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**An Exploratory View of the New San Francisco Oakland Bay
Bridge: Public Private Partnerships and Communication
Strategies During Large Infrastructure Construction**

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An exploratory view

The new San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge

Public private partnerships and communication strategies during large infrastructure
construction

By Joel R Sayre

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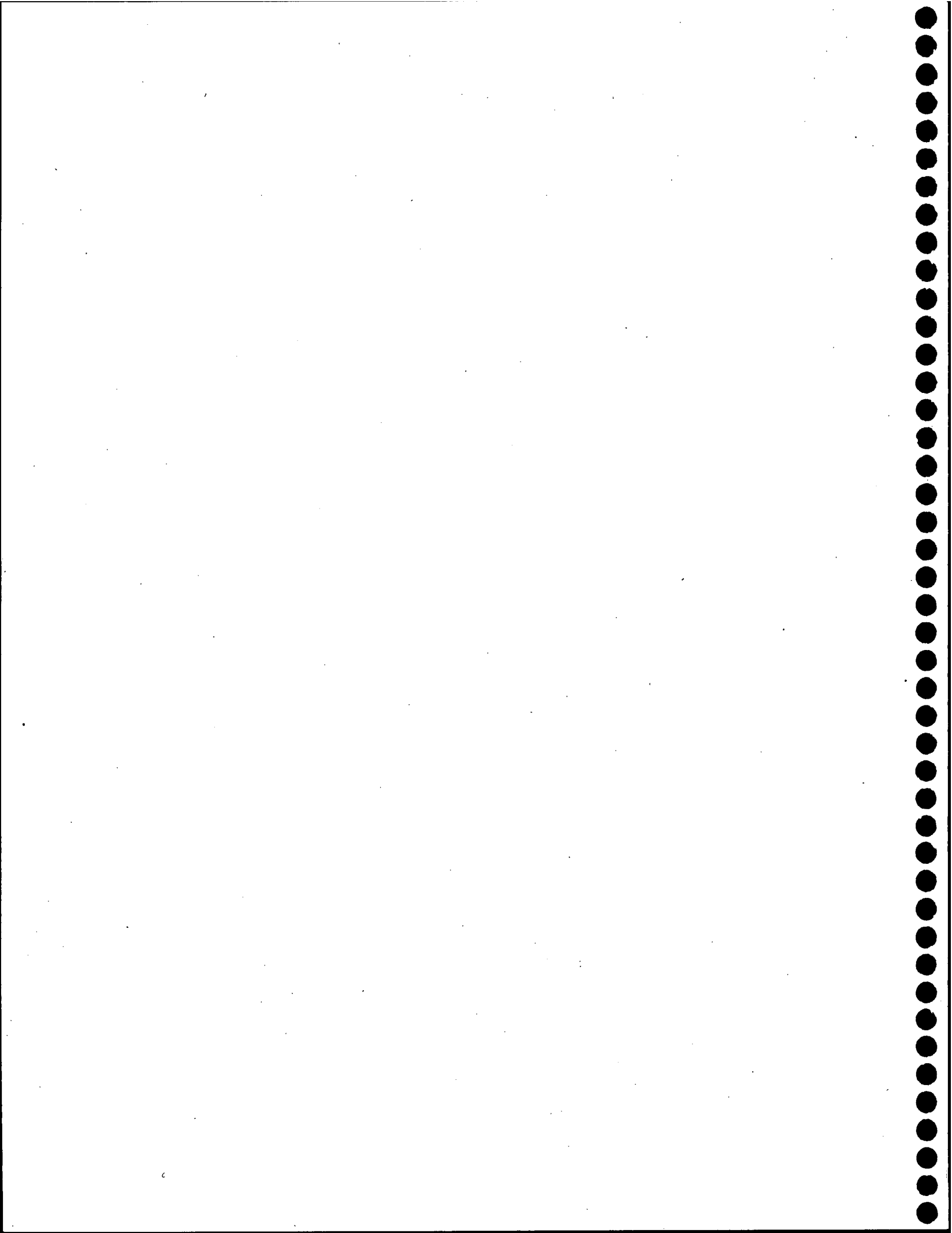


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Abstract

Governments have partnered with businesses to provide products and services throughout US history. Efforts of partnership during large infrastructure projects are common and take place as partnerships between business and government, with government utilizing the specialties that exist in the private sector, while business enjoys the stability and high profile work large construction contracts can offer. These infrastructure projects whether transportation or water resources, are something municipalities, states and the nation itself will work to manage together throughout the foreseeable future. Management and administration through these efforts, in the area of communication, can provide crucial information, when available, necessary and valuable in allowing public officials to have the most complete view of potential and/or ongoing work, to make the best decisions that will have lasting impacts on the region and nation. This information lay at the heart of the issue of balance between public and private sector relationships, is the whole view being

represented?

Public perception regarding construction of the new bay bridge was studied to explore the reception and retention of messages conveyed by the bay bridge public relations office, during the new bay bridge construction. With the possibility that information and education could help provide the most efficient and effective avenue to reach public goals during the decision making process, prior to construction, available information to the public during construction could also prove valuable and be a benefit for the organization(s) managing the construction, and in turn benefit the public as a whole. This research is an exploration of these relationships in order to present recommendations that might lead to a more thorough public understanding of the new bay bridge project, potentially resulting in a safer product in the end.

Introduction

In Northern California's Bay Area, one of the United States largest public works projects is currently underway. The construction work consists of, the retro-fit and replacement of an 8.25 mile stretch of bridge structure across the Bay from San Francisco to Oakland. There has been media attention of the new bay bridge in the past and that attention continues to some degree today in (2008). Elected official and media inquiry and eventual development of legislation (AB 144, 2004) aimed at financing cost overruns and increasing oversight and accountability, had been focused toward lessening increases in cost, ending questions of construction design, methods and techniques used, and reducing time delays. (AB 144) Because of numerous problems since construction began, publicized through media scrutiny after workers left the job unsatisfied with their work, and with the potential for negative media attention to exist for the remainder of the work; sample groups tested, as well as those in potential future sample groups, could be biased in regard to this project.

This research works to measure the public's understanding of information and

measure that potential understanding against the delivery of messages by the bridge project's privately functioning "public affairs" office. By showing connections and areas for improved communication, this work can possibly lead to a more favorable image of the public agencies responsible for the project overall, as well as a better infrastructure product that could serve the region and public for years to come. This research was aimed at exploring the public - private relationship(s) involved in the new bridge's construction, as well as impacts communication management might have on outcome and delivery of project components, through public perception and eventual input on decisions, which could be potentially shaped by private public affairs associates. (Irwin, Plummer)

Background

As the region suffered a major earthquake in October of 1989, a section of one of the area's most heavily traveled bridge's failed, causing a closure for one month for repairs before the bridge could be reopened to traffic. During this month, businesses along with residents suffered through having to do without a major transportation infrastructure artery. This earthquake is what initiated the process, that eventually led to a decision to build an entirely new east span (Oakland to Yerba Buena Island) and to, retrofit the west span (Yerba Buena Island to San Francisco). This study will limit its research to the period of time that includes the 1989 earthquake to the present year 2008.

Before launching into a review of current status and what is proposed for the future, a brief history of the project is necessary in order to understand some of the complexities and connections the regions leaders work to understand, when making decisions regarding such a large and important piece of infrastructure.

After the 1989 earthquake the first publicly made proposal was for a retrofit of the existing bridge that is currently in use today, as of (2008). The proposal included a \$200 million retro fit of the foundations and of the super structure of the bridge, somewhat similar as to what was completed for the west span's retrofit, finished in 2004 at a cost of just over \$300 million. (Caltrans) This initial period (post earthquake 1989) is where some of the most lasting and important decisions were made regarding the future of this section of the region's transportations infrastructure (bay bridge). Quickly after the initial study to retrofit the entire 8.25 miles of Bay Bridge was completed, a decision was made to circumvent the established decision making channels and involve an Engineering and Design Advisory Panel.

Private consultants, working as public advisors on the EDAP panel, were now responsible for deciding what would be built. There were members of the EDAP panel who were employed by firms, who were submitting designs for the new bridge. This is the author's first view of potential areas for conflicts of interest, resulting from public private relationships and how these relationships were communicated publicly. (MTC

2008) The first design, after the cheapest plan to retrofit the entire structure was rejected, included a concrete viaduct side-by-side structure that Caltrans had experience building in its' history. Caltrans estimated the cost would be just over \$1 billion dollars and that it would take approximately three years to accomplish construction of the project to replace the east span. (The same amount of time it took to build the first bay bridge completed in 1936). Through the design and review process administered by EDAP under MTC, a decision was made to go forth into a "world wide" design contest to choose a "signature span" (aesthetic element beyond functional bridge), in addition to, a concrete "skyway" section. (MTC, Caltrans, Denhardt)

A slower, more thorough and comprehensive public education outreach effort during this time, could have potentially helped the region decide on a structure that would match the regions wishes, budget and timeline together, instead of what the EDA panel considered "best". This balance and potential for imbalance between public-private relationships and the information these pairings decide to make public, results in the information available for decision making by public officials and the comments necessary for the public who is involved in the process; through public involvement hearings and testimony in Environmental Impact Studies and design selection decisions. By getting all available information out to as many potential stakeholders as possible, as soon as possible, administrators can choose to allow for the best decision being made. With so many potentially lucrative and high profile contracts available, ensuring the selection process is free from bias, can result in the

most cost and time effective project delivery. By excluding some information and promoting other information, perception and opinion can be shaped alternatively. And if on the other hand private input on final decision-making is too strong, projects can potentially be more expensive, be less safe and take longer to complete than would normally be the case in a more competitive construction market where more than one bidder is present and there is more rigorous public involvement. Competition in construction is known to result in lower bids from contractors and better quality work. (Caltrans, MTC, Irwin)

Construction of the replacement for the eastern section of the Bay Bridge began in 2002. The design included a pre-cast section, post tension structure design, a design which Caltrans had little experience with building or inspecting. While construction of this section was underway, bids had not yet been received for the new aesthetic element chosen by the EDAP panel, the self anchored suspension span. When local and regional officials learned their construction estimates were double expectations and that there was just a single contractor to bid on the work, they began to reconsider their options. Had the best design been chosen? With private firms responsible for potentially selecting their own firms' design, there is possibility that the best design was not chosen and that there was favoritism. The single tower self anchored suspension that was chosen by EDAP, would represent a unique structure to the world, and also to those who would be tasked with designing and building it. There are other structures submitted to EDAP that are aesthetically unique and pleasing to many, while not being nearly as expensive or difficult to design and

build, and also designs that public and private entities had more experience with, such as a cable stayed design popular around the world.

In 2004, the Governor of California stopped the signature span from further consideration and called for the reinstatement of the original side by side concrete viaduct plan, after Caltrans established that significant cost overruns were expected and that there would be significant design challenges upcoming

Design selection had gone full circle in just over a decade, as the design would now revert to what Caltrans originally considered the best choice, side-by-side viaducts. (Caltrans) Prior funding allocated for the reconstruction of the Bay Bridge would now, not be adequate even for that; a new effort was undertaken in order to establish funding for the continuing of the project, and also to establish a regional oversight authority responsible for managing and oversight of the project. By 2004, the initial budget of \$1.1 billion had reached an alarming \$ 3.22 billion. (Caltrans)

Because of cost overruns associated with the Bay Bridge, a decision was made by legislators to enact legislation that would cover further potential cost overruns. Funding increases would be funded through raising Bay Bridge toll fees from \$1 to the current \$4, with an additional \$1 (total of \$5 AB144) should further cost increases be incurred. (AB 144)

The new legislation (2005), AB 144, would require the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA) and Caltrans to establish a Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee, consisting of the Executive Director of BATA, the Director of Caltrans and the

Executive Director of the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The Program Oversight Committee would review project status, program costs and schedules, resolve project issues, change orders, evaluate project changes, develop and update cost estimates, risk assessments and cash-flow requirements. The committee also will review project staffing levels and consultant and contractor services, review contract bid specifications and documents, review and approve all significant change orders and claims and prepare project reports.

The Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee was established through AB 144 to create a project management team to assist the committee in performing its duties and to contract, through BATA, with one or more consulting firms to provide the technical and day-to-day oversight functions of the committee.

Assembly Bill 144 (Hancock) would work to "require the Program Oversight Committee to report quarterly, within 45 days, to the Legislature and the CTC in detail on the toll bridge seismic retrofit program, including program progress, construction costs and expenditures and adherence to budgets, project milestones, etc. The bill will require Caltrans to report monthly to the committee on the construction status, actual expenditures and forecasted costs and schedules of the retrofit program and the Benecia-Martinez Bridge project. Identify the sources and amounts of the additional funds needed to fund the new \$3.6 billion program cost overruns. There were very clear and identified responsibilities the new toll bridge oversight committee (TBPOC) was expected to manage AB144 lists them for review and comparison."

A. Not less than \$2.15 billion of funds were to be derived from an additional \$1 toll on state-owned Bay Area toll bridges that cannot become effective until January 1, 2007.

B. Not less than \$820 million was to be made available through the consolidation of all toll revenues and the refinancing of existing bonds under BATA.

C. \$300 million would be necessary to fund the cost of demolition of the existing east span of the Bay Bridge, from state funding sources that support the state highway operations and protection program, project savings, or the federal highway bridge replacement and the rehabilitation program.

D. \$330 million would be accessed from other state resources, as follows:

E. \$130 million to be taken from accumulated budget savings by Caltrans from better efficiency, operational savings or lower costs.

3. \$125 million would be administered from gasoline sales tax spillover revenues in 2006-07, if available, otherwise from potential additional department savings as provided.

4. \$75 million would need to be taken from the Motor Vehicle Account fund reserve.

5. Provide that if the new cost overruns are less than \$3.6 billion, then the savings shall be shared between the state and toll payers (through BATA) in the proportion as their proportional contribution to funding the cost overruns. If the cost overruns exceed Caltrans' \$3.6 billion estimate, then BATA will provide the additional financial

resources under the toll and other powers granted to it by the bill. The state will not be responsible for any additional cost overruns.

6. Authorize BATA to increase the toll bridge seismic retrofit surcharge to complete the retrofit program and meet its obligations under the act, but not before January 1, 2007.

It also authorizes the consolidation of all toll revenues under BATA's administration and management and authorizes BATA to refinance the current program debt that is secured by toll revenues. Assembly Bill 144 (AB 144) requires Caltrans and the infrastructure bank to payout existing debt obligations as part of the consolidation upon BATA's request.

7. Reaffirm and reference that the funds for the retrofit program for the replacement of the east span of the Bay Bridge shall only be used for the self-anchored suspension (SAS) design in current law.

8. Transfer responsibility for funding the maintenance costs of the Bay Area toll bridges from the state (Caltrans) to BATA and toll revenues, commencing with the completion of the seismic retrofit or replacement work on individual bridges.

9. Authorize Caltrans to include incentives and/or disincentives in bid documents to maximize the number of retrofit program bidders, and to encourage the timely completion of contracts.

10. Require the CTC, by December 1, 2005, to adopt a schedule for the payment of The remaining state financial contributions to the retrofit program, beginning in 2005-06, that insures that those contributions provide a timely balance between state

resources and the toll revenue contribution. State contingency funding provided under AB 1171 would be used commencing in 2008-09 as provided in the adopted Fund Estimate for the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

11. Require the department to establish a comprehensive risk management plans to identify and quantify project risks, implement and track risk response activities, and monitor and control risks throughout the duration of the retrofit program.

12. Continue the provisions established for the program under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) until the toll bridge seismic retrofit and replacement projects are complete.

13. Continue the use of the current \$1 state seismic retrofit toll surcharge for the repayment of existing bonds and debt obligations until those bonds have been paid back. Subsequently, those revenues can be used toward the new program bonds and financing authorized under the bill and its consolidation and refinancing provisions.

14. Provide that the bill's provisions are severable, so that if any individual provision is held invalid, and that invalidity does not affect the validity of the other provisions.

Much of the legislation provided above can explain the efforts maintained by the program oversight committee.

(AB144, Hancock)

According to the Caltrans bay bridge project specific website, and documents

uncovered through it, as of October 2008, the self anchored suspension faces a new one year delay due to "difficulties with the design" as well as significant cost increases due to material and time. The YBI contract has not yet been designed, although it is far along in construction, and is also expecting cost overruns. The west approach contract is under construction and on schedule and budget. The west span retro fit and skyway replacement contracts have been completed. This research will work to show that by thoroughly involving the public and elected officials in decision making as soon in the process as possible, the potential result can be that the most overall effective, responsive and efficient project is delivered.

(Caltrans)

Literature Review

Extensive literature is available covering public private partnerships and a comprehensive study across campaign and transportation infrastructure communications management disciplines was referenced as a part of this exploratory research study. The exploration and study of public-private relationships has been a focus of administrators since administrations' inception it could be argued. At least, a constant theme since the late 19th century, [Old Public Administration] worked openly and actively to "run" the constitution. "It is getting harder to run a constitution than to frame one" (Woodrow Wilson 1887)

"Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices."

(Wilson 1887)

Wilson thought that looking at the then, very successful and expanding business model, would best help government administrators with efficiency in government. As was the case then, a rapidly expanding country and economy was in need of private business to help manage as well as spur further expansion geographically and economically. "Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices."

(Wilson 1887) Understanding was clear that politics should not be allowed to influence implementation entirely, in late 19th and early 20th century but there were far less examples and experience to go by than there are now. Wilson thoughtfully recognized the value in the business systems private organizations has established, realized those models could be adapted and employed in the administrative models of government. He also had a sense that politics should not manage administration, however gave no clear paths to establishing that goal of balance.

"Governments shouldn't be run like a business; it should be run like a democracy. Across the country and around the world, both elected and appointed public servants are acting on this principal and expressing renewed commitment to

such ideals as the public interest, the governance process, and expanding democratic citizenship. As a result, they are learning new skills in policy development and implementation, recognizing and accepting the challenges they face, and treating their fellow public servants and citizens with renewed dignity and respect.”

(Denhardt, Denhardt 2001)

It might have been too early in history for Wilson to be able to foresee the changes and growth that have taken place in the realm of public private relationship and the messages they convey. The process of business administration in some cases works directly to be as efficient as possible, which is sometimes not the most democratic process. Democracy is not the cheapest, fastest or, at times most efficient in the short term, however, when looking at the long-term impacts of short-sighted vision focused mainly on profit and image, efficiency and effectiveness of democracy, can challenge the business model. By democratically interacting with all stakeholders and constituents it can be possible to grasp a more complete view and vision of the path to reaching a goal most effectively. While often the private sector is relied on to provide the specialized techniques necessary for a project as large as a bridge, often, the public has an even more broad assortment of professionals ready and willing to provide input, should they be involved. The chances that a project as large and long term as a bridge represent, could have been participated in at levels from elementary school, through the engineering and architectural professionals the region possesses. (Irwin)

"In the process public servants are reconnecting with citizens. Administrators are realizing that they have much to gain by "listening" to the public rather than "telling," and "serving" rather than "steering"." In Denhardt and Denhardt's recent work, clear connections are made between the public private relationship and how projects should be completed in the New Public Administration, utilizing a democratically invested public. If there are more activities focused on informing the public of the entire view, there is possibility for more comprehensive decision making due to the potentially increased number of actively informed stakeholders. This strategy it has been argued, is at the heart of a properly functioning Democracy. (Denhardt, 2001)

"To serve, rather than steer. An increasingly important role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests, rather than to attempt to control or steer society in new directions." (Denhardt)

By steering the authors mention the relationship that has often been the case in public private partnerships, where the partnership actively works to influence perception and opinion in order to benefit acting parties, not public interest. By hiding, or not sharing information during crucial periods such as choosing designs, the public is not served as it could be. In the interest of public service administrators could actively work to share all available information, so that more of the public will have an opportunity to understand, comment and possibly act. (Plummer)

The authors argue it is this sharing of information that is at the heart of our

successful democracy. By actively working to create messages aimed at shaping public opinion positively, project management does the entire project and public a potential disservice by not allowing the whole view to become public through so far effective public affairs media campaigns. Through comparison to other state communication projects involving infrastructure it was understood that the bay bridge communication team has more resources and has been more effective, in the opinion of the public agencies involved in the management of the project (Caltrans, MTC/BATA, and CTC).

These three agencies have all recognized the bay bridge public affairs efforts as some of the most effective communications management efforts the state and regional agencies have at their disposal. (MTC excellence in transportation award, Caltrans tranny award, AASHTO award)

(Strategic Communications Management)

"An effective practitioner understands a problem and manages it to its successful conclusion. How do we manage problems? Sometimes by making them go away." (Ries and Ries)

Ries and Ries also note some of the differences between public relations (or publicity) and advertising: Advertising uses a big bang while PR uses a slow buildup; advertising likes old names, PR likes new names. The writers also present both an opinion (that public relations is more creative than advertising) and a fact (that public

relations is more credible)." (Ronald D Smith) By utilizing a campaign strategy of steady public information campaigns centered around success of the new bay bridge project construction, instead of failures, an effort was successful at misplacing information regarding that might have been deemed unsuccessful or not positive during construction. By working towards structuring public information in a positive fashion, administrators lose the opportunity for real educated public and elected official feedback, opinion, and oversight, of a project costing tax payers multiple billions of dollars during monumentally difficult economic times; with large transportation safety implications resulting from construction oversight on the project. (Fishman, Stephen)

Recent reports recovered from Environmental Protection Agency documents, show there has been an active campaign by bay bridge officials to share information regarding environmental issues, that best suits the perception and position of the agencies responsible for delivering the projects, not the whole view or truth. "We are extremely concerned that the DEIS lacks a specific analysis of the proposed project's direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to the aquatic environment from hazardous materials which could be re-suspended by dredging and disposal. Equally disconcerting is the lack of information on the basic chemistry and toxicity potential hazardous materials, which could be re-suspended by dredging. (EPA)

Without specific information, we must infer that dredging could increase organics and/or metals in the water column, which, in turn, could result in adverse

environmental impacts. It would be helpful for the public to understand the nature of the sediments and the anticipated environmental effects of dredging and disposing of these materials prior to issuing the FEIS Sediment testing" (EPA). This is one area made public, that has still not been fully understood or qualified as resolved due to lack of publicity and knowledge. Public documents and public perception do not match private communication to the public and in this research, it has been found, that through improved communication, this problem could be solved. There are potentially other areas such as post tension cables holding the skyway together, where it has been suggested there has been a lack of full disclosure as to the quality of construction and inspection of these cables. Survey results show these areas are where the public might have the least amount of information, from which to build educated opinion upon. New Public Service, as discussed by Denhardt and Denhardt, aims to uncover these types of public private relationships by providing strategies grounded in the ideals of public interest and democracy that best meet the needs of society, while also providing the most effective and efficient delivery of products. (Denhardt)

"The main deficiency, as later IG reports detailed, was that Bechtel and Parsons—as "preliminary designer," "design coordinator," "construction coordinator," and "contract administrator"—were often in charge of checking their own work." In many public private partnership influences from private firms can become driving

factors behind activities within projects. Integrity and honesty are of paramount importance in such situations as there will be likely numerous possibilities to make the wrong choice due to influence from within the organizational structure of private firms. Often there are "chains of command" within private agencies whereby one firm be a smaller or larger portion of a contract, or might hire out for specialists in other areas. It is these public private relationships on large infrastructure projects, which has been the focus of this explorative study. (Gelinas)

In order to gain a full understanding of communication strategies, it was necessary to study some recent developments of usage. Political campaign communicators also stood out as innovators in efficiency and responsiveness regarding communication, so the choice was made to study political campaign efforts. Choosing an effective message and staying on that message was found in literature to be a most effective practice and strategy. By choosing a message, such as "to improve safety" an organization can focus on repeating that message to ensure it is received, and additionally, can reflect any negativity, such as regarding time or cost, back to the need for safety in order to stay or move toward a positively viewed position. Repeating the message over and over and not changing is crucial to success. This strategy was utilized on the light-rail initiative in Denver that called for a tax increase to fund 119 miles of new light-rail for the metro region. The strategy was to focus on alternatives to the car, in every question answered or literature piece produced, the message was transportation alternatives for an increasing population. The bay bridge strategy is to always emphasize seismic safety and reflect all

questions or scrutiny to the issue of safety. If there were cost overruns or time delays, safety would be a message repeated. (Lakoff)

Additionally, related large infrastructure projects involving public private partnerships and communications strategies were explored, Boston's big dig, and Denver's light-rail project were chosen as they were both multi billion dollar projects involving many of the same contractors and communication strategies. By applying concepts and strategies employed by similar private -public organizational infrastructure construction efforts through communications methods, a recommendation could be possible to further the efficiency and responsiveness with which information is relayed on the new bay bridge project and subsequent projects of the scope in the future.

(Fastracks)

Research Methodology

A purposive convenience sample of 107 participants was used for the research analysis. These 5 interview sessions included bay bridge users that had no connections to the bay bridge construction project, other than being bay bridge users of varying amounts. A majority considered themselves to be at least somewhat informed on the bay bridge. Part of what was uncovered during this research is that a working definition of "informed citizen" would be useful for further research and study. Related to informed citizen would be a recommendation to achieve a specific

percentage of "informed citizens" before moving forward with projects as large and complex as transportation infrastructure, the ethic could be called, no citizen left behind.

Research question:

Does public understanding match private firms' delivery of communication messages involving the construction of the new bay bridge?

This question was chosen to potentially help explore and explain some efforts chosen by administrators involved in the new bay bridge, as well as recommending strategies for more efficient and effective product delivery involving large transportation infrastructure projects. By exploring public understanding of private firms delivery of public messages, insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of this strategy as an administrative tool could be studied. Basic understanding could possibly include information as the benefits and downfalls of such arrangements involving large transportations infrastructure projects.

Research sub-questions:

Research sub-questions were established to try to gain insight into the effectiveness of communication strategies employed by the bay bridge, as well as to gauge that effectiveness against what was desired regarding massaging. Questions were asked in groups of approximately 20 persons, in five separate meetings. A total of 107 bay bridge users participated in this explorative research study of the communications strategy and effectiveness of public private partnerships involving the new bay bridge communications. Questions were administered in a group format by show of hands, responding to each question individually.

Sub-questions;

- 1) Is the new bridge on time?

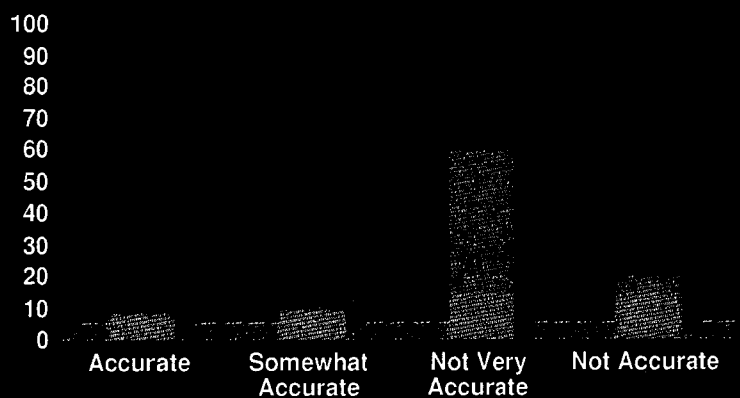
- 2) Have there been few problems with construction of the new bay bridge?
- 3) Is the bay bridge a wise investment in infrastructure?
- 4) Is the new bay bridge construction on time?
- 5) Has the new bay bridge met regional environmental and worker safety regulations?

Results and findings

The first question asked, was meant to reveal the surveyed public perceptions regarding the new bay bridge schedule. Did those surveyed feel it was on time? Was the effort by communications management successful in framing the importance of safety, over time? The survey results showed what was again a surprising amount of perception of the public, despite information being directed at shaping information to

be understood in different ways than schedule.

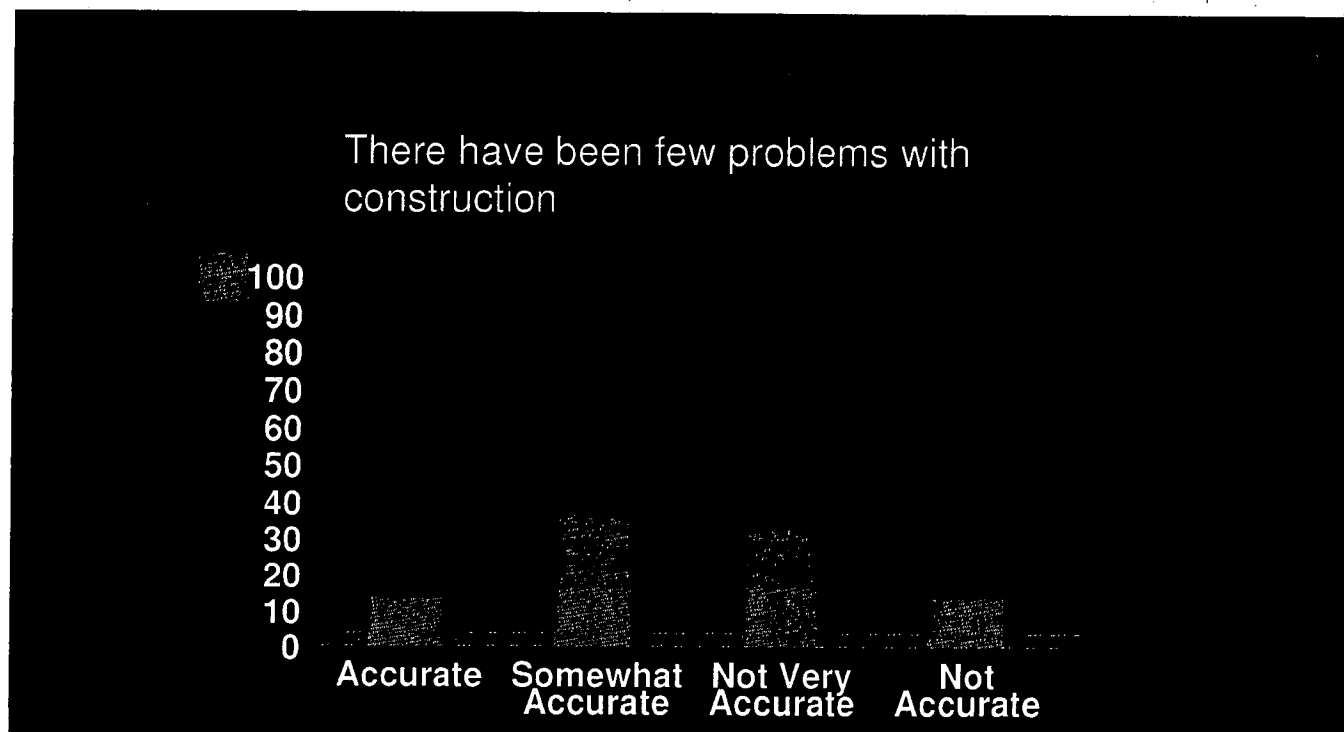
Construction of the new Bay Bridges on time



This question revealed the first of many surprises during this research. With approximately 60%, respondents feeling the construction of the new bay bridge was not "on time", it can be inferred that respondents were getting information from sources other than the bay bridge communications management effort. For this research, a time or schedule was not given to respondents. It can be inferred that media scrutiny of the project has been what has led to the relatively high response rate of over 60 percent when asked this question. A news media reporter was

recently quoted as referring to the new bay bridge as a "bloated, belated, boondoggle". (Tom Vacar) Reports such as this will certainly sway public opinion and research uncovering unbiased opinions on the bay bridge project would be difficult in further study and research involving measurement of findings.

The second question asked also aimed at uncovering basic opinions on construction status that might be deemed important on any construction project. The question worked to explore public opinions of problems associated with the new bay bridge project.



These results included did not allow for a very clear generalization as to where participants in the study most strongly placed their feelings on potential problems with construction. When asked if there were few problems with construction, approximately half felt that was not an accurate statement. Through notes taken during discussion, it was understood that by not feeling the statement was accurate, a majority of respondents felt they were not being told the whole truth regarding potential problems with construction. Through research it was uncovered that no mention of the FBI investigation into construction defects, worker safety, suspension of state and federal environmental regulation, time delay, cost, or other potentially negative issues regarding bay bridge construction was mentioned on the project specific bay bridge construction website anywhere. (baybridgeinfo.org)

The third question was more effective at uncovering a basic and broad assumption and understanding held by the public regarding budget. As polls show in many areas and fields of study, the economy is generally held as what most respondents feel is, of the most importance to them. It is because of this importance placed on economy it could be inferred that, this group surveyed, felt so strongly and held similar opinions regarding the bridge being over its projected budget. (FOX news)

When respondents were asked if the new bay bridge project was on budget, they

responded in large majority, with the opinion that the new bay bridge was not on budget and that it was over budget. During further discussion a similar majority felt that the project was to a large degree over budget. Over 60 percent of those surveyed for this study felt that the when hearing the statement the bay bridge is on budget, their response was that the statement was not very accurate. Through public documents records obtained through research as a part of this project we can find that the project originated with a projection for a \$200 million retrofit of the current structure citizens are using in 2008, into an approximately \$5,800 million dollar project in the approximately 20 years since retrofit and replacement of the current bridge was considered, a rather large percentage increase.

Question number four worked to uncover equally important public opinions relating to the construction of the new bay bridge. Was the new bay bridge a wise investment in infrastructure? Of those surveyed there was an almost equal opinion in all possible answer categories from accurate to not very accurate as to the validity of the statement, the bay bridge is a wise investment in infrastructure. The largest group to answer felt the statement was not very accurate, with the second largest percentage of the group surveyed responding that the infrastructure project was, somewhat accurate when described as being a wise investment. Overall, generalized assumptions were difficult to reach regarding this area of information.

Question number five was designed to show range of public understanding of environmental and worker safety regulations, deemed so important by voters and elected officials in the bay area. By asking if regional environmental and worker safety regulations are being followed on the bay bridge projects, the research will work to show the connection between public policy, private policy and the messages delivered to the public. An understanding of environmental law or occupational safety law was not necessary, the research effort wanted to gain a sense for the depth of understanding by the public regarding projects the size of transportation infrastructure.

Is this area, those surveyed gave what was likely the most useful data. When asked if the bay bridge projects have met all regional environmental and worker safety regulations respondents in large majority showed that they felt the project had met regional standards. With this question, it could be inferred that respondents were not prepared, or informed enough, to make a proper assessment of this question of environmental and worker safety on the new bay bridge project due to geographical limitations of understanding and connection during construction.

Recommendations and limitations of explorative study

The small sample of the survey group led to difficulties with generalizations during the explorative study. The group-administered fashion in which the discussion and questions sessions were conducted was also subject to distortion by influence during the group process between group members. In further research, questions could be more appropriately designed to uncover the most information possible. A more thorough and detailed research analysis of public and private bay bridge project materials in future study would make for a much more complete and whole view of the bay bridge construction project.

By comparing project literature with responses that were assembled from the purposive convenience sample, it could be inferred that a more robust and balanced information and education feature regarding large transportation infrastructure projects, specifically the new bay bridge projects, could benefit the project and region as far as the final product it might result in. Comparing problems that have resulted in related infrastructure construction projects shows that the bay bridge project, and projects to be undertaken of this size in the future, could benefit from a more open and through communication strategy. By assigning goals as far as numbers of people to inform, and establishing a definition for inform, projects will be better understood in the future by the public, which will result in a balanced democratic process, and potentially better designed, more appropriate, and better built product.



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The new Bay Bridge

Public Private Partnerships: Communicating the Whole View



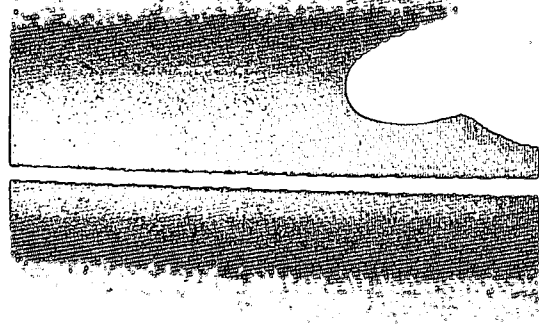
overview

Effectiveness and role of communications
before and during construction

Research question

Methods, results; limitations

Discussion and conclusion




Key communication messages
Bay Bridge public information office

Wise investment
Project schedule delivery
Budget
Construction problems
Environmental and worker safety

Research Question

Does public understanding match
private firms' delivery of
communication messages involving
the construction of the new Bay
Bridge?






Research Sub-Questions

Is the new Bay Bridge on time?
Have there been few problems with construction
of the new Bay Bridge?
Is the new Bay Bridge a wise investment in
infrastructure?
Is the new Bay Bridge construction on budget?
Has the new Bay Bridge met regional
environmental and worker safety regulations?



Methods




Sample:

Purposive convenience sample of 107 Bay Bridge users

Data Sources:

Group interviews with show of hands in response to questions
Notes on group discussions
State administered project information records

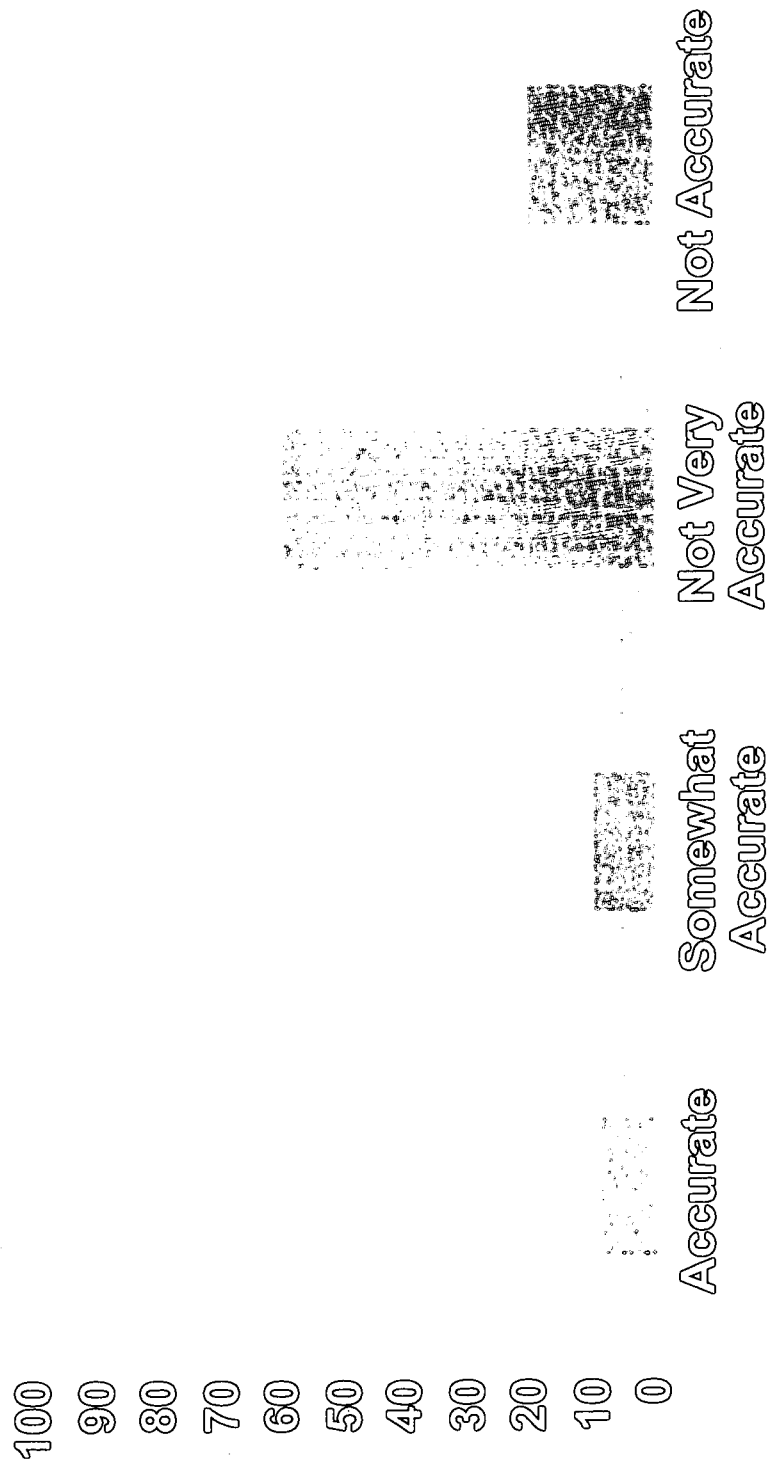


Analysis:

Matching publicly stated goals with outcomes where possible-
relating to cost, schedule and design criteria



Construction of the new Bay Bridge is on time



There have been few problems with construction

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Accurate

Somewhat
Accurate

Not Very
Accurate

Not
Accurate



The new Bay Bridge is a wise investment in infrastructure

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Accurate
Somewhat Accurate
Not Very Accurate
Not Accurate



Construction of the new Bay Bridge is on budget

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Accurate

Somewhat
Accurate

Not very
Accurate

Not
Accurate



The new Bay Bridge has met all regional
environmental and worker safety regulations

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Accurate

Somewhat
Accurate

Not Very
Accurate

Not Accurate

Limitations and potential areas for
expansion of research

Small convenience sample limits
generalizability

Sample assessment technique may have
led to distorted results