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Wenjun Zhu

December, 2011

EXPLORING THE DUAL ROLE OF COMMUNICATORS IN RELATIONSHIP
MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the
Jack J. Valenti School of Communication
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By
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Abstract

Relationship management is a key topic in public relations, and it is also an essential factor for the success of charitable organizations. This study explored interpersonal communication strategies in relationship management when communicators played dual roles in the context of charitable organizations in the Greater Houston Area. The investigator interviewed 13 professionals currently working in nonprofits, analyzed interview transcripts, and illustrated many interesting findings, such as contextual factors of relationship management in this study, antecedent factors of organizational citizenship behaviors, convergence of internal and external communication strategies, and the role conversion of key publics. Major interpersonal strategies were useful for nonprofits in relationship management with key publics, because they were emphasized by many professionals in nonprofits. This study not only filled many research gaps but also resulted in many important theoretical and practical implications for relationship management in nonprofits.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Research Background

J. Grunig (1993) suggested that researchers and practitioners should pay more attention to behavioral relationships instead of image relationships or reputational relationships. The Excellence Theory (e.g. L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) advocated two-way symmetrical communication and collaborative decision-making in organization-public relationship management. Defining fundraising as “the management of relationships between a charitable organization and its donor publics” (Kelly, 1998, p. 8), Kelly perceived fundraising as a process of relationship building and maintaining rather than mere money-soliciting. She added stewardship to the process of fundraising, making it a cyclical process called ROPES (research, objectives, programming, evaluation and stewardship) instead of the previous ROPE process (research, objectives, programming and evaluation) typically used in public relations. Relationship nurturing was perceived as an important strategy in the stewardship stage. Waters (2009) developed scales to measure the four strategies (reciprocity, responsible gift use, reporting and relationship nurturing) in the stewardship stage, and the results of this measurement revealed that nurturing organization-donor relationship over time is an even stronger method of developing trust than the other three methods.

Most of relationship management strategies are derived from interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is a valuable source for public relations when it comes to communication with internal as well as external publics (Johansson, 2007). Kelly (1998) characterized fundraisers’ role as boundary-spanning. In many

charitable organizations, “fundraiser” is considered as a role or responsibility of volunteers and employees in most of charitable organizations. However, few studies have explored how communicators in charitable organizations actually cross the boundary of the organizations and manage relationships through interpersonal communication with both colleagues inside the charitable organizations and with organizations’ external partners and supporters. Even fewer studies have examined how practitioners balance their dual roles in communication process.

Purpose of the Study

Although financial resources are very important for charitable organizations, the organizational operations are centered on external relationship management instead of money-soliciting. This study aims to investigate both the internal and external relationship management of charitable organizations and explore the dual role of communicators in those organizations.

Significance of the Study

While not competing directly for profits, charitable organizations do engage in market competition in terms of financial support from individual donors and governments as well as potential volunteers (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 2008). Because the cost of volunteer labor is small, the value of a volunteer’s contribution to the charitable organizations sector of the economy is much higher than comparable efforts in the private or public sector (Kotler & Murray, 1975). For instance, recent studies estimated that nearly 8.1 billion hours of health-related volunteering occurred in the United States, with a total labor value of home and volunteer health-related production at \$169 billion (Corporation for National and Community Services, 2010). During the year of 2010 (up

to September), about 62.8 million people, or 26.3 percent of the population, volunteered through or for an organization at least once (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

As a result, charitable organizations deserve more attention from public relations researchers. This study will facilitate the application of interpersonal communication in public relations practice. In addition, the examination of the dual role of public relations communicators will provide suggestions on identity management and organization-public relationship management in the context of charitable organizations. For the charitable organizations, positive organization-public relationships may not only generate organizational citizenship behavior, collaborative decision-making and improve working performance, but also may guarantee long-term resource inflow from organizations' partners and supporters. What is more, communicators may gain more satisfaction and social recognition with good relationship management and a balancing of their dual roles.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Relationship Management

Building and maintaining relationships have been widely explored in public relations literature. As a benchmark of public relations theory and research, the Excellence Theory (e.g. L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) advocated two-way symmetrical communication and collaborative decision-making in organization-public relationship management. The relationship between an organization and its key publics has been substantially explored in the public relations literature (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ki & Hon, 2007; Ledingham, 2003; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998; Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999). Researchers have identified four measures of the quality of the organization–public relationship (OPR): trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, and commitment. Grunig (1993) suggested that researchers and practitioners should pay more attention to behavioral relationships instead of image relationships or reputational relationships. Spicer (2007) proposed collaborative advocacy and further explored how to generate trust in the discussion of the correlation between dependency and power balance. Ni (2006) considered relationships as an important resource for organizations. As a result, relationship management is crucial for all types of organizations, including charitable organizations. Whether communicators can solve their role conflicts affects the quality of their relationships with coworkers inside the charitable organizations and partners and supporters outside the charitable organizations.

Identity and Identification of Public Relations Practitioners

Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggested that social identities were those aspects of an individual's self derived from the social categories to which one belongs. These social categories help to define the individual and others based on membership in certain groups (ingroups) and nonmembership in others (outgroups). Tajfel (1974, 1978) used the interpersonal-intergroup continuum to explain when social identity processes are likely to come into operation. He argued that as behavior became more intergroup, attitudes to the outgroup within the ingroup tend to become more uniform and consensual and outgroup members tend to be seen as more homogeneous and undifferentiated members of their own social category. As a result, communicators who play the boundary-spanning role in charitable organizations need to negotiate their personal identities and social identities and to use appropriate communication strategies according to situational variations in self-concept when engaging in internal and external communication.

One of the most significant and robust empirical findings derived from social identity research is the discovery that heightened organizational identification generally leads to improved task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Ellemers, van Rijswijde, Bruins, & de Gilder, 1998; Haslam et al., 2000; James & Greenberg, 1989; Ouwerkerk et al., 1999; Tyler & Blader, 2000; van Knippenberg, 2000; Worchel, Rothgerber, Day, Hart, & Butemeyer, 1998). In contrast to task performance, organizational citizenship behavior refers to behaviors such as helping others, showing initiative, and upholding the reputation of organization toward outsiders (Wright, George, Farnsworth, & McMahan, 1993). Wright et al. (1993) found that goal and incentive systems make self-interested motives salient, so they may discourage individual workers

from investing in organizational citizenship behavior. Van Knippenberg and Ellemers (2003) presented key evidence that identification might affect performance because it leads individuals to internalize the collective interest. Organizations can “redirect people’s focus away from outcomes to interpersonal, relational concerns allow [ing] authorities to worry less about providing desired outcomes to group members and to concentrate more on achieving the greater good and maintaining social stability” (Huo, Smith, Tyler, & Lind, 1996, pp. 44-45). The more one conceives of oneself in terms of one’s membership in a group, the more likely one is to act in accordance with social identity implied by the group membership (Turner, Hogg et al., 1987).

Employees/volunteers who have the responsibility of managing both internal and external relationships will probably encounter conflicts between their dual role, because voices from the charitable organizations can never be identical with voices from the outside partners and supporters and these employees/volunteers are responsible for both of the parties in collaborative decision-making and relationship management process. As a result, how to increase employees/volunteers’ awareness of self-identities and how to settle the conflicts between dual roles are not only essential for organizations to increase working efficiency, but also an inevitable issue for organizational communicators in charitable organizations. As it is often the organizational communicators who initiate relationship building with the organizations’ partners and supporters, it is important to study how the communicators of charitable organizations can best represent the goals and missions of their organizations. This participative democratic organizational system may be the best way for communicators in charitable organizations to balance their dual roles. From the literature of a humanistic approach to organizational management, it is obvious

that supportive superior-subordinate relationships can improve employees' work performance and efficiency. As a result, it is important to study what communicators can contribute to supportive superior-subordinate and colleague relationships building inside the charitable organizations, especially through interpersonal communication. Positive organization-employee/volunteer relationships are built and maintained through internal communication.

Internal communication

Internal communication is essential to maintaining a positive organization-volunteer/employee relationship. McCown (2007) examined the role of public relations practitioners as internal activists. Internal activists play a role of facilitating two-way symmetrical communication, collaborative decision-making and organizational structure reformation. Ni (2009) presented the importance of organization-employee relationship building in implementing organizational strategies. L. A. Grunig et al. (2002) stressed that organizations should maintain constant communication with their publics, both internal and external.

The relational model of authority is built on social identity theory and self-categorization. It posits that when people are treated fairly by authority, they will feel respected and their self-esteem increases (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Smith, Tyler, and Huo (2003) applied the relational model of authority in the context of university community and they found that for employees who identified more strongly with their work organization, their acceptance of their supervisors' decision was more closely related to the quality of their supervisors' treatment of them than by the favorability of their outcomes. The research also indicated that feelings of being respected by peers of the

university community mediated the relationship between authority treatment quality and personal self-esteem or discretionary behavior when members are identified closely with university community. From this perspective, I will study how internal communication influences organization-employee/volunteer relationship and employees' identities.

As a result, effective internal communication will facilitate both organization-employee/volunteer relationships and colleague relationships and help to activate organizational citizenship behavior. The direction of information flow inside the organization can be downward, upward, and/or horizontal, depending on the system of the organization (Likert, 1961). However, communicators' boundary-crossing role is never one-sided. They need to manage relationships with both coworkers and external publics. They also represent either of the two parties in different communication dialogues. Potential conflict in identities may present challenges as practitioners assume a dual role. Charitable organizations need to be concerned with the role conflicts communicators may be confronted with in relationship management.

Dual Role

In Aldoory and Sha's (2007) study of the situational theory of publics, activists' dual roles were discussed, but the question of how activists "negotiate their dual role" (p.352) was left to future research. This concept was further developed, as "dual role" was examined in the context of activist organizations where communicators in an activist group had to balance their role of an internal public in that organization with that of active advocates for that organization among external publics (Jiang & Ni, 2009). Two-way symmetrical communication model (Grunig & Grunig, 1997) can be used to understand the dual role. Following by Jiang and Ni (2009), I contend that organizational

communicators play a dual role—a) as representatives of the charitable organizations to build long-term relationships with the organization's partners and supporters and b) as representatives of the organizations' partners and supporters to participate in collaborative decision-making inside the organizations. The concept of “dual role” for NPOs stems from fundraisers' boundary-spanning role defined by Kelly (1998).

A lot of research uses a systems theory to explain organizational boundary (Altman, 1975; Euske & Roberts, 1987; Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Petronio, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1994). The parties separated by a boundary can choose to remain separate within their individual borders or to engage in communication to find common ground with others (Petronio, Ellemers, Giles, & Gallois, 1998). These researchers also defined boundary spanning as a process that relies on certain groups to determine information across departments or task groups. Individuals whose positions require them to span boundaries may be influenced by the ability to experience different orientations. Research that connects communication theories to social identity theory is promising but underdeveloped (Scott, 2007). Scott discussed the salience of dual/multiple identities in different communication circumstances and the relational-focused identity, which is used in this study.

In the context of charitable organizations, ROPES model (Kelly, 1998) is useful for guiding this study, because it represents the integrated relationship management process in charitable organizations and this study focuses on communicators' internal and external relationship management. It consists of five processes: research, objectives, programming, evaluation and stewardship. ROPES model developed ROPE model (Hendrix, 1995), because it added stewardship process. Kelly (1998) contended that

stewardship process was a necessity, because reciprocity, responsible gift use, reporting, and relationship nurturing must be provided to donors.

Both relationship management theories and social identity theories have the roots in interpersonal communication theories and practice. As a result, I contend that interpersonal communication is a good way of nurturing relationship and forming social identities. I consider interpersonal communication as a tool of long-term relationship management and an arena where roles are formed and role conflicts occur.

Interpersonal communication

Scholars have applied interpersonal communication theories, the basis of many relationship management studies, in public relations. Public relations researchers have proposed that organizations can build and maintain the relationships between organizations and publics by engaging in six relational maintenance strategies: positivity, assurances, shared tasks, openness, networking, and access. Most of these six strategies were defined in interpersonal communication context (Aylor & Dainton, 2004; Canary & Stafford, 1994; Dainton & Aylor, 2002; Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Markiewicz, Doyle, & Brendgen 2001; Stafford et al., 2000). Interpersonal communication is a valuable source for public relations when it comes to communication with internal as well as external publics (Johansson, 2007).

Braithwaite and Baxter (2008) introduced three broad approaches to interpersonal communication theories: (a) individually centered, (b) discourse or interaction centered, and (c) relationship centered. Researchers adopting the first approach considered that interpersonal communication occurs when people make predictions about the other interactants based on perceiving the person as an individual rather than based on that

individual's social role. Researchers adopting the second approach were interested in "the ways our understandings, meanings, norms, roles, and rules are worked out interactively in communication" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005, p.45). Researchers adopting the third approach focused on understanding the role of communication in developing, sustaining, and terminating social and personal relationships. My study will primarily use the third approach, and it will also refer to the first approach in order to explore whether individual-centered interpersonal communication occurs in relationship management in nonprofit sector. In other words, both social identities and personal identities of charitable organization communicators in interpersonal communication will be studied.

Need of the Study

Researchers who studied the organization-public relationship in charitable organizations usually adopted quantitative methods to measure the relationship quality outcomes (Bortree, 2010; O'Neil, 2008; O'Neil, Schrodt, & Grau, 2008; Waters, 2009). Some researchers studied Web-based organization-donor relationship management (Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009; Yeon, Choi, & Kioussis, 2005). As more and more researchers emphasized the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and relationship management in public relations, it is important to study further how to manage relationships through interpersonal communication in the nonprofit sector. Given that most of the previous research solely studied organization-volunteer relationship (Bortree, 2010; Ingenhoff & Koelling, 2009) or organization-donor relationship (O'Neil, 2007; O'Neil, 2008; O'Neil, Schrodt, & Grau, 2008; Waters, 2008, 2009), this study aims to investigate both internal and the external

relationship management and explore the dual role of communicators in charitable organizations.

Volunteer and employee recruitment specifications on charitable organizations' websites show whether the organizations manage relationships with volunteers/employees and how they do it. For example, as shown on the official websites of Child Advocates Inc., it offers monthly happy-hour socials and professional training courses for volunteers, and it also posts interview transcripts of former volunteers about their feelings and opinions of volunteerism. Fundraisers are considered as a job position in some charitable organizations. The responsibility of workers who are entitled "fundraisers" is solely or primarily to solicit funds for organizations. However, other people inside charitable organizations who are not titled "fundraiser" also have the responsibility of fundraising. For examples, volunteers usually work as temporary fundraisers, and employees such as the board members, CEOs, CFOs, program supervisors as well as other lower-rank employees inside NPOs have the responsibility of fundraising as part of their daily work. Cultivating long-term relationships with partners and donors is the responsibility for most of the employees inside charitable organizations. As a result, fundraiser is not considered as a job position in this study, but a role or responsibility for most of the employees as well as volunteers in the charitable organizations. Therefore, employees and volunteers who have the responsibility of managing relationships with organizations' partners and supporters are called communicators in this study.

In addition, on the websites of charitable organizations, external key publics are usually segmented into two categories: partners and supporters. Partners refer to

organizations or individuals that cooperate with the charitable organizations to realize their communal missions. For example, area employers recruit refugees served by the charitable organizations. Supporters refer to organizations or individuals that provide in-kind or monetary support or free services to the charitable organizations, and they are usually called donors. However, charitable organizations sometimes also try to identify potential employer companies in the donor pool. For instance, Interfaith Ministries stresses on the importance of setting up a database of potential employers and the utilization of existing network of partners and supporters. As a result, charitable organizations' partners and supporters sometimes overlap. The following model was proposed to create a brief overview of dual role of communicators in relationship management in the context of charitable organization. Furthermore, interpersonal communication is supposed as an effective way in relationship management and will be extensively explored in the research. The forms of interpersonal communication in the context of charitable organizations incorporate face-to-face dialogue, emails, mails, phone calls and so on. The messages in these forms of interpersonal communication must be tailored to individual employee/volunteer/partner/donor. However, this is an ideal (normative) model because all the communication is symmetrical and two-way. Internal communication between the communicators who cross the boundary of the charitable organizations and other colleagues inside the charitable organizations are supposed to include downward, upward and horizontal internal communication. This model needs to be modified when it is applied to any specific charitable organization in this study.

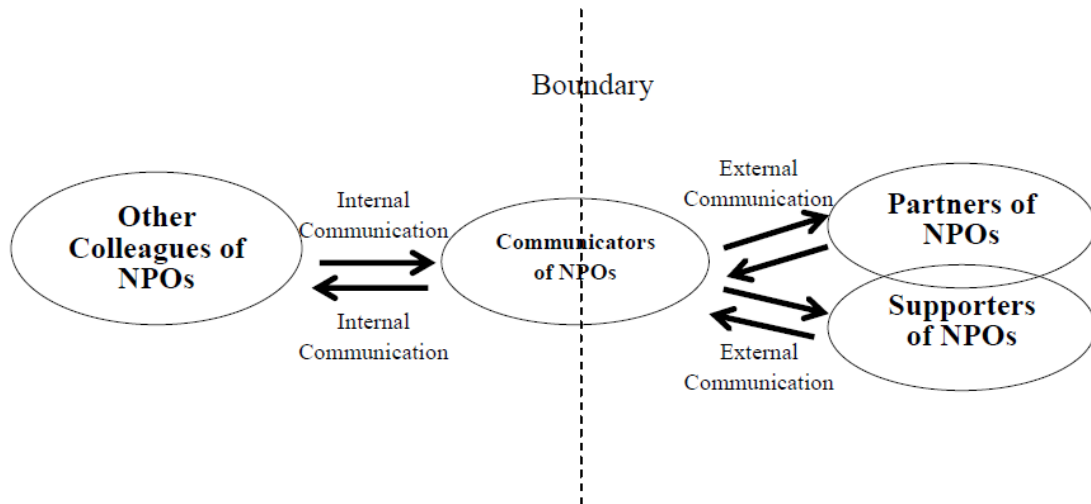


FIGURE 1. The dual role of communicators in charitable NPOs

This study aims at achieving the following goal: Through an examination of the micro-level communication process in this model, this study explores 1) the effectiveness of interpersonal communication in relationship management in charitable organizations and 2) the dual role of communicators in relationship management in the context of charitable organization. Three research questions are proposed as follows:

RQ1: How do charitable organizations manage relationships with their employees and volunteers through interpersonal communication?

RQ2: How do communicators in charitable organizations manage relationships with organizations' partners and supporters through interpersonal communication?

RQ3: How do charitable organization communicators balance their dual role of organization-employee/volunteer relationship maintaining and organization-partner/supporter relationship maintaining?

Chapter Three

Methods

As this study was exploratory in nature, data were collected and analyzed using qualitative methods to discover a range of responses to the research questions. According to White and Raman (2000), qualitative approaches are “preferable in exploratory research where the goal is to understand a process or phenomenon” (p. 407-408). As the purpose of this study was to better understand how communicators in charitable organizations managed relationships through interpersonal communication and how they balanced their dual role, a qualitative approach was appropriate. In addition, qualitative data are a “source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1). The “rich descriptions” in the form of “fruitful explanations” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 1) added the depth needed to more fully understand these underexplored research questions. Specifically, I had long interview with each of the participants who were recruited through purposive, snowball and convenience sampling. Then, I analyzed and coded my data based on grounded theory. The process of data collection and analysis will be illustrated in detail in the following paragraphs.

Method

This study used the method of long interview. The long interview is “a sharply focused, rapid, highly intensive interview process” conducted between the investigator and a single respondent, and it “calls for special kinds of preparation and structure”, including the use of an open-ended questions, and “special patterns of analysis” (McCracken, 1988, p. 7). Each interview was approximately one hour. Anything less than

that might not be sufficient time to collect the sufficient information this study sought. The interview of this study could also be considered as respondent interview with the purpose of eliciting open-ended responses (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). There were several advantages to conducting face-to-face interviews. By conducting face-to-face interviews, I had many opportunities of establishing rapport and trust with the participants (Merrigan & Huston, 2009). More importantly, I was able to “probe” for more in-depth responses and clarify any questions from the participants (Merrigan & Huston, 2009, p. 111). A probe involved asking a participant to explain a response further in order to obtain sufficient data or to ensure that I accurately understood a participant’s answer. The probes did not stray from the original interview protocol, but involved reiteration of certain key words or ideas for the participants.

Two drawbacks from this method include a greater time commitment as well as producing data that are less representative and thus less likely to be generalized (Merrigan & Huston, 2009). In other words, I collected rich data from a limited number of individuals in 13 organizations. As the data collected were highly detailed and extremely representative of the target organizations, it would be difficult to generalize the results to other organizations. Generalized results are often a goal of using surveys. However, as explained earlier in this section, the goal of this study was to obtain rich detail and explanations at the target organizations in order to help understand these under-explored research questions. This study aimed for generating theoretical generalization instead of statistical generalization (Yin, 1994). Later, these findings can be applied in surveys in order to produce generalizable patterns of relationship management and balancing dual role through interpersonal communication.

Sampling

This study used purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling involves choosing participants because there is “good reason to believe that ‘what goes on there’ is critical to understanding some process or concept” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 122). Participants were recruited from charitable NPOs in the Greater Houston Area. Charitable organizations are not equal to philanthropy, and they differ from public-owned nonprofit organizations (Kelly, 1998). I used an internet search to find qualified organizations. Seventy-three charity organizations were found after entering the key word of “Houston” on the website of Charity Navigator. All charities on this website were rated from one star to four stars according to two broad areas of financial health - their organizational efficiency and their organizational capacity (Houston Navigator, 2011). Then, 33 charity organizations were filtered out with a four-star rating specification. A four-star rating represents a 60 and above overall score. I ranked 33 organizations from highest overall score to lowest overall score and visited the website of each of the 33 charity organizations. Qualified organizations must be 501(c) 3 nonprofits under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, which means that they are created for charitable purposes. In addition, qualified organizations must have employees in the position of relationship management or coordination. At last, 14 charitable organizations in Greater Houston Area with the highest overall score on Charity Navigator remained out of the 33 as target organizations.

Within the organization, I tried to use snowball sampling to recruit potential participants through the interview solicitation letter (see Appendix A). Snowball sampling recruits study participants “through referrals made among people who share or

know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 124). It was specified in the solicitation letter that qualified participant must be employees or volunteers who were involved in both internal and external relationship management in charitable organizations in Greater Houston Area, such as employee with title of the director of development or volunteers who do fundraising. Three participants were recommended by their colleagues to whom I then sent emails.

As the goal of this study was to investigate how communicators in charitable organizations managed relationships through interpersonal communication and how they balanced their dual role in this process, participants needed to meet the following two criteria: participants must assume a key communication role and have a title of strategic communicators such as “communication manager”, “corporate communication director”; participants were responsible for both organization-employee/volunteer relationship management and organization-partner/supporter relationship management.

In addition, convenience sampling was be used. In convenience sampling, respondents are selected on based of levels access and availability (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). I talked with my classmates and professors to see whether they had any working experiences or relationships in charitable organizations in Greater Houston Area. Through this way, potential participants increased.

Then, I called or emailed the managers/departmental directors and tried to schedule an interview appointment with selected participants on a voluntary basis. When any co-workers who played a key role in the relationship management were mentioned or referred to by the participants, I contacted the key employees and tried to recruit them as

new participants in order to get more valid data. Then, I obtained the consent of participants through email and also by asking them sign on a consent form.

A total of 13 participants were interviewed for this study. Three of them were reached and recruited by professors' referral through personal contact. Five of them were recruited at an event hosted by United Ways Houston, and then were recruited through email. The other five of them were recruited by emails (and phone calls) with the resource provided by United Ways Houston. And five of them were among those 14 organizations screened on the website of Charity Navigator.

Interview Procedure

Data were collected through interviews. In total, 13 interviews were conducted. Each interview took approximately one hour. Participants were asked open-ended questions, which centered on relationship management through interpersonal communication and identities formed in the process. Eleven interviews took place at the target organizations, one at a café and another on telephone. All these locations were chosen by the participants. The amount of time for each interview was different as I used a semi-structured format. Prior to the beginning of the interview, every participant was asked to sign on an informed consent form.

During the interviews, I took hand-written notes, and I also recorded the interview with a tape recorder when participants allowed me to do that. With the 13 in-depth interview transcripts, I obtained very rich data. As shown in Table 1, there was a large amount of data. Two out of the 13 interviews were recorded only by typed notes, but I recalled each interview, and typed out the details of their answers once I got home from the interview venues to reduce the amount of lost information as much as possible.

Table 1 Quantity of Data

t_{\min}	54.15
t_{\max}	1:26.16
t_{sum}	13:56.22
\bar{t}	1: 4.20 _{approx.}
N	13
N_a	11
N_T	2
N_w	78700 _{approx.}

t = Time Length of Interview

N = Number of Transcripts/Interviews

N_a = Number of Audio Taped Interviews

N_T = Number of Interviews Using Typed Notes and Hand Written Notes

N_w = Number of Words of Transcripts

In order to transcribe the sessions, I manually transferred the audio recordings to my computer word for word. I printed these documents so that I had a minimum of one hard copy and one electronic copy at all times. At this point, I participated in a form of informal data analysis with “in-process writings” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 212). In qualitative research, investigators are instruments themselves. However, investigators had their own emotions and creative thinking. A bad mood or a lack of independent judgment would increase bias. Investigators should not be led, controlled or even manipulated by interviewees who were talkers. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) recommend inserting asides and commentaries into transcribed sessions in order to note “the efficacy of method,” “the author’s own emotions, thoughts, or understandings,” or simply to remark on “details that inform the researcher’s understanding” (p. 212). These in-process writings

helped me greatly when I was coding and categorizing my data. Also, by writing down my emotions, thoughts, and understandings of each organization as I went through the process, I was able to both recognize and to dismiss any bias I may have from the results of this study. For example, before I recalled and typed out all the conversations with P2, I wrote down my impression toward the participants: “she was polite, gentle, cautious when answering my questions, and she was hesitant to reveal detailed information to me. She never talked things through with me.”

I coded data from the first three interviews to see whether any of the research questions or interview questions needed to be refined. This type of early data analysis was part of the grounded theory, in which “the analysis begins as soon as the first bit of data is collected” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5). This process of early analysis was “necessary from the start because it is used to direct the next interview and observations” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6). It allowed me to ask the most relevant questions and to receive the most applicable data from each organization in this study. Actually, I modified certain words of interview questions. For example, I changed “charitable organization” into “charitable agency” as used by many participants. And as different participants had different definitions for volunteers, employees, partners, and donors, I asked several participants to define those publics first. After the data were collected, initial coding and focused coding were done. This process of constant comparison was also an early form of coding which allowed me to compare “each incident to other incidents in order to decide in which categories they belong” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 219). Thus, as coding categories became apparent in the one-on-one interviews, I became more aware of what to look for regarding data categories present in later interviews.

From each organization, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with participants. I did not provide any formal incentives for my participants. However, it was specified in the consent form that they may “find intrinsic satisfaction in helping to further scholarly research”, and I sent a hand-written thank-you email to each participant and offered to send each participant an abstract of the final report if s/he would like.

Participants

Altogether, there were 13 participants. Twelve participants agreed to be interviewed face to face, whereas one agreed to be interviewed over the phone and to be tape-recorded. Ten of out of the twelve face-to-face interviews were tape-recorded with interviewees’ permission. The other two face-to-face interviews were recorded by hand-written and/or typed notes only. There were seven Caucasian Americans, one African American, one Spanish American, one German American, one Chinese, one Jew, and one Afghan. Table 2 shows the main demographic information of the participants, including gender, job title, and length of employment in current charitable organizations. Job titles were slightly modified in order to keep participants’ identities confidential. In addition, job responsibility limitation was also evaluated and illustrated.

During the interview, four participants were found to have job responsibility limitations toward this study, since they did not participate in typical internal and external relationship management. However, these four participants still provided information about how relationship management was conducted in the charitable organization they worked for respectively, because they sometimes participated in the decision-making process or knew about how decisions were made. The other nine participants were directly in charge of or participated in the management of employees, volunteers, donors,

and partners. Thus, most of the participants recruited were experienced high-ranking professionals in charitable organizations and all of them, only except for one, were very open for providing information that I needed. Besides, the participants were diverse in ethnicity and age (see Table 2).

Interview Protocol

The purpose of the interviews was to explore the process, effects and skills of interpersonal communication in relationship management and the balancing of the identities of communicators in the context of charitable organizations. As the participants were communicators in charitable organizations who needed to cross organizational boundaries in order to manage both internal and external relationships, they would probably encounter role conflicts in the communication process. With relationship management, interpersonal communication and social identity theories, interview questions were developed to explore the communicators' relationship management process, interpersonal communication skills and role conflicts and the balancing of dual roles. Interview questions were designed to investigate the way, frequency and outcomes of relationship management, both internally and externally. There were four sections in the interview guide. The first section was background information. Sample questions were "what is your position in the organization and what are your job responsibilities?" and "how were organizational decisions made?" The second section was internal relationship management and social identity inside NPOs. Sample questions were in the terms of "what do you do on a daily basis with your volunteers/employees?" and "to what extent do you communicate face to face?" In actual interviews, questions such as "what

Table 2 Demographic Information of Participants

	Sex	Job Title	Length of Employment in Current Organization	Job Responsibility Limitation
P1	F	Project Specialist	7 months	Relationship management with small donors, not including big donor
P2	F	Director of Marketing and Communication	7 months	Internal communication and external marketing, not including donor/partner relations
P3	M	Executive Director	1 year and 4 months*	N/A
P4	F	Co-founder and CEO	25 years	N/A
P5	F	President of Community Relations	16 years	N/A
P6	F	Executive Director	17 years	N/A
P7	F	Head of the School Administrator	5 years	Administering the school. Fundraising is a minor task, because it makes less than 10% of the revenue.
P8	F	Development Director	4 months	N/A
P9	F	Vice President of Resource Development	1 year and 3 months*	N/A
P10	M	Senior Director of Development	3 years and 6 months	N/A
P11	F	Executive Director	13 years*	N/A
P12	M	President and CEO	25 years	N/A
P13	F	Communication Coordinator	9 months*	Applying for government and foundation funding and soliciting donations from only a few small donors, since the organization relies on government funding.
Max.			25 years	
Min.			4 months	
Mean			8 years and 5 months	

P =Participant; F =Female; M =Male

Max. =Maximum number of age range/working time; Min. =Minimum number of age/working time

* denotes that the participant has a previous job(s) in charitable organizations

efforts to you make on volunteer retention?” were added. Based on the literature review that positive organization-public relationships will facilitate OCBs and collaborative decision-making, interview questions investigated whether the interviewee had the sense and behavior of organizational citizenship behavior and who could participate in decision-making processes in the organization. These questions were “how do you feel about your job?”, “do you put a great deal of efforts beyond what is expected to make your organization successful?”, “what are your motivations?” and “were your opinions, attitudes or even values ever changed by your co-workers or clients?”

The third section was external relationship management and social identity outside NPOs. Sample questions were “how do you work with your partners and supporters?” and “what strategies do you use to build and maintain your relationship with them?” More questions of evaluating the effectiveness of interpersonal communication were added, such as “comparing all the communication ways you mentioned, which one is most effective in managing relationships with donors?” The fourth section was balancing the dual role. In this section, each participant was asked whether s/he felt that s/he played a dual role in the relationship management process and what the challenges, obstacles and skills of balancing the dual role were. Sample questions were “do you feel you play such a dual role?” and “how do you accommodate the dual role?” Questions such as “when big donors who have very close relationships with you, when they have some requirements or opinions which are different from organizational decisions, how do you deal with that?” and “if there are some conflicts between your subordinates’ opinions and your supervisor’s opinions, how will you deal with that?” were added in the actual

interviews. These interview questions helped to identify interpersonal communication strategies and role-balancing strategies in cross-boundary relationship management.

I referred a participant's statements of facts to another participant to compare participants' different responses to the same question. All participants were coded numerically to protect the confidentiality, e.g., P1 represented participant number one. For example, when P10 said the board of directors selected the CEO and they made most of the strategic decisions, I asked why another participant said the CEO had the authority to making decisions, and CEO could even "fire" board members in her organization. I also shared certain participants' ways of differentiating volunteers and employees with other participants to compare their different views. This process of constant comparison facilitated the clarifying of categories and concepts deriving from the data collected. Not all the answers and responses from one participant were accurate. As a result, by comparing and contrasting answers to the same question from multiple participants, I was able to obtain the most solid answers to research questions.

My interview protocol was developed mainly according to Lindlof and Taylor's (2002) and Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative research guidelines. Interview questions were developed from previous public relations literature, my content analysis of web sites of targeted charitable organizations in Greater Houston Area and advices from United Ways department consultants and my thesis advisors in the Valenti School of Communication and the Graduate College of Social Work. The data collected had the potential to accurately address the research questions proposed in this study. The interview protocol served as a guide to the interview process. However, respondents were allowed to elaborate on questions as they wish, and follow-up questions were asked

where appropriate (White & Raman, 2000). This process differed from that of a structured interview where the interviewer would only ask questions on the interview protocol with no variations, and the interviewees would strictly answer the questions asked without additional elaboration. Instead, this study employed a semi-structured process, which allowed for the researcher to probe in topics unanticipated prior to the interview but which the participants felt were important to them. The interview protocol could be found in the Appendix C.

Data Analysis

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), the “purpose of the data analysis is to organize the interviews to present a narrative that explains what happened or provide a description of the norms and values that underlie cultural behavior” (p. 229). The overall approach in my data analysis was to employ an inductive method. Through this method, “data slowly resolve into concepts and specific research proposition through the investigator’s own increasing skill at understanding” (Lindlof, 1995, p. 56). This method differed from deduction, where a researcher began with general principles and then constructed an argument showing evidence that supported those general principles (Potter, 1996). As previously explained, the goal of this study was to explore something that has received little attention and would not necessarily benefit from the deductive process. Instead, I let the data guide my conclusions (Potter, 1996).

More specifically, I analyzed my data using grounded theory. According to Potter (1996), this analytical technique “directs researchers to look for patterns in data so they can make general statements about the phenomenon they examined” (p. 151). Furthermore, “the procedures of grounded theory are designed to develop a well-

integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5). This technique was relevant to this study as I was looking to the participants’ answers to further explain how they were involved in interpersonal communication in the process of relationship management and how they balance their dual roles. Grounded theory was also relevant to this particular study because the research questions were understudied, and this theory allowed the data to provide a theoretical explanation.

The resulting data took the form of narrative answers to the open-ended questions provided to participants. The first step in organizing these data was the process of coding. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), coding is the process of grouping interviewees’ responses into “categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts, or themes” that were discovered (p. 238). First of all, I categorized the communication process related to relationship management into different groups according to the public groups: volunteer, employee, donor, partner, client and media. From participants’ responses, clients and media were considered as two additional key external publics. Then, I noted the ways of communication in relationship management, strategies of interpersonal communication in relationship management, strategies of balancing communicator’s dual role, and strategies of resolving conflicts created by the dual role in the transcripts.

All the detailed strategies were re-categorized into several patterns or themes, so similar strategies or skills had a shared “family name.” For example, the steps and skills for selecting volunteers and the principles of collaborating with partners were given a “family name” of “screening” as a general interpersonal communication strategy in relationship management with publics.

At last, in order to answer the three research questions, I looked for themes from three major areas: 1) the strategies and communicators' roles of internal interpersonal communication in relationship management, 2) the strategies and communicators' role of external interpersonal communication in relationship management, 3) communicators' role conflicts and the strategies of balancing their dual role.

Once I had determined patterns based on the themes and concepts above, I went back through my data to identify each time they occur. This process led me to "discover other themes, concepts, and ideas and designate new coding categories to include them" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 228). According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), "as an incident is noted, it should be compared against other incidents for similarities and differences" (p. 7). Furthermore, "making comparisons assists the researcher in guarding against bias, for he or she is then challenging concepts with fresh data" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7). Such comparisons also helped to "achieve greater precision and consistency" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7).

Data became saturated when participants started to provide similar responses. For example, P5, P9, P10 and P11 all mentioned or showed their persistence on professionalism, so professionalism emerged as a strategy of balancing the dual role. Another example was that P5, P6, P8 and P9 all used open conversations with whoever had a disagreement or complaint with them. When I was interviewing the fifth and sixth interviewees, I realized that repetitive answers started to appear for most interview questions. Although this study only had 13 participants, data saturation was obvious and strong. Therefore, results yielded were supported by relatively sufficient and representative evidence.

Certain doubts were mediated or even eliminated by inviting a third participant to comment on other participants' responses. Another graduate student was recruited as a second coder to code two transcripts randomly. I had only one co-coder and had her complete only two transcripts due to time constraint. She coded transcript 3 and transcript 10 for me, and we discussed the themes or patterns for all the data. At last, we reached consensus on the themes or patterns. We marked the disparate themes, and looked for supporting evidence by reviewing transcripts. Each of us provided evidence and rationale for disparate themes, and the more reasonable ones were left. For instance, she considered "meeting expectations" and "clarifying responsibilities" as two strategies of balancing dual role. After discussion, she agreed to put these two strategies in internal relationship management section, because most participants used them in internal relationship management. Finally, we reached consensus on the themes and patterns.

My analysis was complete, once I had drawn my conclusions. I performed member validation checks by taking my findings back to some of my participants in order to get their feedback regarding the findings (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). I provided my results to the participants and gave them an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of my findings. While the data did not change based on the participant's comments, the presentation of my results and resulting discussion was updated as a response to potential concerns.

Chapter Four

Results

The results section begin with some general contextual factors relevant to relationship management in charitable organizations, followed by findings related to specific research questions. The qualitative, exploratory method used in this study produced rich data, some of which helped reshape the original conceptualization of this study. First of all, data showed that each organization studied had its unique background. At the same time, participants' behaviors in relationship management were greatly influenced by their individual situations. Before I present the main themes of relationship management in charitable organizations, there is a need to look at the context of relationship management in this study. These contextual factors included environmental factors and organization-specific factors. As stated in the method section, participants were coded numerically to protect the confidentiality, e.g., P1 represented participant number one.

Environmental Factors

Participants argued that these contextual factors greatly influenced the specific relationship management process in each charitable organization; therefore, these factors were presented first to provide the general context of the study. They included *government regulations, funding streams, and national economy*.

First of all, all charitable organizations in this study were registered 501 (c) 3 organizations and were bound by *governmental regulations* in managing relationships with various publics. For example, P10 said that any charitable organization must at least have one attorney and one HR person according to government's guidelines. If not, the

organization would lose its 501 (c) 3 organization status, which means it would lose the majority of its funding and could no longer survive. This personnel requirement definitely influenced the daily operation of charitable organizations and how communicators interacted with donors. P13 also specified that the organization she worked for was regulated by government agency so that it could not force any people to believe in the mission and programs of this organization. Moreover, regulations also directly affected managing relationships with members and volunteers. For example, P10 said because the government and law imposed many prerequisites of being a volunteer in their programs for children, the organization was limited in its ability to recruit volunteers who may only help with events occasionally. According to P7, the State of Texas regulated that the teachers in her school are only bound by at-will contracts, which meant that no one could let teachers go, but these teachers could leave with or without notice. This represented a major difference from mainstream charitable organizations in employee-organization contract, which influenced their daily interaction and relationship management with employees.

Secondly, the *funding streams* of a charitable organization influenced the priority setting in relationship management with the publics. The sources and the amount of funding were two key aspects of funding streams. As P13 specified, before 2008, 95% of the organization's revenue came from governmental contracts, and government funding still contributed about 80% of its revenue this year. Thus, although this organization had existed for almost 50 years, it still had not developed a formalized scheme of managing its volunteers and donors. For a similar reason (the government being a major source of funding), P12 said he needed to spend most of his time maintaining good relationships

with government officials. On the other hand, for charitable organizations that served the community and relied heavily on the support of the community, they needed to interact frequently with the people in the community. For instance, the organization P6 served relied on donors in the community, so there were many big fundraising events in the community. Similarly, P5 organized affiliated discussions called Community Conversation, which was made up of 89 conversations with 500 people in order to solicit feedbacks from the community. Therefore, charitable organizations need to analyze the sources and the amount of the funding, and to allocate the resources in relationship management with state and federal government, private and public foundations, and corporate and individual donors.

National economy influenced charitable organizations' funding stream directly, and it also affected relationship management with key publics indirectly. Currently, the economy downturn in the United States caused many charitable organizations to run into financial crises. Fewer donors were making gifts to charitable organizations, and foundations cut down their grants. Six interviewees all mentioned the financial challenges they encountered in the economy downturn. As P11 said, this factor had motivated employees in her charitable organizations to be more proactive in managing good relationships with big foundations, the government, and donors.

Organization-specific Factors

Based on many participants' responses, factors that were internal to different charitable organizations also affected communicators' relationship management with key publics. They included *employee and client makeup, organizational structure, size, and culture, internal power distribution, reputation* and *organizations' current phase of*

development. Since Houston is an ethnically-diverse metropolitan city, many charitable organizations had employees and clients from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The diversity of the staff definitely influenced the strategy of internal and external relationship management. For example, the organization that P4 founded had the first Spanish support group, because it had Spanish-speaking women as their clients. The organization that P1 and P11 worked for recruited employees and volunteers who were ethnically close to the community.

Client segment represents who the charitable organization serves and who the external key publics are, so it had an impact on external relationship management process directly. P13 mentioned that the clientele of her organization was a niche, so “it is pretty easy to say yes or no when making decisions.” That is to say, she did not need to consult her supervisors or co-workers in most cases. Therefore, employees in her organization had relatively high level of independence on decision making. P7 also specified that the clientele that her organization served was “a niche of a niche.” The limitation on client segmenting in the market greatly influenced the organization’s revenue from fundraising, because the general public would give their support to a charitable organization which they believed had broader and/or more immediate impact on the society. So P7 did not have many donors from the general public and she did not need to allocate a lot of resources for donor development. Thus, the organizations that P13 and P7 worked for even did not have a person in the position of fundraising, and employees tried to ask the clients, employees and volunteers they worked with to make a donation no matter what the amount was. However, P7 spent a lot of time encouraging other publics who they had a close relationship with, such as the employees, volunteers and clients to donate. And

P13 focused on governmental funding applications and there were employees who were responsible for relationship management with government officials.

In addition, aiming to serve the community, many charitable organizations had an *employee makeup* which reflects the ethnical composition of the community. For instance, the organizations that P1 and P11 served had many Asian employees, because the organizations were located in an Asian community and served Asian communities mostly. And since the local branch that P6 led served African-American communities, she herself and many other employees and volunteers were African American.

Organizational structure, size and culture needed to be taken into consideration because they all influenced relationship management through influencing working efficiency and program outcomes. Organizational structure and size determined the authority of decision making, the direction of information flow inside the organization, and the frequency of internal communication. As P4 and P13 mentioned, organizational culture could mediate the effects.

Organizational structure was an important factor in relationship management. According to government regulations, board of directors selected CEO, and CEO selected departmental leaders. Board of directors made the strategic decisions. CEO made operational decisions. Departmental leaders made decisions which would only affect the specific departments. For instance, when there were decisions related to policy or other branches, P6, as director of her branch, needed to report to the Metro Office, and manager of Metropolitan area needed to report to the headquarter when needed. Another example was that in P7's organization, there was a lot of bottom-up information flow and a little top-down information flow, because the organization was small, and the structure

was simple and relatively flat. P9 mentioned that there were separations and segregations among different departments in her previous organization, a large national charitable organization. Thus, employees of different departments did not have much chance to cooperate and figure out the most efficient working scheme, and higher-rank officers had few opportunities to know all the employees, the grass-root volunteers, and small donors. In contrast, P12 built and took advantage of a flat-structured organization. He made sure that any employee would have a lot of opportunities to communicate with anybody s/he wants directly. Although his branch was only a part of a national organization, he had sufficient autonomy on the operation of this local branch and does not need to report to higher offices about decision making. Therefore, the frequency of internal communication was much higher in a relative flat-structured charitable organization.

Also, relationship management varies in charitable organizations with different *organizational sizes*. For example, the organization that P6 worked for was a national organization with 40 branches in the metropolitan area of Houston alone. Although P6 was the top officer in her branch, she needed to report to the Metro Office about decisions related to policy and/or procedure and it could take a long time to get the final decision from that office. There were also positive effects of large organizational size. As P6 said, in a national organization, local branches had benchmarks, because the headquarters could select an exemplar and encourage other branches to learn from it. Besides, headquarters or the Metro Office could move resources from a well-performed branch to a dysfunctional branch. P5, P10 and P12 all worked for very large organizations, so local branches needed to communicate and cooperate sometimes. In contrast, P7, P8's and P13's organizations were relatively small, so that almost all the

employees worked closely with each other and also with external publics directly. However, small charitable organizations usually had fewer resources such as an enormous database.

Organizational culture made a difference in relationship management, especially internally. Many participants contended that there was a need to show respect to employees, volunteers and clients. P4 was the CEO and co-founder of her organization. She never took the work of the employees and volunteers for granted; rather, she showed great gratitude and a lot of personal care and understanding. As a result, when the organization encountered a financial crisis, every employee stayed and sacrificed their own time and benefits to get the work done. P4 said that no one put a lot of pressure on employees in her charitable organization. P5 and P7 believed in leading by example. P5 would do anything that might help a co-worker, such as photocopying and moving furniture. Showing respect was also reflected in other ways. P6 said in her organization, anyone was allowed to pray and has the freedom of holding his/her own beliefs. For P7, many volunteer, employees, clients, and donors had lived in the same community for decades. They saw each other every day, knew each other, and helped each other. Overall, all the stakeholders of the organization felt like a family.

Internal power distribution also influenced communication and relationship management. Employees tended not to feel close with supervisors when they could not participate in decision making. For example, P1 and P2 agreed with any decision their supervisors made and accepted any opinions of their supervisors. Agreeing that more democracy was needed, P1 stated overtly that “hierarchy has the final say” and complained about the lack of flexibility in her own work. P2 was pretty cautious in

answering each question. In most cases, she either was reticent or used neutral or general words to describe a situation after careful thinking. For example, when I asked “do you think face-to-face meetings are effective in relationship building?” She said “It depends. We use emails and marketing ads, too. It depends on the person(s) who we contact.” And another example was when I asked “how do others evaluate the officers’ work?” She just said “I do not know.” Nevertheless, her responses revealed strict hierarchy, centralized power distribution, and few employee activities or daily interaction. It was reasonable to conclude that the two participants did not have an equal, open, or close relationship with their supervisors.

Organizational reputation was proposed by many participants as a key factor in attracting donors, partners, and volunteers. Reputation was built through the achievements of charitable organizations and people supported any charitable organization because they agreed with its mission and programs. As a result, whether a charitable organization had high recognition and credibility greatly affected the number of donors, partners and volunteers it had as well as the amount of resources allocated to volunteer recruitment and donor/partner relations. For instance, P4’s organization was known nation-wide and thus it had a lot of volunteers. Another example was that P10 also said he was never worried about volunteer resources, because he had good relationship with many for-profit companies and his organization’s name was always on the list of charitable organizations for the employees in those for-profit companies to choose from when employees were required to volunteer for dozens of hours a year.

Finally, *the current phase of development* for a charitable organization had an impact on organizational structure, organizational culture, and employee’s loyalty and

commitment to the organization. P5 perceived that employees in a new organization probably had a lot in common which might make it easier to have a good relationship with co-workers. In contrast, in a mature organization, its “culture is seriously well established, and it is mission-driven.” Employees would assess whether their personal value fit in the organizational culture and decide whether to stay or to leave. P11 had worked for her organization for 13 years. She joined the organization in the starting point of its expansion and growth, and she experienced its entering of a relatively mature phase last year. She felt self-fulfilled to see all the achievements in the organization’s growing and maturing process, and felt happy to see the children the organization helped to return and work with her. Therefore, she demonstrated a high level of satisfaction and commitment to the organization. In addition, the phase of development also influenced organizational structure, because there would be more separation and segregation and the power distribution would be centralized when an organization grew bigger. P13 suggested that leaders try to cultivate organizational culture to mediate the side effects of organizational expansion.

In summary, all these environmental and organizational factors influenced relationship management in charitable organizations simultaneously and should be taken into consideration when a charitable organization builds and maintains good relationships with its publics. Consequently, Figure 1 in the conceptualization chapter is now modified. Figure 2 provides a general framework as I continue the discussion on findings of research questions.

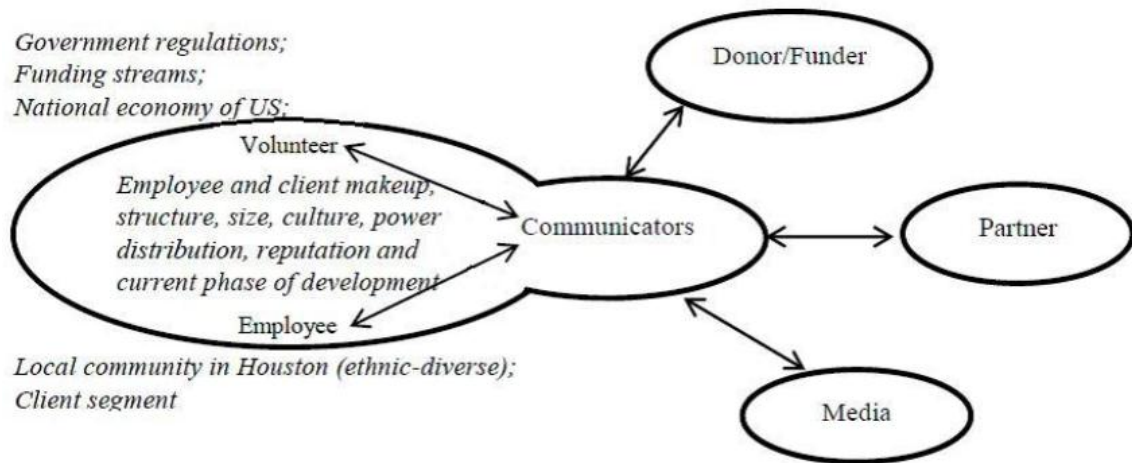


FIGURE 2. The Dual Role of Communicators in Charitable Nonprofit Organizations with Background Factors

As data analysis moved along, some modification and redefinition of some terms in the original research questions were needed. In the interview guide, employees were defined as “those who work on a more permanent basis’ and “have the responsibility of organizing activities and supervising volunteers,” whereas volunteers were considered as people who helped the charitable organizations with events occasionally.

However, as P4 said, it was difficult to distinguish volunteers and employees based purely on the length of employment or frequency of coming to a charitable organization. P4 agreed that employees were bounded by contract, but she had “some volunteers who are as dependable as employees.” She had a volunteer who helped the organization for 22 years. Besides, P5 invited professionals and experts to do workshops in her organization for employees. Some of the presenters came regularly. Moreover, P6 and P7 had many part-time employees who did not appear very often. As a result, for a traditional or mainstream charitable organization, it is better to distinguish employees and

volunteers by whether a formal contract exists between the individual and the organization.

Many participants, such as one participant working in a non-traditional nonprofit school, and a senior director in a well-known charitable organization, did not see any difference among volunteers, donors, and partners. P7 and P10 both said that donors sometimes helped as volunteers. P10 put the contact information of all publics together and did not segment them. Moreover, many participants considered as partners other organizations which collaborated with their charitable organizations. They didn't call an individual supporter a "partner". Many charitable organizations in this study had big corporations or companies as their clients, partners or donors, and the role of these corporations or companies also changed in different cases. As a result, I considered volunteer, employee, donor and partner in the role of publics, and removed "s" from "volunteers", "employees", "partners" and "supporters" as used in the original research questions. Any public could have more than one role at the same time and the role of public is convertible. The role conversion of volunteer, donor, client, and partner had in fact appeared in several participants' organizations. It is shown in Figure 3 as follows:

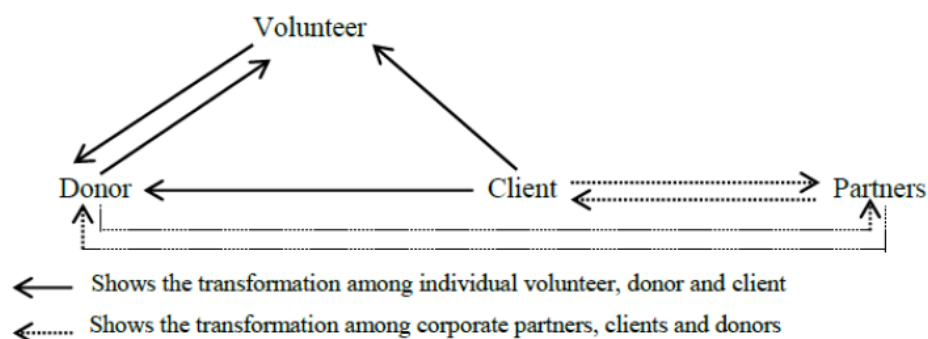


FIGURE 3. The Role Conversion of Volunteers, Donors, Clients and Partner

I agreed with P10's contention that partners and donors both supported charitable organizations, and it was true that donors might work as volunteers sometimes and that partners might also donate. Besides, P13 called governmental agencies and foundations that support them as funders. Therefore, I changed "supporter" into "donor/funder" in RQ 2 and 3, and changed the external public "donor" in Figure 1 into "donor/funder" in Figure 2. I used "funder" to represent federal and state government. As a result, I considered people who had either of the two roles of "partner" and "donor/funder" as external publics of the charitable organization.

Besides, once a volunteer started to work for a charitable organization, supervisors considered the volunteers as part of the organization, and managed the volunteer in a way similar to that for managing the employees. For example, communication with employees and with volunteers were both informal, compared with those with donors and partners. Some volunteers worked for charitable organizations regularly with a long-time commitment, and some volunteers also had a boundary-spanning role of fundraising and building relationships with donors in the community. In the literature review and also in Figure 1, volunteers were considered as a group of supporters. In results section and also in Figure 2, volunteers was incorporated into the internal public. This new categorization was in congruence with the real segmentation of publics in most charitable organizations in this study. Below are the findings related to my RQs.

RQ1: How do charitable organizations manage relationships with employee and volunteer publics through interpersonal communication?

In internal communication, all methods of communication with employee/volunteer publics were effective, but interpersonal communication was specified as the most effective way in relationship management. Interpersonal communication strategies were explored and summarized. In addition, many participants showed a level of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), but the main motivations for such OCBs were various antecedent factors rather than heightened organizational identification.

Interpersonal vs. Mass Communication

Organizations managed relationships with volunteers and employees through various ways of communication, including events, interpersonal talk, activities, social media, meetings, evaluations, memos, emails, and so on. Almost all the participants said that all these ways of communication were effective in making the organization known to the potential internal publics and/or collecting internal publics' feedback. However, many of them emphasized that interpersonal communication was the most effective way of relationship management with internal publics. In this study, interpersonal communication, in contrast to mass communication, refers to various ways of communication that deliver individualized messages. I gave examples of interpersonal communication to participants, such as sending a personal greeting emails to donors and a one-on-one talk with employees. The mechanism of such internal communication might vary. Some participants had the time and chance to meet and talk with volunteers and employees face to face every day, but some could not because of their job positions and responsibilities or time restraints. Instead, these participants used emails, text messages,

memo, on-line meetings, phone calls, open-house and reports from subordinates to manage relationships with grass-root volunteers and employees.

On the other hand, mass communication was also useful in relationship management. Many participants had been using mass communication with publics via newsletters, correspondence, annual report, advertisement, and website. Even when a charitable organization adopted a typical way of interpersonal communication, interpersonal communication was still lacking, as one-on-one conversations were insufficient. Take “evaluation” for example. P7 mentioned that they used anonymous employee surveys each year to get their feedback. In this process, all employees were considered as a whole, and the survey result reflected the opinions of the employee collective. In contrast, P3 said that their employees would regularly meet with volunteers person to person in order to collect their opinions, and therefore this “evaluation” method was interpersonal in nature. Another example is “meetings.” P5 said that in departmental meeting people had the opportunities to talk with anyone they want. In contrast, P12 mentioned that in national conferences where hundreds of people attended, leaders made speeches and most lower-rank employees or volunteers might not have a chance to talk with higher-rank officers.

Interpersonal Communication Strategies

The following are five strongest themes of interpersonal communication strategies that emerged in the process of internal relationship management. They are “managing by walking around”, “showing equity in culture”, “motivating”, “building humanistic tie” and “adopting an open-door policy.”

Managing by walking around. This strategy guaranteed frequent internal communication in an informal setting. Supervisors could make sure that employees had what were needed to get their job done as well as develop a good relationship with employees. P5 said managing by walking around was a very old-fashioned school of management. She explained that a supervisor needed to walk around the workplace and to talk with co-workers all the time in an informal setting. In the conversations with employees, a supervisor needed to make sure that employees got their work done. Another example was that P4 frequently went to every co-worker and talked with them every day. She formed such a close relationship with them that several employees once got mad at her because she did not go to talk with them. These employees showed that they cared about her a lot. Open, equal, and respectful dialogues would facilitate interpersonal communication with lower-rank staff.

Showing equity in culture. It was emphasized by many participants that equity was important in organization and supervisors needed to remember that everybody's opinion had value. Many participants stressed that when managing superior-subordinate relationships, supervisors needed to treat the subordinates as equal to themselves and to show respect for their opinions, especially when subordinates sought help. For instance, P5 would do anything to help others such as making copies and moving furniture, and P7 always tried to help the employees by sharing her own similar experiences with them. Both of them formed very close relationship with employees.

Motivating. There were many ways of motivating employees and volunteers for better working performance and increased employee satisfaction. P7 emphasized the influence that physical environment such as settings had on meeting attendees'

participation in discussion. In her organization, parents were the main source of volunteers. For example, when there was a parent meeting in the school for parent volunteers, she chose one of the child's classrooms, not an office, as the venue, and got parents seated around a round table. In this way, parents could see children's things and sit in a circle of equals. Another example was that P3 and P5 advised supervisors to encourage employees/volunteers to participate in organizational activities and to meet organization's expectations about their work. Therefore, organizations could give more support and encouragement to motivate volunteers and employees to meet organizations' expectations of their work.

Building a humanistic tie. Many participants contended that they continue to work in an organization where there was a "humanistic tie," so that employees would feel warm and taken care of at the workplace. For instance, P13 compared her current job with her previous job in a for-profit corporation and emphasized that it was the humanistic tie in the current organization that motivated her to stay and made her feel like being in a big family. In contrast, in the corporation she previously worked for, she felt stressed, ignored, and isolated. Another example was that P3 felt happy with the flexibility in the organization. When he had an appointment with a dentist, he was permitted to leave earlier and to make up for the missed hours another day. Other participants also highlighted the importance of showing respect and care to employees and volunteers. P12 also shared his personal and professional philosophy of "never burn a bridge," because he valued the relationship with everyone in the community very much.

Adopting an open-door policy. Most of the participants emphasized that supervisors needed to make sure that they were always accessible, especially for

employees. Keeping the door open was a sign of appreciating open talk. For example, P12 said that his door was closed only when he was having private talk with someone, but even then anyone could knock on the door and he would tell him/her when he would be available for that person.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Previous studies showed that heightened organizational identification led to organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Although many participants showed a level of OCBs, organizational identification did not appear as an important reason for such OCBs in those participants' responses. Various antecedent factors of OCBs emerged from their answers to the question of "what motivated you to put more efforts into your work than what were expected?" Seven interviewees contended that intrinsic factors caused them to work hard and to contribute to their organizations. For example, even when there was no close superior-subordinate relationship for P1, she still spent extra hours working at home and had spent a lot of time and energy to make sure that each event went so perfectly. Therefore, when supervisors evaluated the impact of positive relationship management on OCBs, there was a need to incorporate the antecedent factors. These factors are listed below.

Traits. Many participants labeled themselves with words such as "high achiever," "responsible," "hard-working," "passionate," and "energetic" when explaining why they put a great deal of efforts beyond what was expected of them to make the organization successful. These participants said they worked hard in each of the previous organization they had worked for, including both for-profit and non-profit organizations. P5 said she was very energetic and open to conversations, so she "always do[es] things that need to

be done,” and “look[s] for opportunities to engage people to give people chance to try different things.” Therefore, an employee’s or a volunteer’s traits greatly influenced the motivation of working and ways of communication.

Personal value and belief. As money was not a big concern for all participants, personal value and belief became an important reason for their commitment to the causes of charitable organizations. When participants were asked whether their values, beliefs or attitudes ever changed by other members in the charitable organizations, 12 out of the 13 participants assumed that personal value and belief were set and intrinsic which were hard to be changed. However, several participants specified that their personal value and belief needed to be congruent with those of the organizations. They chose to enter an organization when they believed in its mission, and they would leave whenever they did not agree with the values or principles of the organization. Participants’ social identity became heightened when their personal values and beliefs matched those of the organizations. For example, P1 considered her administrative job as important, because the work she did helped those consultants provide programs for clients. Almost all the participants said specifically that they believed in the mission of the organizations they worked for, and all of the 13 participants would like to continue working for the current organizations. As P5 said, whether an organization was ethical was a principle which determined her commitment to the organization.

Personal value and belief was an important motivator for employees’ OCBs. For example, P4 said that she had been committed to the causes of her organization for more than 25 years no matter what difficulties she had, because she had always been a feminist. By interacting with a lot of women who had the same health problems, P4’s attitude had

been changed in that she became “sensitive to that anyone of us can be poor at any time”, because she had seen many people suffering from cancer and/or poverty. She felt that all people were equal and deserved a right to have a good life, so she devoted herself to bringing equity to more people. P10 stressed professionalism at work, and she always tried her best to solve donors’ concerns professionally instead of showing any negative emotion or attitude. Besides, participants used phrases such as “contributing to society”, “improving people’s lives”, “serving the community”, and “benefiting the agency” to describe their motivation in working in the current organization. All these terms showed how personal value was a reason for participants’ commitment to charitable causes. Thus, supervisors could consider this factor to try to understand employees and to manage relationships with them.

Career interest. Many participants showed personal interest in their current jobs. Participants used any of the phrases of “in favor of understanding how people think”, “being exposed to the broad community”, “seeing different people every day”, and “in favor of cultural affairs or challenges” to describe the reason why they chose to work for the current organization or the benefits of working for the current organization.

Personal expectation. The lack of a clear understanding of how personal expectations and organizational expectations clashed might result in declining OCBs. P5 proposed that employees might feel that their personal and social life was in conflict with the expectations at work. Realistic job previews were thus implemented by many participants to prevent this. For instance, P3 let the candidates know what the charitable organization was trying to accomplish before they came on board. He usually told program volunteers directly about the expected time length of their volunteering. P10

also got volunteers' expectations about the job through face-to-face talk in volunteer recruitment, so he knew whether he has enough people before the event started. What is more, P5 and P8 mentioned that organizations needed to know the differences between volunteers' expectation and employees' expectation, because volunteers were donating their time while employees were paid for their time and work. Employees could not ask for as many favors or help from other employees as they did from volunteers, because employees had to get their own work done on time.

Comparative advantage on the job. Many participants chose their specific jobs because they had certain advantages in doing the jobs, such as vocational or language sophistication. Several participants mentioned that they chose to work for the current organization because of their "academic background, working and/or life experiences, and/or their ethnic background." P13 said she could use what she had learned at a university, and she worked extremely hard in the current organization. She even turned down a salary raise, because she did not feel she had reached her own standards of excellent work. P11 had worked for the current organization for more than 13 years and she demonstrated a high level of satisfaction and initiatives at work. One of the main reasons that she chose this organization and liked her job a lot was that she had ethnic closeness and a language advantage with her current organization and the community the organization relies on.

Level of position. Although this did not appear as strong a factor as the previous factors, the level of position was emphasized or referred to by some participants as a determinant of commitment to the charitable organizations. P5 proposed that whether an employee was at the entry, middle, or top management level influenced his or her

commitment to the organization. For example, most people at the top management level were “not gonna go any place any time soon” while “at a certain level, people often leave and go and get other opportunities.” As a result, employees at the top management level had more working stability and higher levels of OCBs.

In summary, all of these antecedent factors of organizational citizenship behavior identified in this study influenced employee’s/volunteer’s motivation to work, commitment to the organization, and preferred ways of communication. Many organizations used these factors as part of the recruitment criteria, and supervisors could develop a specific strategy of internal relationship management for each individual with these factors.

Internal publics were essential in carrying out programs and exploring new supporters. They made the charitable organization function. However, it was not enough for communicators to merely manage a good relationship with internal publics. External publics were even more important to charitable organizations. Many participants stressed that they spent a lot of time and resources on external relationship management, and developed many useful interpersonal communication strategies in external relationship management.

RQ2: How do communicators in charitable organizations manage relationships with organizations’ partner and donor/funder publics through interpersonal communication?

Donors and funders were especially important for charitable organizations, because they provided financial support for the survival of charitable organizations. Charitable organizations adopted diverse ways of communication with external publics. Besides, there was convergence between the ways of communication with internal and

external publics. Interpersonal communication strategies as well as additional key external publics emerged from the data. Moreover, responses from most of the participants showed that charitable organizations paid attention to the evaluation and the stewardship phases of the ROPES model (Kelly, 1998). First of all, there was a convergence of communication strategies in internal and external relationship management. A comparison of internal and external communication was needed, because they were considered as two quite different processes before data collection.

Similarities and Differences between Internal and External Communication

Trust emerged as an essential factor of good relationships across all publics. Both P6 and P13 emphasized that relationship were not built overnight. Sometimes, it took years to build a relationship with a donor. As P13 said, it is imperative to build trust with employees and volunteers. He also stressed that “it takes a long time to build trust, and it took only one action to lose that trust.” Other participants also said that communicators needed to be patient and pretty careful when interacting with external publics.

The strategies that communicators in charitable organizations used in managing relationships with external publics had convergence with those they used with internal publics. A similar pattern was found where they considered all ways of communication as effective for getting the organization known to the external publics and/or collecting external publics’ opinions. Many of them also emphasized that interpersonal communication was the most effective way of relationship management with external publics.

The extent to which a charitable organization used one or several specific methods of these universal ways of communicating varied with individuals. For instance,

P4 did not ask volunteers to distribute flyers on the street or by mail any more. P6 favored texting and emails, because she loved the real-time communication empowered by technology.

However, there were still some differences in communicating with different groups of publics. Most importantly, the communication with internal publics was mostly informal, whereas that with external publics was mostly formal. As P12 and P13 said, whereas supervisors usually had many more opportunities to talk with regular volunteers and employees every day, there was always a certain distance with donors when these supervisors were in the fundraising role. Whereas activities for employees and volunteers were mostly informal, such as Karaoke, having meals together, ice cream socials, celebrations for their birthdays or anniversaries, organizations showed their gratitude to volunteers and staff by holding appreciation parties, which was relatively formal in some organizations. P5 agreed that most events charitable organizations hosted to interact with donors and partners were formal, such as luncheon, gala, VIP reception and series of affiliated discussion. For these formal events, a lot of preparation was needed. In P7's organization, it took an entire school year to prepare for the Spring Gala. P1 also said she needed to prepare for their big events at least four months in advance.

Besides, the ways of communicating with donors or funders were most diverse, mostly because donors or funders were the most important public of the charitable organizations. Organizations conducted two-way communication with donors or funders as much as they could, and showed their great gratitude to donors' or funder' generosity. There was a golden rule for charitable organizations that "you need to thank the donors for seven times." Both P4 and P6 quoted it. Moreover, when managing big donors or

corporate partners, communicators in many charitable organizations needed to make meeting time and place convenient for external publics, cater to their needs, and show a lot of respect. For instance, employees in charitable organizations needed to pay personal visits to donors and partners sometimes. They also needed to attend donors' and partners' activities to show support. There were often on-site meetings and partnership meetings and other collaborative activities with partners.

Extensive Effect of Internal Relationship Management on External Publics

Regardless of the communication ways and processes, internal relationship management affected external publics, and programs outcomes were put into the spotlight. Data collected showed that internal relationship management would influence external publics, and a reciprocal effect occurs, which also supports the ROPES model proposed by Kelly (1998). For example, many participants stressed each employee's contribution to the organizations' success. When there was a close internal relationship, people worked more efficiently, and the outcomes of programs could be good. Externally, P3, P5, and P7 all showed great respect to donors'/partners' opinions. They collected feedback from external donors and modified their activities and programs accordingly. Participants cared a lot about donors'/funders' satisfaction on the outcomes of programs. P1, P9 and P11 said that donors/funders would give more donations if they were satisfied with the outcomes of the programs.

The reciprocal effect was illustrated in Figure 4. There must be other unknown factors that influenced volunteer and staff performance, program outcomes, funder satisfaction and funding. In fact, it was not a linear causal relationship between every two adjacent factors. However, as participants pointed out, Figure 4 presented a way of

looking at the “big picture” in relationship management in charitable organizations. For instance, P6 and P10 stressed that they needed to assess the impact of a plan on all publics when s/he made decisions. Besides, it could be used to explain why many charitable organizations in this study were outcome-oriented in decision making process to some extent. Program outcomes had a direct effect on funder satisfaction, and would influence the amount of future funding.

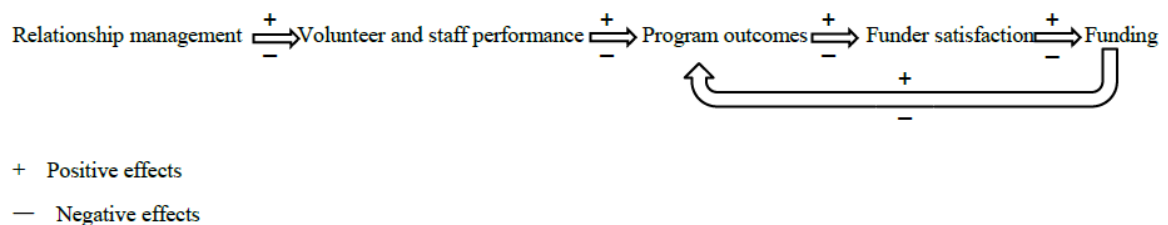


FIGURE 4. The Circle Effect of Internal Relationship Management

Interpersonal Communication Strategies

With the comparison and contrast of internal and external communication processes, it became salient that many interpersonal communication strategies in relationship management were universal across all the publics. Followings are six strongest themes of interpersonal communication strategy that emerged as critical in external as well as internal relationship management process.

Showing attention and care in conversation. Regardless of format, communicators needed to show a lot of attention in every person-to-person conversation. P9 said that a warm-up conversation was necessary in one-on-one talk, especially for a cold call. P13 suggested calling donors on their birthdays or anniversaries. When talking with donors, communicators should not ask for donations immediately, but talk about how things are with donors, their company, and their family. P7 mentioned that she

prepared bottled water and facial tissue for parent volunteers in meetings in order to show care for them.

Getting people involved. Relationships are built through interaction. As a result, all participants agreed that they worked hard to get all the publics involved in their activities in both formal and informal settings. When communicators invited donors/partners to organizational activities such as galas and open-house, it is good to contact them by sending individualized messages or giving them a personal call. Besides, P3 said that “there is a need to have fun and understand your workers are different age groups and backgrounds.” “Workers” here referred to employees and volunteers working for her organization. In addition, as P6 stated, communicators needed to know what a certain person would buy into, and how to get her/him connected with the causes of the charitable organizations.

Using customized way of communication. This strategy was useful to form a firm and close personal relationship with the publics. Sometimes, it was the only key to open the door of building a relationship. Using the most appropriate form of communication based on the individual’s preference was not only a way of showing attention and care, but also a way of making things work or improving efficiency. P5 believed that communicators could ask directly about donors/partners their preferred way of communication, and they would tell you sometimes even if communicators did not ask.

Showing equity in culture. In addition to using this strategy in internal relationship management as illustrated in the results of RQ1, communicators also could use this strategy in external relationship management. For example, P7 suggested that employees should not tell clients what to do, but advise them to try other ways of doing things.

Managing databases. Most organizations built databases of contact information, and sent identical emails and mails to all the publics. In this study that centered on relationship management through interpersonal communication, remarks of participants inferred that databases were also useful for interpersonal communication, because they provided a lot of personal information. For instance, many participants pointed out that people talked about the issues they were both concerned about in an informal setting most of the time. As a result, monitoring issues regularly was useful to start up an interesting conversation with publics. P5 conducted community assessment every other year to monitor the changes and issues in the community. P3 specified that they used surveys all year round and recorded the feedback in a database to monitor the link and match between volunteers and clients, as many of their volunteers had a long-term and one-on-one relationship with the clients. In addition, many participants emphasized the importance of keeping track of donors' requirements and preferences to avoid making errors when communicators sent a customized message. One participant even had a habit of keeping a record on the people with whom he spoke to.

Screening. As P9 said, communicators needed to screen partners/donors through background investigations to decide whether to meet them in person, because this action might result in conflicts with other charitable organizations. Besides, communicators needed to evaluate the requirements and expectations of partners/donors and to assess the impact, cost, and responsibilities attached with the support, and then to decide whether to accept their support. This strategy could also be used in internal relationship management. For example, as P10 and P6 mentioned, staff could assess whether there were sufficient or exceeded numbers of volunteers and assign them with the most appropriate work

through fact to face talks. Therefore, communicators showed a sense of responsibility for both the charitable organization and external partners, and screening was a good way to hold the communicator as well as the charitable organization accountable to external publics in long-term relationship management.

Additional Findings on External Relationship Management

Additionally, emerged patterns showed that it was also important to manage good relationships with clients and media, two important stakeholder groups that were later added to Figure 2. Media were considered as an external public of the charitable organizations, whereas clients were seen as both a contextual factor and an external public. First of all, some charitable organizations charged clients fees or tuition for their services. Having more clients could increase the revenue of charitable organizations. This was the case with the organizations P1 and P7 served. Secondly, even if clients did not pay any fees for services provided by the charitable organizations, clients' willingness to attend the program the charitable organizations provided would influence the outcomes of those programs and also the realization of their organizational mission. P4 believed that any client's healing depended on his or her feeling very comfortable about the treatment. The organization that P9 served provided shelter and assistance for people who were at the end of their life. Its mission was to help this marginalized group of people to live a happy and healthy life as much as possible in their last days. As a result, staff and volunteers must maintain a close relationship with the clients. In the school that P7 worked for, satisfied clients turned into donors and volunteers.

Media played an important role in external relationship management. First, media were essential to help the charitable organizations to "get words out." P2 had many

reporter friends, because she had worked for print media for years. She went to meet reporters and had lunch with them regularly. She had a lot of skills in knowing interest the media and increasing exposure for the charitable organization. Second, charitable organizations could try to make sure that their exposure was mostly positive, so that it would have a positive effect on organizational reputation. For example, P12 also interacted with any kind of media, including print media, broadcast media. He became very familiar with the characteristics of each form of media. He provided channels for the media to reach the employees in his organization when a relevant issue emerged in the media's agenda.

When participants recalled the complete process of relationship management in the context of charitable organizations, all of them were aware of their dual role, and introduced many useful strategies of balancing the dual role and resolving conflicts created by their dual role.

RQ3: How do charitable organization communicators balance their dual role of organization-employee/volunteer relationship maintaining and organization-partner/donor relationship maintaining?

All participants were aware of their dual role in relationship management process. Some of them even assumed that they played more than two roles according to the number of groups of publics. After I explained the definition of dual role in this study to them, they all agreed with the contention that communicators in charitable organizations played a dual role in relationship management with internal and external publics. They had different identities when they communicated with internal and external publics. Specifically, internally, participants took any of the roles of leader, leadership team

member or executive staff member in his/her organization. Externally, most of them played any of the roles of consultant, fundraiser or friend to external publics.

Besides, all participants except one, who was too cautious about revealing the actual operation of the organization in the interview, admitted that there were disagreements between superior and subordinate as well as disagreements between fundraiser and donor/partner. Nevertheless, they stressed that there were conflicts only when internal disagreements turned into employee grievance or a “break-up” between either the organization and the employee/volunteer or the organization and donor/partner. Grievance resolution had much to do with human resource management which was not the area of this study, so it would only be referred to in the strategies of conflict/disagreement resolution. As several participants mentioned, a “break-up” might be the case when the supervisor decided to terminate the employment contract when an employee made big mistakes or made an error repeatedly. It might also be the case, as several participants said, that employees/volunteers or donors/partners would not have supported a charitable organization if their value had not fit into the organization’s value or if they had not agreed on the organization’s causes and mission.

Strategies in balancing the dual role could be divided into two groups. One was strategies of playing the dual role, and the other is strategies of resolving conflicts/disagreements created by the dual role.

Interpersonal Communication Strategies in Balancing Dual Role

The five strategies communicators used when playing the dual role are as follows.

Looking at the “big picture.” Several participants stressed that it is essential to know the need of each group of publics and to understand each group’s perspectives.

When communicators tried to manage good relationship with each group, they needed to balance a lot of priorities. P6 said staff was a big concern for her and she needed to figure out ways to make money and to keep people employed. When a communicator made decisions, s/he needed to consider the purpose and feasibility of a plan and to assess the possible impacts it would have on the recognition of the organization, the staff, the clients and the community. Before P7 came to the school, there had been serious conflicts among board of trustees, head of the school, parents, and teachers, because each group of publics wanted to have the authority of making decisions. P7 learned that she needed to balance the power of each group of publics so that no group became too powerful and she could control the overall management. In addition, several participants said that employees in charitable organizations were multi-tasked. P6 contended that communicators needed to use his/her time wisely to manage good relationship with all the publics.

Packaging messages. Communicators needed to screen and to re-organize the messages when they played the boundary-spanning role. First of all, because communicator's roles inside and outside the organization were different, the communication processes with external and internal publics were not identical and they did not need to tell other staff the whole process of discussion with donors/partners. They only needed to tell the staff what to do to get things done. The results are 100% the same as what the donors expect, but how employees accomplish things might not be 100% the same. However, both internal and external conversations were conducted according to the same value. As inferred by other participants, the values included being ethical, keeping the words, realizing organizational mission and so on.

Secondly, from the case that P13 illustrated, as communicators were multi-tasked in charitable organizations, sometimes, they needed to switch gears. Even though they were working on two completely different projects or having a series of different important meetings on the same day, they needed to know who received the each message and how to get the message reach the right persons for each projects or incident in order to avoid mistakes. P13 was a grant-writer, so she was sensitive to words and meanings. She also said that “a little adjustment is necessary” in the process of message delivering so as to get the messages easily and fully understood. Thirdly, P7 emphasized that messaging involved confidentiality sometimes, such as cases that related to a “whistle-blower” policy. She said that she always needed to decide “who needed to know the information and what level they needed to know it and who could be trusted to keep that” when she had to discuss certain serious, sensational or personal information from a client with others. Communicators needed to write the stories which could deliver effective message and meaning. Nevertheless, all these participants stressed that the content of message must be true.

Watching the boundaries and being professional. Many participants such as P7, P12 and P13 felt that they were in a family when they worked with other employees. However, even if communicators were very close friends with certain partners/donors, there was always a boundary when communicators were in the fund-raising role. Facing the boundary-spanning role, it is imperative for communicators to know when to cross the boundary and when not to cross it. For instance, as P9 said, when a charitable organization collaborated with its competitors, it should not take away its partners’ clients and offend the partners. Communicators should have conversations with those

partners to avoid possible misunderstanding and conflicts and also to show respect to partners. Participants suggested that communicators needed to be clear about and abide by the organizational mission, principle, policies and their job responsibilities whenever they were managing relationships with key publics. P5, P9, P10 and P11 all mentioned or showed their persistence on professionalism. In their cases, being professional was to work efficiently and to solve problems effectively.

Facilitating two-way communication. Many participants used various ways to gather publics' opinions. Internally, supervisors had the responsibility of making sure that subordinates got their work done. Externally, charitable organizations must be held accountable to their donors, so they provided reports to donors regularly. Besides, they reported external publics' opinions in internal meetings to others, so that all employees could talk about what those publics looked for and what the charitable organizations could offer. Moreover, charitable organizations used all kinds of ways of communication to explain the decision to all publics, when publics were involved in decision making. As a result, facilitating two-way communication could keep in touch with all the publics and let them know what is going on. Two-way communication was a tool of reducing misunderstanding and increasing satisfaction.

Screening. Screening had several functions when communicators there were disagreements created by the dual role. First, information screening was done so that each group of publics got the effective message. For example, P11 suggested that when communicators brought donors'/partners' opinions to the board or other staff members, they could screen the information and then discuss with them, so the amount of information would not overwhelm the board or other staff members. Second,

communicators needed to be responsible for both the charitable organization and external publics, so screening was a good way to discuss the disparities and to reach a common ground whenever there were disagreements or conflicts with external publics. For instance, P11 said that when partners/donors wanted employees to work on an event or program in a different way, employees could request more meetings with the foundation or the donors. Employees and donors/foundations tried to reach a common ground through a series of discussion. Furthermore, recruiters in charitable organizations screened employees and volunteers to find the right persons for the specific tasks. Employee and volunteer selection would definitely affect external publics and interpersonal communication was very important in recruitment, because many employees and volunteers worked directly with external publics. Communicators needed to try to make sure that all the publics have satisfied experiences with the charitable organization.

Interpersonal Communication Strategies in Resolving Conflicts Created by Dual Role

Almost all of the participants admitted that they had encountered certain challenges of obstacles when they played the dual role. The five strongest themes of strategies in resolving conflicts in playing the dual role are as follows:

Initiating an open, direct, and active dialogue. Most participants addressed that communication was never enough in organizations. Whenever communicators encountered role conflicts, a direct conversation was a necessity for resolving the conflicts. When it came to internal disagreements or conflicts, as P5 said, any employee should try to initiate an open and direct conversation with the person who filed complaint about you to a third person. If the person refused to have conversations, the employee

could do nothing to solve the problem, because like P5 said “I do not read minds.” P8 also agreed that adults could have open conversations. Anyone who complained but refused to have an open conversation may lose respect from others. Besides, when it came to external disagreements or conflicts, I asked “what would you do if your fundraising goal was 6,000 dollars, but the actual amount raised was 5,000 dollars?” P6’s response was that fundraisers should ask for more donations directly if the need was urgent, and sometimes, donors would understand the situation and increase funding. In addition, when donors/partners had different opinions, many organizations allowed subordinates/donors/partners to present their opinions at the board meeting or to bring them to the executives directly. A flat organizational structure and open and democratic culture would facilitate this kind of direct dialogue. Furthermore, when a third person wanted to coordinate a conflict, P9 suggested that the coordinator talk with the persons in the conflicts directly in a polite and respectful manner. Sometimes, s/he could bring another one into the conversation when it was needed.

Teaching employees the rules of decision making. Training and education were good ways adopted by many participants to help employees learn the dynamics of decision making, and it was also a useful way of reducing conflicts. These dynamics or principles included: every opinion was valid, someone had to be the leader, and rules could help make decisions and so on. As illustrated by many participants, person(s) who had the authority made the final decision. For example, as specified by P10, chairman of the board needed to decide whether a disagreement was about a violation of the policy. If it was something simple, then anyone could disagree. If the person could convince the supervisor that s/he was right, then the supervisor could compromise.

Although the structure of charitable organizations and the authority of making decisions were more or less the same as regulated by the government, the specific rules varied, because organizational structure, culture, and internal power distribution influenced the actual implementation of policies and procedures. For example, I re-stated the decision making process in the organization that P8 worked for in the interview with P10, and he agreed that some charitable organizations did not follow the operation rules made by the government. So newcomers could not just follow the universal rules of decision-making in charitable organizations set by the government, they also needed to learn the specific rules and dynamics in the organizations where they worked. In addition, grievance resolution procedure of each charitable organization was also determined by the interpretation of policies and procedures by the person(s) who had the authority of making decisions, so employees needed to learn and follow the employee grievance resolution procedures of a specific organization.

Watching the boundaries and being professional. Even if communicators had a very close relationship with partners/donors, they had to refuse certain requests from partners'/donors' that went with the collaboration or gifts after certain screening process sometimes. However, communicators needed to remain professional when solving disagreements or conflicts. The manner of refusing request should be appropriate in order to maintain a relationship with donors/partners. P9 and P13 suggested that employees say "at this time, with the information we've been given, we are not going to be able to meet that request, because it does not fall within our mission," or "when we have good means or the technology or support, we may be able to revisit that." Demonstrating professionalism and respect, communicators showed people that their requests or

opinions were indeed taken into consideration, which made it easier for people to accept the decisions. And these responses showed professionalism and respect.

Besides, many participants held to the principle that “you are not going to get into any confrontation with donors,” and “customers are always right.” Staff’s responsibility was to fix things for donors. Staff did not criticize donors or blame on donors even when donors made mistakes and staff wanted donors to believe they were right. In addition, when it came to employee grievance resolution, coordinator needed to know what the staff member aimed to take away from the complaint and what the end results might be. When a third person helped to resolve the internal conflict, coordinator needed to do as much as s/he could to explain and to make the person feel understood, and then to do what was promised. Therefore, although participants in different positions had different interpretations of professionalism, they emphasized that all communicators needed to be professional so as to resolve the conflicts or disagreements effectively.

Being sensitive to cases that may cause conflicts. Participants listed skills for reducing the occurrence of conflicts. For example, communicators needed to make sure that the content of message was coherent for all groups of publics. Besides, as P3 illustrated, a restrictive gift came with many requirements as prerequisites of making that donation. Several participants mentioned that communicators needed to be pretty careful with those requirements. Employees must examine whether the organization could meet all the requirements, whether the requirements were in conflict with the organizational policy and the manager’s opinion. At the same time, employees needed to assess the cost of implementing those requirements. Any negligence might result in conflicts, such as an employment termination or a break-up of relationships with external publics.

Listening. When participants were asked “which strategy is most effective in solving conflict”, several participants gave the answer of “listening.” For example, P10 said “listening is pretty important. You must get what is going on.” P13 said “make them know they are heard. Listen to them first of all, and show them you are engaged.” For many participants, the first step of resolving a conflict was to listen to the critical points and learn what the conflict was.

Advice for Newcomer

Finally, each participant was asked about suggestions for how newcomers to charitable organizations could accommodate the dual role when they communicated with both internal and external publics. As indicated by many participants, newcomers needed to learn as much as possible about the dynamics of organizational decision making, to take advantage of any training opportunity, to ask questions, to observe others, and to be open about what people have to say. Newcomers learn from others’ opinions, even opposite opinions. As a result, newcomers needed to be open to others’ opinions. Besides, newcomers needed to balance their personal values and the organization’s values, especially when they entered a well-developed organization that had already formed its organizational culture.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Conclusions

Relationship management is a key issue in public relations. This study explores the relationship management strategies in the context of charitable organizations. The study focuses on the understudied areas of interpersonal communication and communicators' multiple identities. First of all, I will summarize the major findings of this study, and then discuss its theoretical and practical implications, limitations and directions for future research.

Summary of Major Findings

Contextual factors greatly influenced relationship management process in charitable organizations. These factors were divided into two groups: environmental factors and organization-specific factors. Environmental factors included government regulations, funding streams and national economy. Organization-specific factors included employee and client makeup, organizational structure, size, and culture, internal power distribution, reputation and organizations' current phase of development. All of them were incorporated into Figure 2.

Interpersonal communication proved to be essential in relationship management in charitable organizations. "Managing by walking around," "showing equity in culture," "motivating," "building humanistic tie," and "adopting an open-door policy" were five most frequently used interpersonal communication strategies in internal relationship management. Besides, six antecedent factors of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) were identified: traits, personal value and belief, career interest, personal

expectation, comparative advantage on the job, and level of position. These factors were considered as motivators of OCBs by participants.

It was found that many interpersonal strategies could be used in both internal and external relationship management. Showing attention and care in conversation, getting people involved, using customized way of communication, showing equity in culture, managing databases, and screening were the six most frequently used interpersonal communication strategies in external relationship management with key publics. Besides, two additional external key publics of charitable organizations were found.

Interpersonal strategies of balancing dual role included looking at the “big picture,” packaging messages, watching the boundaries and being professional, facilitating two-way communication, and screening. All of them were related to relationship management with all the key publics. Moreover, the five most frequently used interpersonal communication strategies in resolving conflicts created by dual role included initiating an open, direct, and active dialogue, teaching employees the rules of decision making, watching the boundaries and being professional, being sensitive to cases that may cause conflicts and listening. These five strategies were useful in resolving disagreements or even conflicts when communicators played the boundary-spanning role.

Theoretical Implications

The presumptions of this study are made on the basis of five areas of theoretical foundations: relationship management, identity and identification, internal communication, dual role and interpersonal communication. While supporting many

previous research findings, the results in this study also challenged some previous assertions of scholars.

Relationship management. Many of the relationship management strategies revealed in this study are in congruence with previous studies. For example, two-way symmetrical communication in organization-public relationship management is advocated in the Excellence Theory (e.g. L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Indeed, two-way communication was also identified as a useful strategy of playing the dual role in relationship management in the context of this study. As Kim (2007) stated, “symmetrical communication takes place through dialogue, negotiation, listening, and conflict management rather than through persuasion, manipulation, and the giving of orders. Asymmetrical communication in organizations, in contrast, is generally top-down” (p. 171). Most participants in this study had many opportunities of conducting two-way symmetrical communication inside their organizations, whereas the responses of two participants suggested the use of two-way asymmetrical communication in their organization most of the time. Among the two, one participant expressed overtly that she wanted symmetrical communication with her supervisors. Therefore, two-way symmetrical communication again proved to be an effective and desirable strategy in relationship management, at least in building relationships with internal publics.

Additionally, several strategies emerged in this study converge with four out of the six relational maintenance strategies commonly used in interpersonal and organization-public relationship management (i.e., Canary & Stafford, 1994; Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Markiewicz, Doyle, & Brendgen, 2001). The four strategies are assurances, openness, networking and access. P13 suggested that a

coordinator reassure the person who made a complaint that s/he got it by repeating the problem. Being open to conversation and being accessible for publics were recognized by many participants in relationship management. Networking was considered to be important by many participants, because charitable organizations always needed to explore new donors/funders by getting them involved in various activities or events.

What is more, the results also support three out of the four measures for the quality of organization-public relationship: trust, satisfaction, and commitment. P13 mentioned that trust was important in relationship building with donors, and it took time to build that trust. Several participants said that volunteers would help explore more donors if they had satisfied experiences with the charitable organization. Many participants perceived the level of commitment as an important sign of good relationship.

The importance of each step in ROPES (research, objectives, programming, evaluation, and stewardship) model (Kelly, 1998) is also supported in this study. Broom and Dozier (1990) defined research as “the controlled, objective, and systematic gathering of information for the purposes of describing and understanding. In other words, it is the *scientific* approach to answering questions, providing more reliable answers in most situations than authority, personal experience, and historical precedent” (p. 4, italics in original). Kelly (1998) advised charitable organizations to do research on their own organizations’ history, finances, personnel, program services, and past fund-raising efforts, on opportunities, and on donor publics including corporations and foundations. For instance, P3 said that they were doing a research by interviewing specific donors about donor’s priority of interest in donating and their opinions on the programs. Broom and Dozier (1990) described objectives as “the specific results to be achieved by a

specified date for each of the well-defined target publics” (p. 40). Kelly (1998) introduced output objectives and impact objectives. She defined output objectives as the work to be produced, and impact objectives as “specific intended effects” (Hendrix, 1995, p. 22) of programming on targeted publics. Many participants stressed that communicators should be professional and know what should be done to realize organizational goals.

Then, she elaborated programming in two parts: planning and implementing. Figure 4 showed the reciprocal effect in relationship management and it might explain why many participants perceived their organization to be outcome-oriented in decision making process. Kelly (1998) proposed that charitable organizations should evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of fundraising, and also the objectives. All the organizations in this study had a lot of evaluation methods. Kelly (1998) agreed with many scholars that stewardship should be operationalized and standardized in four aspects: reciprocity, responsible gift use, reporting, and relationship nurturing. Many participants emphasized on the importance of reporting to donors and being responsible or accountable to donors. Besides, all the participants emphasized the importance of relationship nurturing. Reciprocity and responsible gift use were also indicated in the responses of most interviewees. Therefore, stewardship is salient in relationship management in charitable organizations. None of the five steps could be omitted. They together made the fundraising process sustainable and ethical.

Identity and identification. Motivating was proposed as a strategy in managing internal relationships in this study. As many participants said, it was effective to activate organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) to some extent, because employees could be

encouraged to meet the organizations' expectations. When internal publics were aligned on the same objective and goals, they had more things in common. Many participants indicated that shared tasks and common expectations were the basis of developing colleague relationship. And OCB is a sign of increased social identity. Moreover, participants encountered disagreements and challenges when they played the dual role, and most of the time they needed to consider the possible impacts that a plan would have on all the publics, so the findings support my presumption of communicators' identity negotiation when they play the dual role.

This study proved that Tajfel's (1974, 1978) interpersonal-intergroup continuum could be understood in another way when it comes to dual role. With the continuum, he contended that social identity became salient when behavior became more intergroup. His contention inferred that people who engaged in interpersonal communication tended to be devoid of social identity. In my study, social identity was attached to communicators' job responsibilities, values, beliefs, and so on. As participants all played a boundary-spanning role in fundraising, they were involved in communication process with multiple groups of publics. They were aware of their social identities when crossing boundaries and when they used interpersonal communication. As a result, I believe interpersonal and intergroup communications are intertwined in the relationship management process of charitable organizations.

The results of this study also question whether heightened organizational identification generally leads to improved task performance (e.g., Ellemers, van Rijswijde, Bruins, & de Gilder, 1998; James & Greenberg, 1989; Tyler & Blader, 2000; van Knippenberg, 2000), because many other antecedent factors of organizational citizenship

behavior emerged in data analysis. All participants demonstrated a level of OCBs, but none of them attributed OCBs to organizational identification. Actually, their responses are related to lot of antecedent factors of OCBs. However, some of the participants' responses indicated that their OCBs were activated when their personal value and belief matched those of the organizations. Besides, several participants said their opinions were influenced by other publics all the time. One participant said her attitude was changed by co-workers, and another participant said her value was partly and moderately changed by the causes of the charitable organizations. As a result, there is a need to measure the influence that the personal background factors proposed in this study have on organizational citizenship behavior.

Internal communication. This study further supports internal communication theories which it is based on. McCown (2007) contended that employees should act as internal activists to facilitate two-way communication, deliver external publics' opinions to other colleagues and facilitate organizational structure reformation. In relationship management process of this study, the first two functions of internal activists were demonstrated. This finding supports Ni's (2009) contention that organization-employee relationship helped to implement organizational strategies. This study supports Ni's (2009) contention by proposing "motivating" as one of the interpersonal communication strategies in internal relationship management. What is more, the strategy of "managing by walking around" and "open-door policy" proved a level of constant and frequent internal communication (L. A. Grunig et al., 2002). Furthermore, Tyler and Lind (1992) emphasized on the importance of treating employees fairly and with respect by authority. Smith, Tyler and Huo (2003) also stressed on the importance of showing respect in

superior-subordinate relationship management. The study supports the above two statements by proposing the strategy of “showing equity in culture” supported in these previous studies.

However, this study developed internal communication theories, because it applies interpersonal communication strategies to internal communication in relationship management. “Humanistic tie” was favored by most of the participants, and it was also a demonstration or indicator of good organization-employee, superior-subordinate, and colleagues relationships. While all the ways of communication were found effective in internal communication, interpersonal communication proved to be essential in superior-subordinate and colleague relationships management.

Dual role. Aldoory and Sha (2007) left the question of how activist “negotiate their dual role” (p.352) to future research. Although my study is not targeted on activist, it provides theoretical and empirical findings on balancing the dual role. This study contributes to the underdeveloped research that connects communication theories to social identity theory (Scott, 2007). Filling in the gap in research on simultaneous examination of internal and external relationship management at the same time, this study explores communicators’ identity conflicts in internal and external communication process and identifies interpersonal strategies that can be used to resolve those conflicts.

Some of my presumptions are supported by the results, too. I assumed that participative democratic organizational system may be the best way for communicators in charitable organizations to balance their dual role. The results infer that a flat organizational structure and decentralized power distribution have positive influence on internal relationship management. Charitable organizations could work on these two

factors to build a good relationship with employees/volunteers, but it is not sufficient for communicators to balance their dual role.

This study shows that the conflicts created by the dual role of communicators in charitable organizations are perhaps not as fierce as those in other contexts. For example, in Jiang and Ni's (2009) study, communicators in an activist group were in an opposite position toward external publics, and the relationship between communicators and external publics could be hostile in many cases. However, external publics for charitable organizations, especially donors and partners, usually supported a charitable organization, because they believed in the mission and causes of these organizations. On the other hand, communicators in charitable organizations also support donors' and partners' activities. As a result, communicators and external publics had a supportive relationship in the context of charitable organizations. Many participants said they seldom had conflicts with external publics. Most of the time, there were only disagreements. Therefore, no irreconcilable conflicts exist between the communicator and external publics in the context of charitable organizations. However, this study does reveal many important manifestations of potential conflicts such as employee grievance, violating restrictions of gift use, and offending partners when communicators play the dual role which are unique to this special context. And these may provide rich data for researchers interested in exploring the dual role in multiple contexts.

Interpersonal communication. I contended that interpersonal communication was a good way of nurturing relationship and forming identities based on relationship management theories and social identity theories. The results showed that practitioners in nonprofit sector definitely agreed with this contention. Moreover, this study yielded the

contextual factors of relationship management, and antecedent factors of OCBs, and thus many participants confirmed the necessity of adopting individualized or customized way and strategy of relationship management. Furthermore, charitable organizations had two unique characteristics which influence relationship management, compared with for-profit companies. One is that all charitable organizations must maintain their 501 (c) 3 status in order not to lose the majority of its funding. The other is that most charitable organizations serve relied on specific communities. They had very frequent interactions, especially interpersonal communication with people in the community.

Unexpected findings. This study has many unexpected findings, including contextual factors of relationship management and antecedent factors of OCBs, extra key publics of relationship management, the conversion of role of publics, and the extensive effect that internal relationship management has on external publics. Contextual factors are important to qualitative research, because any qualitative research is resided in a specific context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Besides, although there were boundaries between internal and external publics, the ways of communication with these two publics had many overlaps, and most interpersonal strategies found in this study could be applied to all the publics. This aspect is pretty surprising, because the internal and external communication process and strategies were assumed different prior to data collection and RQ 1 and 2 were designed to explore these two separate categories of strategies. These unexpected findings demonstrated the exploratory nature of qualitative methods and helped enrich the examination of the relationships among different publics and the dynamics of charitable organization operation. Moreover, it is interesting to find the role conversion of key publics and the extensive effect that internal relationship management

has on external publics as shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4. These two models represent an evolving view of relationship management process instead of a static view.

Practical Implications

This study investigates the operation of charitable organizations, and further develops the conceptual model into a comprehensive data-based and practical model. This model integrated the key publics of charitable organizations, contextual factors, and two-way communication inside and outside the charitable organizations, making the primitive model down to ground. Communicators' dual role is obvious in the model, and accommodating to the dual role becomes inevitable. This model can guide relationship management in charitable organizations and help communicators make specific strategies of relationship management. This study has produced precise definitions and categorizations of important terms in the research questions according to the actual practice of communication in charitable organizations.

This study gathers opinions from experienced professionals in charitable organizations and proposes many strategies to help communicators in charitable organizations better conduct relationship management with key publics. For example, the strategy of "managing by walking around" denotes that communicators, especially high-rank officers, need to participate in organizational activities frequently, such as employee socials, going out for dinner, and holiday parties. These strategies also supported the ROPES model, which needs to be facilitated in the operation of charitable organizations. Moreover, the antecedent factors of OCBs help communicators in charitable organizations to assess the motivators of OCBs for a specific employee/volunteer, and to develop an individualized strategy to increase OCBs. For instance, as personal interests

motivate people to work hard, communicators in charitable organizations should understand individual's interests and try to assign him/her with the job he or she likes as much as possible. Building a good relationship with internal publics definitely will help communicators know more about personal motivators of OCBs.

In addition, Figure 3 and Figure 4 present two models that connect the internal and external publics, thereby encouraging communicators to adopt an evolving view of relationship management. The view is important for communicators to explore new supporters when the charitable organization faces a crisis or dead end. Figure 4 also helps to explain why many charitable organizations are outcome-oriented. Furthermore, this study presented two main characteristics of charitable organizations: 501 (c) 3 status and reliance on the community. As a result, communicators in charitable organizations need to assess their priorities of publics and contextual factors in order to balance the dual role.

Limitations

The limitation of this study results from the qualitative research method. First, the number of the participants is small. However, repetitive data began to appear since the fifth and sixth interviews, and the researcher felt that the point of saturation has been reached through these participants. In addition, most of the participants were totally qualified for this study. Some of them had more than 10-year working experiences in charitable organizations and could be considered key informants in the research topic at hand. Second, the investigator's bias may influence the validity of this study. However, I have used in-process writing, constant-comparison, and another coder to reduce potential biases during data analysis. Third, the results are less likely to be generalized to a broader area because statistical generalization was not a typical goal for qualitative studies.

Directions for Future Research

This study is fruitful to the extent that it has supported many theoretical claims. Based on the findings of this study, future research can verify the strategies and models yielded by this study, explore more effective strategies of balancing the dual role and more full-fledged model, use quantitative methods to measure the effectiveness of interpersonal communication strategies in the context of this study, or to conduct a research in the context of charitable organizations on the national level. Moreover, future research can also investigate the usefulness of interpersonal communication in other industrial sectors or the strategies of balancing dual role in other contexts. In addition, comparative study of charitable organizations operation and for-profit operation can also be conducted.

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Appendix A: Solicitation Letter

Hello,

My name is Wenjun Zhu, a graduate student in the Jack J. Valenti School of Communication at the University of Houston. I'm working on my Master's thesis, under the direction of my advisor, assistant professor Dr. Lan Ni, from the School of Communication at the University of Houston.

This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713)-743-9204. The purpose of the study is to explore the effectiveness of interpersonal communication in relationship management in charitable organizations and as well as the dual role of communicators in relationship management in the context of charitable organization. You will be one of approximately 13 participants to be asked to participate in this project. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question. If you agree to participate in the interview, you will be given a consent form containing a brief description of the research and all potential risks and benefits. You will sign this consent form confirming your voluntary involvement. You will then respond to an interview, which will take approximately 60 minutes in-person. I will ask for your permission to audiotape the interview for purposes of accuracy; however, you will have the right to decline being taped. In that case, I will then take extensive notes.

By the way, is there any other co-workers who may also contribute to my study of employee relationship management and donor relationship management? Officers who are in charge of both the internal and external relationship management are qualified for this study, because I want to talk about the dual role in my study. I will greatly appreciate it if you can recommend potential participants in your organization or in other charitable organizations in Greater Houston Area.

Only my advisor and I will have access to the data you provided. Data will be securely stored in my locked box and on computers, hard disks, audiotapes, and hard copies.

Adequate provisions will be made to protect your privacy and to maintain confidentiality of identifiable information. The data will be destroyed when they are no longer needed but not before a minimum of three years after data collection.

If you would like to accept the interview, please let me know via email or telephone listed below. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best'

Wenjun Zhu

Phone: 2817819892

Email: wzhu2@mail.uh.edu

Appendix B: Telephone Script

Investigator (I):

Employee from one of targeted charitable organizations (E)

I: Good morning/afternoon, Sir/Madam. My name is Wenjun Zhu. I am a graduate from School of Communication of University of Houston. I have a research focusing on the relationship management through interpersonal communication in local charitable organizations. My research procedure has been reviewed and approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subject in UH. Participant rights are specified in consent form. I am wondering if there is any employee in your organization who is responsible for relationship management with both co-workers and donors?

E: ...

I: Could you please schedule an interview appointment for me or can I contact him/her directly? The interview will last about 40 minutes to 1 hour.

E:

I: I can send you my solicitation letter, interview questions and consent form for you to review. Please consider my request. This study will definitely contribute a lot for organizational management of charitable organizations. Please give your support to my research and the nonprofit industry. Thank you so much.

....

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Grand tour questions/Background information

1. What is your position in the organization and what are your job responsibilities?
2. How long have you been with this organization?
3. What is the hierarchy or structure in your organization? How were organizational decisions made?

Relationship management with internal publics and social identity inside charitable organizations

4. How do you work with volunteers?

Probe:

What do you do on a daily basis with your volunteers?

Do you feel close to other volunteers? Do you feel you have something in common?

To what extent do you communicate face-to-face? Could you please give examples?

5. How do you work with your employees? When I say employees, I refer to those who work on a more permanent basis and they probably have the responsibility of organizing activities and supervising volunteers.

Probe: What do you do on a daily basis with your employees? Could you give examples?

To what extent do you communicate face-to-face? Could you please give examples?

6. How do you feel about your job?

Probe:

- a. Why do you work for your current organization? What benefits do you get out of your work?
- b. How do you involve yourself into the organizational activities?
- c. Was your opinion, attitude or even values ever changed by other members in the charitable organization?
- d. Do you put a great deal of efforts beyond what is expected to make your organization successful?

Relationship management with external publics and social identities outside charitable organizations

7. How do you work with your partners and supporters?

Probe:

- a. How do you contact your partners and supporters?
 - b. What strategies do you use to build and maintain your relationships with potential and existing donors/partners? What strategies do you think are most effective?
8. Do you have any personal relationship with partners/donors? How did you get to know each other and how did you form that relationship?

Balancing the dual role

10. It seems that on one hand, you need to communicate with other members inside your organizations in decision making process; on the other hand, you need to communicate

with supporters and donors outside your organization to seek support. Do you feel you play such a dual role? Why? Why not?

11. What does the dual role mean to you? How do you accommodate the dual role? What are the challenges, obstacles, and concerns? How do you feel about the dual role?

Probe:

- a. If and when there's any conflict between your organizations and your partners/supporters, what do you do?
- b. If and when there's any conflict between the top managers in your organization and your employees or volunteers, what do you do?
- c. As a member of the charitable organization, how do you represent the voices of the partners and donors when communication happens inside your organization?

