Abstract

Churches are often faced with the challenge of helping people who are seeking assistance. The main purpose of this study was to determine if having a benevolent policy in place reduced the level of anxiety in church employees who handled benevolence. The study gathered information from churches in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, metro area to find out how they handled their benevolent ministry. Questions were asked that indicated the anxiety level of the employees who handled benevolence. Findings revealed employees who handled benevolence in churches that did not have a policy in place experienced significantly greater anxiety than employees who handled benevolence in churches that did have a policy in place. Suggestions for possible future research were also discussed.

Introduction and Statement of Problem

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to survey the methods used by different churches to manage their benevolent ministries. This study was conducted from March through June 2008, and it focused on local churches in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, metro area. A desire to have a workable benevolent policy at Southwood Baptist Church was expressed by the minister who was in charge of the benevolent ministry at the church. This desire, expressed to one of the secretaries, led to the development of this project. As a part of this project, surveys were conducted. These surveys were distributed to churches in the Tulsa metro area and were used to determine several factors about the management of their benevolent ministries. Some of these factors were: whether or not their church had a benevolent policy; if so, how it had been created; how effective the
employees felt the policy was; and how employees felt when they had to handle benevolence. The findings of this project were intended to lay the foundation for creating an acceptable benevolent policy for Southwood Baptist Church which was located in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Organizational Context

Setting of the problem. Southwood Baptist Church (SBC), a Southern Baptist Church located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was established in 1976. The ministers, also called pastors, were chosen by the congregation and have been the leaders of the church. Deacons were non-paid leaders in the church and aided the pastors in ministering to the congregation. Three secretaries were employed by the church and were under the authority of the pastors.

The primary goals for SBC included three parts. The first primary goal included a mission, “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18-20). The second goal included five functions which were worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and missions. Four results were incorporated as the third primary goal and included numerical growth, spiritual transformation, ministry expansion, and kingdom advance.

One way SBC has attempted to meet the primary goals of the church has been through their benevolent ministry. This ministry has endeavored to assist members of SBC, as well as other people in the community, who have experienced various needs because of adverse circumstances. As the church has strived to help these people who were in need of material items, it has also tried to address their spiritual needs. Ministers of SBC have spent time counseling people from the community who are not members of SBC when they have come into the office requesting assistance. The
ministers have tried to help these people realize their need for spiritual as well as material help. This endeavor has aided the church in its effort to fulfill its mission, achieve its functions, and attain its results.

Southwood Baptist Church has not had a benevolent policy, and there have been inconsistencies in the process of dealing with individuals who have come in for assistance. Due to a shortage of staff members, the minister who was in charge of meeting with people in need and processing their requests had been unable to devote adequate time to this particular responsibility. The church office has been located on a main street in the city of Tulsa, and people have frequently walked into the office seeking help. Due to the shortage of staff members, there have been times when there have been no ministers in the office, and the secretaries have had to contend with people who were in need of assistance. Sometimes, the people who were seeking help were very rude and demanding. This situation has caused the secretaries to feel very uncomfortable and unsafe.

History and background. Inconsistencies in the benevolent ministry have existed since Southwood Baptist Church was established in 1976. There has never been an established policy for dealing with people who were seeking financial assistance. Nevertheless, in an attempt to share God’s love with the community surrounding the church, the staff has always strived to help meet physical needs of people who were struggling.

There has never been a designated pastor to handle benevolence, so the responsibility has always been left to the pastor present when a needy person came into the office. At one time, the church had five full-time ministers on staff, and the
responsibility of counseling people in need was shared by all of them. However, because of unfilled vacancies in the ministerial staff, the church has been reduced to only one full-time pastor. When he had to be away from the office taking care of other responsibilities, he told the secretaries to post a sign on the door instructing people to call his cell phone if they needed help with food, gas, or bus tokens. Before long, he was inundated with calls from people at all times of the day and night. He then instructed the secretaries to remove the sign, and people who were seeking assistance began coming to the office, even when the minister was not there.

The funding of the benevolent ministry has been very limited throughout the years of SBC’s existence. At times, there has been a designated amount in the yearly budget allocated to help people in the community who were in need of assistance. In 2006, the church voted to designate one-half of the budgeted benevolent funds to be sent to Arms Around Broken Arrow (AABA), a local food pantry. The other half of the budgeted amount was designated to be used to help members of SBC who were having financial struggles. Non-church members were directed to seek help through AABA since the church was sending monetary support to that agency. Then, the congregation decided to collect donations for the benevolent fund whenever they observed the Lord’s Supper, which occurred four times a year. They decided the donated money would be used for either church members or non-church members who were in need of help. Some months, especially during the winter, the number of people seeking assistance was so great that the funds became depleted.

There had also been a problem in discerning whether a person’s need was legitimate or fraudulent. The church has not had an accurate method of validating a
person’s story before deciding whether or not to offer assistance. At times, the ministers noticed that after they had helped an individual, several people from the same apartment complex came into the office seeking help that same day or the next day. Most of them said they did not have a job or that they had recently started a new job and had not received their first pay check. Some of them said they received federal aid, but it was not adequate to meet their needs. As a result, the pastor in charge of the benevolent ministry began seeking ideas for improvement in the management of the ministry.

Scope of the problem. The ineffectiveness and inconsistencies in the benevolent ministry at SBC has impaired the church in achieving its mission, to reach others with Jesus’ love. This research project was designed to explore methods used by other churches to manage their benevolent ministry. Thirty-two churches in the Tulsa Metro Baptist Association were surveyed to determine the ways in which they dealt with people who were seeking assistance.

This project was limited to the benevolent ministry of SBC. It impacted the ministers, the secretaries, and the people who came to the office seeking assistance. The minister in charge of the benevolent ministry retained his responsibility of counseling people who were in need. This project was not designed to provide a benevolent policy for SBC. The findings of this project were intended to lay the foundation for the church to design an effective policy.

Significance of the Project

There were several benefits or advantages of this project. One was that it provided a better understanding of the management of benevolent ministries by other
churches. This understanding gave SBC the opportunity to incorporate the best ideas from other sources into a workable benevolent policy designed just for their church. The intent was to help SBC develop consistency in the handling of requests for assistance which would enable more people to receive help and result in a lower level of apprehension and fear for the secretaries.

The findings of the project enabled the minister in charge of the benevolent ministry to understand how other churches managed their benevolent ministries. They also revealed that having a policy in place reduced the anxiety level in church employees who handled benevolence. The findings served as a catalyst for a positive change in the benevolent ministry at SBC.

**Definition of Terms**

Benevolence – helping people in need

Benevolent assistance – help given to people in need of assistance for food, gasoline, bus tokens, etc.

Benevolent ministry – a ministry designed to help people in need

Congregation – the group of people who are members of the church

Deacons – men ordained by the church or another Southern Baptist Church to aid the pastors in ministering to the congregation and the community

Faith-based provider – an organization affiliated with a religious group who provides assistance to people in need

Food bank – a place, usually a non-profit organization, where food is made available to people who may not be able to afford it

Food insecurity – the lack of adequate food
Food pantry – a term used interchangeably with food bank

Food stamps – a government-provided means for low income people to purchase food and other necessary items

Hunger – “the unpleasant sensation resulting from the lack of sufficient food” (Nestle, 1999, p. 261)

Kingdom advance – the development of Christians who can help spread the Gospel

Lord’s Supper – a special service in which church members eat bread and drink wine or grape juice in remembrance of the death of Jesus Christ

Welfare – financial assistance provided by taxpayers to people who cannot support themselves

Review of the Literature

The literature research that was conducted contributed validity to the supposition that for many years there has been a need for finding a more suitable method to connect the poor with available food supplies. The research re-enforced the idea that hunger has always existed in America; however, the food insufficiency has been caused by the lack of resources to obtain the food rather than the actual lack of food. The techniques that have been utilized throughout the years to help the hungry were discussed in several of the articles that were researched. The research also revealed the effects that government funding has had on faith-based organizations in their attempts to help the poor. The reasons why and the different ways local churches have been involved in helping the needy were also established during the research process.

Is Hunger Really a Problem in America? As early as the 1500s, communal and personal assistance plans have been created to provide only enough help to prevent
starvation, but not enough to encourage dependency (Nestle, 1999). When thinking about the possibility of hunger in America, three important areas have been explored: whether or not America produces enough food for its population; whether or not hunger actually exists in America; and, what policies, if any, might provide more equitable access to food. Studies have shown that the United States actually produces far more than the established benchmark for food adequacy, yet studies have also shown that 12 million children and eight million adults in the United States are classified as “hungry.” Hunger was defined by Nestle as the horrible feeling produced by the lack of enough food (Nestle).

A scientifically validated survey instrument named the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) was designed to indicate household hunger (Nestle, 1999). Results from a 1995 CCHIP survey of 45,000 households in the United States indicated that food insufficiency is due to a lack of resources rather than the actual lack of food. Studies have shown that food often became the unessential item in poor people’s budgets. When faced with expenses incurred by other daily necessities, people often decided that three meals a day were a luxury that they could sacrifice (Lieberman, 2003). Therefore, the question was posed as to the best way to connect food insecure households with the means to obtain or purchase food. By the end of the colonial era, families, churches, communities, schools, businesses, fraternal orders, and local governments all were attempting to help the underprivileged (Nestle). Researchers have agreed that the process of connecting the hungry with food supplies has continued to be a problem. Throughout the years of its existence, Southwood Baptist Church
(SBC) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has made various attempts to make that connection a reality for people who are in need of help.

*How Do We Help the Hungry?* The pursuit of finding a solution to the problem of feeding the hungry in America has had a long history. The federal role in welfare began in the early 1800s. In the early 20th century, states began to supplement local agencies with funding administered through state boards. The depression of the 1930s led to the development of the welfare and food assistance programs that are still in existence. During the 1960s, the Food Stamp program was extended nationally. Then, in the 1980s legislation restricted welfare benefits, and more people began utilizing food stamps (Nestle, 1999). Research has found that the mood of the United States during the 1980s era favored cost containment and brought about cuts in welfare. Thus, food stamps became a necessity for more people as a means of survival.

The 1996 Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) transferred most responsibility for welfare from the federal government to the states (Nestle, 1999). States, therefore, had to align their policies with this shift in responsibilities. The charitable choice provision of the PRWORA was intended to establish new funding opportunities for services delivered by faith-based providers (Cashwell, Bartkowski, Duffy, Casanova, Molnar, and Irimia-Vladu, 2004). This reform also limited eligibility for Food Stamps (Nestle). As a result of these developments, local assistance became more critical than ever in addressing hunger in America. Many churches and faith-based organizations became more active in assisting those in their community who were in need.
One method of providing food to the needy in which many faith-based organizations have participated in was the distribution of food through food pantries. Food pantries were developed to distribute food for clients to take away and prepare at home and to provide emergency food for those who suffered from hunger and malnutrition. Faith-based providers have often received food to be distributed through their food assistance programs from donations by individual congregations (Cashwell et al., 2004). In the past, SBC has participated in this type of program by making donations to Arms Around Broken Arrow (AABA), a local faith-based food pantry. Twice a year, Southwood Baptist Church has collected donations of non-perishable food items from members of the congregation and delivered them to AABA. Then, AABA has distributed the food to individuals seeking assistance. Although this type of assistance was intended as a response to a short term emergency, often it has evolved into serving longer term needs (Cashwell et al.).

*How Does Government Funding Affect Faith-Based Organizations?* The opportunity to access government funds might positively impact faith-based relief agencies. Charitable choice was meant to protect the civil and religious freedoms of welfare patrons (Cashwell et al., 2004). As a result, clients must be given the choice of receiving assistance from faith-based or secular organizations. However, survey results indicated that pantry directors seem to be only vaguely aware of the legal responsibilities that their establishment would face if they accepted public funding (Cashwell et al.).

Hugh Zimmerman, Director of AABA, said that their food pantry has never received any direct funding from the government. They have relied on donations from
churches and individual donors. However, they have obtained some food items from a local food bank, Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma (CFBEO), which is not a faith-based organization. CFBEO has received United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities from the government, and monthly, the organization has provided lists of available items to area food pantries, both faith-based and non faith-based. Zimmerman said when AABA obtained the items that USDA had provided to CFBEO, they received them free of charge. When AABA obtained other items that had been purchased by CFBEO, they had to pay for them. However, the price was usually cheaper than if the items had been purchased at a grocery store. Zimmerman said since AABA received items from an agency that received government commodities, they had to allow CFBEO’s director to approve the applications that AABA used for its clients (Zimmerman, H., personal communication, January 21, 2008).

One study (Owens, 2006) investigated which congregations might be willing to seek public funding. Owens’ study showed that at least one-half of the congregations in the United States provided social welfare, and the majority of them collaborated with other organizations in doing so. In most of these cases, clergy leading the congregations believed them to be worthwhile, and they believed the staff of congregation-based programs to be more considerate and empathetic of the challenges of the poor than the staff of secular organizations.

Owens’ study revealed that a major fear that faith-based organizations had about receiving public funding was that government agencies may monitor and evaluate the congregations’ social welfare programs. Therefore, congregations were likely to seek the leadership of their senior pastor about public funding. At Southwood Baptist Church,
the ministers, deacons, and members have expressed strong disapproval in seeking public funding because of their fear of the possibility of government entanglement.

Participation in the Food Stamp Program declined during the 1990s, and the use of food pantries by low-income families grew (Bhattarai, Duffy, and Raymond, 2005). Bhattarai, Duffy, and Raymond’s study looked at factors affecting the use of both food pantries and food stamps by low-income families. They found the median length of food pantry use was two years. In many instances, the use of food pantries was an ongoing strategy to meet food needs and tended to supplement rather than replace food stamps.

Families with children and those who were severely food needy were most likely to participate in the use of food pantries (Bhattarai et al., 2005). Poorer, more food-insecure households were found to be more likely to use food pantries and food stamps. Bhattarai, Duffy, and Raymond found that participation in one food assistance program increased the likelihood of participating in the other. Food insecurity appeared to push motivated families to look for more than one possible source of food assistance (Bhattarai et al.). It was also found that the length of the food stamp application negatively effected food stamp participation, and a simplified questionnaire would potentially remedy this problem (Bhattarai et al.).

*Why and How Are Local Churches Involved?* Faith-based organizations have typically tried to follow mandates in the Bible to help others in need. In Matthew 25:34-46, Christ talked about helping the needy and stated that when you help others, you are helping him. Through the faith-based efforts of helping the needy, congregations have had the advantage of being able to help people spiritually as well as financially (Hula, Jackson-Elmoore, and Reese, 2007). Many congregations have been involved in a
variety of service actions that have benefited members as well as non-members of the congregations who were experiencing times of need (Jeavons, 2003). In the past, SBC has included its benevolent ministry in its yearly budget. The church also collected special offerings, and all of the donations received were used to help members or non-members who were in need of assistance.

According to I.M. Dau, suffering is a fact of life for many people today (Dau, 2007). Yet, Jesus Christ commanded His followers to share His love and grace with those who are suffering (Dau). Jesus told His followers to expect suffering (John 15:18-21; 16:2-4). Dau emphasized that suffering and disaster are unbiased and happen to everyone. He suggested that our choice determines whether the effects of suffering and disaster are positive or negative. According to Dau, following Jesus means being continually obedient to His commands, including showing a selfless, forgiving, and sacrificial love to others. Dau pointed out that the cross is a powerful reminder that God was prepared to suffer in order to redeem the world and that He expected His people to share in the same commitment. Dau suggested that by meeting the practical needs of those who suffer, people have clearly demonstrated the message of the cross. Dau also stated that as followers of Christ, we cannot be indifferent to suffering and tragedy. Many churches have endeavored to take action through their benevolent ministry in response to the needs of others.

Southwood Baptist Church has made attempts to meet the needs of suffering people seeking benevolent assistance, but several factors have caused their endeavors to be ineffective. Due to a shortage of staff members, the minister who was in charge of meeting with people in need and processing their requests has been unable to devote
adequate time to this particular responsibility. The church office has been located on a main street in the city of Tulsa, and people in need have walked into the office seeking help for food or other needs. As a result of the shortage of staff members, there have been times when there have been no ministers in the office, and the secretaries have had to handle benevolence. In a study by LeBlanc and Kelloway (2002) on workplace violence and aggression, it was discovered that when people are denied an object or a service by someone in a business, they are more likely to commit acts of violence, usually assault. The study also found that the risk of violence increased if the person was frustrated (LeBlanc and Kelloway). Many times, people who have sought assistance at SBC have been very frustrated because of their seemingly hopeless situation, and a denial of their request for assistance has made them even more frustrated. Their frustration has been very evident by the rudeness that they have displayed. They have often been very demanding in their requests for help, rather than politely asking for needed assistance. When rudeness has been displayed, it has caused the secretaries to feel threatened and less inclined to have a spirit of helpfulness. Porath and Erez (2007) found that when people have been treated rudely by someone, their attitude of helpfulness was greatly reduced. They felt less obligated to help someone who had been rude to them (Porath and Erez).

According to John Throop (2003), even though many needy people have been helped by churches, there are still those who have abused the helpfulness of churches and individuals and have misused benevolence assistance. Throop suggested that churches should have policies on giving money, especially to strangers whose circumstances are masked by unknown factors.
Researchers have agreed that hunger has been a problem in America for many years. Numerous attempts have been made to connect the hungry with available food supplies. Faith-based organizations have tried to aid in the plight of the poor and have, at times, accepted assistance from the government in the funding of their programs. Government assistance, however, also means government stipulations; therefore, some faith-based organizations have chosen to refuse government funding because they did not want to be regulated by government mandates. Local churches have continued their attempts to help the poor, even though there have always been people who have taken advantage of their generosity. This project was designed to research how other churches managed their benevolent ministry opportunities. The findings of this project were intended to lay the foundation for possibly creating an acceptable benevolent policy for Southwood Baptist Church.

Methods

Hypothesis

The main research question or purpose of this project was to determine if having a benevolent policy in place reduced the level of anxiety in church employees who handled benevolence. The anticipated result and the main focus of the study was to prove that employees who handled benevolence in churches which had no benevolent policy in place experienced greater anxiety than employees who handled benevolence in churches which had a benevolent policy in place. The hypothesis maintained that employees in churches which had no benevolent policy in place would score higher on the survey (indicating greater anxiety) than employees in churches which had a benevolent policy in place.
Design

The research design that was employed was a quasi-experimental method to measure the difference in the level of anxiety between two subjects. One subject (Group A) included employees in churches which had no benevolent policy in place. The other subject (Group B) included employees in churches which had a benevolent policy in place. The dependent variable was the employees’ scores on the survey. The independent variable, which was assigned and not manipulated in any way, was whether or not there was a benevolent policy in place. Every reasonable safeguard was used to inhibit the research participants from knowing the specific purpose of the study. Phone calls were made to selected churches in order to identify which employees were directly involved in handling benevolence. Those individuals were then asked if they would be willing to participate in a study about their church’s benevolent ministry. They were told that the study was being conducted as a college project, and the results possibly could be used to improve the benevolent ministry at Southwood Baptist Church. Nothing was mentioned about the precise purpose of the study. Those safety measures allowed the collected data to be more straight-forward and more trustworthy. They also aided in helping to control inconsistency or prejudice in the study by preventing, or at least minimizing, any preconceived thoughts by the participants.

Participants

The participants which were included in this study were a convenience sample of 32 churches in the Tulsa Metro Baptist Association. The only requirement that was integrated in the selection process was that the churches needed to be involved in
helping people who sought assistance. The size of the church was not a determining factor in the selection process.

*Instrumentation*

The dependent variable was measured by using a survey which was composed of 24 questions. The first four questions were demographic questions which helped determine factors such as: “Did the churches have a benevolent policy in place?”; “If so, who had created the policy?”; “Did employees feel the method their church used to handle benevolence was effective?”; and “How large was the church?” Those four questions were not included in the scoring of the survey. The remaining 20 questions involved feelings of employees who handled benevolence. The following were some of the questions about their feelings: “Do you feel safe when handling benevolence?”; “Do you feel pressured when the people seeking help are demanding?”; and “Do you feel vulnerable when handling benevolence?” The full questionnaire may be found in the Appendix.

A five level Likert scale was used to score the surveys, and each of the 20 questions was given a score from one through five. The score of three on a question meant a neutral answer. The highest possible score was 100, which indicated a very high level of anxiety. The lowest possible score was 20, which indicated a very low level of anxiety. The split-halves reliability method and the Cronbach’s method were used for the survey to ensure internal reliability. After the survey was prepared, and before it was distributed, coworkers, educators, and other outside people were asked to evaluate it. The evaluators offered beneficial thoughts and ideas which were employed to help guarantee face validity.
Procedure

After the survey was created and the face validity was assured, telephone calls were made to churches in the Tulsa Metro Baptist Association to verify whether or not they were involved in helping people who sought assistance. Surveys were then mailed to a convenience sample of 32 of those churches who had indicated that they were involved in helping people who sought assistance. A cover letter was included with the survey thanking the participants for their part in the study. The cover letter also revealed the confidentiality of the study and asked the person completing the survey to indicate if he/she would like to have a copy of the summary of the study. Two packets of tea were included with the survey to serve as an encouragement for the respondent to complete the survey. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included so the completed survey could be returned with no expense to the participant. When all of the surveys were returned, a split-halves reliability test and the Cronbach’s method were performed on the odd and even scores of the contributors to confirm the reliability of the survey. The surveys were then evaluated, and the final results of the study were determined.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis. A mean and a standard deviation were calculated for the dependent variable which was the employees’ scores on the survey. These statistics were determined for both groups (Group A, the employees of churches that had no benevolent policy in place and Group B, the employees of churches that had a benevolent policy in place). Then the data were entered into the STATISTICA program which enabled the development of a histogram, a whisker chart, and a mean plot. These made the evaluation of the two groups and the results of the study much clearer.
Inferential analysis. The alternate hypothesis stated that Group A, employees of churches that had no benevolent policy in place, would score significantly greater than Group B, employees of churches that had a benevolent policy in place, on the survey ($H_a: \mu_A > \mu_B$). The null hypothesis stated that Group A would score significantly less than or equal to Group B on the survey ($H_0: \mu_A \leq \mu_B$). The .05 level of significance was used, and the two sample independent $t$ test was utilized to assess the hypothesis.

Limitations

There were several factors in this study that would make it difficult for a person to generalize the conclusions. The survey was not professionally prepared, so the question arises as to the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. Even though the instrument had face value because it was analyzed by coworkers, educators, and other outside people, the accuracy of its validity could possibly be questioned. Perhaps the survey did not have construct validity in that the questions may not have had the same meaning to the participants as was originally intended. The instrument may not have had concurrent validity because there was no known similar instrument or study, so the survey could not be correlated with some recognized instrument. The survey did not have predictive validity because it did not predict some type of future behavior. Even though the split-halves reliability method and the Cronbach’s method were employed, the reliability may have been weak because participants may have not taken the time to answer the questions according to their true feelings. They may have hurried through the survey because of other pressing responsibilities. Also, the survey may have been completed by a person who was inexperienced in handling benevolence. Finally, there was no control over the samples. They were selected by calling churches who were
members of a particular association of churches to determine if they had a benevolent ministry. If they did have a benevolent ministry, then information was gathered as to who handled benevolence and if that person was willing to participate in the study.

Summary of Results

Descriptive Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using WebSTATISTICA (StatSoft, Inc. 1992-2007). The mean of Group A (no policy) was 51.21, the standard deviation was 10.62, and N was 24. The mean of Group B (policy) was 41.86, the standard deviation was 4.95, and N was 7. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

T-Tests: Grouping: Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Defined or None</th>
<th>Mean Policy</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Valid N Defined or None</th>
<th>Valid N Policy</th>
<th>Std.Dev. Defined or None</th>
<th>Std.Dev. Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
A histogram of total scores is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Histogram of Total Scores

To measure the internal stability of the survey, the split-halves reliability analysis was performed. The Pearson r ($r_{sh}$) equaled .85. (See Table 2.) The correlation proved to be significant; in fact, it was a very strong proof. Then, to ensure that the correlation for the whole test, $r_{tt}$ was correct, the Spearman Brown Prophesy Formula

$$r_{tt} = \frac{2 \cdot r_{sh}}{1 + r_{sh}}$$

was used as follows: $r_{tt} = 1.7/1.85 = .919$. This calculated the ultimate reliability of the survey. This analysis indicated that the survey was very reliable. Additionally, the Cronbach’s method was utilized to test the reliability of the survey. The result of that method showed that the alpha was .882 which was also high.
Table 2

Split-Halves Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlations (Turman, Beverly)</th>
<th>Marked correlations are significant at p &lt; .05000</th>
<th>N=31 (Casewise deletion of missing data)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odd Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A graph showing the split-halves reliability correlation is shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Split-Halves Correlation](image)

**Inferential Data Analysis**

The null hypothesis stated that Group A, employees who handled benevolence in churches that had no benevolent policy in place, would score significantly less or equal to Group B, employees who handled benevolence in churches that had a benevolent...
policy in place, on the survey. There were 29 degrees of freedom, and the critical value was 1.699. (See Table 1.) The actual $t$ value was 2.238, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The conclusion drawn from the result of the independent $t$ test was that Group A, employees who handled benevolence in churches that had no benevolent policy in place, experienced significantly greater anxiety than Group B, employees who handled benevolence in churches that had a benevolent policy in place. This difference can be seen in the box and whisker plot in Figure 3 and the mean plot in Figure 4.

![Box and Whisker Plot](image)

*Figure 3. Box and Whisker Plot*
Figure 4. Mean Plot

**Additional Statistical Analyses**

Three surface plots were created to illustrate additional visuals of the scoring.

Figure 5 demonstrates all scores. Drill downs were done to show the difference between Group A scores (see Figure 6) and Group B scores (see Figure 7).

Figure 5. 3D Sequential Graph of Total of All Scores
Data mining was also used to determine the importance plot for significant questions in the survey (see Figure 8). This data mining revealed that the questions that
showed the most significance in the survey were questions 20, 17, 6, and 18. (See Table 3.)

![Figure 8. Importance Plot for Significant Questions](image)

Table 3

**Best Predictors for Significant Dependent Variables**

| Best continuous predictors: | 20 17 6 18 24 19 8 9 11 5 16 7 21 12 10 13 16 15 22 23 |
| Best categorical predictors: |

To demonstrate how these significant dependent variables might appear in a graph, an ANOVA procedure was performed. The four most significant variables (20, 17, 6, and 18) were designated as the dependent variables, and the independent variable was the presence of or the absence of a policy. Even though statistically it was
not significant, the graph did reveal potential direction for all four of the variables. This information could be utilized as a hypothesis for further work in the subject (see Figure 9).

![Figure 9. Four Variables Between the Two Groups](image)

**Discussion and Conclusions**

**General Discussion and Conclusions**

The analysis of the data substantiated the hypothesis. The mean of Group A was 51.208, and the mean of Group B was 41.86. When the independent $t$ test was performed, it showed that there was a significant difference in the means of the two groups. The independent variable, which was whether or not there was a benevolent policy in place, was assigned and not manipulated in any way. The dependent variable was measured by using a survey which was composed of 24 questions. The first four questions were demographic questions and were not included in the scoring of the survey. The remaining 20 questions involved the emotional feelings of employees who handled benevolence.
The literature review confirmed that hunger is definitely a problem in America. It also verified that even though government agencies help supply aid for needy people, there are instances in which people still lack adequate funds to provide enough food for their families. In those cases, people often seek additional help at local churches. Some churches have benevolent policies in place that serve as guidelines in handling benevolence, while others do not have policies in place. The data indicated that employees who handled benevolence in churches with no benevolent policy in place experienced greater anxiety that employees who handled benevolence in churches which had a benevolent policy in place.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

One strength of the study was that respondents were church employees who were directly involved in handling benevolence. Phone calls were first made to selected churches in order to identify who those particular people were. Then the surveys were sent personally to those specific individuals.

Another strength of the study was the number of church employees who completed the survey. Employees who were responsible for handling benevolence in selected churches were called personally and asked if they would be willing to participate in a study about their benevolent ministry. Then the survey, two packets of tea, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope, were sent to those who said they would be willing to participate. Thirty-two surveys were mailed out, and 31 were returned.

A third strength of the study was the reliability of the survey. The split-halves reliability test indicated that there was .919 reliability, which is a very strong proof.
the reliability was tested using the Cronbach’s method, the result showed that the alpha was .882, which is also a very strong confirmation that the survey was reliable. Another strength of the study was that the survey had face value because it was analyzed and approved by coworkers, educators, and a minister before it was sent to the participants.

A weakness of the study was that since the survey was not professionally written, the question arises as to the validity. Even though it had face value, the accuracy of its validity could possibly be questioned. Perhaps the survey did not have construct validity in that the questions may not have had the same meaning to the participants as was originally intended. The instrument may not have had concurrent validity because there was no known similar instrument or study, so the survey could not be correlated with some recognized instrument. The survey did not have predictive validity because it did not predict some type of future behavior.

Another weakness of the study was that, even though the split-halves reliability test and the Cronbach’s method indicated that the survey instrument was strongly reliable, perhaps it was not reliable according to other standards. Perhaps the participants may have not taken the time to answer the questions according to their true feelings. They may have hurried through the survey because of other pressing responsibilities.

A third weakness of the study was that there was no control over the samples. They were selected by calling churches who were members of a particular association of churches to determine if they had a benevolent ministry. If they did have a benevolent ministry, then information was gathered as to who handled benevolence and if that person was willing to participate in the study.
Another weakness of the study was that the survey could have included questions that would have provided other beneficial information about anxiety levels of employees who handle benevolence. Some examples of additional information are: the location of the church, different spiritual gifts of the employees who handle benevolence, whether or not staff members are on the premises most of the time, the economic conditions of the surrounding neighborhoods, and the security of the church office. Questions about these topics could have provided additional information as to the reasons for employee anxiety.

Recommendations

The findings indicate that it would be an advantage to church employees who handle benevolence to have a benevolent policy in place. The study showed that there was a significantly greater anxiety level in employees who handled benevolence in churches that had no benevolent policy in place than in employees who handled benevolence in churches that had a benevolent policy in place.

A desire to have a workable benevolent policy at Southwood Baptist Church was expressed by the pastor who was in charge of the benevolent ministry at the church. The findings of the study were intended to lay the foundation for creating an acceptable benevolent policy for Southwood Baptist Church. A recommendation would be that having a working benevolent policy in place would relieve the amount of anxiety in employees who handle benevolence in any church.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research could be done to find out the specifics of benevolent policies that are in place in area local churches. Copies of those policies could be obtained for
review and examination. This would aid in the discernment of the most practical solution for creating a policy to meet the desire and need of Southwood Baptist Church for its benevolent ministry.

Another area that could benefit from further research is the effect that the location of a church has on its benevolent ministry. People who are in need may be more likely to seek help from churches that are located on busy streets than from churches that are located on streets that are not so busy. It would be worthy of note to see if the location of a church makes a difference in the number of people who choose to seek help at that particular church.

Further research could include the exploration of why certain questions seemed to be more significant than other questions on the survey. Certain emotions may dictate higher levels of anxiety. It would be interesting to find out which emotions correlate with high levels of anxiety and why.
References


Appendix A

Survey Cover Letter

May 12, 2008

«GreetingLine»

I really enjoyed visiting with you on the phone the other day. Thank you so much for agreeing to help me with my research by completing the enclosed survey about your church’s benevolent ministry. I want to ensure you, as I said on the phone, that the information you furnish in the survey will be kept in complete confidence. After I receive all of the completed surveys, I will compile the answers into a summary report. If you would like to receive a copy of my summary, please indicate that desire by filling out the requested information on the back page of the survey form.

I am enclosing a packet of tea for you to enjoy as you complete the survey. The form is not very lengthy, and you should be able to complete it by the time you finish your cup of tea.

I am also enclosing a postage-paid envelope for you to use to return the completed survey to me. After you complete the survey, simply put it in the envelope, seal it, and drop it in the mail box by Tuesday, May 20.

Again, thank you so much for helping me by being a part of my research. I really appreciate your help. I pray you will have a wonderful day!

Blessings,

Beverly Turman
Appendix B

Survey

1. Please place an “X” before the statement below that best describes your church:

   ___ Our church has a written benevolent policy in place, and all of our staff, support staff, and other church members who handle benevolence are familiar with the contents of it and know how to respond to people seeking assistance.

   ___ Our church has a written benevolent policy in place, but some of our staff, support staff, or other church members who handle benevolence are not familiar with the contents of it.

   ___ Our church does not have a written benevolent policy in place, but we have a well-defined procedure that we use when we have people seeking assistance, and all of our staff, support staff, and other church members who handle the cases are familiar with that procedure.

   ___ Our church has no defined procedure that we use when we have people seeking assistance, but our staff, support staff, and other church members who handle benevolence respond to each case according to the need and to our ability to help with that need.

2. Our average attendance in our Sunday Morning Worship Service is:

   ___ Less than 100

   ___ 100-200

   ___ 200-300

   ___ 300-400

   ___ Over 400

3. For the following question, please place an “X” by each answer that applies to your church.

   If your church has a written benevolent policy in place, who created it?

   ___ Staff members

   ___ Deacons or Elders

   ___ Church Members

   ___ An Outside Source

   ___ Other (Please specify) ________________________________________________
4. I feel that the method our church uses to handle its benevolent ministry is:

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

For the remainder of the survey, please place an “X” by the answer that best describes the way you think.

5. The procedure to be used in handling benevolence is clear to everyone in our office.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. I usually feel comfortable when handling benevolence.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. I usually feel safe when handling benevolence.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. I often feel threatened when handling benevolence.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
9. I often feel pressured when the people seeking assistance are demanding.
   ____ Strongly agree
   ____ Agree
   ____ Neither agree nor disagree
   ____ Disagree
   ____ Strongly disagree

10. I often feel offended when the people seeking assistance are rude.
    ____ Strongly agree
    ____ Agree
    ____ Neither agree nor disagree
    ____ Disagree
    ____ Strongly disagree

11. I think people seeking assistance who come to our office are usually respectful.
    ____ Strongly agree
    ____ Agree
    ____ Neither agree nor disagree
    ____ Disagree
    ____ Strongly disagree

12. I usually have a feeling of being in charge of the situation when handling benevolence.
    ____ Strongly agree
    ____ Agree
    ____ Neither agree nor disagree
    ____ Disagree
    ____ Strongly disagree

13. I often feel intimidated when handling benevolence.
    ____ Strongly agree
    ____ Agree
    ____ Neither agree nor disagree
    ____ Disagree
    ____ Strongly disagree
14. I often feel awkward when I have to tell a person seeking assistance that we cannot help him/her at this time.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

15. I feel that I am supported by the staff and the church members when I have to tell a person seeking assistance that we cannot help him/her at this time.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

16. I often feel guilty when I have to tell a person seeking assistance that we cannot help him/her at this time.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

17. I feel that we really are ministering to people who are in need of assistance rather than just providing a hand-out.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

18. I often feel anxious when handling benevolence.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree
19. I usually feel self-confident when handling benevolence.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

20. I have a positive feeling about the responsibility I have in handling benevolence.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

21. I usually feel secure when handling benevolence.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

22. I often feel fearful when handling benevolence.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree

23. I often feel vulnerable when handling benevolence.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Neither agree nor disagree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly disagree
24. I usually feel good about the way I can help minister to people’s needs through our benevolent ministry.

___ Strongly agree
___ Agree
___ Neither agree nor disagree
___ Disagree
___ Strongly disagree

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out this survey. Please return the completed survey to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. I assure you that the information you have provided will remain confidential. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of my findings, please fill out the following information.

Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the summary of your findings from this survey.

Name ____________________________________________

Street Address _____________________________________

City _________________ State ____________________

Zip _____________________
Appendix C

Survey Results
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