Alumnae Giving and the Internet: An Exploration of Women and ePhilanthropy

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Chapel Hill
2006

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ABSTRACT

JOANNA RUTH WORRELL: Alumnae Giving and the Internet: An Exploration of Women
and ePhilanthropy
(Under the direction of Dulcie M. Straughan)

Previous studies indicate gender differences in both Internet usage and general
philanthropic giving. Through a survey of alumni at the University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill, this study seeks to identify how gender differences are reflected when the
Internet and philanthropy are combined. Gender differences in philanthropy on the Internet
are examined from a public relations perspective, focusing on the importance of relationships
and incorporating relevant public relations theories.

Findings from this study suggest that there are no significant differences between men
and women in their attitudes toward the Internet as a fund-raising and relationship-building
tool. The results do indicate, however, that e-mail and the Internet are quickly becoming
important communication channels in development and fund raising. Implications for
development officers and fund raisers are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My friends and classmates were an invaluable source of support as well. Thanks especially to Carrie Leonard, Hela Sheth, and Subhashni Joy, who were always there to support and encourage me. I have truly enjoyed getting to know each of you over the past two years, and I wish you only the best in the future. I am also grateful to Crystal Brantley, my best friend of more than a decade. Your frequent calls and visits helped me so much.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their constant presence and support. Your love and encouragement has been the most important thing in my life, and I cherish you both greatly.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the Internet has become more popular in recent years, a growing number of organizations have turned to the Web to solicit and receive charitable funds. In 2004, the nation's largest charities brought in more than $167.3 million in online donations, marking a 63.2% increase over funds raised online in 2003 (Gabriel, 2005). With 68% of adults now using the Internet, online giving shows no signs of slowing down (Ohlemacher, 2005).

Another significant development affecting the world of philanthropy is the emergence of women as powerful contributors to philanthropic causes. While men traditionally have been considered the fairer sex in terms of donating money, recent research suggests that women are closing the gap. A 2004 study by the Center of Philanthropy found that single women are 37% more likely to donate to charitable causes than single men (Debaise, 2004). The same study also found that single women annually give an average of $600 more than single men. This relatively recent change in giving patterns may be explained in part by the fact that women are acquiring the means to give more and more. Between 1996 and 1998, the number of wealthy women grew by 68% while the number of wealthy men increased only 36% (Grove & Prince, 2003). Women now own and operate approximately 26% of American companies, and 43% of Americans with assets of more than $500,000 are women.

While these two philanthropic developments may appear to have little in common, they intersect on a fundamental level. Since the Internet is becoming an important fund-

raising tool and women are increasingly a major fund-raising target, what are the implications of soliciting donations from women on the Internet? Studies show significant differences between men and women in charitable giving, and gender differences have also been found in online behavior. Research is needed to determine how these differences are manifested when fund raisers use the Internet to target women.

The need to understand gender differences in giving and online behavior is important for all organizations, but for institutions of higher education especially. In 2003, corporate charitable giving to education comprised only 20% of gifts, down 6% from the previous year (Strout, 2004). With many public universities suffering from state budget cuts and shrinking endowments, universities are being forced to turn their attention like never before to private funding sources, including foundations and alumni. Although traditionally a major source of support, foundations have suffered from the stock market declines of recent years. In 2004, foundations provided only a quarter of the total contributions to higher education, a 6.1% drop from the previous year (Strout, 2005). Alumni now represent the most significant source of private financial support, comprising more than 27% of the total contributions made to colleges and universities in 2004.

As the Internet becomes an important tool for philanthropy, it is important to understand how technology affects alumni giving. Web pages, e-mail, message boards, and other technologies offer new ways of contacting and building relationships with alumni. However, the implications of these new communication technologies for building and maintaining relationships with alumni are unclear. One positive result of Internet technologies is a dramatic increase in the incidence of online giving. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, for instance, more than $300,000 was raised online in the

2005 fiscal year. This amount represents a 57% increase in online donations from 2004 (B.G. Braxton, personal communication, September 22, 2005).

The importance of cultivating women donors is especially growing at higher education institutions, where women now make up more than 56% of undergraduates (Freeman, 2004). Universities historically have focused on cultivating relationships with male donors, but with the future of alumni giving resting in the pocketbooks of women, changes will have to be made if universities want to survive.

Traditionally, most fund-raising research in the context of higher education has been examined from an economic perspective, or has been anecdotal in nature. Very little research has explored fund raising from a public relations perspective, particularly to examine building and maintaining philanthropic relationships. Research from this point of view is crucial, however, to the future of philanthropy. The emergence of the Internet as a new communication tool raises a lot of questions and uncertainties about the relational aspect of new technology. In addition, the increasing importance of attracting women donors makes it crucial to understand how cultivating relationships with women is different from working with male donors. Previous studies have made headway in identifying what factors are associated with higher levels of alumni giving, but more research is needed to understand how those factors affect the relationships alumni establish with their alma maters.

The purpose of this study is to examine philanthropic giving by alumni at the intersection of Internet growth and the rise of the woman donor. Because previous studies indicate gender differences in Internet usage and general philanthropic giving, research is needed to identify how these differences are reflected when the Internet and philanthropy are combined. Since most previous research has been conducted from economics or educational

perspectives, an approach based on public relations theory will help fund raisers better understand how public relations directly applies to philanthropy. This paper seeks to fill a gap in the alumni giving literature by using a survey to examine gender differences in philanthropy on the Internet from a public relations perspective, focusing on the importance of relationships and incorporating relevant public relations theories.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of fund raisers is ultimately to raise money, and to do that, development officers and fund-raising professionals must work to build relationships with people who want to donate money. To effectively build successful donor-organization relationships, public relations should drive that process. Despite the importance of public relations to fund raising, much previous research on development and philanthropic activities has neglected to effectively tie fund raising to public relations. The following section provides an overview of fund raising's connection to public relations and highlights relevant theories that help explain important concepts related to successful fund raising.

Public relations and fund raising

Most research on fund raising has been conducted by advancement and development practitioners for other practitioners, explaining why many studies are not grounded in theory but instead rely on anecdotal evidence (Kelly, 1998). The first public relations scholar to focus on the theoretical foundations of fund raising and philanthropy was Kathleen Kelly (1991, 1993, 1995, 1998). Kelly conceptualized fund raising as a sub function of public relations, defining it as "the management of relationships between a charitable organization

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and its donor publics" (p. 8). This definition closely mirrors contemporary definitions of public relations as the management of relationships between an organization and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The concept of relationship management is a major theme in both public relations and fund raising, and numerous researchers have discussed its importance (e.g., Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998; Guth & Marsh, 2003). Ledingham (2003) reviewed much of the existing literature on relationship management and formulated the following definition of relationship management, which he called a general theory: "Effectively managing organizational-public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and publics" (p. 190). Kelly (1998) discussed relationship management as an element of social exchange theory, which suggests that donors give when they and/or society get something in return through a reciprocal relationship. She emphasized the importance of two-way communication to the relationship-building process. Since this research involves the use of the Internet to build those relationships, it must be determined if there are specific attributes of the Internet that inhibit (or facilitate) the relationship-building process.

Much recent research has examined the association between new communication technologies and their place in the relationship perspective of public relations. Kent and Taylor (1998) were two of the first researchers to provide a theoretical framework to examine the importance of the Internet in building relationships. They pointed to dialogic communication, a theory that focuses on dialogue and open communication between organizations and publics. According to Kent and Taylor, "dialogic communication created by the strategic use" of the Internet is a great way for organizations to build relationships

with publics, especially as the Web becomes more popular and pervasive (p. 331). In a later article, Kent and Taylor (2002) elaborated on the benefits of the Internet when it comes to relationship building: "The Web can be used to communicate directly with publics by offering real time discussions, feedback loops, places to post comments, sources for organizational information, and postings of organizational member biographies and contact information" (p. 31). The numerous contributions the Internet can make to the relationship building and dialogic communication process make it a worthy and important area to explore in the fund-raising arena.

From a theoretical standpoint, the situational theory of publics offers a good example of how public relations theory applies to fund raising. Broadly speaking, the situational theory states that there are three variables that predict whether an organization's publics are active or passive: level of involvement, problem recognition, and constraint recognition (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Kelly (1998) applied the situational theory to fund raising by modifying the three factors: level of involvement is defined as the degree to which donors are connected with the organization, problem recognition becomes belief in the organization's mission and goals, and constraint recognition indicates the ability or capacity of donors to give. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the three factors combine in different ways to create four levels of publics: 1) active publics, who are involved with the organization, recognize that there is a problem and see no constraints in doing something about it; 2) aware publics, who recognize that there is a problem but are not highly involved with the organization and experience some constraints; 3) latent publics, who register low on involvement and problem recognition and haven't thought about constraints; and 4) nonpublics, who have no interest in the organization, don't care about the problem, and

haven't even thought about constraints. Taking the situational theory one step further, Kelly (1998) created four categories of donor publics based on these levels: 1) those who are aware of the cause and believe in it, 2) those who can be presumed to have a favorable opinion, 3) those who know little about the cause but are influenced by others who give, and 4) those with no interest in the cause and no interest in supporting it. The major benefit of the situational theory for fund raising is that it helps organizations identify those individuals who are most likely to give and allows them to focus development efforts on them.

The situational theory's value in this project is evident in existing research on men and women and philanthropy, which indicates that in many cases men and women give to organizations when they are involved in the organization or believe in its mission or goals. Constraint recognition is also a major factor in people's decisions to give, and not just on a financial level. In this digital age, where e-mail is quickly replacing direct mail and the Internet has replaced virtually all other sources of information, it is unknown what effects and constraints these technologies may place on potential donors. Research has shown that, especially for women, the Internet presents certain security or privacy concerns among Internet users. An important component of the present research study is determining if there are any real or perceived obstacles involved in the use of the Internet to build donor relationships with women. These constraints must be addressed before women can reach their giving potential.

This discussion of public relations theory indicates that, although most existing literature on philanthropy does not incorporate public relations perspectives or theories, many theoretical concepts have useful applications to the field of fund raising. Two theories that are especially applicable to this research are the dialogic communication theory and the

situational theory of publics. Although the theories provide basic concepts about what factors might contribute to successful donor relationships, research is needed to better understand how the Internet influences these relationships.

While these theoretical concepts provide a wealth of knowledge about the factors and reasons involved in individuals' decisions to give, it is the real-world application of these concepts that illustrates their value to the field of public relations and the world of philanthropic giving. As mentioned earlier, the philanthropic world is ever changing, and competition for funds is more intense among fund raisers than ever before. This is especially true for institutions of higher education, where public dollars are dwindling and many corporations and foundations are limiting their support. In order to stay competitive, organizations are turning their attention to untapped resources and those publics that are most likely to give. As they acquire more wealth, achieve greater success in society, and enroll in larger numbers at colleges and universities, women are becoming a prime target of many organizations', especially universities', fund-raising efforts.

Women and Philanthropy

With a theoretical background now in place, next it is important to explore the historical landscape of philanthropy by women and highlight a number of studies that have explored gender differences in philanthropy.

To better understand the current climate of women and philanthropy, it is helpful to examine briefly the historical context of women and giving, especially as it relates to higher education. Although women have always made significant philanthropic contributions to

society, recognition for their generosity has been largely ignored throughout history. As

Shaw and Taylor (1995) explain:

> Only in the past decade have scholars come to accept that women's absence
> from the pages of our history books does not mean that their participation was
> unremarkable. Rather editors and writers did not consider the role of women
> important enough to document, and many of the women themselves, in their desire
> for anonymity, too frequently kept their magnanimity secret. (p. 23)

Higher education was an early priority for women philanthropists, even in the days

when colleges were open only to males. That is not to say that the gifts were always

adequately appreciated. Shaw and Taylor (1995) tell the story of a private mid-western

university "that knowingly erased all public acknowledgement of a large and very significant

bequest made by a female earlier in this century, when the school was all male" (p. 34). The

generosity of women also laid the foundation for a number of women's colleges, including

Emma Willard College, Smith College, and Wellesley College (Shaw & Taylor, 1995).

Women also played an important role in the development of the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill. Long before women were allowed to attend the University, women

such as Mary Ann Smith, Mary Elizabeth Mason, and Mary Lily Kenan Flagler made

substantial gifts to the University. Kenan Flagler's $2.3 million gift, presented in 1917, was

reported to be the largest contribution ever given to a state university at the time (Sobbe,

1997).

The philanthropic landscape for women in the 21st century is quite different from

these early years, but some research still indicates that men are more philanthropic than

women. The 1996 Giving and Volunteering study by the Independent Sector, a nonpartisan

coalition of nonprofits, is used by many to demonstrate that married women give less than

their spouses, even though the study shows only that women report that they give less than what their husbands say they give (Capek, 2001). As Capek (2001) explains:

> Few sources of reliable data accurately document patterns of women's donating behavior or account for giving differences between women and men. Indeed, much of what has been published in the last decade—research as well as journalism—misinterprets the scant survey data available, recycles stereotypes, and generalizes inappropriately from anecdotes and case studies. (p. 5)

Many of these studies, furthermore, do not take into consideration such variables as age, income level, and number of dependents. Once these are taken into account, the differences between men and women almost disappear (Capek, 2001).

Several studies have sought to identify the factors involved in women's decisions to donate money. Newman (2000) conducted surveys and follow-up interviews to explore gender differences in the decision to give philanthropically. In addition to finding that women are more concerned with whether an organization has a single purpose or mission, her results indicated that women are more likely to make donations that show care for humans, help others, and give them an opportunity to convey gratitude and express their beliefs. Another study explored factors involved in women's charitable giving, specifically to human services organizations (Marx, 2000). From a demographic standpoint, the research indicated that high-income white women were most likely to give to human services organizations. Looking at differences in motivations for giving, the study uncovered that women are more likely than men to express a belief that charitable organizations play a significant role in improving society. Rooney, Mesch, Chin, and Steinberg (2005) also evaluated key demographic characteristics associated with giving and found that single women are much more likely to give and they give more than their male counterparts.

Although most existing research on women's giving is quantitative, several studies have taken a more qualitative approach. To identify factors related to philanthropic giving among women donors, volunteers, and alumni, UCLA researchers conducted focus groups (Marx, 2000). Researchers found that women were more likely to give when they were personally committed to an organization, experienced a family tradition of social responsibility, were personally involved with the organization as a volunteer, desired to see social change, and were individually recognized for their contributions.

Shaw and Taylor (1995) conducted extensive interviews, focus groups, and discussions with more than 150 female philanthropists and numerous development professionals to explore women's potential for charitable giving and to understand why women were not taken seriously in philanthropy. They identified a number of motivations for giving, and characterized them as the six C's of women's giving: change, create, connect, commit, collaborate, and celebrate. The ability to produce change, they discovered, is the number-one motivator behind giving by women. Similarly, women desire to be involved in the creation of a new order, from start to finish. Shaw and Taylor explained how that differs from men: "When a man gives money, that is usually the end of the negotiations. The reverse is true with a woman: by giving money, she is beginning a long-term relationship with the organization" (p. 90). That creation process is related to women's desire to connect with the organization, both before and after making a contribution. Shaw and Taylor also identified women's commitment to volunteering with organizations and indicated that it provides opportunities to secure gifts as well. Collaboration is an area in which partnerships with other programs and organizations can help connect women with one another to develop unity and work together to solve problems. The final motivation the authors identified was celebration.

Because women may often feel that giving is a responsibility or obligation, making philanthropy into something fun can ease the pressure associated with asking for and giving money. Shaw and Taylor (1995) also identified some of the barriers to women's giving, including concerns about financial security, unfamiliarity with finances, a desire to remain anonymous, and difficulty accepting the power and responsibility associated with money.

Kaminski and Taylor (1998) also pinpointed a number of reasons women choose not to give to an organization. Their findings indicated that women are negatively affected by aggressive telemarketers, direct-mail campaigns, guilt or status appeals, and high-pressure tactics. Women also are less likely to support organizations that are dominated by men, use extravagant methods of fund raising, or are uninterested in having women personally involved in the organization.

Several public relations-oriented themes emerge from the literature regarding women and philanthropy. Research suggests that women, more than men, are interested in forming long-term relationships with organizations they financially support, suggesting that effective public relations is especially important when reaching out to women as potential donors. In a similar vein, women are more interested in being personally involved with organizations they support, whether through volunteering or collaborating with the organization to solve problems. Understanding philanthropy through the lens of public relations is therefore crucial to cultivating women donors.

Besides focusing their efforts on recruiting women and other donors who have resources to give, development officers are also turning to the Internet as a powerful philanthropic tool. Most charitable organizations now have Web sites, and many have online giving opportunities. To stay competitive for funds, understanding and using the Internet as

an effective philanthropic tool is imperative to the success of any fund-raising endeavor. Since women are now a major focus of fund-raising initiatives, fund raisers must examine and understand how the Internet affects building successful relationships with women. Because the Internet is still a relatively new philanthropic tool, little research has directly addressed this area. However, studies examining Internet use and activities such as online shopping also can be used to better understand the Internet's role in fund raising. The following section provides an overview of existing literature on philanthropy and the Internet, and summarizes literature from other related areas of study that may impact fund raising.

Philanthropy and the Internet

Despite the growing popularity and importance of online giving, philanthropy on the Internet encompasses much more than just donating money on a Web site. In fact, e-mail, not online giving, is the most important element of using the power of the Internet for philanthropic purposes (Hart, 2002). But development professionals should be careful not to let these new technologies undermine the fundamental element of successful fund raising and public relations: building relationships. To do that, Hart recommends that "charities should approach the Internet as a communication and stewardship tool first and a fundraising tool second" (p. 354).

Philanthropy on the Internet has been dubbed ePhilanthropy. The ePhilanthropy Foundation defines ePhilanthropy as "the building and enhancing of relationships with supporters of nonprofit organizations via an Internet-based platform, the online contribution of cash or real property or the purchase of products or services to benefit a nonprofit

organization, and the storage of and usage of electronic data or use of electronic methods to support fundraising activities" (ePhilanthropy Foundation, 2001).

Because ePhilanthropy is a relatively new concept, little academic research has been conducted to study and evaluate it. One unpublished master's thesis examined how the Web is used by nonprofit arts organizations to achieve their fund-raising goals (Woodward, 2004). Some of the major ePhilanthropy issues encountered in an assessment of relevant articles included relationship-building, trust, and privacy. The second part of the study included a content analysis of nonprofit arts Web sites to evaluate how organizations are using the Internet to raise funds and to explore how they address issues such as building relationships, ethics, and giving online. The research indicated that while nearly all of the sites included basic information about fund-raising programs, only half included online giving or membership options. Woodward concluded that while many organizations have made great headway in using the Internet for fund raising, the potential of the Internet's fund-raising power has not been fully realized.

One study of online and direct-mail political contributions offers some insight into the demographics of online giving (Powell, Powell, Thomas, & Wilcox, 2005). Researchers found that donors who give online typically are younger and more likely to be male than direct-mail donors. The results indicated that 72% of Internet donors were under 50, while only 62% of offline donors were under 50. The study also found that women were less likely to donate than men, a finding that was true even when researchers controlled for factors such as political attitudes, income, education, and age.

While little scholarly research has addressed the topic of ePhilanthropy, even less research has addressed the issue of women and ePhilanthropy. Since a number of studies

have examined the more general topics of computer and Internet use among women, a brief look at these studies might provide some insight into what can be expected of women and ePhilanthropy.

Numerous researchers have identified gender differences in computer usage, with women exhibiting more computer anxiety, less favorable attitudes toward computer technology, and less self-efficacy for computers (Busch, 1995; Cooper & Weaver, 2003; Jackson et al., 2001; Miura, 1987; Whitley, 1997). Studies have also indicated gender differences in how people use the Internet, with women tending to use the Internet more for interacting socially and building relationships online (Parks and Floyd, 1996; Rodgers & Sheldon, 1999). This relationship-building component of Internet use among women relates to women's greater desire to form relationships with organizations they support financially, indicating that building relationships is important to women in other aspects of their lives.

In a study of Internet-related behaviors, Sheehan (1999) used an e-mail survey to explore differences in how men and women feel about online privacy concerns and Internet marketing practices. Women expressed more concern about their privacy online, with specific concerns about unsolicited e-mail and the unapproved secondary use of their information. This study's findings have key implications for online giving by women. Because making online purchases and donating online are similar activities, it might be assumed that privacy concerns are a perceived (if not real) obstacle for women to overcome in giving online.

Drawing on an Internet use model that examined motivational, affective, and cognitive factors as antecedents and consequences of use, Jackson, Ervin, Gardner, and Schmitt (2001) examined gender differences in Internet use through a survey administered to

college students. Their results indicated that women use e-mail more than men, a finding that indicates a greater interest by women in interpersonal communication. Additionally, women reported more computer anxiety and less favorable computer attitudes about technology than men. Contrary to Sheehan's findings, however, the study uncovered no gender differences in Internet trust or privacy concerns. Akhter (2003) used a survey to explore the demographic factors affecting the likelihood that consumers will make purchases over the Internet. His results indicated that sex, age, education, and income all significantly influence Internet purchasing behaviors. Akhter concluded that men are more likely than women to make Internet purchases. He attributed the difference, at least in part, to previous studies linking women with greater concerns regarding risk, security, and information privacy—factors that closely align with Sheehan's findings.

Rodgers and Harris (2003) used a survey of adults in a small Midwestern city to argue that emotion, trust, and convenience are major predictors of the dissatisfaction many women experience with online shopping. Focusing on the importance of emotion and sociality in dealing with women on the Internet, they recommended that online marketers consider the importance of ensuring information privacy when communicating with women shoppers. Weiser (2000) also focused on the social and emotional aspects of women's personalities in his survey of college students and Internet use. Results indicated that women used the Internet more for e-mail and for meeting and interacting with people in a social context than men. In discussing the study's implications for commercial companies, Weiser recommended that businesses emphasize communication features and relationship building when trying to appeal to women online, which also is a public relations function.

Women are quickly catching up with men online, according to recent research by the Pew Internet and American Life Project that indicates that 66% of women using the Internet compared to 68% of men (Fallows, 2005). The study indicated, however, that younger women are more likely than younger men to use the Internet: 86% of young women are online, compared to only 80% of young men. As indicated by previous research, the Pew study also found that women use e-mail more than men, with 94% of wired women using e-mail versus only 88% of wired men. Women are also more likely to value e-mail for its role in improving relationships and communicating with others. In addition, the Pew findings supported earlier studies indicating that men are more technologically savvy than women and that women are more concerned about the risks involved in using the Internet.

Although most of these studies do not speak directly to philanthropic uses of the Internet, online shopping and marketing have several key similarities with online giving. Both involve building relationships and trust, especially when personal information such as credit card numbers or addresses is shared. Because of these similarities, the concerns many women tend to have regarding security, information privacy, and trust when shopping online may apply to online giving as well. Research specific to online giving and ePhilanthropy is needed to determine if any of the gender differences evident in online shopping and marketing carry over into online philanthropy.

While most charitable organizations are facing funding crises, colleges and universities are being hit especially hard. At many public universities, state budget cuts and declines in corporate and foundation funding have left development officers scrambling to find alternate sources of support. Reaching out to alumni is a major focus of these efforts. To better understand the current climate of alumni giving, it is important to evaluate existing

literature on the topic. Since this study specifically looks at alumnae giving, relevant research specific to alumnae is also an important area.

Alumni Giving Research

The next section examines issues of giving specific to the charitable sector addressed in this research project—alumni giving. Because alumni donations are integral to the continued success of institutions of higher education, numerous researchers have studied variables such as college characteristics, student characteristics, and efforts by institutions to solicit funds in order to evaluate factors that increase the likelihood of giving (Baade & Sundberg, 1996). However, most of these studies have been conducted from an economic perspective rather than a communications one, concentrating on empirical relationships between data sets and variables (e.g., Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Clotfelter, 1995; Harrison, Mitchell, & Peterson, 1995, Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994).

Despite their emphasis on economic variables, many of the studies provide useful information about what communications and relationship-building strategies are related to increases in alumni giving. Two studies, for instance, illustrated the importance of alumni satisfaction with their college experience, pointing out that positive relationships must be formed before students become alumni (Clotfelter, 2003; Monks, 2003). Other factors related to giving include the academic reputation of the school, the scholastic aptitude of enrolled students, and the faculty-student ratio (Cunningham & Cochi-Ficano, 2002). Monks (2003) examined graduates from 28 different institutions in an attempt to pinpoint the attributes and experiences that make alumni more likely to donate to their alma maters. In addition to a satisfying undergraduate experience, he found that alumni who had contact with faculty or

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advisers outside of class, as well as other campus staff, made higher average donations. Alumni who were involved in extracurricular activities as students also were more likely to give.

One study specifically examined how public relations activities affect alumni giving. Tsao and Coll (2005) conducted a survey of journalism and mass communication alumni from a Midwestern university to examine the demographic, behavioral, and psychographic variables involved in the intent of alumni to give. Their findings coincided with earlier studies that suggested that program communication and alumni involvement, satisfaction with the quality of their journalism education, and personal income all contribute to alumni intent to donate. They explained the implications for public relations practitioners in this way:

> All of the activities that allow alumni to get involved with the program should be incorporated into a public relations strategy. In other words, quality of the program is not the only important factor determining the success of fund raising. It needs to be accompanied by a well-planned public relations campaign or more specifically, an alumni-relations strategy, if it is to make an impact on alumni giving. (p. 391)

Despite its value as a study that explored alumni giving from a public relations perspective, Tsao and Coll's (2005) study did not make determinations of giving by gender or address the Internet's role in giving.

Several articles touched briefly on sex differences. Monks (2003), for instance, found that while a cursory examination of average giving by sex found that women gave significantly less to their alma maters than men, the difference was not significant when examined conditionally with such variables as income and number of children. Another study of alumni giving to a small private college over a 23-year period uncovered significant sex differences among occasional donors (Wunnava & Lauze, 2001). Although no sex

differences were found among frequent donors, the study concludes that men are much more likely to give occasionally than consistently. This is consistent with other philanthropic studies that have found that men are less interested than women in being closely involved with institutions they financially support. This finding also coincided with a similar study by Okunade et al. (1994).

A recent study compared gender and age differences in direct-mail and online gifts made by alumni to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during fiscal year 2005 (Worrell & Kelleher, 2006). The findings of the research indicated that men gave more than women through both online giving and direct-mail formats, and that men's gifts were consistently larger in both formats. However, the study only examined existing data on giving and could not address the reasons why alumni made donations through specific channels. Further research is needed to explore the specific reasons for these differences.

In recent years, several studies have focused specifically on the role of alumnae giving at colleges and universities. A 1995 study by Simari looked at the factors that influenced alumnae decisions to donate money to Hofstra University. Her findings indicated that women gave because of a sense of loyalty and obligation to the university and a desire to help future students. Achieving public recognition for their donation was rated as the least important motivating factor. Simari also evaluated methods used to solicit donations and found that women were more inclined to respond to mail and less likely to respond to phone or personal requests.

Briechle (2001) followed Simari's (1995) study by using the same survey with slight modifications and applying it to alumnae from three different universities: "Studies within the realm of higher education have been institution specific. I believe it is an appropriate time

to begin comparing women across institution types to see if any differences exist" (p. 28).

Briechle looked specifically at a number of different areas, including reasons why women give, contact methods used to solicit donations, and preferred contact methods. His findings indicated that alumnae's major reasons for giving are a "sense of obligation," "loyalty to the institution," and "making a positive impact" (p. 55). Contact methods used most often to solicit donations were telephone and mail contact, with mail contact being chosen as the preferred mode of contact by an overwhelming number of alumnae. Briechle cautioned against putting too much stock in direct mail contact, however: "In no way should the most-preferred contact mode imply that it is the most effective, especially from the point of view of the institution. Alumnae probably feel the most comfortable with this method since it exerts the least pressure" (p. 62). Briechle added e-mail contact to his study "since this has become an important form of communication with the growth of the Internet" (p. 28). However, since only 2.6% of respondents indicated that they were contacted by e-mail by their alma maters, the category was collapsed with mail contact. The same was also true for the study of the most preferred method of contact: since only 14 respondents selected e-mail, it also was combined with mail contact mode. These findings suggest that at the time of this study, e-mail was not used extensively as a fund-raising tool. Since nearly five years have passed since this study was conducted, it would be interesting to examine if there have been significant changes in the use of e-mail to solicit donations.

Several years after Briechle's (2001) research, another study sought to identify the characteristics that motivate alumnae to give to a Research I public university (Pumphrey, 2004). Out of 21 possible motivations, 11 motivations were positively associated with how often alumnae made donations to the university: a feeling of obligation, volunteering with the

university, a desire to support athletics, making a difference for future students, response to urgent appeal for help, receiving mailings about giving opportunities, peer solicitation, receiving recognition, ability to continue academic excellence, being educated to give as a student, and perceptions of the quality of education they received. Five of these motivations—volunteer involvement with the school, making a difference for future students, receiving mailings about giving opportunities, responding to an urgent request for help, and feeling obligated—supported the results of previous research on alumnae giving. One of the motivations, receiving recognition, seems to contradict previous research suggesting that women are uninterested in being recognized for their contributions. Based on her findings, Pumphrey (2004) made a number of recommendations to the university to help ensure alumnae support. These include increasing alumnae involvement on committees and boards, making sure alumnae are aware of funding opportunities, and ensuring that alumnae are adequately recognized for their contributions.

In summary, a number of studies have explored the topic of alumni giving, exploring such issues as economic variables, demographic variables, and reasons associated with the decisions of alumni to support their alma maters. As was the case with the literature examining women and philanthropy, existing research on alumni giving points especially to the importance of relationship-building in securing donations. Although a number of studies have been conducted to examine giving by alumni, and more specifically, alumnae, very little research has explored the role ePhilanthropy plays in the decision to donate. Briechle's study, although it included e-mail, was premature. The use of e-mail has grown exponentially since the mid-nineties, but many universities have only just begun focusing on e-mail solicitations.

Research is now needed to help development officers more clearly understand the effects of the Internet and e-mail on soliciting charitable donations.

Based on the research addressed in each of these areas of study, public relations should be an integral element of fund raising, especially when targeting women. Although the existing literature indicates this through allusions to the importance of relationships and communication in giving, these previous studies lack theoretical frameworks that connect public relations with philanthropy. The one study that did address alumni giving from a public relations perspective did not incorporate theory into the study, leaving a significant gap in the research (Tsao & Coll, 2005). This thesis builds on the groundbreaking work of Kelly (1998), who researches fund raising specifically from a public relations perspective.

Chapter II will present the study's research questions and hypotheses, which grew out of this literature review. The development and implementation of the survey used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses will also be described. The next chapter will also provide a brief description of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Office of University Development, since the researcher partnered with this office to conduct this research.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this research project is to examine philanthropic giving by alumnae to understand better how use of the Internet as a communication channel could affect donor relationships. As a survey of the literature pointed out, previous studies indicate gender differences in Internet usage and in philanthropic giving, but little research has examined how these differences are reflected when the Internet and philanthropy are combined. Furthermore, existing research on alumni giving has not addressed the use of the Internet and e-mail to cultivate donor relationships, a practice that has been used more frequently in the last few years. Research also is needed to help researchers and practitioners understand how the use of the Internet as a philanthropic tool interacts with relevant public relations theories as they apply to fund raising. This research seeks to fill a gap in the existing literature by addressing all of these areas. To do that, this paper addresses the following broad question:

How does the use of the Internet as a philanthropic tool influence alumnae giving relationships with universities?

Within this broad category, a series of specific research questions and hypotheses are posed:

RQ1: How do alumnae and alumni prefer to be contacted by the university?

RQ2: How do alumnae and alumni perceive the Internet's impact on their relationships with their alma mater?

Based on results of previous research that have examined these topics, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Fewer women than men make online donations.

H2: Women will perceive more obstacles to making online donations than men.

H3: Women are more likely than men to use e-mail as a communication tool.

METHOD

To address the research questions and hypotheses posed in the previous section, an online survey was used. A survey approach was chosen for a number of reasons. A good deal of previous research has already qualitatively explored what motivates women to give to charitable organizations. Researchers have quantitatively examined gender differences in Internet use and gender differences in philanthropic giving. Little quantitative research, however, has explored how these two categories interact. A survey is also an appropriate method to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses developed in this study, as the variables being examined can be measured quantitatively (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Qualitative research, such as focus groups, is more appropriate for research that is descriptive or exploratory in nature. Although surveys can be administered a number of different ways, an online survey is ideal for this study, as the topic being explored is how alumni and alumnae who use the Internet feel about e-philanthropy.

Surveys are a useful tool to measure attitudes and opinions or test existing theories. They are relatively inexpensive to conduct, and a lot of information can be gathered easily from a large number of people (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). The ease of gathering

information is especially an advantage for this study, as a survey allows the researcher to gain insights from a large number of alumni.

However, conducting a survey does have some disadvantages. Surveys make it difficult to establish causality between independent and dependent variables; the survey may establish a relationship between variables, but it is not possible to determine from the survey whether one causes the other (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Other factors unknown to the researcher may account for certain findings. Another major drawback is that there is no guarantee that the person who fills out the survey is the intended respondent, a factor that may affect the quality of the results. Additionally, there are potential self-reporting issues. Respondents may say they do one thing when in actuality they do another, or they may respond the way in which they think the researcher expects them to (Nardi, 2003). A major drawback of surveys is their inflexible nature. While data can easily be gathered, surveys do not allow the researcher to explore other areas of interest uncovered during the course of the study or gain greater insight into answers received.

This study employs an Internet survey, which has a number of advantages over traditional mail surveys. To begin with, Internet surveys are easy to conduct—they can be easily posted to the Internet and available for response almost immediately (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). This ease of creation also translates into an ease of correction, allowing the researcher to immediately make any needed changes or corrections to the survey as the research progresses. This is more difficult with mail surveys, which in many cases cannot be retrieved once they are sent out. Additionally, Internet surveys have a significant cost advantage over mail surveys. Distributing the survey via the Internet wipes out postage costs. The collection of data is another advantage. The turnaround of results for an online survey is

extremely fast, and responses to the survey can be viewed almost immediately after they are submitted. Mail surveys, on the other hand, collect information that must be manually entered into a data analysis system such as SPSS. An Internet survey also eliminates geographic restrictions and allows the researcher to access people who may not be accessible through other means, such as telephone or mail.

Online surveys do have disadvantages. As with most mail surveys, the researcher has no control over the research situation. The respondent may be distracted, unfocused, or interrupted when completing the survey (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Furthermore, a lot of people are concerned with security and privacy on the Internet and may refuse to open e-mails from unknown senders or click on links embedded in e-mails. Another major drawback of Internet research cited by some researchers is that the Internet population is not representative of the general population, a disadvantage that prevents Internet survey results from being generalized to the population as a whole (Dillman, 2000; Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). This disadvantage, however, is of little importance in the current study. Since the study is designed to evaluate the Internet's impact on alumni giving and relationships for those alumni who use Internet and e-mail, the results are not meant to be generalized to the entire UNC-CH alumni public. Another drawback of Internet surveys is low response rates (Dillman, 2000). Internet survey response rates have ranged anywhere from 1 or 2 percent to as much as 68 percent or higher, with most falling into the lower end of the spectrum. Dillman (2000) has researched ways to increase rates of response among Internet surveys, including sending pre-notices, personalization, and follow-up e-mails, but the numbers are still very low. Dillman (2000) suggests that to combat the possibility of low response rates, a follow-up e-mail should be sent to nonrespondents after the initial mailing. A final

disadvantage is the newness of Internet survey research. It is not yet known if people respond differently to Internet survey questions than other traditional formats.

UNC-Chapel Hill's Office of University Development

The Office of University Development was created in 1952 to handle the university's fund raising for academics (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d.). The senior associate vice chancellor for development coordinates the University-wide development efforts, while the Office of University Development and individual schools and entities on campus are responsible for fund raising. The Office of University Development provides a number of services, including donor and prospect research, communications, gift processing, planned giving, and events.

The first University-wide campaign, the Carolina Challenge Campaign, was launched in the 1970s. It was followed in 1989 by the Bicentennial Campaign for Carolina, which was the largest university-wide campaign in Carolina's history. The Carolina First Campaign, the University's current fund-raising campaign, is a $2 billion drive to support Carolina's goal of becoming the nation's leading public university. The organizational structure utilized during the campaigns is an integrated-hybrid model that combines a centralized model based in the Office of University Development with decentralized models, which include individual schools and units within the University.

As the face of philanthropy has changed in recent years, the University has made adjustments. Realizing that the involvement of women in fund-raising activities is crucial to success, the Carolina Women's Leadership Council was created as a component of the Carolina First campaign (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d.). The Council was

designed to create a network of women who are committed to supporting the University, to identify leadership opportunities to involve women more fully in the university, to cultivate future generations of women philanthropists, and to strengthen both the bonds and communication between the University and women (. So far, the Council seems to be achieving some success. Nearly $300 million of the $1.7 billion raised to date has been given by women, and 54% of first-time donors to the University in 2005 were women. To keep Council members informed, the Council produces an e-newsletter.

Online giving opportunities also are a major component of the current campaign. The campaign's online giving site provides donors with a number of online gift options, which include credit card donations, online pledges, bank drafts, and payroll deduction for UNC employees. If they wish to mail a check instead, donors can complete an online form to print and mail with their check. Several e-mail solicitations consisting of Flash presentations have been sent to alumni, encouraging them to give and providing them with the link to the campaign's online giving site.

Sample

The population for this study included all alumni of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with e-mail addresses on file in ADVISE, the University's alumni database. This is estimated to be 54,692 males and 54,488 females, a total of approximately 109,180. A computer-generated random sample of 10,000 of these e-mail addresses was provided by the development office for this study. The sample included both men and women, as this allowed the researcher to compare the responses of men and women. Since the research questions and hypotheses posited in this study apply specifically to individuals who use the Internet, it was

not necessary to target alumni who do not have e-mail addresses.

Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study contained 32 questions. These included a series of Likert scale questions, as well as multiple choice questions about giving activities, with demographic questions at the end. Although some demographic questions were adapted from a previous study (Briechle, 2001), the Likert scale questions were created by the researcher to test the hypotheses posited in the study. The survey contained one open-ended question at the end, which was requested by UNC's Office of University Development.

The survey instrument (see Appendix B) used in this study began with a series of 18 five-point Likert scale questions, which asked respondents to note their level of agreement with statements regarding their Internet and e-mail use. The second section of the survey focused on alumni giving and involvement with the university. Respondents were asked questions about their previous donations to the university and how they most preferred to be contacted by the university. Questions about where they got their information about the University were included as well. The final section of the survey included demographic questions.

As a whole, the survey was designed to address the question, "How does the use of the Internet as a philanthropic tool influence alumnae giving relationships with universities?" Questions #6 and 23 specifically address the first research question, "How do alumnae and alumni prefer to be contacted by the university?" The second research question, "How do alumnae and alumni perceive the Internet's impact on their relationships with their alma mater?," is addressed through questions #3 and 9. Questions #11, 21, and 22 address the first

hypothesis, which states that fewer women than men make online donations. Questions #4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 14 address the second hypothesis, which states that women perceive more obstacles to making online donations than do men. The third hypothesis, that women are more likely than men to use e-mail to communicate with their alma mater, is tested through questions #1, 2, 13, 16, and 17.

The remaining questions were included primarily to obtain background and demographic information, including age, degree, sex, marital status, and household income. A portion of the survey instrument, primarily the demographics section, was based on Briechle's (2001) survey of alumnae at three universities. Several of those questions were altered as appropriate to reflect the university at which this research was conducted. Finally, the researcher included an open-ended question to the survey at the request of the development office (Question #32). The survey instrument was designed to take between five and 10 minutes to complete, as respondents are less likely to complete long, complicated surveys (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine, & Newbold, 1998).

Administration

The survey was pre-tested among a dozen graduate students, faculty, and staff members in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Participants were asked to complete the survey and provide any feedback or suggestions they had. This group was ideal to use for the pre-test because they all obtained college degrees and were able to apply the questions to their experiences with their own alma maters. As a result of the pretest, several of the questions were rephrased for clarity and some minor errors were identified and corrected.

The study received approval by the Institutional Review Board on January 31, 2006.

A copy of the IRB approval form is included in Appendix E. Once the survey was created

and pretested, the researcher used the online software tool http://www.surveymonkey.com to

post the survey to the Internet. Once the questions were designed on the Web site, the survey

was again pre-tested among a total of six graduate students and faculty members.

Respondents focused on the usability of the survey and offered input on the technical set-up

and ease of completion. Once all of the corrections were made, the survey was officially

opened.

To distribute the survey, the researcher used SurveyMonkey's online list management

function. The 10,000 e-mail addresses were copied into the database into a total of 7

distribution lists. SurveyMonkey's list management function automatically deleted invalid e-

mail addresses, which eliminated 27 of the original 10,000 e-mail addresses. The surveys

were sent to prospective participants between February 15, 2006 and February 24, 2006. The

surveys were sent in seven waves to make it easier for the researcher to handle the influx of

returned e-mails that occurred with each mailing. The first two distributions, which contained

499 e-mails and 796 e-mails respectively, were sent on February 15, 2006. The third

distribution, which consisted of 1,096 e-mail addresses, was sent on February 16. The fourth

distribution list included 1,596 e-mails and was sent on February 17. The fifth mailing, which

totaled 1,997 e-mails, was sent on February 20. The fifth list, consisting of 1,993 e-mails was

sent on February 22. The final list of 1,996 was distributed on February 24.

Each individual received an e-mail (see Appendix C) inviting them to participate in

the survey and indicating that the research was being conducted for a master's thesis in the

School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at

Chapel Hill. Each e-mail contained a unique link to the survey Web site so that

SurveyMonkey could track the status of respondents. The e-mails also contained a removal

link, so recipients could decline to participate and have their e-mail address removed from

future mailings. Reminder e-mails were sent on March 1 and 2, 2006 to those alumni who

had not yet responded to the survey (see Appendix D). The survey was officially closed on

March 13, 2006.

Data Analysis

Once the survey was administered, the results were downloaded from SurveyMonkey

into a Microsoft Excel file, which was then transferred to the Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequencies were run on all of the original variables in order to

determine how many responses were obtained for each answer category. Frequencies were

also run on the data file split by gender in order to determine what percentage of men and

women selected each answer.

To answer Research Question #1, an independent samples *t*-test was run on the

relevant survey data to determine whether statistically significant differences existed between

men and women who preferred direct-mail solicitations over e-mail solicitations. Basic

descriptive frequencies were run to determine what percentages of men and women preferred

to be contacted through the different solicitation methods.

For the second research question, an index was created to combine the relevant data

categories. An independent samples *t*-test was run on the indexed data to determine whether

statistically significant differences were present among how men and women perceive the

Internet's impact on their relationship with their alma mater.

The first hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t-test to determine whether significant differences existed between gender (the independent variable) and use of the Internet to make charitable donations. Chi-square crosstabulations were also used to test for the statistical significance of the relationship between gender and those who made online donations to UNC-CH or other charitable organizations.

To address the second hypothesis, an index of relevant data was created and an independent samples t-test was run with gender as the independent variable. Because several of the questions included in the index were scaled positively, reverse coding was used to make the data uniform. An index was also created to test the third hypothesis, and an independent samples t-test was used to test for statistical significance between genders.

In addition to gender, Chi-square tests were run in order to compare categories such as age and online giving, degree received and giving, and household income and giving. Although these tests were not used to answer the research questions or test the hypotheses, they provide interesting directions for further study. Chapter III will provide the results of the survey.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

To examine differences between men and women and their attitudes toward the Internet as a fund-raising tool, this study used an online survey questionnaire. Findings from the survey are presented in this chapter. First, information about the response rate and participants will be presented. Next, the demographic breakdown of respondents will be summarized. Then, the frequencies of answers to the survey questions will be presented. Finally, this chapter will report the results that address this study's research questions and hypotheses.

Participants

The survey was sent to 9,973 alumni e-mail addresses. A total of 486 survey e-mails were returned to the researcher because the addresses could not be found, were incorrect, or had expired. Another 102 messages were returned to the researcher because of spam blocking software used by the recipients, which prevented messages from unknown e-mail addresses from reaching the recipients' inboxes. Once bad addresses and spam blocked e-mails were considered, 9,385 alumni received the survey. Of these, 121 alumni declined to participate and asked to be taken off of the e-mail list. The reminder e-mail was sent to a total of 8,566 recipients. The total number of surveys collected was 2,013, resulting in a response rate of 21.4%. A total of 46 surveys were excluded from the analysis because one or more key questions were not answered. One survey was eliminated because the respondent indicated

that he was not a graduate of UNC-CH. A total of 1,966 responses were included in the analysis.

Demographics

Overall, 53% of the survey respondents were female (n = 1,044), while the remaining 47% were male (n = 922). Nearly 55% of respondents obtained bachelor's degrees from UNC-CH (n = 1,071); 27% earned master's degrees (n = 525), 16% earned doctorates (n = 322), and 2% earned juris doctor degrees (n = 43). A majority of respondents (69%) reported that they were either married or living with a partner (n = 1,356), while 23% were single (n = 455), 6% were divorced or separated (n = 118), and 1% were widowed. A quarter of respondents were between ages 31-40 (n = 488), while another 22% were between 51-60 (n = 428). A total of 19% of respondents were between 41-50 (n = 378), 17% were between 25-30 (n = 337), 8% were between 61-70 (n = 157), 5% were under 25 (n = 106), and 4% were 71 or older (n = 68). Of those who reported household income levels, 44% earned incomes of $100,000 or more ($n$ = 852), 9% earned between 70,000 and 84,999 (n = 177), 8% earned between $40,000 and 54,999 ($n$ = 155), and 8% reported incomes between $85,000 and 99,999 ($n$ = 148). Nearly 11% reported incomes under $40,000 ($n$ = 200). Bar charts illustrating respondent percentages in each category are presented at the end of this thesis.

Likert Scale Answers

The first 18 questions included in the survey were Likert Scale questions designed to test the hypotheses posed in this research project. Results from frequencies indicate the percentage of alumni who chose each response.

For the statement, "I check my e-mail at least once a day," 74% of respondents strongly agreed ($n = 1,450$), while 19% agreed ($n = 375$). Only 6% strongly disagreed or disagreed ($n = 120$). A total of 1% were neutral ($n = 25$).

Nearly 51% of alumni agreed that they enjoy receiving news about UNC-CH via e-mail ($n = 1,000$), while 20% strongly agreed ($n = 393$). Only 5% of alumni disagreed or strongly disagreed ($n = 102$). A total of 24% were neutral ($n = 468$).

More than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have stronger ties to UNC-CH because of the Internet (e-mail, Web site, etc.)" ($n = 1001$), while 12% strongly agreed. A total of 31% were neutral ($n = 603$), and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed ($n = 356$).

More than half of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they verify that they are on a secure Web site prior to making online purchases or donations ($n = 1,035$), while 33% agreed ($n = 644$). Another 10% of respondents were neutral (n = 190), and less than 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed ($n = 91$).

Some 42% of alumni agreed that they would feel comfortable making an online donation to UNC-CH ($n = 827$), while 19% strongly agreed ($n = 380$). A quarter of respondents were neutral ($n = 481$). A total of 10% disagreed ($n = 199$), and 3% strongly disagreed ($n = 63$).

For the statement "I prefer direct-mail solicitations to e-mail solicitations," 40% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed ($n = 790$), 34% were neutral ($n = 663$), and 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed ($n = 504$).

Approximately 40% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they often use the Internet to pay bills and make purchases ($n = 793$), and 35% agreed ($n = 695$). A total

of 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (n = 320), while 7% were neutral (n = 146).

Approximately 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they are confident in their computer and Internet skills (n = 1749). Another 7% were neutral (n = 150), and only 3% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (n = 55).

A total of 51% of alumni agreed that they feel better informed about UNC-CH because of the Internet and e-mail (n = 1,005), while 20% strongly agreed (n = 368). Nearly 21% were neutral (n = 407), while 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed (n = 167).

For the statement, "I worry about my privacy when I enter my credit card information online," 39% of respondents agreed (n = 766) and 14% strongly agreed (n = 266). A total of 20% were neutral (n = 402), while 24% disagreed (n = 466) and 3% strongly disagreed (n = 55).

Approximately 44% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they use the Internet to donate to charitable causes (n = 858), while 15% of respondents were neutral (n = 288). Nearly 42% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (n = 811).

Nearly 39% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that making online donations puts their personal information at risk (n = 758), while 32% were neutral (n = 626). The other 29% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (n = 565).

Nearly three-fourths of alumni agreed or strongly agreed that e-mail helps them stay informed about what's going on at UNC-CH (n = 1,455). A total of 17% were neutral (n = 343), while only 8% disagreed (n = 127) or strongly disagreed (n = 16).

Approximately 48% of respondents agreed that they worry about unsolicited third parties obtaining their personal information when they use the Internet (n = 942), and 18%

strongly agreed (*n* = 348). Some 17% of respondents were neutral (*n* = 343), while 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed (*n* = 322).

Nearly 43% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they would rather make a donation online than mail in a donation (*n* = 853). Nearly 26% were neutral (*n* = 503), and 30% agreed or strongly agreed (*n* = 597).

Almost 80% agreed or strongly agreed that e-mail is an effective tool for maintaining ties to UNC-CH (*n* = 1,555). Approximately 17% were neutral toward the statement (*n* = 325), while only 3% disagreed (*n* = 59) and less than 1% strongly disagreed (*n* = 16).

Nearly 41% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "I do not appreciate receiving unsolicited e-mail from UNC-CH" (*n* = 815), while 35% were neutral (*n* = 688). Only 23% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (*n* = 452).

A little more than half (51%) of alumni agreed that giving online is more convenient than mailing in a donation (*n* = 1002), while 25% were neutral (*n* = 482). The other 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (*n* = 477).

Giving Questions

The second part of the survey consisted of questions related to alumni giving habits and preferences.

The first question in this section asked alumni if they had ever made a donation to UNC-CH. More than 79% of respondents indicated that they had donated (*n* = 1,560).

Respondents who had donated to UNC-CH were asked how they were solicited for their last donation. More than half of the respondents said they were contacted by mail (*n* = 807), while 31% were solicited by telephone (*n* = 472). A total of 7% of respondents could

not remember how they were solicited (n = 115), while 6% said they were solicited in person (n = 86), 3% were solicited by e-mail (n = 49), and 1% indicated that their donations were not prompted by a solicitation (n = 18).

Respondents were then asked if they had ever made an online donation to the university. An overwhelming 70% indicated they had not (n = 1,374). Only 9% reported that they had donated to UNC-CH online.

The next question asked alumni if they had ever made online donations to any charitable organizations. More than 54% answered yes to the question (n = 1,066).

The next question asked respondents to indicate which methods of contact they prefer when being contacted for a donation. The four types of contact were personal, telephone, mail, and e-mail. Mail contact was chosen as the most preferred type of contact by 47% of alumni (n = 917). E-mail contact was chosen as the most preferred contact method by 28% (n = 559), and 14% selected personal contact as the contact method they most preferred (n = 281). Only 7% selected telephone contact as their most preferred method of solicitation (n = 127). As far as their least preferred method of contact, 39% indicated that personal contact was their last choice (n = 757). Similarly, 38% selected telephone contact as the method they least preferred (n = 744). E-mail was the least preferred contact method of 14% of respondents (n = 278), while mail was the last choice for only 4% (n = 82).

When asked if they had ever visited UNC-CH's Web site, 93% indicated that they had (n = 1,821).

Respondents were also asked to indicate where they get their news and information about the university. More than 57% of respondents reported that they received their information from the General Alumni Association and its associated publications (n = 1,128).

Nearly 13% reported that they got their information from various Web sites, including the

UNC-CH Web site, *The Daily Tar Heel* Web site, and some sports-related sites ($n = 250$).

Another 9% received their information from other UNC-CH publications, including

departmental newsletters and alumni publications. Of the remaining respondents, 9% said

they get their information from friends, family, or faculty members ($n = 172$), 5% get their

information from local newspapers ($n = 102$), and 3% get information from university fund-

raising publications ($n = 57$). Less than 1% indicated that they received the majority of their

information via e-mail ($n = 18$).

Research Question #1

The first research question, which asked how alumnae and alumni prefer to be

contacted by the university, was addressed through two survey questions. One was a Likert

Scale question (#6) that asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the

statement, "I prefer direct-mail solicitations to e-mail solicitations." The other was a question

asking alumni to rank four types of solicitation—personal contact, telephone contact, mail

contact, and e-mail contact—in the order they most preferred to be contacted for donations.

Overall, 40% of the total respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they

preferred direct mail over online solicitations ($n = 790$), while 34% of respondents were

neutral ($n = 663$), and 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed ($n = 504$). When broken down by

gender, the percentages were similar for both men and women: 41% of women either agreed

or strongly agreed ($n = 426$) that they preferred to receive direct mail solicitations over online

appeals versus 40% of men ($n = 364$). Approximately 32% of women were neutral ($n = 330$),

while 36% of men were neutral ($n = 333$), and 27% of women disagreed or strongly disagreed ($n = 281$) versus 24% of men ($n = 223$).

To test for statistical significance, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the means of the scores between men and women. The levels of agreement or disagreement were categorized numerically: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The average responses for both groups were similar, with both women and men averaging a primarily neutral stance toward the statement. Women did, however, seem slightly more likely to disagree that they prefer direct mail over online solicitations ($m = 3.18$, $sd = 1.14$) than men ($m = 3.2$, $sd = 1.11$). However, the difference between the two means was not statistically significant ($t = .29$, $df = 1955$).

The second question was analyzed by splitting the data file into groups according to gender and then running frequencies. As reported previously, mail contact was chosen as the most preferred method by nearly half (47%) of all respondents, followed by e-mail (28%), personal contact (14%), and telephone solicitations (7%). Individually, 45% of men ($n = 410$) and 49% of women ($n = 507$) selected direct mail contact as their most preferred method of contact, indicating that women slightly prefer direct-mail solicitations more than men. Similarly, more women than men favored e-mail contact as the form of contact they most prefer; 30% of women selected e-mail as their first choice ($n = 314$) compared to 27% of men ($n = 245$). On the other hand, more men preferred personal contact: 18% of men chose personal contact over other modes ($n = 164$), while only 11% of women selected personal solicitations ($n = 117$). Men were also slightly more likely to prefer telephone solicitations; 7% of men selected phone contact as their first choice ($n = 64$) versus 6% of women ($n = 63$). Overall, alumni indicated that personal contact was their least favorite contact type (39%),

followed by telephone contact (38%), e-mail (14%), and mail (4%). From a gender

standpoint, a larger percentage of women were opposed to personal contacts; 43% of women

least preferred personal solicitations ($n = 453$) while only 33% of men were against it ($n = 304$). The two groups were nearly equal on telephone solicitation, with 38% of both groups

selecting it as their least favorite contact type ($n = 397$, $n = 347$). Men were more opposed to

e-mail contact, however. More than 18% of men indicated that e-mail was their least

preferred method of contact ($n = 167$) versus only 11% of women ($n = 111$).

Research Question #2

Questions #3 and 9 were included to answer the second research question, which

asked how alumnae and alumni perceive the Internet's impact on their relationships with

their alma mater. The two questions asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement

with two similar statements, one stating that they have stronger ties to UNC-CH because of

the Internet, and the other stating that they feel better informed about UNC-CH because of

Internet and e-mail. To answer this research question, the two questions were used to build

an index, summing the variables for both items and then reporting the mean. An independent

samples t-test was conducted to test for statistical significance in the difference between men

and women's answers. The mean for women's responses was only slightly higher ($m = 3.62$,

$sd = .82$) than the mean for men ($m = 3.6$, $sd = .86$), but this difference was not statistically

significant at the .05 level ($p > .5$, $t = -.68$, $df = 1964$).

Hypothesis #1

Hypothesis #1, which states that fewer women than men make online donations, was tested using two Likert scale questions regarding the use of the Internet to make donations and two questions asking respondents if they had ever given online to UNC-CH or to other charitable organizations.

An index was not created for the two Likert scale questions, because one addressed giving preferences and the other addressed actual giving behavior. Separate independent samples *t-tests*s were run for each variable. The first Likert question (#11) asked respondents to report their level of agreement with the statement that they use the Internet to donate to charitable causes. Women were slightly more likely to agree with the statement ($m = 2.93$, *sd* $= 1.19$) than men ($m = 2.90$, *sd* $= 1.27$), but the difference was not statistically significant at the .05 level ($t = -.48$, *df* $= 1,885$).

For the second Likert statement (#15), "I would rather make a donation online than mail in a donation," more women agreed ($m = 2.84$, *sd* $= 1.14$) than men ($m = 2.77$, *sd* $= 1.16$), but again, there was no statistical significance ($p > .18$, $t = -1.34$, *df* $= 1951$).

For the yes/no question "Have you ever made a donation to UNC-CH?," a Chi-square crosstabulation was used to test for statistical significance. More than 86% of men reported that they had given to the university ($n = 787$) versus only 74% of women ($n = 773$). This difference was found to be statistically significant at the .001 level. A crosstabulation was also used to test for significance in the answers to the question "Have you ever made an online donation to UNC-CH?". Only 13% of men ($n = 105$) and 10% of women ($n = 73$) reported having made an online donation. This was significant at the .05 level ($p \leq .015$).

However, virtually equal percentages (55%) of men ($n = 496$) and women ($n = 570$) reported that they had made an online donation to charitable organizations other than UNC-CH. The Chi-square test indicated that the overall difference in the two, which was less than a percent, was not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis stated that women perceive more obstacles to making online donations. An index labeled "Obstacles" was created using six Likert scale questions included in the survey. The statements dealt with a variety of issues and hindrances that have been reported in previous research as obstacles to giving. Four of the statements were presented from a negative point of view (I verify that I am on a secure Web site before making online donations or purchases, I worry about my privacy when I enter my credit card information online, Making online donations puts my personal information at risk, I worry about unsolicited third parties obtaining my personal information when I use the Internet). Three of the statements were phrased in a positive manner (I often use the Internet to pay bills and make purchases, I feel comfortable making an online donation to UNC-CH, and I am confident in my computer and Internet skills). In order to create a uniform index, the three positive items were reverse coded to be consistent with the other four variables before the index was created.

The index mean for women ($m = 2.95$, $sd = .58$) was slightly higher than that of men ($m = 2.92$, $sd = .62$), meaning that women perceive slightly more obstacles to giving online. However, an independent samples *t-test* revealed that the difference was not significant at the

.05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis #3

The final hypothesis stated that women are more likely than men to use e-mail as a communication tool. To test this hypothesis, an index combining five Likert scale responses was created. Four of the Likert variables addressed the e-mail in a positive way (I check my e-mail at least once a day, I enjoy receiving news about UNC-CH via e-mail, E-mail helps me stay informed about what's going on at UNC-CH, and E-mail is an effective tool for maintaining ties to UNC-CH). The data from one negative statement, "I do not appreciate receiving unsolicited e-mail from UNC-CH," were reverse coded in order to be consistent with the other variables in the index. As with the other Likert indices, an independent samples t-test was used to test for significance. The mean score for women ($m = 3.88$, $sd = .57$) was ever so slightly higher than men ($m = 3.87$, $sd = .58$), but it was not statistically significant at the .05 level ($t = -.24$, $df = 1964$). Therefore, Hypothesis #3 was not supported.

Chapter III has presented the results of the survey questionnaire. The next chapter will discuss these results, address the strengths and limitations of this study, provide some suggestions for further research, and examine this study's implications for both practical and applied purposes.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The previous chapters explored the literature surrounding the topic of women and ePhilanthropy, explained the method used to address the research questions and hypotheses developed for this study, and reported the results of the research. In this final chapter, the results of the research are examined more closely and discussed, along with their implications for the practical and applied fields of public relations. The strengths and limitations of the research are addressed, and ideas for further research opportunities are presented.

Discussion of Research Question #1

The first research question examined how alumnae and alumni prefer to be contacted by the university. In an earlier study that explored how alumnae prefer to be contacted by their alma maters, Briechle (2001) found that mail and telephone contact were the two most commonly preferred contact methods. E-mail, while included in the study, was preferred by so few alumnae that it was collapsed with the direct-mail category. One goal of this study was to determine if e-mail has gained ground as a preferred contact method for alumni. While results show that alumni still most prefer mail contact, it appears that alumni preference for e-mail has grown considerably, where it is now preferred over telephone contact. This finding is not surprising, given the drastic growth of e-mail in recent years. Contrary to Briechle's study, alumni were found to least prefer contact by telephone, with

personal contact ranking even above telephone solicitations. This is not surprising either, as the growth of the wireless phone industry and the popularity of do-not call lists have changed the face of telephone use. Many people now use cell phones as their primary phones, and making calls to alumni with cell phones can incur charges on the recipient. The emergence of the national do-not call registry and a growth in telemarketing also has played a role in making people more hostile toward phone solicitations and less likely to answer calls from unknown callers. Despite a pronounced aversion to telephone contact by the university, it is interesting to note that in an open-ended question included at the end of the survey, many alumni cited telephone calls from students as the most powerful solicitation they had ever received from the university. They may have an aversion to telephone solicitations because it is easier to ignore a letter or e-mail asking for money than an undergraduate who engages the caller in news about the university and shares his or her own experiences as a Carolina student.

Only small differences were found in contact preferences between men and women. It appears, however, that women are more likely to choose direct mail and e-mail as their top preferences. Men, on the other hand, seem slightly more opposed to e-mail contact. That women are more interested in e-mail communication is not surprising, given that studies show that women are more likely to have e-mail addresses and use e-mail to communicate. What is surprising, however, is that women were more opposed to personal contacts by the university than men. Previous research suggests that relationship building is a major part of fund raising that targets women, so it seems that personal contact would be encouraged and even preferred.

Discussion of Research Question #2

The second research question was included to explore how alumnae and alumni perceive the Internet's impact on their relationships with their alma mater. To answer this question, the survey included questions to gauge whether alumni feel they have stronger ties to the university because of the Internet and to ask whether alumni feel better informed about the university because of Internet and e-mail communication from UNC-CH. Based on the survey responses, it appears that the large majority of alumni agree that the Internet has strengthened their ties to the university and helped keep them better informed. This finding was not unexpected. The Internet has impacted people's lives in a number of ways, providing new ways to connect with others and stay informed about the world around us. The fact that more than half of alumni felt that the Internet had positively impacted their relationship with the university indicates that the Internet is becoming an important tool in alumni relationships.

When broken down by gender, it appears there are only slight differences in how men and women perceive the Internet's impact on their relationship with the university. Women were slightly more likely than men to agree that their ties to the university were strengthened, while men were marginally more likely to disagree. Although not statistically significant, this provides some indication of how men and women differ in their attitudes toward relationship-building. Since research indicates that women are more interested in forming relationships with organizations they support, it makes sense that they would be more likely to view the Internet as a valuable tool for strengthening ties with their alma mater. Women and men equally agreed that the Internet helps them stay better informed, which indicates that there are no substantial gender differences in that regard.

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Discussion of Hypothesis #1

Based on the results of previous research, it was hypothesized that fewer women than men would report making online donations. This hypothesis was posited in large part because of research previously conducted at the university that found that more men donated online to UNC-CH in the last fiscal year. The hypothesis was supported, but the findings provide a number of other interesting insights.

Men and women equally agreed that they would feel comfortable making an online donation to the university, but these equal comfort levels did not translate to equal incidences of online giving to UNC-CH among men and women. As reported in the results, men were significantly more likely to report having made an online donation to the university. When asked if they had donated online to other organizations, however, an equal percentage of men and women responded that they had. These research findings bring up some interesting questions regarding online giving. If men and women feel equally comfortable making online donations to the university, why don't they donate in equal numbers? The disconnect may be due to factors such as financial resources or priorities, but further research is needed to better understand the reasons for the disparity. The fact that the gender differences in giving disappear when it comes to online donations in general also raises some interesting questions about the reasons for those differences. One reason that fewer women give to the university than to other charitable organizations may be the nature of the organizations they support. The literature on women and philanthropy suggests that women are more likely to give to causes they believe in, especially ones that help people in need or support social causes.

Some women also may feel that the university doesn't need their money or that the university still favors men over women.

The gender differences in the incidence of online giving to UNC-CH suggest that perhaps the university is not doing all it can to reach out to alumnae, but they are also indicative of the fact that men were also more likely to donate to the university in general. It makes sense that if men give more overall, they are likely to give more online as well. This discrepancy in giving by gender is most likely rooted in the university's historical tradition of admitting more men than women to the university. Until the early 1960s, for instance, women were not admitted to the university as freshmen—they could only transfer in after attending another college for their first two years. Because of this, a large percentage of older alumni are male. The demographic breakdown of the survey seems to support this theory. The men completing the survey were, on average, older than the women who completed the survey. Some 45% of men were 51 or above, versus only 22% of women. The largest concentration of men was in the 51-60 age category, while the largest number of women fell between 31 and 40. Since older alumni tend to have more financial resources to give and most older alumni are male, it is logical that more men would donate to the university. The survey also supports this supposition, as there were substantial differences in income levels between men and women. More than 50% of men reported a household income of more than $100,000 in the last fiscal year, while only 37% of women reported that amount. While the giving discrepancies may be because of these demographic factors, it could also suggest that the university's fund raising efforts are not targeting women effectively.

Discussion of Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis, which stated that women perceive more obstacles to making online donations than men, was based on literature suggesting that women are more concerned about online security and privacy than men and are less comfortable using technology. To test this hypothesis, the survey included a number of questions on related areas, including Internet security issues, paying bills and making purchases online, and worries about privacy. Contrary to previous research, women did not report experiencing more obstacles to online giving than men when the variables were examined as a whole. Women did, however, show slightly more concern about online privacy and the security of their information. Women were more likely to verify the security of Web sites when making donations or purchases, and they expressed more worry about their privacy when entering credit card information online. They also were slightly more likely to agree that making online donations puts their personal information at risk and reported worrying slightly more about unsolicited third parties obtaining their personal information on the Internet. These differences, though small, seem to support previous research on gender differences on the Internet. However, women indicated a greater level of comfort with making online donations and reported using the Internet more often to pay bills and make purchases. They also exhibited greater confidence in their Internet and computer skills. These findings are at odds with previous research reporting that women are less confident on the Internet and are less likely to make online purchases.

These results suggest that many of the hurdles experienced by women in previous research are not as much of an issue now. This may be due to several reasons. For one thing, the population surveyed for this study consisted solely of college-educated women. It is

likely that many women, especially younger graduates, have grown up using computers, having used them in college and in the workplace. They are more likely to have been exposed to computers and use them more often than less educated or older women. Additionally, recent research suggests that the "Internet gap" is narrowing quickly, as the Internet population becomes more representative of the general population. As more women go online, they gain more confidence and skills in using the Internet and computer.

Discussion of Hypothesis #3

The third and final hypothesis in this study was based on recent research suggesting that women, who have always used the Internet for more social purposes than men, use e-mail to communicate more than men. Research has noted that a greater percentage of women use e-mail and they are more likely to stay in touch with friends and family via e-mail. As noted in Chapter III, no significant differences were found in this research to support this hypothesis, which was tested through the creation of an index consisting of five items from the survey.

An equal percentage of men and women checked their e-mail at least once a day, but there were slight differences in other categories. Women were more likely to agree that e-mail helps them stay informed about the university and that it is an effective tool for maintaining ties to the university. More women than men also disagreed with the statement that they didn't appreciate receiving unsolicited e-mail from the university. These differences, although small, suggest that alumnae are slightly more interested in e-mail as a communication tool with the university, which aligns closely with other research.

The demographics of the survey responses also provide support for the hypothesis. A larger number of women completed the survey than did men. Although the difference was not a large one, it is important to note that more men than women have e-mail addresses on file in the university's alumni and development database. This suggests that even though the random sample of e-mail addresses generated did not indicate the gender of potential respondents, a larger number of men were probably invited to participate in the survey. The fact that more women responded indicates that women were more interested in completing the survey.

Strengths and Limitations

As with all research studies, there are both strengths and limitations to the present study. A major limitation of the study is that it employs only one method of data collection. To more fully understand a research problem, many scholars now recognize the importance of triangulation of data, which involves using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect data (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Including qualitative research in this thesis project could have provided more in-depth information about the reasons behind respondents' answers, going beyond the information gleaned from the brief survey that was conducted. However, time and resource constraints prevented the researcher from conducting other types of research.

Another limitation was the narrow mode of contact used to contact potential respondents. E-mails were only sent to a random sample of those individuals with e-mail addresses currently on file with the university. A number of other alumni most likely have e-mail addresses and use the Internet, but they were not included in the study's population and

the results cannot be generalized to include these individuals. To reach out to a larger number of alumni, the survey could have been administered in other ways, including providing a link to the survey on alumni pages of the university Web site, or administering surveys by telephone or through the mail.

As mentioned in Chapter II, there are also some limitations involved in the use of a survey as a research method. One major limitation is the fact that surveys provide breadth but not depth. During the course of the study, a number of areas warranted further exploration or explanation, but the survey did not provide the flexibility to do that. The survey's length was another limitation. In order to maximize participation, the survey was kept short. Questions that would have provided more information or allowed opportunities for more feedback from participants were eliminated to keep the survey as short as possible. While this allowed for a larger number of responses, it compromised the quality of the data gathered. Another limitation that became clear as the study was conducted was that other questions should have been asked or current phrases amended to garner more helpful results. However, to protect the integrity of the survey results, changes were not made after the survey was opened. In addition, based on responses to some questions, it became obvious that additional answer categories should have been included. For example, the question asking respondents to indicate where they get the majority of their information about UNC-CH did not include e-mail as an answer choice. While a number of respondents selected the category "Other" and wrote it in, the percentage of those selecting e-mail might have been higher had it been included in the list of choices. Additionally, a question asking respondents to indicate their highest degree earned at the university did not include "Juris Doctor" as a selection. More than 40 respondents wrote it in as an alternate answer, and several e-mailed the researcher to

indicate that it should have been included. The narrow focus of the survey and lack of opportunity for respondents to answer in an open-ended and flexible manner somewhat limits the integrity of the results garnered.

A major strength of the study was the response rate. Although a response rate of 21.4% seems low, it is in the higher end of the range of typical Internet survey response rates, which Wimmer & Dominick (2003) report as being anywhere from 1% to 30%. The response patterns also do not seem to indicate any major biases, which can sometimes weaken the strength of the findings. While women were more likely to respond to the survey, the difference was not extremely large. Older and younger alumni participated in the survey at comparable rates, with nearly half of respondents being under 40 and the rest being over 40.

Another strength was the interest many alumni seemed to take in the project, which relates closely to the high response rate achieved by the study. Because the respondents have a direct connection to the university, they had a more vested interest in participating in the survey. A number of alumni contacted the researcher directly to share further insights and explain their answers more fully, even though they were not instructed to do so. Several others expressed an interest in the study's results. While the interest taken by alumni is a strong point, it is also important to recognize the possible limitations caused by that as well. Many of those alumni with less favorable attitudes toward the Internet as a communication tool with the university probably did not complete the survey, which could possibly skew the results.

This study also began to examine the importance of relationship building to fund raising, specifically as it relates to public relations theories and concepts. Despite the obvious connection among relationship building, fund raising, and public relations, Kelly (1998) is

one of the only scholars who has explored this important topic. This study took a step toward better understanding the relationship between fund raising and public relations by exploring relationship building in an Internet context, asking pertinent questions about how the Internet contributes to alumni relationships with the university. However, relationship building is hard to quantify or operationalize, and this study only scratches the surface.

Ideas for further research

A number of further research ideas emerged from this study. From a methodological standpoint, future research studies examining UNC-CH's alumni could recruit alumni in a different manner, seeking responses from alumni who do not have e-mail addresses on file with the university. There are a number of ways this could be accomplished. Links to a survey could be published in alumni publications or on the Web site, and surveys could be administered by telephone or via mail. This would make the results more generalizable to all alumni of the university. It might also be useful to study other university-affiliated populations besides alumni. For instance, major donors, friends of the university, parents, and faculty and staff are all affected by the Internet's role at the university, and insights might be gleaned from studying how the Internet impacts relationships with these important publics as well.

Additionally, this study only explored alumni attitudes toward the Internet at one university. Because each university and its alumni are different, future studies could branch out and study alumni at other universities. In this study, for instance, the circumstances regarding the enrollment of women probably affect the results.

The results of the survey offer interesting areas for further research as well. The study's main finding was that men are more likely to donate online than women, but the survey did not explore all the factors that contributed to the difference. It did explore issues regarding privacy and trust in computers, but these did not seem to be related to the difference. This is an area that needs to be addressed before steps can be taken to change this trend. Also, the study uncovered some noticeable gender differences in income levels and age of respondents. It may be useful to examine these areas in more depth to understand their role in existing philanthropic differences between men and women. Because this was a brief survey, there are numerous other opportunities for further exploration. For instance, research could be conducted to understand why respondents chose mail and e-mail as their most preferred methods of contact. Research could also explore what kind of Internet services and opportunities alumni might like to see in the future. Another area unexplored by this survey was the donation amounts for gifts made online. A previous study (Worrell & Kelleher, 2005) indicated that online gifts were substantially larger than gifts made through other means, and it would be interesting to compare how men and women compare in this category as well. In a similar vein, future research could identify the financial resources of men and women and compare how those resources match with gifts made to the university.

In addition to further survey research, a number of qualitative research options also exist. Interviews and focus groups could be conducted to help the university better understand why many women do not donate to the university online but do donate to other charitable organizations online. Textual analyses could also be conducted on the university's current fund raising materials to see if the language and tactics employed by the university tend to favor one gender over the other.

As mentioned earlier, this study does look at relationship building in the realm of fund raising, but this is an issue that needs to be explored further. For instance, a number of different methods could be used to explore whether there are differences between men and women in terms of the importance of building relationships to their giving behavior.

A number of opportunities for practical research exist as well. Development officers could evaluate the success of direct-mail, telephone, and e-mail solicitations by launching similar campaigns through each channel and then comparing the amount of money raised from each method. Furthermore, different types of fund-raising appeals could be used through the various channels to better understand what types of messages work best for different communication channels. Practical research such as this brings fund-raising dollars to the organization while also providing concrete evidence of the effectiveness of different appeals.

Applications of this research

From an academic standpoint, this research fills a gap in the literature by bringing together the topics of gender and philanthropy, ePhilanthropy, and alumni giving to help scholars better understand how these categories relate to each other. The findings indicate that many of the gender differences present in earlier studies regarding Internet use have seemingly disappeared, suggesting that more research could be conducted to update previous studies and see how the differences have changed over time.

This study has a number of practical applications as well, especially for UNC-CH. Understanding that direct-mail and e-mail are the preferred contact methods of a majority of alumni may have an impact on strategic planning efforts for fund raising. Future annual fund plans could focus on these two modes, and the university may want to cut down on the

number of telephone solicitations used to raise funds since a majority of alumni dislike it. However, the fact that many alumni mentioned telephone calls from students as the most powerful solicitation they had ever received from the university raises an interesting challenge. The university may want to look at ways of combining the best features of these telephone solicitations with other contact methods. For example, instead of making telephone calls, students could e-mail alumni to ask for donations. Understanding that men and women do not differ significantly in their attitudes toward e-mail and online giving is useful as well, because it indicates that women and men may not need to be targeted differently for online appeals. The fact that most alumni like e-mail could mean that the university should start focusing more of its efforts on using e-mail as a communication tool. Administrators should definitely work to obtain e-mail addresses for more and more alumni, as the Internet grows in popularity. The university should also be heartened by the fact that most alumni feel comfortable making an online donation to the university, and administrators should seek additional ways to encourage online giving. Even though alumni would still rather mail in donations than donate online, the results indicate that online giving will continue to become more popular.

The finding that men report giving more, both in general and online, has implications for the university as well. It suggests that a more inherent problem in gender differences in giving online may lie in the factors that lead men to give more in general. The university should take steps to understand the reasons for these differences and seek to find solutions.

CONCLUSION

The philanthropic world of today is quite different from the one in existence when UNC-CH's Office of University Development was created in 1952. Women are steadily beginning to rival men in the accumulation of financial resources and power, giving them greater control over philanthropic funds and encouraging fund-raisers to turn their attention to this growing group. The Internet also has revolutionized the world of philanthropy, offering organizations new ways to communicate with potential donors and providing donors with online giving opportunities. To stay competitive in today's fund-raising world, organizations must better understand how these factors affect how they raise funds.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how the emergence of women as powerful donors and the growth of the Internet as a powerful communication tool influence alumni giving relationships at UNC-CH. Although previous studies suggest that women perceive more obstacles to using the Internet to donate, this research uncovered few differences between men and women in their attitudes toward the Internet. If anything, women seemed more receptive to the use of e-mail and the Internet as communication tools with the university. For the university, this indicates that the Internet does have the potential to become a significant tool in forming giving relationships with alumnae. This study also concluded that alumni increasingly prefer e-mail contact as a way to stay in touch with the university, and that it now surpasses telephone contact as a preferred method. It can be expected that the use of e-mail will continue to grow.

According to Kelly's (1998) version of the situational theory of publics, three factors predict the likelihood that an organization's publics will donate: level of involvement, belief in the organization's mission and goals, and recognition of factors that inhibit giving. The

present study sought to better understand whether the Internet introduces obstacles that prevent alumni, and more specifically alumnae, from donating to the university. While the study found that women reported no more obstacles to online giving than men, differences were evident in their actual giving percentages. More research is needed to understand what specific factors—be they historical, institutional, or logistical—prohibit women from giving at the same level as men.

As noted in Chapter I, the concept of relationship management is an important theme in both public relations and fund raising. For fund raisers, it is important to use effective, two-way communication to establish long-term giving relationships with donors. A goal of this research was to understand what specific attributes of the Internet may inhibit or facilitate the relationship building process. Based on the findings, it appears that most alumni see the Internet as a facilitator in relationship building, allowing them to strengthen their ties to the university and stay better informed. It is too soon to tell what long-term role the Internet will play in motivating more alumni to give, but it appears that its effects are mostly positive at this point.

Looking to the future, it is safe to say that the Internet will become an important tool in the area of dialogic communication, which focuses on the use of dialogue and open communication to build relationships between organizations and publics. The Internet's versatility, broad reach, and myriad communication opportunities make it an important component of any strategic communication plan. Even this survey, which was administered solely online, illustrates the strength of the Internet as a powerful communication tool. In just a matter of weeks, more than 2,000 alumni shared their opinions of the Internet and their view of online giving at UNC-CH. This information is being used by both the researcher and

the university to better understand the needs of alumni donors, so that their communication

and relationship needs may be met while the university benefits as well.

CONSENT FORM

1. Thank you for your participation

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Philanthropy and the Internet: An exploration of the Internet's impact on alumni giving

You are being asked to take part in a research study exploring the Internet's impact on alumni giving. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Details about this study are discussed below. You should contact the researchers named below if you have any questions about this study.

Purpose:The purpose of this study is to learn about the Internet's role in alumni giving at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The study is designed to help researchers learn more about alumni attitudes toward giving and using the Internet.

You are being asked to be in the study because you are an alumnus/a of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Approximately 10,000 alumni from this university are being asked to participate in this study. The survey will take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
You will be asked a series of questions about your Internet and e-mail use. You also will be asked to provide some basic demographic information.

What are the benefits from being in this study?
You may not benefit personally from being in this research study. However, information collected may be used to help the University provide better alumni services to you in the future.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?
There are no known risks or discomforts involved in being in this study.

How will your privacy be protected?
We will make every effort to protect your privacy. Your response to the

survey will remain anonymous-- the researcher will not know who completes surveys and who does not, and respondents cannot be matched with completed surveys.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?
There will be no costs for being in the study.

What if you are a UNC employee?
Taking part in this research is not a part of your University duties, and refusing will not affect your job. You will not be offered or receive any special job-related consideration if you take part in this research.

What if you have questions about this study?
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed below.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by e-mail to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

IRB Study #JOMC 05-059
Principal Investigator: Joanna Worrell, Roy H. Park Master's Fellow
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Phone number: 919-843-8286
E-mail Address: jworrell@email.unc.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dulcie Straughan, Associate Professor
Phone number: 919-962-9003
E-mail Address: dulcie@email.unc.edu

Participant's Agreement:
I have read the information provided above and I have no questions at this time. By clicking on the NEXT button below, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

Next >>

Alumni Giving and the Internet   Exit this survey >>

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

1. I check my e-mail at least once a day.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
◡	◡	◡	◡	◡

2. I enjoy receiving news about the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) via e-mail.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
◡	◡	◡	◡	◡

3. I have stronger ties to UNC-CH because of the Internet (e-mail, Web site, etc.).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
◡	◡	◡	◡	◡

4. I verify that I am on a secure Web site before making online donations or purchases.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
◡	◡	◡	◡	◡

5. I feel comfortable making an online donation to UNC-CH.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
◡	◡	◡	◡	◡

6. I prefer direct-mail solicitations to e-mail solicitations.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

7. I often use the Internet to pay bills and make purchases.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

8. I am confident in my computer and Internet skills.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

9. I feel better informed about UNC-CH because of Internet and e-mail.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

10. I worry about my privacy when I enter my credit card information online.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

11. I use the Internet to donate to charitable causes.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

12. Making online donations puts my personal information at risk.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

13. E-mail helps me stay informed about what's going on at UNC-CH.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

14. I worry about unsolicited third parties obtaining my personal information when I use the Internet.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

15. I would rather make a donation online than mail in a donation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

16. E-mail is an effective tool for maintaining ties to UNC-CH.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

17. I do not appreciate receiving unsolicited e-mail from UNC-CH.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○	○

18. Giving online is more convenient than mailing in a donation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Please select the appropriate response to the following questions.

19. Have you ever made a donation to UNC-CH?

◯ Yes

◯ No

20. How were you solicited for your last donation to UNC-CH?

◯ Personal contact

◯ Telephone contact

◯ Mail contact

◯ E-mail contact

◯ Don't remember

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

21. Have you ever made an online donation to UNC-CH?

◯ Yes
◯ No

22. Have you ever made an online donation to any charitable organization?

◯ Yes
◯ No

23. Please rank the following in the order you most prefer to be contacted for a donation. (1-most prefer, 4-least prefer)

	1	2	3	4
Personal contact	○	○	○	○
Telephone contact	○	○	○	○
Mail contact	○	○	○	○
E-mail contact	○	○	○	○

24. Have you ever visited UNC-CH's Web site?

○ Yes
○ No

25. Where do you get most of your information about UNC-CH? (Select one)

○ General Alumni Association publications (e.g. Out of the Blue, Carolina Alumni Review)

○ Fund-raising publications (Carolina Connections, Chancellor's FYI newsletters, Annual Fund brochures)

○ Other UNC-CH publications (Endeavors, departmental publications, etc.)

○ UNC-CH's Web site

○ Local newspaper

○ Former classmates/friends

○ Other (please specify)
[   ]

26. What year did you graduate from UNC-CH?

[   ]

27. What is the highest degree you earned from UNC-CH?

◯ Bachelor's

◯ Master's

◯ Doctorate (Ph.D., M.D., etc.)

◯ Other (please specify)

[   ]

28. What is your gender?

◯ Male
◯ Female

29. What is your present age?

◯ Under 25

◯ 25-30

◯ 31-40

◯ 41-50

◯ 51-60

◯ 61-70

◯ 71 or older

30. What is your current marital status?

◯ Married or living with partner

◯ Single, never married

◯ Divorced or separated

◯ Widowed

31. What was your 2005 total household income?

○ Under $15,000

○ 15,000-24,999

○ 25,000-39,999

○ 40,000-54,999

○ 55,000-69,999

○ 70,000-84,999

○ 85,000-99,999

○ 100,000 and over

○ No response

32. Please describe the best fund-raising solicitation you've ever received from UNC-CH. What made it so powerful?

7. Thank you!

Thank you for your participation in this survey. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Joanna Worrell, the principal investigator of this project, at 919-843-8286 or jworrell@email.unc.edu. You may also contact her faculty adviser, Dulcie Straughan, at 919-962-9003 or dulcie@email.unc.edu.

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INVITATION E-MAIL

To: Alumni
From: Joanna R. Worrell
Subject: UNC-CH Alumni Research Study

Dear alumnus/a:

I am writing to request your participation in an online survey exploring the Internet's role in alumni giving and involvement at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The study, which is part of my master's thesis in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at UNC-CH, will help UNC-CH and other schools assess the value of Internet tools such as e-mail and online giving sites in order to provide better services to alumni.

Please consider participating in this study. You may click on the link below to learn more about the study and begin a questionnaire that will take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

The survey can be accessed at this address: [SurveyLink]

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (919) 843-8286 or via e-mail at jworrell@email.unc.edu. You may also contact my faculty adviser, Associate Professor Dulcie Straughan, at (919) 962-9003 or dulcie@email.unc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Joanna Worrell
Master of Arts Candidate
Roy H. Park Master's Fellow
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB# 3365
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3365
(919) 843-8286
jworrell@email.unc.edu

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
[RemoveLink]

APPENDIX D

SURVEY REMINDER E-MAIL

To: Alumni
From: Joanna R. Worrell
Subject: UNC-CH Alumni Research Study

Dear alumnus/a:

I recently sent you an invitation to participate in an online survey exploring the Internet's role in alumni giving and involvement at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am conducting this study for my thesis project in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at UNC-CH.

If you have completed the online questionnaire, thank you very much for taking the time to do so. If you have not completed the survey, I hope that you will consider participating. You may click on the link below to learn more about the study and begin a questionnaire that will take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

The survey can be accessed at this address: [SurveyLink]

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (919) 843-8286 or via e-mail at jworrell@email.unc.edu. You may also contact my faculty adviser, Associate Professor Dulcie Straughan, at (919) 962-9003 or dulcie@email.unc.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Joanna Worrell
Master of Arts Candidate
Roy H. Park Master's Fellow
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB# 3365
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3365
(919) 843-8286
jworrell@email.unc.edu

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
[RemoveLink]

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL FORM

THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

OFFICE OF HUMAN
RESEARCH ETHICS

BEHAVIORAL INSTITUTIONAL
REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

BANK OF AMERICA BUILDING
SUITE 600
CAMPUS BOX 3378
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599-3378

T 919.962.7761
F 919.843.5576
http://ohre.unc.edu

Joanna Worrell

TO: Dulcie Straughan
DEPARTMENT: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
ADDRESS: CB # 3365
Campus
DATE: 01/31/2006
FROM: Lawrence B. Rosenfeld
Behavioral Institutional Review Board
IRB NUMBER: JOMC 2005-059
APPROVAL PERIOD: 01/31/2006 through 01/30/2007
TITLE: Philanthropy and the Internet: An Exploration of the Internet's Impact on Giving
SUBJECT: Expedited Protocol Approval Notice--New Protocol

The above research study has been reviewed and approved by the Behavioral IRB Co-Chair, on an Expedited basis, Category ___7___.

[✓] New approval   [ ] Renewal approval   [ ] Modification approval per 45 CFR 46.110(b)(2)
[ ] Secondary data

Please note that, if checked, the following Federal regulations are applicable to this research study:

[ ] 45 CFR 46.404 -The IRB finds that no greater than minimal risk to children is presented, and that adequate provisions have been made for soliciting the assent of the children and the permission of their parents or guardians, as set forth at 45 CFR 46.408.

[ ] 45 CFR 46.116(d) - Approval of a consent procedure that does not include all of the elements of informed consent, or a waiver of the requirement to obtain informed consent has been satisfied.

[✓] 45 CFR 46.117(c)(2) - Waiver of the requirement for documentation of written (signed) consent.

[ ] 45 CFR 164.512 - Criteria for waiver of HIPAA Authorization have been satisfied.

[ ] 45 CFR 164.508 - HIPAA Authorization Form approved.

The above Approval Period informs you of the date that IRB approval expires for this research study. You will be notified in advance of this date to submit an application for renewal or termination of IRB approval.

Please note that IRB approval is required prior to any modifications being made to this research study.

If you have any questions or concerns about your study's approval, please contact the Behavioral IRB Office at 962-7761 or e-mail the office at aa-irb-chair@unc.edu. Thank you.

Approved by:

_____   1/31/06
Behavioral IRB Co-Chair   Date of Approval

Figure 1:

Percentage of Respondents by Gender
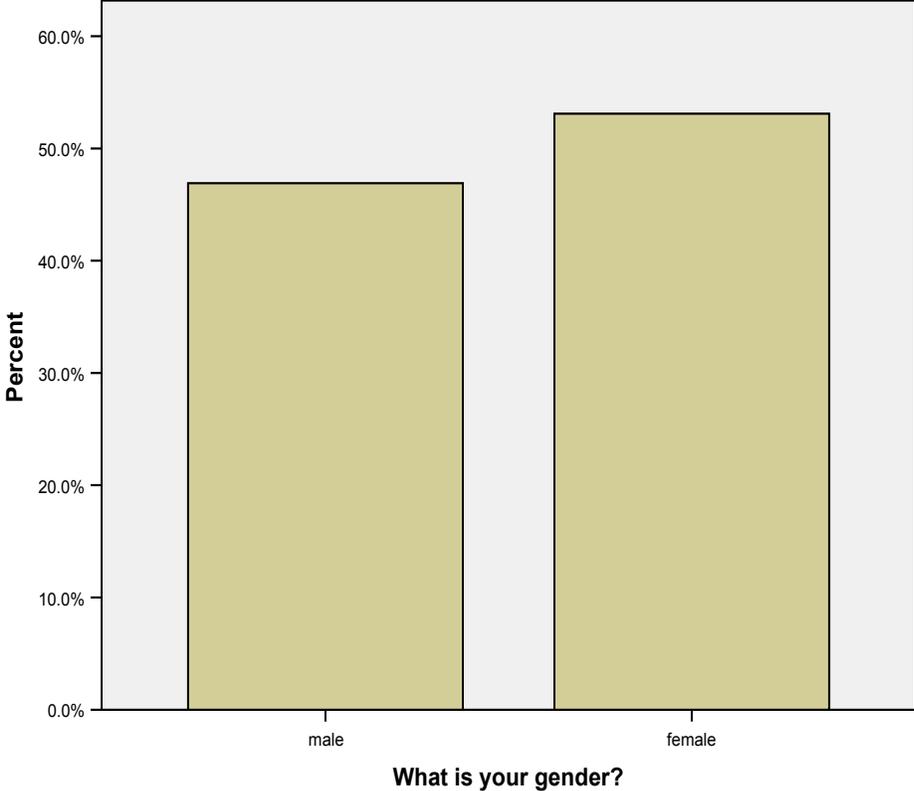
Figure 2:

Percentage of Respondents by Degree
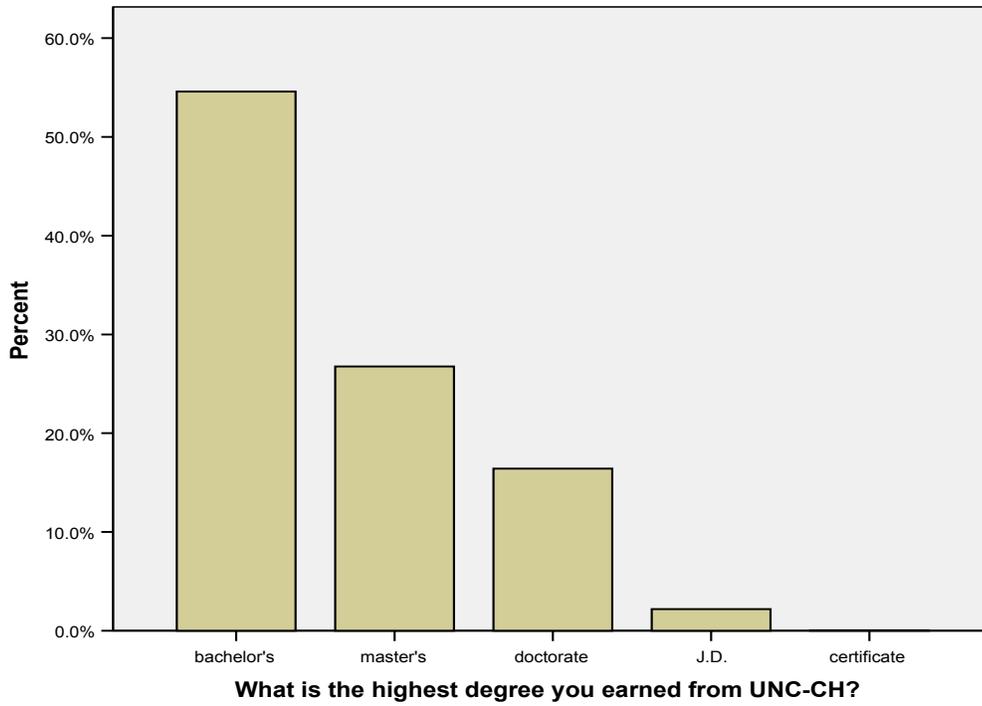
Figure 3

**Percentage of Respondents by Marital Status**
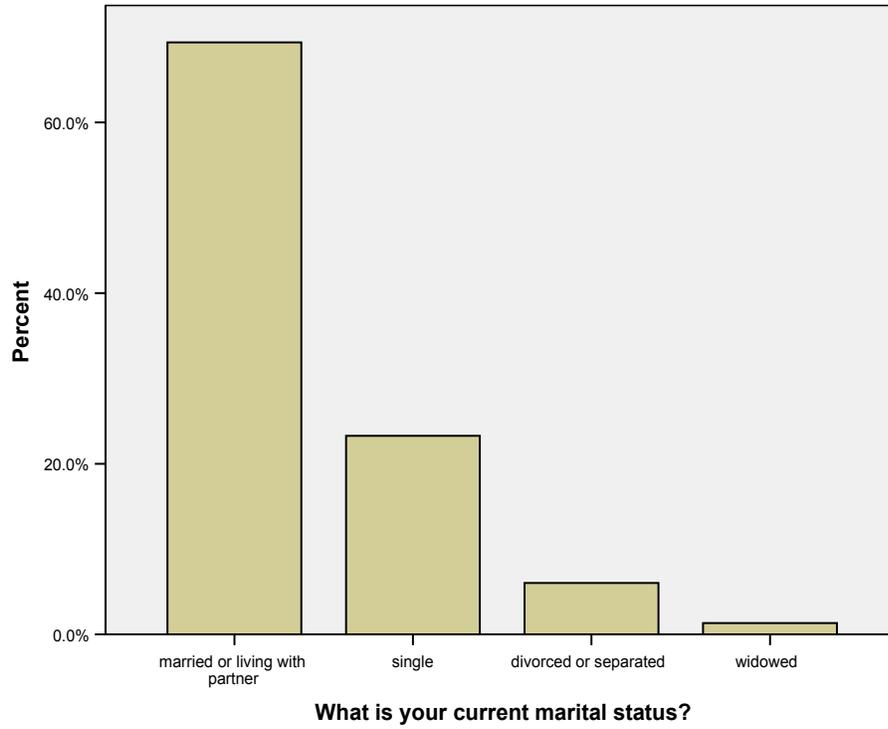
Figure 4

Percentage of Respondents by Age
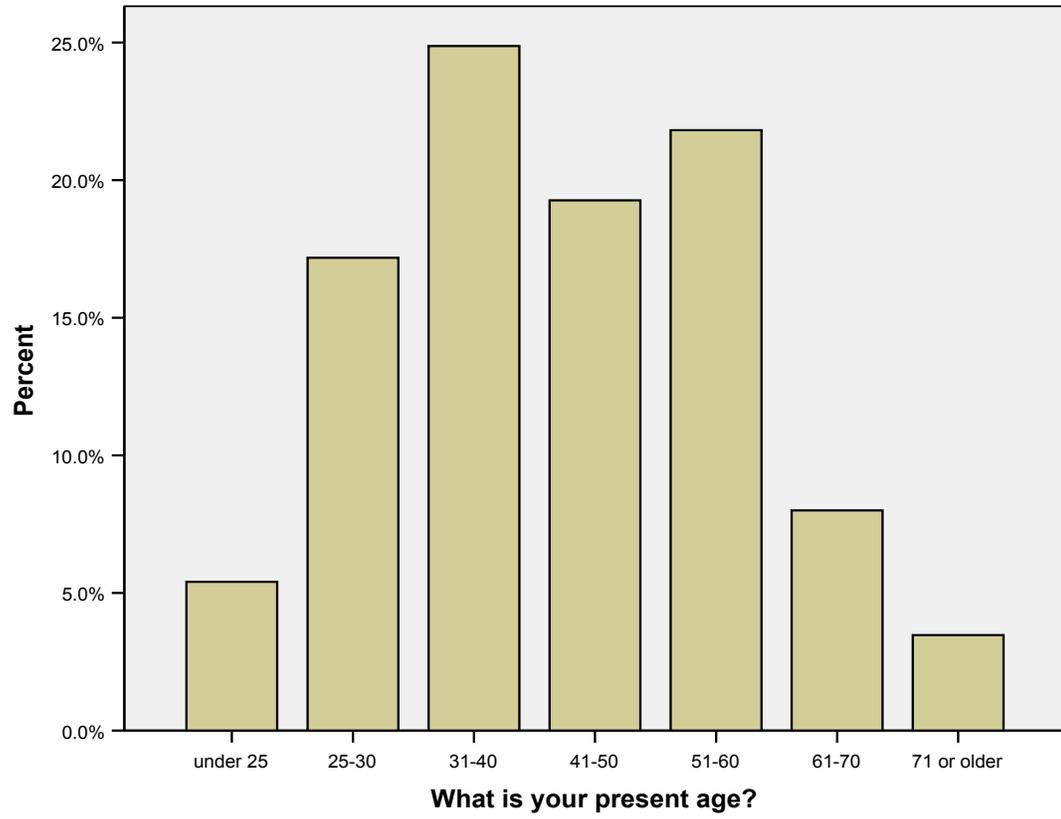
Figure 5

Percentage of Respondents by Household Income
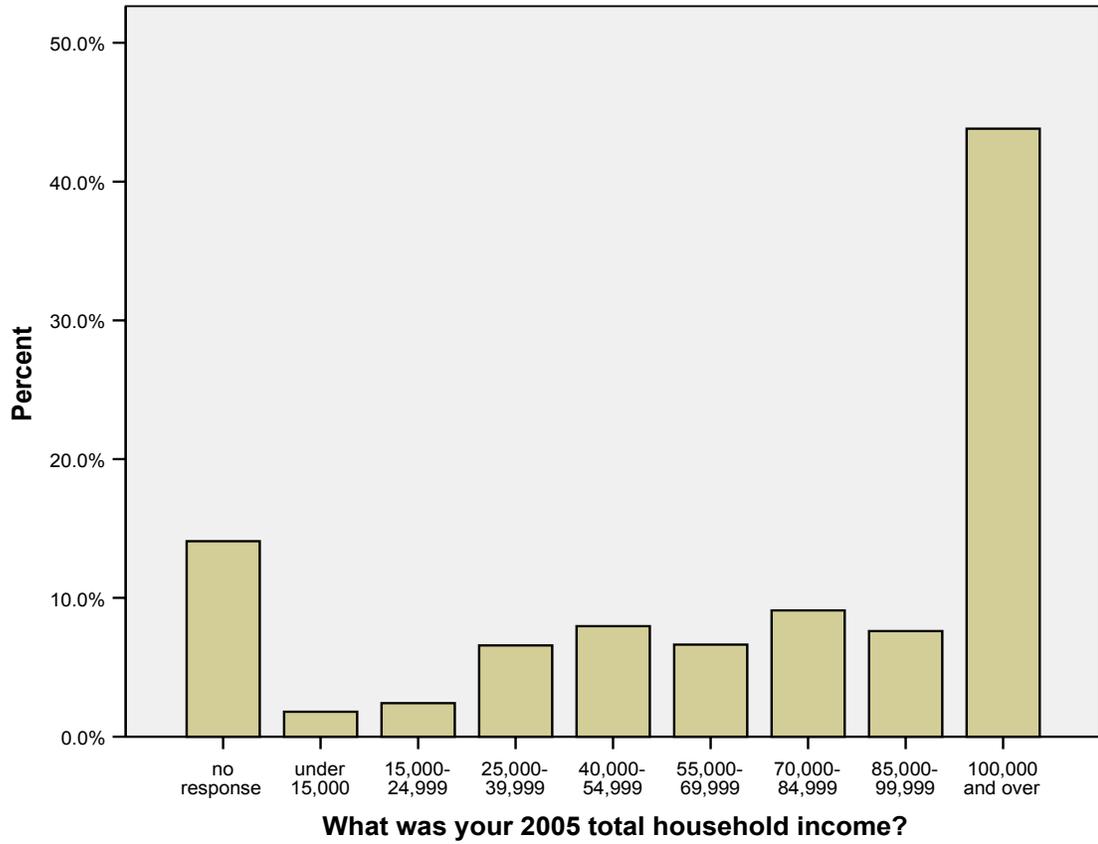
Figure 6

Percentage of Men and Women Who Prefer Mail Contact
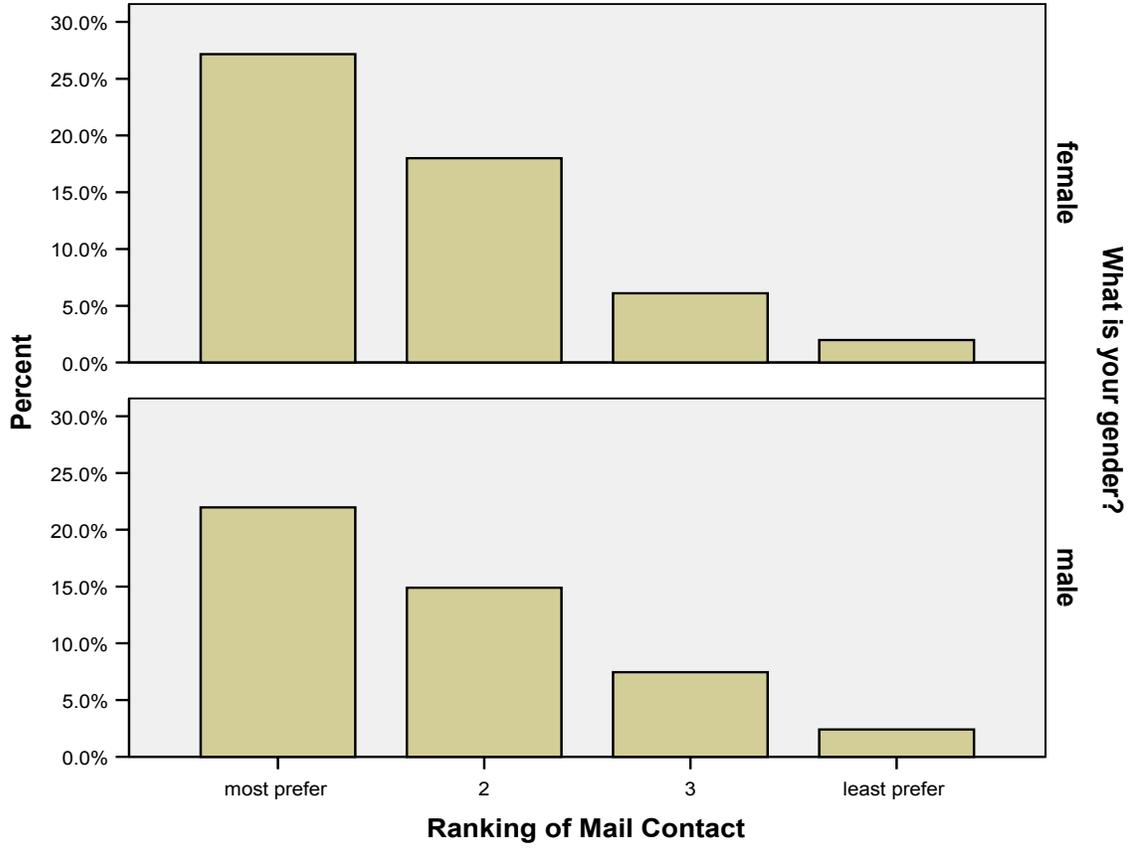
Figure 7

Percentage of Men and Women Who Prefer E-mail Contact
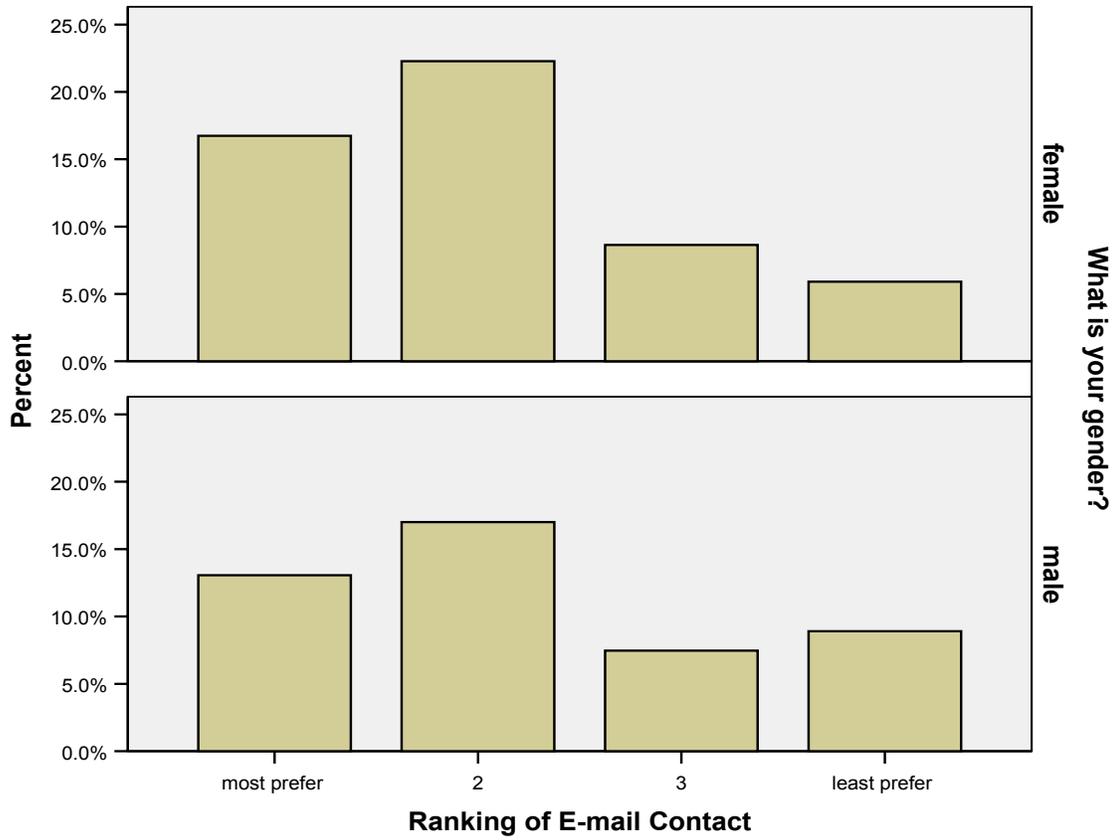
Figure 8

Percentage of Men and Women Who Prefer Telephone Contact
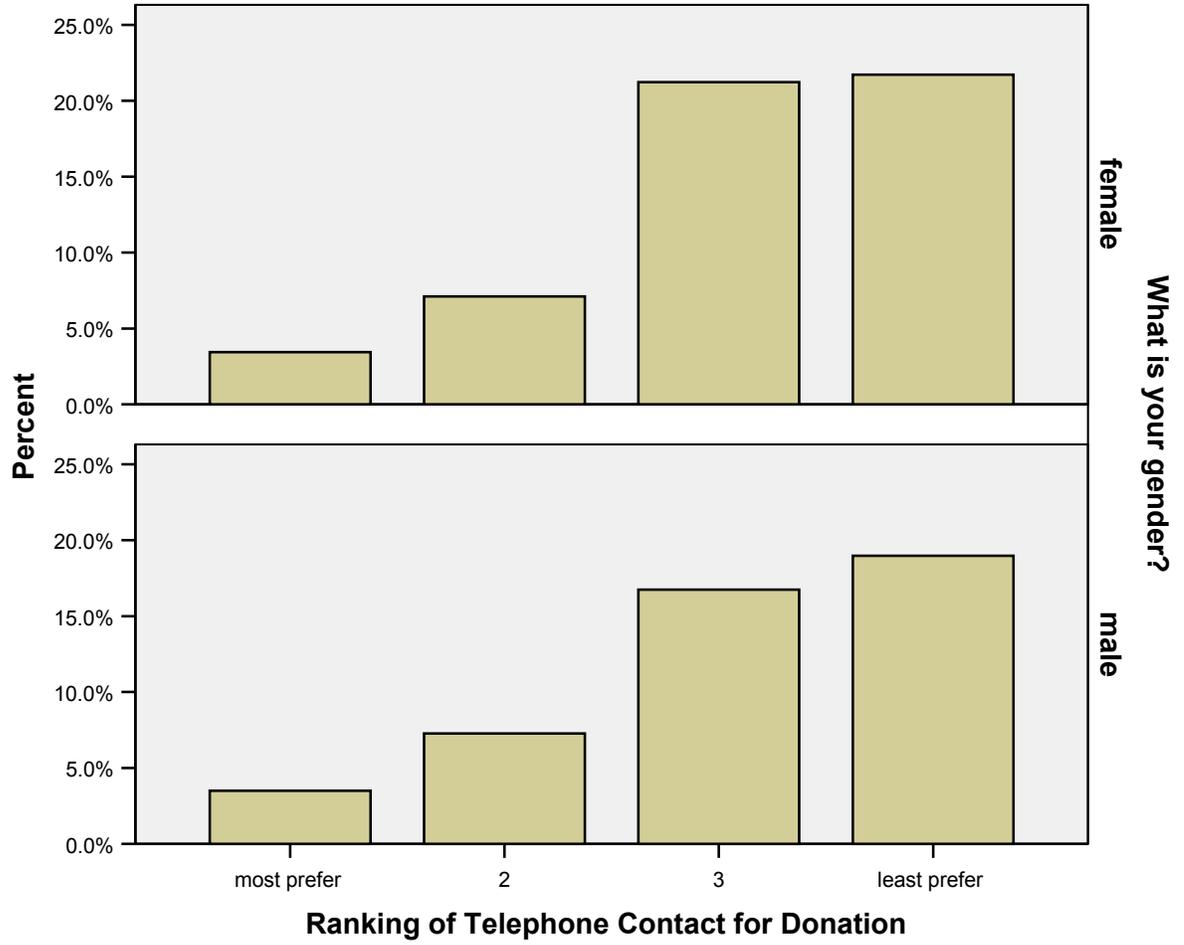
Figure 9

Percentage of Men and Women Who Prefer Personal Contact
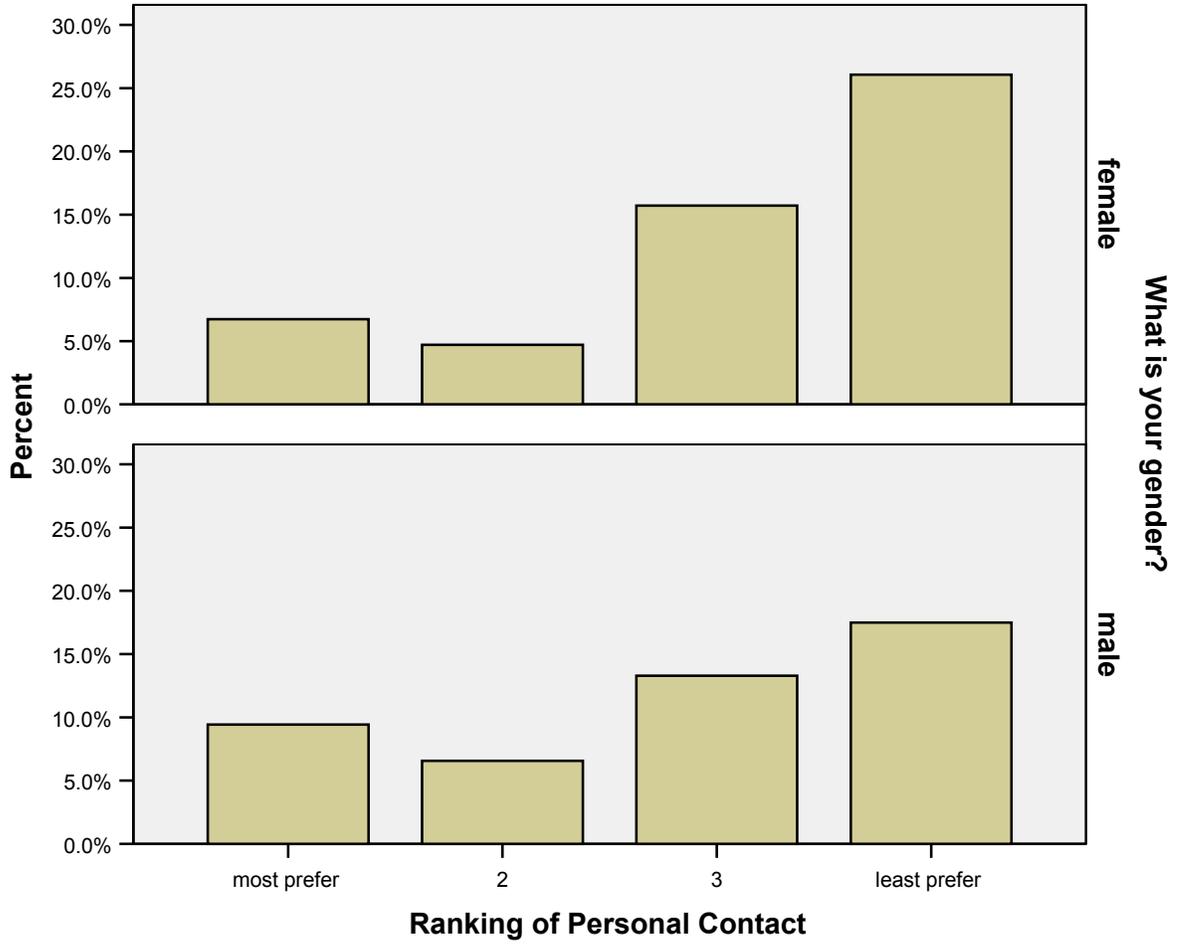
Table 1

Mean Values of Likert Scale Questions

Likert Scale Questions			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Mean***	**Std. Deviation**
Q1. I check my e-mail at least once a day.	1966	4.58	0.89
Q2. I enjoy receiving news about the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) via e-mail.	1963	3.85	0.82
Q3. I have stronger ties to UNC-CH because of the Internet (e-mail, Web site, etc.).	1960	3.42	0.98
Q4. I verify that I am on a secure Web site before making online donations or purchases.	1960	4.33	0.86
Q5. I feel comfortable making an online donation to UNC-CH.	1950	3.65	1.01
Q6. I prefer direct-mail solicitations to e-mail solicitations.	1957	3.19	1.13
Q7. I often use the Internet to pay bills and make purchases.	1954	3.96	1.17
Q8. I am confident in my computer and Internet skills.	1954	4.37	0.76
Q9. I feel better informed about UNC-CH because of Internet and e-mail.	1947	3.80	0.86
Q10. I worry about my privacy when I enter my credit card information online.	1955	3.37	1.07
Q11. I use the Internet to donate to charitable causes.	1957	2.92	1.23
Q12. Making online donations puts my personal information at risk.	1949	3.13	0.97
Q13. E-mail helps me stay informed about what's going on at UNC-CH.	1941	3.84	0.81
Q14. I worry about unsolicited third parties obtaining my personal information when I use the Internet.	1955	3.66	0.97
Q15. I would rather make a donation online than mail in a donation.	1953	2.81	1.15
Q16. E-mail is an effective tool for maintaining ties to UNC-CH.	1955	3.93	0.73
Q17. I do not appreciate receiving unsolicited e-mail from UNC-CH.	1955	2.81	0.97
Q18. Giving online is more convenient than mailing in a donation.	1961	3.35	1.08

*The range for Likert Scale responses was 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

Table 2

Mean Values of Likert Scale Questions and Indices by Gender

Question	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q6	M	920	3.20	1.106
	F	1037	3.18	1.143
RQ2 index	M	922	3.60	.862
	F	1044	3.62	.819
Q11 (H1)	M	916	2.90	1.27
	F	1041	2.93	1.19
Q15 (H1)	M	916	2.77	1.16
	F	1037	2.84	1.14
H2 index	M	921	2.92	.622
	F	1044	2.95	.577
H3 index	M	922	3.87	.019
	F	1044	3.88	.018

Table 3

Independent Samples *t*-tests of Likert Scale Questions and Indices Based on Gender

	Independent Samples t-Test		
	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q6 (RQ1)	.286	1955	.775
RQ2 index	-.676	1964	.499
Q11 (H1)	-.482	1885	.630
Q15 (H1)	-1.338	1951	.181
H2 index	-1.064	1887	.288
H3 index	-.235	1964	.814

Table 4

Crosstabulations by Gender (Hypothesis #1)

		Gender		Total
		male	female	
Have you ever made a donation to UNC-CH?	yes	787 86%	773 74%	1560 79%
	no	134 15%	271 26%	405 21%
Have you ever made an online donation to UNC-CH?	yes	105 13%	73 9.5%	178 12%
	no	678 87%	696 90.5%	1374 89%
Have you ever made an online donation to any charitable organization?	yes	496 55%	570 55%	1066 55%
	no	412 45%	462 45%	874 45%

Table 5

Chi-square Tests by Gender (Hypothesis #1)

	Value	df	Sig. (2-sided)
Have you ever made a donation to UNC-CH?	38.922	1	.000*
Have you ever made an online donation to UNC-CH?	5.863	1	.015*
Have you ever made an online donation to any charitable organization?	.072	1	.789

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

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