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Effects of university website on students' evaluations of Fort Hays State University

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EFFECTS OF UNIVERSITY WEBSITE ON STUDENTS' EVALUATIONS
OF FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Fort Hays State University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Science

by

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ABSTRACT

The Internet has brought significant developments and challenges to universities and their publics. Meanwhile, the channels to deliver messages have gradually become digitized through the strong impact of the Internet, which offers an additional channel for public relations practitioners. With a survey conducted at Fort Hays State University (FHSU), this study was designed to investigate the relationship between students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluations of the university. This study also provided a practical method for FHSU to evaluate how the university website satisfies the students or other publics.

Key words: University relations University website Public relations

Website assessment University evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet, which originated in the 1960s as a project by the United States Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, is considered one of the most record-breaking achievements in the last century (Dykehouse & Sigler, 2000). The Internet not only impacts several generations and makes differences at every corner of our world with its multiple functions but also consistently affects the communication process by shortening the distance and reducing the cost of communication. Since technologies for online public relations were introduced, the function of public relations is connected with the concept of interactivity (Kelleher, 2007). According to Ledingham and Bruning (2000), public relations is one of the most important research topics for communication practitioners. Associated with the Internet, public relations services have been regarded as a key factor in modern society, and contribute to the success for many organizations.

The Internet plays an essential role at numerous universities, providing distance learning for students, simplifying working procedures, and branding the university far and wide. As the Internet facilitates the process of communication by conquering the time and space limitation, universities need to keep pace with the emerging technologies. By taking advantage of the Internet, universities can achieve a widely influential reputation when they recruit students from different countries.

The World Wide Web (www) is growing toward the domination of communications in the 21st century (Dykehouse & Sigler, 2000). Internet technology is changing the manner in which people offer and seek information on a daily basis. The tactical tools of the Internet allow us to do things with others, who share our interests (Holtz, 1999).

Therefore, the effect of the Internet on collaboration is profound. With much of the academic user community as well as other potential users already online, it is clear that online marketing and public relations using the Internet have relevance for today's universities (Ashcroft & Hoey, 2001). Since the Internet strongly impacts numerous activities related to universities, universities need to pay attention to the website for improving the users' satisfaction.

While universities publish their website in different styles, it is impossible to require a unified vision and mission for all universities. However, setting up a standard for evaluating the communication effectiveness of a university and its website is dispensable. Fort Hays State University is the only state-assisted institution in western Kansas with an enrollment of more than 9,000 students, and it is dedicated to provide affordable success for the public (Fort Hays State University, 2009). The university needs a study to investigate the relationship between students' satisfaction with the university website and their evaluation of the university. With a survey conducted at FHSU, this study attempted to analyze the relationship between students' satisfaction with the university website and their evaluations of FHSU.

Definitions

Generally, this study investigates the areas of public relations, higher education, and the Internet. This study is also designed to offer an answer to the research question. For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined.

Public relations (PR).

PR is "building relationships with publics that constrain or enhance the ability of the organization to meet its mission" (Grunig, 1992, p. 20).

The World Wide Web (www).

The American Heritage College Dictionary (2002) defines the World Wide Web as “the complete set of documents residing on all Internet servers that use the HTTP protocol, accessible to users via a simple point-and-click system” (p.1580).

Website & Webpage.

According to The American Heritage College Dictionary (2002), a website is “a set of interconnected webpages prepared and maintained as a collection of information by a person or organization”, and a webpage is “a document on the World Wide Web, consisting of an HTML file and any related files, usually hyperlinked to other such documents” (p.1554).

Internet.

The Internet is “an interconnected system of networks that connects computers around the world via the TCP/IP protocol – a protocol for communication between computers, used as a standard for transmitting data over networks and as the basis for standard Internet protocols [T (ransmission) C (ontrol) P (rotocol) /I (nternet) P (rotocol)]” (p.725, p.1414). In this study, Net is a synonym for Internet.

Homepage.

A homepage is the opening or main page of a website, usually for greeting visitors and providing site or owner information (The American Heritage College Dictionary, 2002). Organizational home pages are used for informing consumers and media, enhancing the organization’s image, responding to activist publics’ challenges and even conducting interactive press conference (Banks, 2000). Liu (1997) suggested, “One of the

most popular methods to enter into cyber-marketing has been to establish a home page or Web site on the Internet” (p.335).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many scholars have contributed their reviews of public relations and higher education, and online public relations (Grunig & Hon, 1999; Ihlen & van Ruler, 2007; Pompper, 2006; Maguad, 2007; Rowley, et al., 2002; Jo & Jung, 2005; Kent, 1998). Specific literature that supported this study can be divided into three sections: public relations, public relations on the Net, and public relations and higher education.

Public Relations (PR)

Public relations has become a broad field and covers many varied activities, and defining all that a public relations person does is impossible (Bernays, 1961). Many practitioners struggle with the fact that putting PR into practice is difficult, and they often find their role misunderstood. A survey of New York chapter members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), for example, found that 92 percent of participants believed that most people do not understand what public relations is (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001). The following elements are considered to be involved in any comprehensive definition of public relations:

- Public relations is a management function.
- Public relations involves two-way communication.
- Public relations is a planned activity.
- Public relations is a research-based social science.
- Public relations is socially responsible (Guth & Marsh, 2006, p.7).

Public relations is essentially about an organization's reputation and about the ways many different types of people perceive an organization, and public relations is also concerned with the control of information through effective communication (Ashcroft &

Hoey, 2001). Despite the fact that public relations is a field undergoing continued change in terms of perspective, role, and evaluation, the contribution of public relations to corporate goals is still a mystery to much of the senior management and many practitioners, and the field suffers from the lack of an agreed-on approach for evaluating public relations initiatives (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000).

Public relations practitioners are questioning whether their services work for customers, and they attempt to use evaluation to answer the question (Elmer, 2001).

Grunig and Hon (1999) advanced six indicators for evaluating public relations:

- Trust, which refers to one party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party, is a complicated concept and has several underlying dimensions: integrity, dependability, and competence.
- Control mutuality indicates the degree to which parties agree on who has rightful power to influence one another.
- Commitment is the extent to which one party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote.
- Satisfaction, the extent to which one party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced, also can occur when one party believes that the other party's relationship maintenance behaviors are positive.
- In a communal relationship, both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other, even when they get nothing in return.

- Exchange relationship is defined as one party giving benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future (p.3).

Public Relations on the Net

“Before the Internet, organizing an effort required that activists follow a fairly well-prescribed sequence of activities, beginning with an individual or small group handing out leaflets on street corners for months or even years. On the Internet, the same process can occur in a matter of hours or days” (Holtz, 1999, p. 176). The process is simplified with the Internet. As the Internet has great potential for facilitating dialogue between organizations and MAPs (Markets, audience, and publics), this new communication channel must be integrated into a practitioner’s toolbox. In addition, the Internet requires new skills that are becoming essential for practitioners (Heath & Coombs, 2006). However, simply transforming the basic ethos, roles, and practices of public relations is a mistake because the Internet invites change. The new technologies nonetheless have changed the communication environment for public relations and in no arena are more evident than in international programs and relationships. By transforming public concepts of time and space, technology has transformed the possibilities of international commerce and communication. Compared to other technologies and innovations, the Internet is “expected to have the most profound impacts on the transformation of public relations” (Banks, 2000, p.89).

Today, public relations plays a major supporting role in the marketing of goods or services by business firms and some nonprofit agencies (Cutlip, 1995). The practices are changing associated with public relations theory, which is rooted in different disciplinary

fields and schools of thought (Ihlen & van Ruler, 2007). However, according to Jo (2006), “the study of public relations and communication management has shifted dramatically in the last few years, from a microfocus on techniques and programs to a macrofocus on relationships” (p. 227). The roles, missions, duties and techniques of the public relations staff members are to be reconstructed in accordance with the new pedagogical requirements in the information age (Barry, 2005).

Internet technologies have had a significant implication for public sector organizations (McIvor, McHugh, & Cadden, 2002). The use of the Internet makes it possible for public relations professionals to communicate with various key constituencies without the gate-keeping function of other mass media (Jo & Jung, 2005). The Internet consists of tactical tools that allow public relations practitioners to send e-mails, surf the Web, and participate in discussions with anybody who shares public interests (Holtz, 1999). The powerful functions of the Internet could not be overlooked. “PR practitioners are expected to have expertise on group and team communication as well as organizational behavior in the flux of constantly changing information and communication technologies. What they need even more is a new way of thinking about PR, which is interactive and networked” (Hurme, 2001, p. 74).

Currently, organizations of any size and in any sector can benefit from the Internet; however, there is not a guarantee of success to any organization adopting the Internet (Bell & Tang, 1998). As a result, the evaluation for measuring how well the organization performs online functions becomes necessary. When it comes to the elements used by an organization to develop its online relationships, the following items were investigated by

the author to evaluate the users' satisfaction with the organization website according to the earlier studies, and the list was developed by the author of this study:

Layout.

Vorvoreanu (2008) suggested public relations practitioners carefully consider the interaction between content, layout, organization, and navigation, as members of the public derived meaning not only from content elements, but also from their position on the page and from the ease of accessing them.

Navigation.

Including extensive, clear, straightforward, easily accessible information about the organization, its practices, its history, and its values, a website should ensure visitors find the sites easy to figure out and understand with a simple and straightforward navigation (Kent, 1998, & Vorvoreanu, 2008).

Security.

Hoffman and Novak (1994) indicated that if the Internet became the backbone of a viable information superhighway, security and privacy should be included as a number of other hurdles that the public relations practitioners must face.

Art and Design.

Kent (1998) suggested organizational image as an important part for any organization to communicate with its publics. Vorvoreanu (2008) mentioned that publics derived meaning about the organization's intentions about communicating and establishing relationships with them from subtle aspects of website design, such as the location on page, the graphics, and the colors.

Useful information.

Kent (1998) proposed the Usefulness of Information as an idea of hierarchy and structure, and he also suggested,

“Sites should make an effort to include information of general value to all publics - even if a site contains primarily industry, or user, specific information. Relationships with publics must be cultivated not only to serve the public relations goals of an organization, but so that the interests, values, and concerns of publics are addressed” (p.327).

Interaction.

There are multiple resources for constructing visually appealing and economically successful Web sites. The Web provides public relations practitioners an opportunity to create dynamic and lasting relationships with publics; however, organizations that wish to create dialogic communication with publics through the Internet need to specially train the organizational members who respond to electronic communication. Consequently, dialogic loops incorporated into Web sites must be completed (Kent, 1998).

Interface.

The intuitiveness/ease of the interface is considered as a principle for visitors who come to Web sites for informational purposes or curiosity. Sites should be dynamic enough to encourage all potential publics to explore them, information rich enough to meet the needs of very diverse publics, and interactive enough to allow users to pursue further informational issues and dialogic relationships (Kent, 1998).

Even though the elements that used to measure a website have been studied, the efforts for employing the evaluation model into practice are still deficient. As White and

Raman (2000) indicate, very little research about present effectiveness has been done, but there is a strong belief that Web site communication will be increasingly important in the future. “The highly competitive nature of websites has suggested a need to study and address the needs and preferences of both current and prospective Web users” (Ng, Parette, & Sterrett, 2003, p. 242).

Public Relations and Higher Education

Higher education is an indispensable sector within society. In developed countries, higher education is characterized by the convergence of an information rich society, the rapid growth of information technology, and the emergence of learning themes, which focus on the learner (Hernon, Dugan, & Schwartz, 2006). With regard to scholarship and academics, higher education institutions are considered the gold standard and the model for organizations around the world (Ruben, 2004). In recent years, numerous universities have established public relations units for better communication with students, alumni, donors, neighboring communities, and other publics. These units are also responsible for managing crises, boosting rankings, increasing donations, and carrying out a variety of other tasks (Luo, 2005). According to Szymanska (2003),

“Today, good public relations is crucial to the successful functioning of any educational institution. Public relations activities that focus on emphasizing distinctive competencies and values are the main condition for the accomplishment of the set objectives and mission of higher education in the contemporary world. The main goal of public relations in higher education institutions is the thoughtful creation of a positive image of them in the social and economic environment in such

a way that the clarity and distinctiveness of the image enables clear-cut identification” (p.471).

Colleges and universities in the United States today are challenged by the increasing demands for greater accountability and transparency and “are beginning to respond to public’s need for reliable information about the performance” (Bennett, 2008, p. 36).

To fully commit to satisfying and anticipating students’ needs, universities should clearly identify their current and potential publics because the failure to identify them correctly results in wasted efforts (Sirvanci, 1996). Within the academic environment, students are considered to be the most important internal customers of higher education. On the administrative side, students are clearly the primary internal customers for many facilities on the campus (Maguad, 2007). The most important public of a university consists of its students, especially the enrolled students, who create in society the image of their school and of the educational sector in general at any one moment (Szymanska, 2003).

“For many educational institutions, the World Wide Web has become a major avenue of communication with its constituencies” (Weiss & Faith, 1999, p.125). According to Will and Callison (2006), “institutions of higher learning should put real effort into using the new medium as a communication tool, such as having Web sites that provide the information students want in an easily accessible manner” (p. 180). Information technology (IT) is a major factor driving changes in the way students, faculty, and most people communicate, learn, find, and use information (Hernon, et al, 2006). “The impact of digital networks and electronic information services and sources, in a variety of media, on academic information users and learners is potentially

enormous, and permeates all of the arenas of research, teaching, publishing and communication” (Rowley, et al., 2002, p. 108).

There is a need to discuss, debate, and deliberate the merits of any proposed change. As with any new quality or management system, the path for higher education to assimilate new processes is not smooth (Sorensen, Furst-Bown, & Moen, 2005). What is significantly different today are neither the problems nor issues confronting higher education, but the full-scale arrival of the Internet and its inherent age of information. Most people have a vague and uncomfortable awareness of information overload set against a shrinking global community (Breivik & Gee, 2006). Instead of engaging in a great deal of emphasis on media relations for public relations practitioners, scholars have advocated a practical approach to university public relations that moves beyond media relations and embraces strategic management, and two-way symmetrical communication (Luo, 2005).

Although online communication seems to be almost everywhere when looking at public relations according to Kelleher (2007), the Internet use in public relations is still in its infancy, and there are only a few research studies on the use of the World Wide Web in public relations (Jo & Jung, 2005). Kent (1998) offered dialogic communication as a theoretical framework to guide relationship building between organizations and publics, while Wright (1998) conducted the first research study to examine the Internet and interactive media from the perspective of the chief communications policy maker in the nation's largest corporations. Later, Ho (2001) proposed a framework to evaluate web sites from a customer's perspective of value-added. Dealing with the issues of online public relations in higher education institutions, public relations practitioners call for an

evaluation of the institution's website and performance. Specifically, this study is designed to investigate how students' satisfaction with the Fort Hays State University website influences their evaluations of the university. The research question is:

RQ₁: Is students' satisfaction with the Fort Hays State University website related to their evaluations of the university in the areas of Trust, Control Mutuality, Satisfaction, Commitment, Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship?

METHOD

This study collected quantitative data for analyzing the students' satisfaction with the official website of Fort Hays State University and their evaluations of the university. The study examined if students' satisfaction with the university website correlated with their evaluations of the university.

During this one-shot case study, a survey was distributed for collecting quantitative data. One-shot case studies are designed so that some manipulation of the independent variable occurs with an attempt to measure its effect on the dependent variable (Merrigan & Huston, 2004).

Participants

A total of 105 participants filled out the questionnaire. However, six questionnaires were invalid because not all the questions had been completed. Thus, 99 students' responses were analyzed.

The sample consisted of 48 male (48.48%) and 51 female (51.51%) participants. Thirty-eight participants (38.4%) were between the ages of 18 and 20 years; 61 participants (61.6%) were between the ages of 21 and 30 years. Twenty-two participants (22.2%) were freshmen; 15 participants (15.2%) were sophomores; 18 participants (18.2%) were juniors; 38 participants (38.4%) were seniors; and 6 participants (6.1%) were graduate students. As for ethnicity, 15 Asian/Pacific Islander students (15.2%), 77 Caucasian/White students (77.8%), 1 African American/Black student (1%), 3 Hispanic/Latino students (3%), and 3 Middle Eastern students (3%) took the survey.

All participants were asked for the frequency, the main locations, the most recent time, and the major purposes of their visits to the FHSU website. Sixty-four students

(64.6%) who accessed the website daily; 14 students (14.1%) accessed the website more than three times per week; 12 students (12.1%) accessed the website two or three times per week; and 9 students (9.1%) accessed the website once a week. Fifty-three students (53.5%) accessed the website off campus most of the time, while forty-five students (45.4%) accessed the website on campus most of the time. Only one student (1%) indicated that she visited the university website on campus or off campus with equal frequency.

Procedures

A questionnaire with 44 multiple choice questions was distributed to students who were in classes of the Communication Studies Department at Fort Hays State University.

Instruments and Scale Reliability

For purposes of this study, a three-part questionnaire was used (See Appendix E). The first part of the survey included questions about the demographic information of participants. The second part of the survey asked the participants about their levels of satisfaction with the website of Fort Hays State University. The third part of the survey investigated the participants' evaluations of Fort Hays State University on six indicators: Trust, Control Mutuality, Commitment, Satisfaction, Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship. Part three was based on the short version of the PR Relationship Measurement Scale (Grunig & Hon, 1999). However, the questions were in mixed order, and they did not indicate to which elements (from six indicators) they belonged. One question of Control Mutuality was reverse scored, as well as three questions of Communal Relationship (See Appendix F).

Part two of the instrument in this study was designed by the author to evaluate the students' satisfaction with the university website. It used a 7-item scale to ask the students about their satisfaction with the university website. Responses were analyzed with a 5-point scale, ranging from (1) very dissatisfied to (5) very satisfied. In this study, a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.87 was obtained for the scale.

In part three, the PR Relationship Measurement Scale (short-version) used a 26-item scale to examine respondent perceptions of the relationship variables of Trust, Control mutuality, Satisfaction, Commitment, and Communal and Exchange Relationships. Responses were solicited using a 5-point scale to indicate the extent to which the participants evaluate the six indicators. In earlier research (Grunig & Hon, 1999), all Alphas were above 0.80 and most approached 0.90, with the exception of exchange relationships. The four-item scale for an exchange relationship was 0.70, an acceptable level. For every indicator, the short scales were almost as reliable as the full scale (Grunig & Hon, 1999). In this study, a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.855 for the PR Relationship Measurement Scale (short-version) was obtained for the respondents.

Table 1

The reliabilities of six indicators for the students' evaluations of FHSU

Indicators	Reliability (This study)	Reliability (Grunig & Hon, 1999)
Trust	.827	.86
Control Mutuality	.368	.85
Commitment	.764	.84
Satisfaction	.774	.88
Communal Relationship	.489	.80
Exchange Relationship	.606	.70

In this study, the reliabilities of trust, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship were high, whereas the reliability of Communal Relationship was low. When compared to the previous research (Grunig, & Hon, 1999), every indicator received a lower reliability. In particular, Control Mutuality was not reliable in this study.

Scale Development

After conducting the reliability analysis, a factor analysis was performed for the two scales – the one designed by the author to evaluate the students' satisfaction with the university website, and the other one was developed based on the previous research (Grunig & Hon, 1999). In part two, the scale was used to analyze the degree of students'

satisfaction with the FHSU website. The factor analysis showed that the first component accounted for 57.01% of the total variance. The loadings for the 7-item scale are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Factor loadings for the 7-item scale of evaluating the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website

Items	Loading
Effective layout	.748
Straightforward navigation	.762
Security of my online session	.602
Art and Design	.748
Useful information	.821
Online interaction	.749
Interface friendliness	.833

Table 3

Factor loadings for the 6-item scale to analyze the students' evaluations of FHSU

Items	Loading
Trust	.830
Control Mutuality	.767
Commitment	.804
Satisfaction	.805
Communal Relationship	.788
Exchange Relationship	.856

The loadings of the 6-items that analyzed the students' evaluation of FHSU are shown in Table 3. As for the scale that analyzed the students' evaluation of FHSU, the first component accounted for 53.59% of the total variance. No item was loaded on the second item. The first component had a greater-than-one Eigenvalue. In this study, a single factor solution has been developed.

RESULTS

The pattern for access to the website was broken down as follows: The most recent visits to the website was some time during the day of the survey for 67 students (67.7%), sometime that week for 27 participants (27.3%), sometime last week for 2 students (2%), two or three weeks prior for 2 students (2%), and in the last month for 1 student (1%).

Table 4

The primary reason for students' visits to the university website

Reason	Participants	Percentage (%)
Blackboard	59	59.6
TigerTracks	35	35.4
Forsyth Library	2	2.0
Academics	1	1.0
Financial aid information	1	1.0
Facebook	1	1.0

The major purposes for students to visit the university website could be picked from Academics, Forsyth Library, Blackboard, TigerTracks, financial aid information, current events, general information, or other. The most frequent reason given for students' use of the website was Blackboard. The second and the third most frequent reasons for students'

visits to the website were TigerTracks and Academics. The “current events” was the least frequent reason in terms of the students’ purpose for their visits to the website. In ranking the top 3 reasons they visited the website, the participants’ choices were broken down as shown in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6. There were 95 students (95.96%) who selected Blackboard as their main reason for the visit to the university website, whereas 94 students (94.95%) choose TigerTracks as their main reason for the visit to the university website.

Table 5

The secondary reason for students’ visits to the university website

Reason	Participants	Percentage (%)
TigerTracks	48	48.5
Blackboard	31	31.3
Academics	8	8.1
Forsyth Library	4	4.0
General information	3	3.0
Athletics	2	2.0
Current events	1	1.0
Financial aid information	1	1.0
E-mail	1	1.0

Table 6

The third reason for students' visits to the university website

Reason	Participants	Percentage (%)
Academics	31	31.3
General information	17	17.2
Forsyth Library	14	14.1
TigerTracks	11	11.1
Financial aid information	11	11.1
Current events	6	6.1
Blackboard	5	5.0
Athletics	1	1.0
Calendar of events	1	1.0
Jobs for Tigers	1	1.0

The students' average evaluation of FHSU was 3.515, and their average satisfaction with the FHSU website was 3.726. The students' average satisfaction with the FHSU website has been evaluated from 7 indicators as shown in Table 7. The students' average evaluation of Trust, Control Mutuality, Commitment, Satisfaction, Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship for FHSU is shown in Table 8.

Table 7

The students' satisfaction with the FHSU website

Indicators	Mean	Mode	SD
Effective layout	3.81	4	.853
Straightforward navigation	3.71	4	.972
Security of my online session	4.08	4	.804
Art and Design	3.32	3	1.018
Useful information	4.00	4	.782
Online interaction	3.46	4	1.013
Interface friendliness	3.70	3*	.897

Note: *Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Table 8

The students' evaluations of six indicators for FHSU

Indicators	Mean	Mode	SD
Trust	3.65	4	.598
Control Mutuality	3.39	3.25	.516
Commitment	3.54	3.8	.691
Satisfaction	3.81	4	.593
Communal Relationship	3.41	3.25	.632
Exchange Relationship	3.21	3.3	.642

The correlation coefficients were computed among the 7 items for evaluating the FHSU website and the organization. The results of the correlation analyses are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Correlations between the students' satisfaction with the Fort Hays State University website and their evaluations of FHSU

Students' satisfaction with the FHSU website	
Trust	.596**
Control Mutuality	.485**
Commitment	.360**
Satisfaction	.534**
Communal Relationship	.147
Exchange Relationship	.004
Students' evaluations of FHSU	.540**

Note: *significant at the level of 0.05, **significant at level of 0.01

This study was designed to test the relationship between the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluations of FHSU. The results pointed out that the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website significantly correlated to their evaluations of FHSU from the evaluations of Trust, Satisfaction, and Commitment but not of Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship. As for Control Mutuality, the scale in this study is not reliable as the one in earlier research (Grunig & Hon, 1999).

Accordingly, the correlation between the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluation of FHSU from Control mutuality should not be considered as significant because the scale was not reliable.

The research question asked if students' satisfaction with the Fort Hays State University website related to their evaluations of the university in the areas of Trust, Control Mutuality, Satisfaction, Commitment, Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship. The answers showed the students' satisfaction with the Fort Hays State University website and their evaluations of the Fort Hays State University were correlated with each other. Overall, the students presented an acceptable relationship with the university from Satisfaction, Trust, and Commitment. The correlation between the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluation of FHSU was significant, as well as the correlations between the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluations of FHSU from two perspectives (Trust, Satisfaction, and Commitment). In addition, the correlations between the students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluations of FHSU from other three perspectives (Communal Relationship and Exchange Relationship) were not significant.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore the relationship between students' satisfaction with the FHSU website and their evaluations of Fort Hays State University. The findings as well as the limitations and implications for future researchers are summarized as follows.

Generally, the students were satisfied with the security/privacy of their online sessions and agreed that the university website provided useful information with an effective layout and a straightforward navigation. However, the option of art and design received the lowest score, which presented that the students' expectation for a graphic design was least satisfied.

Several reasons may explain the differences between the reliabilities of Control Mutuality and Communal Relationship in this study and the previous research (Grunig & Hon, 1999), as well as the lower means received by Control Mutuality, Communal Relationship and Exchange Relationship. "Control Mutuality is involved in the process of any decision making, concerning the extent to which each party's voice can be heard in the final outcome" (Jo, 2006, p.229). In this study, the reliability of Trust was revealed as the highest one among the six indicators, while the students granted high means for their Satisfaction and Trust of the university. Consequently, Control Mutuality can be weakened as the students choose to follow the decision of the university. Ki and Hon (2007) explained, "In most cases, one party has power in some contexts and shares or gives it up in others. Therefore, 'control' does not necessarily have to be equally distributed for a stable relationship as long as inequalities are accepted by the other party. In other words, the power distribution of the relationship tends to be negotiable and

dynamic” (p.5). Hon and Brunner’s (2002) research has shown perceptions of Control Mutuality were one of the weakest indicators among the six relationship indices, which can also be supported the comparably low means of Control Mutuality in this study.

Communal Relationship differed from the Exchange Relationship, which refers to the relationship with an expectation for “give back” benefit. The reliability of Control Mutuality, Communal Relationship, and Exchange Relationship were lower than those of the other indicators, and measurement problems related to the students may be a factor.

“Perhaps the items measuring communal relationships and exchange relationships, for example, are not reflective of students’ attitude because students have not yet developed these relationship perceptions, which may be more complex and long term than those measuring current satisfaction. This may be especially true for the freshmen and sophomores” (Ki & Hon, 2007, p.17).

In Ki and Hon’s (2007) research, freshmen and sophomores make up 39% of the sample, which was almost as this study with 37.2% freshmen and sophomores. Another explanation could be that both of the relationships used in this study were not exhaustive.

Websites are essential to the university in building a strong relationship with publics, and must present clear, fast, easy-to-access directions to both on-campus and off-campus members of the university community (Madere, 2007). Browsing the Internet, no one can find shortage of school websites. A webpage is passive until the reader goes in search of information, and it is more suitable for static information that does not require constant updating and modification (Bernstein, 1998). This research analyzed the public’s satisfaction from the students’ perspective. Further, the survey could be applied to reach other publics, such as faculty or community members. The results suggested that if the

students' satisfaction with the FHSU website was high, their evaluations of Fort Hays State University would also be high.

The website of an organization is its public image. When the public visits the website, they connect with the server and the organization as well. As the channel to disseminate the information for the organization, the website needs to establish its credibility as the organization itself by objectively publishing issues. In other words, the website could be considered the organization when visitors interact with the online service. Once the public trusts the context of the website, their evaluations of the website become high, and they will be more likely to rely on the organization for its honesty. Making a university website is a planned activity. A university website conducts the management function of online public relations, while it plays an inevitable role in the two-way communication process for a university to research its publics. With its social responsibility, a university website faces a variety of challenges in the Internet age.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered for this study. First of all, although the scale's reliability for evaluating the students' satisfaction with the university website was satisfactory in this study, more studies are needed to retest the scale.

Second, more diverse participants should be recruited for the study. During this study, the participants between the ages of 21 and 30 have the highest percentage. For ethnicity, most of them were Caucasian/White students. Participants in other age groups, ethnicities, and occupations should be brought into the analysis.

Third, the channel for sending the survey could be developed. The surveys have been sent through a paper version. People who were on campus at Fort Hays State

University have only taken the paper surveys. Further, the survey could be conducted via an online version for virtual students to participate.

Implications for Future Research

This study offers certain implications for future research. First, it brings the model for testing university websites. Since the reliability was satisfactory, the model could be regarded as reliable for testing other universities' websites for future study. Second, the questions for evaluating the website could be explored. The added questions can ask the participants about their evaluations of the organization through their response to the website, which will be more likely and directly to predict their thoughts about the website and the organization. Third, more diverse participants are required for future research. Participants at different ages should be recruited. As for their occupations, not only students could be surveyed but also the faculty, staff, community members, and high schools students looking to select a college could be invited to participate in the evaluation process. In addition, for evaluating the new website of Fort Hays State University, only freshman - people who have no experience with the previous website could be invited. Last, the model could be considered for introductions in more educational institutions - not limited to only one university.

In summary, no current study combines the students' satisfaction with a university website and their evaluations of the university together in order to test a university's public relations from the Internet perspective. This study was exploratory as this interrelated area received little attention from educational public relations practitioners. Once the model can be applied for further evaluation, it can reduce the cost of FHSU

purchasing outside products or services. This study successfully confirmed the relationship between students' satisfaction with the university website and their evaluations of the organization from a communication perspective. It also revealed the value of the website and sparked the necessity for educational organizations to keep updating and promoting their websites, ensuring their websites crucially and positively contribute to the organizations' reputations. This study's explicit reconstruction of the research model will also enlighten more thoughts and lead to deeper insights for future exploration.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
IRB Application Form



**FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH**

APPLICATION

Proposals for review by the IRB may be submitted at any time. With the exception of expedited reviews, complete proposals submitted no later than ten (10) business days prior to a scheduled meeting will be reviewed at that meeting. Late proposals will be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting. The IRB meeting schedule is posted on the website. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed, and will be returned to the researcher for completion.

Type of Request:

Full Review

Complete Application and Relevant Forms

Expedited Review

Complete Application and Expedited Review Attachment

Approved research proposal revision request (use revision /extension form)

Approved research proposal extension request (use revision /extension form)

Exempt from Review

Complete Application and Exempt Review Attachment

Application Information:

1. Activity or Project Title: Effects of university website on students' evaluation of Fort Hays State University

2. List all people involved in research project:

Name & Title	Institution & Department	Phone	Email
* Yu (Flora) Mo	Communication Department	617-642-7893	y_mo@scatcat.fhsu.edu
** Andy Stanton	Communication Department	785-628-4448	lastanton@fhsu.edu

*Principal Investigator

**Faculty Research Advisor (if student is Principal Investigator)

Time period for activity: From October, 2009 to December, 2009

*If longer than 1 year, annual review will be needed

3. Type of investigator and nature of the activity: (Check all the appropriate categories)

A. Faculty/Staff at FHSU:

- Submitted for extramural funding to:
- Submitted for intramural funding to:
- Project unfunded
- Other (Please explain)

B. Student at FHSU: Graduate Undergraduate Special

Thesis Graduate Research Paper

Specialist Field Study Independent Study

Class Project (Course Number and Course Title):

4. Certifications:

I am familiar with the policies and procedures of Fort Hays State University regarding human subjects in research. I subscribe to the university standards and applicable state and federal standards and will adhere to the policies and procedures of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. I will comply with all instructions from the IRB at the beginning and during the project or will stop the project.

AND

I am familiar with the published guidelines for the ethical treatment of human subjects associated with my particular field of study.

Statement of Agreement:

By electronically signing this application package, I certify that I am willing to conduct and /or supervise these activities in accordance with the guidelines for human subjects in research. Further, I certify that any changes in procedures from those outlined above or in the attached proposal will be cleared through the IRB.

If the Principal Investigator is a student, the electronic signature of the Faculty Advisor certifies: 1) Agreement to supervise the student research; and, 2) This application is ready for IRB review. The Student is the "Principal Investigator". The Faculty Research Advisor is the "Advisor". Designees may not sign the package. It is the student's responsibility to contact their Faculty Research Advisor when the study is ready for his/her signature.

- I certify the information provided in this application is complete and correct
- I understand that I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethical performance of the project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the IRB.
- I agree to comply with all FHSU policies, as well as all federal, state and local laws on the protection of human subjects in research, including:
 - Ensuring all study personnel satisfactorily complete human subjects in research training
 - Performing the study according to the approved protocol
 - Implementing no changes in the approved study without IRB approval
 - Obtaining informed consent from subjects using only the currently approved consent form
 - Protecting identifiable health information in accordance with HIPAA Privacy rule
 - Promptly reporting significant or untoward adverse effects to the IRB

Description of Project

Completely describe the research project below. Provide sufficient information for effective review, and define abbreviations and technical terms. Do NOT simply attach a thesis, prospectus, grant proposal, etc.

A. Project purpose(s):

The study aims at analyzing the relationship between people's response to the Fort Hays State University website and the evaluation of the organization. The research question is proposed as the following:

RQ: Does students' satisfaction with the Fort Hays State University website correlate to their relationship with the university?

B. Describe the proposed participants (number, age, gender, ethnicity, etc)

The proposed participants are publics related to Fort Hays State University. Owing to the objective limitation, the survey will be conducted mainly on campus. The participants will be college students above 18 years old at Fort Hays States University. This study will include both male and female participants without any discrimination for gender or ethnicity. Overall, this study expects at least 100 responses.

C. What are the criteria for including or excluding subjects? Are any criteria based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or origin? If so, justify.

All participants will be over 18 years. There is not a criterion for including or excluding subjects based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or origin. The study will be conducted without any discrimination for a participant's gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or origin.

D. Population from which the participants will be obtained:

General Populations:

Adult students (18-65 years) on-campus

Adults (18-65 years) off-campus

FHSU Students*

FHSU Employees*

International Research Population *

Protected Populations*

Children (Less than 18 Years)

Elderly (65+ Years)

Prisoners

Wards of the State

Pregnant Women

Fetuses

Vulnerable Population*

Vulnerable to coercion

Vulnerable to influence

Economically disadvantaged

Educationally disadvantaged

Mentally disabled

E. Recruitment Procedures: Describe in detail steps used to recruit participants.

Classes for participation will be scheduled by Department of Communication Studies.

F. Describe the benefits to the participants, discipline/field, and/or society for completing the research project.

There is no current study that combines the response to a website of a university and the evaluation for the university together, in order to test a university's public relations from the Internet perspective. As a result, this study is exploratory as this interrelated area received little attention from educational public relations practitioners. It is designed to reveal the value of the website and show the necessity for educational organizations to keep updated, because their websites may crucially contribute to the organizations' reputation. The research will benefit a university webmaster, an administrator of university relations, and every individual related to the university, because of factors that influence the public opinion about the university, and is applied to evaluate the online process for developing a university's public relations.

G. Describe the potential risks to participants for completing the research project. *A risk is a potential harm that a reasonable person would consider important in deciding whether to participate in research. Risk can be categorized as physical, psychological, social, economic and legal, and include pain, stress, invasion of privacy, embarrassment or exposure of sensitive or confidential information. All potential risks and discomforts must be minimized to the greatest extent possible by using appropriate monitoring, safety devices and withdrawal of a subject if there is evidence of a specific adverse event.*

There is no expected risk to participants when they answer the questionnaire, or during the process for completing the research project. However, appropriate monitoring will be provided when participants fill out the questionnaires.

H. Describe the follow up efforts that will be made to detect any harm to subjects, and how the IRB be kept informed. *Serious adverse or unexpected reactions or injuries must be reported to the IRB within 48 hours. Other adverse events should be reported within 10 days.*

All participants will be asked about their feelings about being involved in the research after they finish the survey, and they will also be provided the investigator's contact information that they can use for reporting any harm or

inconvenience for attending the project. They cannot be identified by the demographic information that they are going to provide in the study.

If serious adverse or unexpected reactions or injuries happened, they will be reported to the IRB within 48 hours. If other adverse events happen, they will be reported within 10 days for advice to deal with the issue.

I. Describe the procedures used in the research project (in detail, what will all participants experience during the research project):

There are a total of 44 questions. Every participant will probably spend 10 minutes finishing a questionnaire. They cannot be identified by the demographic information that they are going to provide.

All participants will first be introduced to the study, and then they will be invited to take the questionnaire with their consent. They will be informed that they can refuse the offer and have the right to withdraw at any time even after the survey begins.

J. List all measures/instruments to be used in the project, include citations and permission to use (if measure/instrument is copyrighted) if needed or if it will be changed for this study. Attach copies of all measures:

In this study, the questionnaire consists of two parts. The part one is developed by myself and the part two is based on the short version of the PR Relationship Measurement Scale (Grunig & Hon, 1999). The Institute for Public Relations gives authority for the fair use of information and images contained in its web pages for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes.

K. Describe in detail how confidentiality will be protected before, during, and after information has been collected?

All the questionnaires will be used only for the research. The participation in this research will be anonymous. The subjects cannot be identified by the demographic information provided in the research. Each questionnaire will be given a unique number for data identification.

L. Data: How will the data be stored? When will the data be destroyed? Who will have access to the data? If audio or video recordings are used, how will they be kept confidential?

The data will be kept in my personal laptop with a password, and a backup will be on USB hard disk, which also requires a password for access.

All the data will be kept for two years for later verification, replication or publication. Only the principal investigator and the faculty research advisor will have access to the data.

In addition, no audio or video recordings will be used.

M. Informed Consent: Describe in detail the **process** for obtaining consent. *If non English speaking subjects are involved, describe how consent will be obtained.*

All participants will be given an introduction of the purpose and the context of the research, while they will be shown the approved of IRB form. Then, they will be asked about whether they are willing to take the survey. Once they agree to take part, a consent form will be provided for their signatures.

N. If informed consent is to be waived or altered, complete Supplemental: Consent Waiver Form

O. If written documentation of consent is to be waived, complete Supplemental: Documentation Waiver Form

N. Explain Debriefing procedures/end of study information that will be given to all participants.

All participants will be informed that they can require a copy of the completed results if they want, before they decide to fill the questionnaire. If they want to receive the results, they will write down their email and I will send them when the study finishes. Their email address will be kept confidentially.

O. Emergencies. How will emergencies or unanticipated adverse events related to the research be handled if they arise?

If emergencies or unanticipated adverse events related to the research arise, participants will be suggested to contact the Kelly Center when they feel discomfort or any anxiety due to completing the research. If serious adverse or unexpected reactions or injuries happened, they will be reported to the IRB within 48 hours. If other adverse events happen, they will be reported within 10 days for advice to deal with the issue. At anytime the unanticipated adverse events arise, the faculty research advisor will be asked for instruction to deal with the problem.

P. Will information about the research purpose and design be held from subjects? If yes, justify the deception.

No. Information about the research purpose and design will not be held from subjects.

S. Each individual with a personal financial interest or relationship that in the individual's judgment **could reasonably appear to affect or be affected by the proposed study** involving human subjects should attach a Supplemental Form: Conflict of Interest. It is unnecessary to report any financial interests or relationships that do **not** reasonably appear to affect or be affected by the proposed study.

Definitions:

"Conflict of interest" occurs when an independent observer may reasonably question whether an individual's professional actions or decisions are influenced by considerations of the individual's private interests, financial or otherwise.

Conflicting financial interests do not include:

- Salary and benefits from Fort Hays State University;
- Income from seminars, lectures, teaching engagements, or publishing sponsored by federal, state, or local entities, or from non-profit academic institutions, when the funds do not originate from corporate sources;
- Income from service on advisory committees or review panels for governmental or non-profit entities;
- Investments in publicly-traded mutual funds;
- Gifts and promotional items of nominal value; and
- Meals and lodging for participation in professional meetings.

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Department of Communication, Fort Hays State University

Study title: Effects of university website on students' satisfaction
of Fort Hays State University

Yu (Flora) Mo
Principal Investigator
Assistant Professor
y_mo@scatcat.fhsu.edu
617-642-7893

Andy Stanton

Faculty Advisor,

lastanton@fhsu.edu
785-628-4448

You are being asked to participate in a research study. It is your choice whether or not to participate.

Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your academic standing or job status or your relationship with any organization. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

The purpose of the study is analyzing the relationship between public response to the website of Fort Hays State University and the evaluation of the organization. A questionnaire consisting of 44 questions will be used in this study based the PR Relationship Measurement Scale (Grunig & Hon, 1999). If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you (The length of time of your participation in this study is 10 minutes. Approximately a hundred participants will be in this study) .

None of the procedures (or questionnaires) used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for analysis.

There may be no benefits to you should you decide to participate in this study. Your participation will help us learn more about how people respond to the website of Fort Hays State University and how their responses relate to the evaluation of the organization.

You will not receive any compensation if the results of this research are used toward the development of a commercially available product. There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend on answering the questionnaire.

It is unlikely that participation in this project will result in harm to participants. If you feel distressed or become upset by participating, please contact the Kelly Center for assistance: B603 Wiest Hall, 628-4401. If you feel uncomfortable completing the survey, you may discontinue participation, either temporarily or permanently.

The data that will be collected are numbers, identifying the different levels of evaluation. The electronic data will be used only for research purposes, and they will be input in my laptop with a password. All questionnaires will be kept locked, and they will be deleted once the study ends. The electronic data will be kept for two years for later verification, replication or publication. Access to all data will be limited to the research. Only the principal investigator and the faculty research advisor will have access to the data. In addition, no audio or video recordings will be used.

Your participation in this research will be anonymous.

The information collected for this study will be used only for the purposes of conducting this study. What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will never be used in these presentations or papers.

Other important items you should know:

- **Withdrawal from the study:** You may choose to stop your participation in this study at any time. Your decision to stop your participation will have no effect on your academic standing or job status, or your relationship with any organization. All subjects are allowed to withdraw from the study at any time and without penalty. If you are a student at Fort Hays State University, your grades or benefits will not be impacted by your decision to participate or not, even if you withdraw. In the course of this study, there is no information that can identify you.

- **Funding:** There is no outside funding for this research project.

Whom should you call with questions about this study ?

Questions about this study or concerns about a research-related injury may be directed to the researcher in charge of this study: Yu (Flora) Mo at (617) 642-7893, y_mo@scatcat.fhsu.edu.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about human research at FHSU, you may call the Office of Scholarship and Sponsored Projects at FHSU, (785) 628-4349, during normal business hours.

CONSENT

I have read the above information about Affects of university website on students' perspectives for public relations and have been given an opportunity to ask questions. By signing this, I agree to participate in this study, and I have been given a copy of this signed consent document for my own records. I understand that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent at any time. By signing this consent form, I understand that I am not giving up any legal rights. I am 18 years or older.

Participant's Signature and Date

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

IRBNet Board Action

From: Leslie Paige (no-reply@irbnet.org)

Sent: Fri 12/11/09 4:40 PM

Andrew Stanton (lastanton@fhsu.edu); Connie Eigenmann-Malik

To: (cseigenmannmalik@fhsu.edu); Yu Mo (florauu@hotmail.com)

Please note that Fort Hays State University IRB has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Submission: [140137-1] How does the perception for the Internet change public relations at Fort Hays State University

Action: EXEMPT

Effective Date: November 2, 2009

Should you have any questions you may contact Leslie Paige at lp Paige@fhsu.edu.

Thank You,

The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org

APPENDIX D

Letter of Introduction

Letter of Introduction

Yu (Flora) Mo
408 W 13TH ST
HAYS, KANSAS, 67601
617-642-7893

10/18/2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to introduce my research project to you in the hope that you will agree to work with me as I develop it for completing my thesis.

Being a graduate student in the Department of Communication Studies at Fort Hays State University, I am conducting research to examine the relationship between people's response to the Fort Hays State University website and their evaluation of the university.

For completing the analysis, I am inviting you to finish the survey that consists of 44 questions. You can definitely refuse the offer and have the right to withdraw at any time after the survey begins. Please feel free to give your suggestions to me or contact my advisor. If you want to know about the result of this study, please inform me at anytime during the research.

All the questionnaires will be used only for the research. The participation in this research will be anonymous. You cannot be identified by the demographic information in the survey.

I am hoping to both learn and contribute if you will take part in the research and finish the survey as attached.

Sincerely,

Yu (Flora) Mo

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire

Survey: Effects of university website on students' satisfaction of FHSU

1. Please circle your gender: A. Male B. Female

2. Please circle your age:
A. 18-20 B. 21-30 C. 31-40 D. 41-50 E. 51-60 F. 60 above

3. Please circle your class level:
A. Freshmen B. Sophomore C. Junior D. Senior E. Graduate
F. Other _____

4. Please circle your ethnicity:
A. Caucasian/White B. African American/Black C. Hispanic/Latino
D. Asian/Pacific Islander E. Native American F. Mixed race
F. Other _____

5. How frequently do you access the Fort Hays State University website?
A. Never B. Once a week C. Two or three times per week
D. More than three times per week E. Daily

6. Where do you access the Fort Hays State University website at majority time?
A. On campus B. Off campus

7. When was your most recent access to the Fort Hays State University website?
A. Sometime today B. Sometime this week C. Sometime last week
D. Sometime the last two or three weeks E. In the last month
F. More than a month ago

8. What do you usually use the Fort Hays State University website for? (Please choose three options)
A. Academics B. Forsyth Library C. Blackboard D. TigerTracks
E. Financial aid information F. Current events G. General information
H. Other _____

9. The most frequent service you used for the Fort Hays State University website from your answers for Question 8: _____

10. The second frequent service you used for the Fort Hays State University website from your answers for Question 8: _____

11. The third frequent service you used for the Fort Hays State University website from your answers for Question 8: _____

Part One

This part relates to your general assessment for the homepage of Fort Hays State University website: <http://www.fhsu.edu/>

The following scale is used for each item:

1 = very dissatisfied

2 = dissatisfied

3 = neutral

4 = satisfied

5 = very satisfied

Please circle your answers. The questions are as follows:

Question		Scales				
12	Effective layout	1	2	3	4	5
13	Straightforward navigation	1	2	3	4	5
14	Security of my online session	1	2	3	4	5
15	Art and Design	1	2	3	4	5
16	Useful information	1	2	3	4	5
17	Online interaction	1	2	3	4	5
18	Interface friendliness	1	2	3	4	5

Part Two

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

Please circle your answers. The following scale is used for each item:

1 = strong disagreement

2 = disagreement with the statement

3 = neither agreement nor disagreement with the statement

4 = agreement with the statement

5 = strong agreement with the statement

19	This organization treats people like me fairly and justly.	1	2	3	4	5
20	This organization and people like me are attentive to what each other say.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I feel that this organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I am happy with this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
23	This organization does not especially enjoy giving others aid.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Whenever this organization gives or offers something to people like me, it generally expects something in return.	1	2	3	4	5

25	Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
26	This organization believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I can see that this organization wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Both the organization and people like me benefit from the relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
29	This organization is very concerned about the welfare of people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Even though people like me have had a relationship with this organization for a long time, it still expects something in return whenever it offers us a favor.	1	2	3	4	5
31	This organization can be relied on to keep its promises.	1	2	3	4	5
32	In dealing with people like me, this organization has a tendency to throw its weight around.	1	2	3	4	5
33	There is a long-lasting bond between this organization and people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
34	Most people like me are happy in their interactions with this organization.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I feel that this organization takes advantage of people who are vulnerable.	1	2	3	4	5
36	This organization will compromise with people like me when it knows that it will gain something.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I believe that this organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
38	This organization really listens to what people like me have to say.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Compared to other universities, I value my relationship with this organization more.	1	2	3	4	5
40	Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this organization has established with people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
41	I think that this organization succeeds by stepping on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
42	This organization takes care of people who are likely to reward the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I feel very confident about this organization's skills.	1	2	3	4	5
44	This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX F

The PR Relationship Measurement Scale

The PR Relationship Measurement Scale

FINAL ITEMS FOR RELATIONSHIP SCALES (Hon & Grunig, 1999)

(*Boldface indicates shortest scales, boldface and italic indicates short scale with one additional item*)

Trust

Dimensions Integrity, competence, dependability

1. This organization treats people like me fairly and justly. (Integrity)
2. Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about people like me. (Integrity; original dimension: faith).
3. This organization can be relied on to keep its promises. (Dependability)
4. I believe that this organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions. (Dependability)
5. I feel very confident about this organization's skills. (Competence)
6. This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.
(Competence)
7. Sound principles seem to guide this organization's behavior. (Integrity)
8. This organization does not mislead people like me. (Integrity)
9. I am very willing to let this organization make decisions for people like me.
(Dependability)

10. I think it is important to watch this organization closely so that it does not take advantage of people like me. (Dependability) (Reversed)

11. This organization is known to be successful at the things it tries to do.
(Competence)

Control Mutuality

1. This organization and people like me are attentive to what each other say.
2. This organization believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.
3. In dealing with people like me, this organization has a tendency to throw its weight around. (Reversed)
4. This organization really listens to what people like me have to say.
5. *The management of this organization gives people like me enough say in the decision-making process.*
6. When I have an opportunity to interact with this organization, I feel that I have some sense of control over the situation.
7. This organization won't cooperate with people like me. (Reversed)
8. I believe people like me have influence on the decision-makers of this organization.

Commitment

1. I feel that this organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.
2. I can see this organization wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.

3. There is a long-lasting bond between this organization and people like me.
4. Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with this organization more.
5. *I would rather work together with this organization than not.*
6. I have no desire to have a relationship with this organization. (Reversed)
7. I feel a sense of loyalty to this organization.
8. I could not care less about this organization. (Reversed)

Satisfaction

1. I am happy with this organization.
2. Both the organization and people like me benefit from the relationship.
3. Most people like me are happy in their interactions with this organization.
4. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship this organization has established with people like me.
5. *Most people enjoy dealing with this organization*
6. The organization fails to satisfy the needs of people like me. (Reversed)
7. I feel people like me are important to this organization.
8. In general, I believe that nothing of value has been accomplished between this organization and people like me. (Reversed)

Communal Relationships

1. This organization does not especially enjoy giving others aid. (Reversed)
2. This organization is very concerned about the welfare of people like me.
3. I feel that this organization takes advantage of people who are vulnerable.
(Reversed)
4. I think that this organization succeeds by stepping on other people. (Reversed)
5. *This organization helps people like me without expecting anything in return.*
6. I don't consider this to be a particularly helpful organization. (Reversed)
7. I feel that this organization tries to get the upper hand. (Reversed)

Exchange Relationships

1. Whenever this organization gives or offers something to people like me, it generally expects something in return.
2. Even though people like me have had a relationship with this organization for a long time, it still expects something in return whenever it offers us a favor.
3. This organization will compromise with people like me when it knows that it will gain something.
4. This organization takes care of people who are likely to reward the organization.