapter provides a discussion of the results presented in this chapter. IT draws the results conclusions, discusses limitations, and examines the significance of this research. In addition, it proposes avenues for future research in this area of public relations inquiry.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationship between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she represents. This was achieved by identifying the role the public relations practitioner plays in his or her organization, understanding how organizations make decisions, and measuring the practitioners' levels of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality regarding their organization.

This study posited that public relations roles and organizational decision-making styles impact the quality of the relationship shared between the public relations practitioner and his or her organization. Specifically, it hypothesized that the manager role is a positive predictor of relationship quality and the technician role is a negative predictor of relationship quality. This research attempted to contribute to the relational theory by examining how practitioner roles and organizational decision-making style impact the levels of trust, commitment satisfaction, and control mutuality present in the relationship between the public relations practitioner and his or her organization. Specifically, the public relations manager role and the rational decision-making style was found to have a significant influence on the relational variable of satisfaction and the quality of the overall relationship.

The findings support the conclusion that practitioner roles and organizational decision-making style do influence the relationship that is shared between the practitioner and the organization he or she represents. In addition, the findings provide new information related to how specific organizational decision-making styles influence the relationship between the practitioner and the organization both positively and negatively.

H1 tested the relational theory, and reported that trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality are predictors of relationship quality between the practitioner and the organization. Satisfaction was the greatest contributor when attempting to measure the quality of the relationship. This supports previous research by Broom and Dozier, that found that, public relations managers generally report having higher levels of job satisfaction. Additionally, trust was a contributor to relationship quality, but it did not have the same significance as satisfaction when used as a predictor of relationship quality. Based on these findings, organizations should invest time and resources into evaluating how satisfied practitioners are with the organization and its values and practices. Satisfaction should be the variable future researchers work with when evaluating relationship quality between the practitioner and the organization.

H2 provided information regarding how public relations roles influence relationship quality. The findings indicated that if a practitioner is serving in the public relations manager role, then he or she will likely have higher levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality. Practitioners serving in the manager role may have higher levels of the relational components because they have more investment in the organization. Because managers are considered experts on public affairs, public opinion, and issues management, and are involved in strategic decision-making, and the organization's dominant coalition, it may indicate why they feel more connected to the organization, resulting in the formation of a positive perception of the relationship they share with the organization.

Trust was the only relational component positively associated with the technician role. The technician role was partially supported by the data, but more research is needed to determine the relationship between the relational components and the technician role. It may be argued that because of the negative connotation found in the word 'technician' that survey respondents serving in this role feel apathetic regarding forming a valued relationship with the organization they represent. Commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality were all negatively associated with the technician role. This finding may indicate that some technicians are inherently creative human beings who enjoy producing public relations materials for the organization they represent. These technicians may not have a deep desire to travel through the organizational ranks to achieve manager status. One may argue that this is why the alpha's for the technician constructs scored so low. Additionally, the manager-technician dichotomy is no longer valid because both managers and technicians are required to have similar knowledge and skills when working in the organizations public relations department. It may be argued that overlap in responsibilities and duties between the two roles also contributed to the low alpha scores for the the technician role.

Public relations technicians are not involved in high-level strategic decision-making at the organizational level. Because of this they may not feel they are committed to the organization. It may be argued that technicians feel that they may be replaced or let go by upper management in the organization, or by the manager in the public relations department. Additionally, this may contribute to why technicians may be apathetic regarding their status in the organization, but they may also be satisfied with the job they are doing. Future research should evaluate what happens when technician's opinions are taken into account regarding when the organization is making important organizational strategic decisions, rather than involving them only in the strategic decision making of their public relations department. More research is also needed to break through the manager-technician dichotomy that is established in the literature. It may also be necessary to re-name the role of the technician.

The research also indicated that organizational decision-making style has an impact on the perceived quality of the relationship between the organization and its public relations practitioners. The rational decision-making style is the most significant decision-making style an organization can use if it wants to have a quality relationship with its public relations practitioners. The research findings for the rational decision-making style indicated that each of the relational components were statistically significant. This decision-making style is characterized as a process that takes place when there is agreement on goals and/or the problems that need addressing. It had a positive relationship with on trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality. It may be argued that, because the decision-makers agree on what goals and/or problems need resolving, that it is easy for everyone to feel like a part of the process. If all decision-makers have a perception of being an important element of the process, then perhaps this is why the rational decision-making style had a positive impact on the relationship between the practitioner and the organization.

Each of the other decision-making styles, trial and error, coalition, and garbage can influenced the level of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality negatively. Regarding the trial and error model, there is often agreement on goals and/or the problems that need resolving, but a lack of agreement on how to achieve the goals or solve the problem. It can be argued that because the persons involved in the decision-making process agree on goals and/or problems, but disagree on how to achieve the goal or solve the problem, a feeling of uncertainty in the decision-making process results. This uncertainty may be a contributor to why the relational components are negatively influenced. Additionally, the trial and error decision-making process often results in small, incremental decisions instead of designing a comprehensive blueprint for achieving goals or solving problems. Because decisions are made haphazardly,without a clear purpose, one may argue that this is a contributor to why the trial and error decision-making process negatively impacts the relational components.

The coalition decision-making process also negatively influenced each of the relational components. This is not surprising because the coalition decision-making process is characterized by having the people with the most power in the organization making the decisions. There is also a significant amount of politics and power involved in this decision-making process. Previous research has indicated that power and political activity within organizations has a negative impact on the relational components.

The garbage can decision-making process also negatively impacted the relational components. The garbage can decision-making process is characterized by as an outcome or interpretation of several relatively independent streams within an organization. This decision-making style is used when the environment is poorly understood or when key decision-makers are not available to participate in the process. This process forces decision-making to become random, and decision-making becomes an area of conflict. The data indicating that this process negatively influences the relational components is not surprising because there is not certainty involved in the decision-making process and complete information is not available. Decisions are made in haste, which can be argued to result in negative levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality.

The results of this study have contributed to the current public relations roles, organizational decision-making style, and relational theory by identifying how practitioner roles and organizational decision-making style influence the quality of the relationship shared between the practitioner and the organization. Conclusions of the research will be discussed in the following section.

Conclusions

Based on the information presented, it is clear that both public relations roles and organizational decision-making style has an impact on the relationship shared between the public relations practitioner and the organization he or she represents. In linking theory to practice it is important for organizations with public relations departments to invest time and resources into understanding how they can build and maintain better relationships with their public relations practitioners by evaluating the specific decision-making style they use. By involving both the public relations manager and technician in the strategic decision-making process, using the rational model, it may be predicted that both managers and technicians will be more satisfied with the organization. It is equally as important for organizations to identify the decision-making styles that have a negative influence on the relational variables. This is necessary in order to try and build better relationships with the public relations practitioner.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the low response rate. Because the response rate was not at the 30% standard, results are unable to be generalized to the entire Public Relations Society of America population. The second limitation of the study was technical problems with Online survey administration. Technical problems resulted when the first e-mail merge was to be sent. E-mails were sent to a part of the population, but not the whole population. As a result some practitioners had to be contacted twice, resulting in a refusal to participate in the research. As a result of these technical problems, only three contacts were sent to practitioners instead of the originally planned four. The third limitation of the study was the low reliabilities for several of the scales.

Future Research

Future research conducted should strive to contact online survey participants during the fall or early spring months. In this study the online questionnaire was sent during the third week of July when several public relations practitioners were out of the office because of summer vacation. If the study was to be replicated, it may be argued that the desired 30 percent response rate would more realistically be achieved, resulting in stronger alphas and the ability to generalize the results of the study to the total population sampled.

Future research in this area should focus, in depth, on the four organizational decision-making styles to better understand how the decision-making models impact the quality of the relationship shared between the practitioner and his or her organization.

Future research should also evaluate the technician role and what is needed to improve their levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality with the organization. Future research addressing the relationship between the technician and his or her organization should not assume that the technician is unhappy with the relationship they share with their organization simply because of the role they play in their public relations department.

Additionally, qualitative research should be conducted to add richness and texture to the quantitative data provided here. The decision-making style items need further development and testing because of the low reliabilities that are reported in this study. It is also important for future research to evaluate how other variables such as gender and salary impact the quality of the relationship shared between the public relations practitioner and his or her organization.

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Appendix A

Appendix A Continued

Prenotification Letter

Early next week you will receive an e-mail message requesting that you complete a brief online questionnaire for an important research project being conducted by a graduate student at the University of South Florida. The questionnaire concerns the practice of public relations, Specifically, it investigates how organizational decision-making styles and practitioner roles impact the relationship shared between the practitioner and the organization. I am writing in advance because many people are busy and like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. The study is an important one that will help public relations researchers and practitioners understand how organizations make decisions, and how those decisions impact the relationship between the practitioner and the organization. Thank you for your time and consideration. It is only with the help of generous people like you that this research can be successful.

Informed consent statement: This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kelly P. Werder, School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., CIS 1040 Tampa, FL 33620-7800. Your responses will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time without consequence. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this research and you will receive no compensation for your participation. If you have any questions concerning the procedures used in this study, you may contact me via e-mail at Jillboudreaux@tampabay.rr.com. Questions or concerns about your rights as a participant can be directed to the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board at (813) 974-9343.

Appendix A Continued

Request For Participation Letter

I am a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am writing you to ask for your help in research that investigates the practice of public relations.

As a member of PRSA, you are part of a carefully selected sample of public relations practitioners who have been asked to assist with this survey. This study is an important one that will help public relations researchers and practitioners understand practitioner roles, how organizations make decisions, and the relationship that exists between practitioners and the organizations they represent.

The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete, and your responses will remain completely confidential. Your name will never be connected to your responses in any way. Please read the informed consent statement for information on your rights as a participant in this study. Please take a few minutes to contribute to the growth of your profession by completing the questionnaire at the Web address below. This link will no longer be active after July 18, 2005.

Survey URL - ***Paste this link into your Web browser page to access to the survey.***
http://compassmetrics.custhelp.com/cgibin/compass_metrics.cfg/websurveys/ws?_133=81

Informed consent statement: This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kelly P. Werder, School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., CIS 1040 Tampa, FL 33620-7800. Your responses will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time without consequence. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this research and you will receive no compensation for your participation. If you have any questions concerning the procedures used in this study, you may contact me via e-mail at Jillboudreaux@tampabay.rr.com. Questions or concerns about your rights as a participant can be directed to the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board at (813) 974-9343.

Appendix A Continued

Public Relations Roles, Organizational Decision-Making Style, and Relationship

Practitioner Questionnaire

A public relations graduate student in the School of Mass Communication at the University of South Florida is conducting this survey. The research will aid the graduate student in not only competing a graduate thesis, but will provide invaluable insight to the public relations field, as well as the current public relations body of literature. If you could please take a few minutes to answer the following questionnaire, your responses will be greatly appreciated. The success of this survey depends on the cooperation of public relations practitioners like you. All responses will remain confidential, and there will be no attempt made to contact you personally. Your identity will not be included as part of the data.

*Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree.

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

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1. I plan action strategies for solving public relations problems.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

2. Overall, my relationship with the organization is good.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

3. In my organization, we always have necessary information before we make decisions.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

4. Although my organization agrees on goals and problems, it disagrees on how to reach the goals or solve the problems.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

5. There are a lot of politics involved in decision-making in my organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

6. There is often a lack of information my organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

7. This organization treats its public relations practitioners fairly and justly.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

8. I feel this organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to its public relations practitioners.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

9. I am happy with this organization.

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

10. This organization and its public relations practitioner are attentive to what each other say.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

11. The management of this organization gives its public relations practitioners enough say in the decision-making process.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

12. I can see that this organization wants to maintain a relationship with its public relations practitioners.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

13. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this organization has established with me.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

14. This organization really listens to what public relations practitioners have to say.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

15. I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

16. My colleagues and I mostly agree on the goals we need to reach.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

17. In my organization, we tend to make small, less important decisions rather than big ones.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

18. There is a lot of negotiation in decision-making in my organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

19. Problems in my organization often go unresolved.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

20. Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about the public relations department.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

21. I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's public relations program.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

22. There is a long-lasting bond between my organization and its public relations practitioners.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

23. Generally, I have a poor relationship with this organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

24. Everyone mostly knows what decisions have been made and how to proceed.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

25. I produce brochures, pamphlets, and other publications.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

26. This organization often lacks information when it makes decisions.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

27. There is often a lack of agreement about the goals to be pursued or the issues to be addressed.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

28. Decision-making is an area of conflict in my organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

29. Most people enjoy dealing with this organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

30. In my organization, the people with the most power make the decisions.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

31. Everyone in the organization makes his or her own decision without consulting anyone else.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

32. I diagnose public relations problems and explain them to others in the organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

33. I maintain media contacts to place press releases.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

34. Once decisions are made in this organization, they are final.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

35. I feel very confident with this organization's skills.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

36. In my organization, there is frequent disagreement about how to reach our goals.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

37. I edit and/or rewrite the materials written by others in the organization.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

38. I would rather work for this organization than not.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

39. When dealing with its public relations practitioners, this organization has a tendency to throw its weight around.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

40. Both the organization and I benefit from the relationship.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

41. Please rate the overall quality of your relationship with the organization on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest quality.
1___ 2___ 3___ 4___ 5___ 6___ 7___ 8___ 9___ 10___

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

42. I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

43. This organization can be relied on to keep its promise.
1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided 5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

Demographic Information:

1. Please indicate your gender:

___ Female
___ Male

2. Are you an accredited PRSA member?

___ Yes
___ No

3. What type of organization do you work for? Please indicate the <u>primary</u> nature of the work your organization performs.

___ Agencies
___ Corporations
___ Health & Welfare
___ Government
___ Associations
___ Educational Institutions
___ Other

Appendix A Continued

Reminder E-mail

Recently, I asked you to participate in research about the practice of public relations. As a practitioner, you are the most knowledgeable of sources of information about how public relations concepts are applied in the real world.

I am a graduate student at the University of South Florida. I am trying to gain a greater understanding regarding how organizational decision-making and public relations roles impact the relationship between practitioner and their organizations.

The informed consent statement below explains your rights as a participant in this study. Please take a few minutes to contribute to the growth of your profession by clicking on the link below and completing the questionnaire. Many thanks to those of you who have all ready completed this questionnaire. This link will no longer be active after July18, 2005.

Survey URL - ***Paste this link into your Web browser page to access to the survey.***
http://compassmetrics.custhelp.com/cgibin/compass_metrics.cfg/websurveys/ws?_133=81

Informed consent statement: This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kelly P. Werder, School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., CIS 1040 Tampa, FL 33620-7800. Your responses will remain confidential to the extent provided by law. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, and you have the right to withdraw consent at any time without consequence. There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this research and you will receive no compensation for your participation. If you have any questions concerning the procedures used in this study, you may contact me via e-mail at Jillboudreaux@tampabay.rr.com. Questions or concerns about your rights as a participant can be directed to the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board at (813) 974-9343.