EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ARMENIA:
GLOBAL VIEW ON LOCAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Public relations has been expanding internationally during the last few decades. This has generated interest for public relations research in different parts of the world. The scholars urge the community to continue investigating the public relations practice globally.

The proposed exploratory study of public relations in Armenia has described and explained the patterns and factors of public relations in the country as practiced in organizations. It was an attempt to investigate public relations practice in Armenia in lines with the socio-cultural and environmental models and theories employed for studying global public relations. The overarching purpose of the study was to understand the specifics that define public relations in Armenia from the perspective of the practitioners. The study applied qualitative and quantitative research methods to look into the function, value and role of public relations in organizations operating in Armenia. The accumulated data and derived knowledge shall identify the avenues of growth and contribute to empowering the best practices of the profession. Secondly, the study shall be a modest contribution to the scholarship and literature pertaining to global public relations.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Public relations as a management and leadership function within an organization, as defined in Western scholarship, started its inception and diffusion process in Armenia in the mid 1990’s. Since the independence in 1991, the country has been going through complex transition period. Along with the restructuring of the government system into democratic, the transition was accompanied by the introduction of free market relations, new communication channels and technologies as well as transformed political and organizational systems. Transition to democratic system created favorable conditions for reconsidering public relations as a part of organizational culture. However, the balance between the idea of whether public relations discipline supports democracy or whether it is defined by democracy makes room for speculation. Though many authors propose that democracy and free market economy are preconditions for emergence and functioning of public relations (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier 2002; Sriramesh & Verciç 2009), others argue that this approach is somewhat ethnocentric, and public relations is practiced internationally irrespective of the specifics of political and economic systems in a country (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). To balance the specifics of emerging public relations practice in a country and dominance of Western models, some other scholars suggest that international public relations has common characteristics among countries. Yet each country demonstrates specific factors influencing practice (Wakefield, 1996). The latter
emphasize the cultural aspect of public relations and the importance of creating more encompassing theories that could involve all the practices under collaborative umbrella (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). The current study accepts the provision that democracy and free market economy can influence the quality or communicative discourse of public relations, however, these are not inherent to the existence of the profession.

While Dozier (1990) viewed public relations (PR) research through the lens of diffusion of innovation, likewise public relations in Armenia as a whole can be viewed in the same lines. Within the last two decades, PR as a discipline and a profession in Armenia has reached a level of being adopted by early majority. Organizations, private, public or governmental gradually started applying PR as a component of their operations by establishing PR departments or by hiring PR professionals. At this point the public debate inquires where the current state of PR in Armenia fits the continuum of remodeling the authoritative propaganda or simply emulating the Western ideologies (A1plus, 2008). Especially after the establishment of the Information and PR Center in 2008 within the administration of the president of Armenia, PR has assumed a more official status. Since then the debate about the stage of development of PR in Armenia has attracted the attention of the Armenian media (Panorama.am, 2009). This debate could have more weight if it were substantiated by a comprehensive research conducted in the PR sphere in Armenia. Meanwhile, new institutions and mostly Western management models are finding their way into the different layers of the organizations in Armenia modifying also communication practices. The formalization of public relations as a discipline and a profession is challenging; it requires time and commitment of PR
professionals to encompass and utilize ethical practice beneficial to the society as a whole on a common information platform (Saghatelyan, 2005a).

The development of PR industry in Armenia with a more political focus can be conventionally divided into three periods. The period covering early to mid 1990s is characterized by transforming from the communist system into capitalist system, and the centralized economic system was giving way to free market relations. At this stage the public relations was conspicuous on political arena mingled with advertising and marketing (Barseghyan, 2006, 2009; Saghatelyan, 2005b). The second stage of the PR development falls into the timeline of early 2000s. The emergence of telecommunication companies, relative economic stability, and change of ruling elite brought new developments in the social and political life in Armenia. PR started to become a part of the election campaigns, as well as component in various organizations: non-for-profits, businesses and governmental institutions. In 2003, the Law on Freedom of Information (Freedom of Information Center [FOI], 2003) was adopted. In addition, the government of Armenia established PR and communication departments in the ministries within the scope of Armenian Public Reform project in 2003 implemented together with the UK Department for International Development. In 2003, the first Armenian PR Association was founded. Years later, in 2009 Armenian Center of PR Development was established, which attempted to promote the profession by marking the International PR Day in Armenia in 2010 for the first time. Academic PR courses and vocational training sessions were also launched in the last five years. Several textbooks based on the existing bulk of PR literature were published in Armenian language with the aim to provide practical guidance to the students and practitioners. The extent to which this attempts of
institutionalizing PR profession have been successful or have had impact on the quality
and scope of the practice is one of the aspects that this study looks into.

The recent developments in political arena in Armenia became a turning point for
formalizing public relations. Specifically after the presidential elections in 2008, the
government of Armenia established the Information and PR Center (IPRC) to
communicate closely with the public and improve public image and reputation after
public discontent and socio-political activism following the elections. Establishment of
IPRC within the President’s Administration indicates that there is at least intent to
transform the one-way asymmetric communication into a two-way communication –
whether asymmetric or symmetric, based on categorization of the symmetry of
communication process (Grunig J, Grunig L. & Dozier 1992; 2001). Albeit at this point
there is no enough scientific research or data to support the argument whether PR in
Armenia fits or should fit predominantly in any of the Excellence study models.

Another important aspect that brought change into communication process is
diffusion of information and telecommunication technologies in Armenia. As Curtin and
Gaither (2007) state: “Technology has irrevocably changed communication and blurred
national boundaries” (p. 56). As the influx of communication technologies opens new
spectrum and strategies of communication, it also influences the way PR is practiced
(Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Sriramesh & Verčič 2009). Currently, in Armenia three major
internationally subsidized mobile operators offer also wireless and mobile Internet
services. This trend is supported by the argument that multinational corporations and
international organizations also contribute to enhancement of international PR (Curtin &
Gaither 2007; Sriramesh and Verčič, 2009). Besides the international non-profit or
humanitarian organizations, major corporations such as Microsoft representative office and Apple products also found ground in Armenia through telecommunication companies. However, the international public relations companies do not have major presence in Armenia. Among the major international communications companies and networks that have representation in Armenia are the StarCom Mediavest Communication (www.spyur.am) and Action Global Communications (www.actionprgroup.com). There are eight local companies that are listed as offering PR services: some of those are full marketing and communications or printing companies incorporating also PR component. This list includes also associations such as Armenian PR Association, PR Development Center, and Armenian Marketing Association (www.spyur.am).

The time is the key to the diffusion process, as proposed by the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers 2003; Rogers, Singhal & Quinlan, 2009). It is interesting to observe how quickly the adoption of communication technologies has taken place in Armenia especially within the last five years. This seems to be an indicator also for the PR development in Armenia as the study findings demonstrate. According to the data on Communications from the National Statistics, in the period from 2004 to 2009 there has been ninety-one percent growth in number of mobile phone subscribers (Armenian Statistical Services, 2009). Among the total number of mobile phone subscribers thirty percent are Internet users through cellular communications. Besides the cellular Internet, a number big and small IT companies offer cable, broadband, and wireless Internet services around the country. In addition, all the major media channels – print or broadcast, have websites that incorporate blogs, social media, audiovisual reports and
interactive channels. On the other hand, this expansion is taking place primarily in the capital city Yerevan. The small regional media outlets have limited resources and almost no on-line presence in this respect. This creates a gap and asymmetry in the way media and communications develop and embrace technological commodities in the capital and the regions of Armenia. More detailed account of the media market in Armenia is presented in Chapter V (Environmental factors).

Thus, the trends of institutionalizing public relations, access to new technologies and information, relative economic stability as well inception of PR technologies in political arena are all entwined and represent parallel S-curve of diffusion on the following ten-year timeslots 1990-1999; 2000-2009, 2010 projected to 2020. The study findings do not locate PR development in a specific time frame, yet based on the information provided by the in-depth interview participants and statistical data of the survey, the 2005 was a tipping point for PR industry in Armenia.

Statement of Problem

In the recent years steps have been taken towards regulating the sphere of information and communication in Armenia by passing the Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Dissemination of Mass Information (2003), Law on Freedom of Information (2003), the Law on relationships between the governing bodies and the public (2004). Though this regulations create environment for the development of PR sphere in Armenia, there is no consistent research about how integration of public relations takes place on the professional, organizational and national levels. The discourse surrounding the concept of public relations among various publics can incur
creation of controversial meanings (Curtin & Gaither 2007). In Armenia PR has gained a number of connotations ranging from political propaganda, “information war”, “black PR” to advertising, promotion, event planning and corporate social responsibility (Saghatelyan, 2005b). This study shall enable to reflect the perspective of public relations practitioners and their level of understanding of the profession’s role and function within their organizations.

Another important factor for international PR is the translatability of the concept in different languages, which does not always convey the same meaning and volume as public relations in English (Curtin and Gaither, 2007). The term public relations has three modes of translation in Armenian: a) direct translation as “public relations” b) “public links” or c) “connections with the society or public”. The English acronym PR without translation is also used. There is no specific term that would convey the meaning of public affairs, as a result the specifics of each function cannot be conspicuously stated unless described or operationalized through its distinct functions. Though the English term PR is gradually becoming visible to the population in Armenia, it is mostly associated with political campaigns at large and somewhat to corporate activities.

As for the unified ethical code, Armenian PR Association (APRA) has adopted a document to which all the members of APRA should abide. It is unknown what percentage of practicing PR specialists in Armenia are APRA members, or whether non-members are aware of the document to adopt it. Though APRA has pioneered in initiating a process of institutionalizing PR in Armenia, the association reaches out to limited number of professionals, and there is no mandatory ethical code provision for non-member PR professional all over the Republic.
Curtin and Gaither (2007) suggest that academic programs, in addition to PR associations, contribute to the institutionalization of the profession. It is common that PR practitioners come from other academic backgrounds, mainly journalism, linguistics, political science, business or marketing. In the recent years some vocational training in Armenia and opportunities for practitioners to receive academic training abroad has enlarged the bulk of knowledge. The vocational training programs offered by the American University of Armenia, Center for European Education, APRA and other non-profits and governmental programs for PR professionals of ministries, as well as emergence of academic courses at Yerevan State University Department of Sociology, Russian-Armenian Slavonic University, and some courses at State Linguistics University as well as other public and private Universities, have contributed to enhancing the understanding of the profession. However, comprehensive self-standing academic departments and academic programs are in their early formation stage though making progress. The lack of theory and research-based education programs and formal professional networking opportunities remain one of the challenges for PR practitioners in Armenia.

Moreover, literature about PR and communication specifics in Armenia based on formal research methods such as explorative studies, surveys and case studies, are scarce or almost non-existent. Limited descriptive literature exists concerning political and PR campaigns in Armenia. Some of the resources are articles provided by more active PR professionals in Armenia, other texts come mainly from Russian or English language sources. The assumption that PR practice in Russia or in Western cultures can be applicable to Armenian reality may blur the cultural, relational, historical and socio-
economic peculiarities of the context of the country under study (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Hofstede 2001; Sriramesh & Verčić, 2009). Initiating quantitative research of PR in the context of Armenia and understanding how national and organizational cultures influence the practice of PR will support the expansion of the field and best practices. Moreover, research efforts will contribute to legitimizing the profession and bringing it to another level along with peer-supported activities and established PR institutions. This research combines qualitative and quantitative methods to delineate the scope of practice of public relations in Armenia based on the information, ideas, and feedback provided by the PR practitioners of Armenia.

**Purpose of the Study**

“The question of how, or whether, communication can be mobilized to support economic, political, and social change is one of the puzzles to be sorted out in the 21st century” (Stevenson, 2009, p.174).

This exploratory study aims to investigate into the emergence and development of PR in Armenia from wide range of socio-cultural dimensions. This is an attempt to identify different factors and variables influencing PR sphere in Armenia as well as to get insight into the perceptions, attitude and knowledge of PR practitioners about the discipline as perceived by themselves and their senior management. Overall, the field of PR has been expanding steadily, and in the recent years it has attracted attention of government and the media, as well as the professionals. Since currently comprehensive baseline research data is not available about PR in Armenia, this research takes the challenge of filling the gap and adding to the exiting efforts.
The research goals are the following:

1. To investigate and summarize the developments of the PR industry through secondary research on environmental factors and by inquiring into the perceptions of PR practitioners.
2. To identify and posit questions and objectives for further research as well as formulate needs for PR profession as defined by the findings of the study.
3. To fill in the research and literature gap about PR in Armenia within the context of the country and globally as a part of international public relations scholarship.
4. On the local scale, the study shall contribute to the scope of knowledge about public relations research methodologies and shall serve as a reference for further research of PR in Armenia.

The study made a number of preliminary delimiting assumptions that guide the formulation of research questions based also on the review of theoretical and research scholarship in the field of international and global PR. The first assumption was that most of the major local and international organizations, businesses, as well as governmental and international diplomatic missions in Armenia employ some form of PR or communication staff; therefore, it would be possible to generate survey data from those professionals. Secondly, that PR was mostly viewed as supportive function rather than strategic component within the hierarchy of an organization’s departments. This assumption led to looking into the role of PR department and PR staff on organizational level. Other supplementary assumptions were the scarcity of professional education and the lack of employing consistent research in the field. The final normative assumption stipulated that there are opportunities for the PR industry to prosper and be useful, particularly to meet the need of maintaining relationships between the public and organizations, the Government of Armenia, as well as Armenian Diaspora worldwide.

The research has considered the indicators and variables that were marked and measured in the studies of PR practices in Western and non-Western countries
specifically through the Excellence study by Grunig and his colleagues. However, the nuances and cultural specifications are taken into account to surpass ethnocentrism (Curtin and Gaither, 2007; Heath, 2008; Hofstede, 2001). Since, mere replication of Western models in other contexts can lead to inaccurate conclusions, the study considers dimensions and paradigms of empirical and theoretical data with caution and employs those primarily as a road map for defining the frame of the grounded research of PR practices in Armenia. The secondary research intends to describe and analyze the environmental factors in which the current trends of PR industry in Armenia have formed. Primary demographic and survey data generated from in-depth and survey interviews with the PR practitioners answer and substantiate the research questions by supporting qualitative observations and assumptions through quantifiable data.

At this point, the study focuses on answering primarily the overarching question of definition i.e. *what is the public relations practice in Armenia?* The study also stimulates formulation of conceptual framework for addressing questions of fact, value and policy for further research and hypothesis development as an additional outcome. Thus, this grounded research aims to bring added value to understanding the PR situation in Armenia; identifying avenues of improvement in advancing the practice of PR in Armenia; adding to the PR literature; contributing to the development of PR models pertaining to specifics of the local culture; initiating research and theory building in Armenia and linking to global scholarship in the field of public relations. The study can also provide basis for further research in specific areas of PR field in Armenia by serving as a model for a more comprehensive and generalizable baseline survey.
Defining Global and International Public Relations

Defining public relations is a challenging task due to volume and scope of public relations practice and potential. Most of the literature chapters on public relations open with this endeavor. There have been multiple attempts to encompass the scope of PR into a concise and all-inclusive formulation. In the end, it has been possible for one person to come up with 478 definitions (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). More practically, public relations can be defined also by the key terms of its core functions such as strategic management function; and as a construct incorporating concepts of relationship-building, reputation, trust and credibility, etc. (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Grunig J. Grunig L. & Dozier, 2001; Hon & Grunig J., 1999).

Public relations has become a strategic tool for facilitating the establishment of communication and relationship on every level of human activity. The post-modernist perspective on public relations inquires into investigating the theories and models as well as practices in the discipline in terms of explicating the demographic and ideological shifts in the society that consequently bring new qualities and changes to the PR industry (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). From interpersonal to international levels, the industry is in the process of accumulating the strength, tools and strategies.

Based in the definitions and perceptions of public relations, Grunig et al. (1992) categorize public relations in terms of deontology: (a) pragmatic social role – as a useful practice to achieve goals; (b) neutral social role – like the society itself is a neutral object
of study; (c) conservative social role – advocating for interests of the economically powerful; (d) radical social role – leading to social change and reform; (e) idealistic social role – “public relations is a mechanism by which the organizations and publics interact in a pluralistic system to manage their interdependence and conflict” (Grunig et al., 1992, p. 9).

In the last formulation, it is important to note the key phrase “pluralistic system”, which means that the authors assume public relations is viable in a pluralistic society. This approach can be supported by the fact that in the early 1990s the process of democratization triggered emergence of public relations in many newly emerging democracies of the world, particularly in the communist block (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; Fukuyama, 1999; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009; Tilson & Alozie, 2004). However, since the process of democratization cannot happen immediately, for there are deeply rooted structures and values in place (Fukuyama, 1999), the public relations did not develop homogeneously in every country.

Among many definitions of public relations there is a presumption that public relations currently has become an international venture by its very nature (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). It is even more difficult to define and formulate international public relations, given the geographic reach and spectrum of diversity in each of the countries. “This area of communication, perhaps more than others, is diverse and unorganized” (Stevenson, 2009, p. 169).

Sriramesh & Verčič (2009) argue that public relations is a global phenomenon and therefore they define global public relations through the following formulation:

“Public relations is the strategic communication that different types of organizations use
for establishing and maintaining symbiotic relationships with relevant publics many of whom are increasingly becoming culturally diverse” (p.xxxiv).

… since the beginning of the 1990s, the world has been evolving rather rapidly, with many countries undergoing political, economic and societal changes. In particular, many former Soviet bloc countries have embarked on the road towards democratization and market reforms and now have economies in transition.

…Because the political environment determines the nature of public relations one can practice there, it is essential to conduct comparative research on the linkage between various political ideologies and public relations.

Sriramesh and Verčič, 2009, p.5

The concept of international public relations can be explained in many different ways: (a) international relations as a study of public relations practices in a foreign country or a practice in a foreign country (b) as a form of international communication (c) if referred to as global defines “planet as a single, unified system” (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009; Stacks & Salwen, 2009).

To separate international communication from the general field, a third dimension is needed that includes four distinct categories: foreign, comparative, international or intercultural and global. “Foreign studies are single-country or single-culture studies, usually heavy on description light on explanation. Comparison with other countries is usually implicit, if attempted at all” (Stevenson, 2009, p. 170).

There are scholars who would not fully agree with the approach of considering all the public relations as global or international, since there are specifics that define domestic public relations (Wakefield, 2009), though they also capitalize on the
importance of understanding the cultural, political, and economic factors forming the broad global public relations.

In the attempt to find definition of the international relations, another study investigates the parallels between the intercultural communication and the international relations (Zahama, 2000). Taking the approach of defining what public relations is not (Curtin & Gaither, 2007) international public relations can be juxtaposed to intercultural relations. Though these two fields share common features, elements and links, both need separate definitions and delineation, given the tendency of the expansion of international public relations. The important argument of the study is that intercultural communication derived from the field of study of anthropology while the international public relations is based on practice of the profession (Zahama, 2000). For the intercultural communication Steinfatt and Millette (2009) formulate it as “communication between people with different mindsets and ways of looking at and perceiving the world that goes beyond the differences normally found among people who regard themselves as culturally similar” (p. 300).

**Approaches and Theories of Global and International Public Relations**

**Excellence theory and environmental factors.**

While the ever-changing and globalizing world enjoys more opportunities of communication as well as faces the challenges, there is more interest and need in researching how the public relations function in each country and how it can be utilized to reach understanding, collaboration and synergy.
In each country along with globalization process public relations has been going through different processes of development. Public relations in this respect has different manifestations attributed to the socio-cultural specifics as well as level of political, economic development of each country, and historical specifics of the country. Though the concept of public relations was coined in the U.S. and has longer tradition in the U.S. and the UK, it is a global practice now (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). “Together, with their mostly Anglo-American global partners and competitors, they [other countries] are shaping a new global culture that promises to change the nature and distribution of power as Gutenberg’s printing press did a half millennium ago (Stevenson, 2009, p. 176). Since the panorama of public relations changes, it is essential to define what factors contribute and define the change and perspectives.

As Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) note there is need for contribution of different countries to build bulk of knowledge and understanding of PR practices and evolution around the world. The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice presents a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of public relations in different countries of the world (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). Besides presenting specific context of various countries from around the globe, the authors of the book provide valuable support to the argument that the world has become an interconnected and interdependent place where cooperation has become indispensable. It is quite natural, then, that people as well as the nations and countries as separate entities would want to interact and establish bonds. As Gergen (2009) investigates in the Relational Being: Beyond Self and the Community, the multiple facets of building relationship is inherent to a human being.
In need of regulating the expending field of public relations the academicians and scholars have attempted to boost the development of PR theories (Botan & Hazleton 2006; Hansen-Horn & Neff, 2008). The factors that contributed to the emergence of theoretical platform for the public relations as a social science are the following: “(1) growth in scholarship and publishing, (2) development of scholarly organizations and conferences, and (3) development of the theoretical foundation, particularly through Symmetrical/Excellence theory” (Botan & Hazleton, 2006, p.3). Moreover, the development of the public relations theory has turned into “an international undertaking” since public relations has “gone global” (Botan & Hazleton, 2006, pp. 11-16; Hansen-Horn & Neff 2008; Sriramesh & Verčič 2009). While each approach brings a value to the process of study, amalgamation of models can serve to encompass international public relations more holistically.

In the pursuit of exploring public relations internationally, many authors (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; Tsetsura, 2004) use models of communication (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 1992; 2002) as a reference point to outline their research in their respective countries.

The Excellence study was carried out in international context of three different but mainly Western countries – U.S., UK and Canada (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 1992; 2002). The theory suggests the possibility of international use given the global transformations of communication. Consequently, the Excellence theory has been used as a guiding theory to underpin the explorative studies in various countries around the world (Grunig, 1995; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). The presumption about the use of the theory globally is that the concepts of four models of communication shall be applicable
in all countries to varying extent; secondly, that PR is practiced the same way almost everywhere in the world, otherwise it would not be possible to consolidate international PR practice and involve in professional synergy (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 2002). Though two-way symmetric model of public relations proposed by Grunig J., Grunig L. and Dozier (1992, 2002), has been used in both practice and for research purposes, it has not encompassed normative perspective of networking and open dialogue that Habermas (1973) suggested in the Theory and Practice. However, Habermas’ (1973) idea provides a vision which the international public relations could support to achieve. Grunig J., Grunig L. and Dozier (2002) themselves acknowledge that the two-way symmetric model of excellence is more an ideal, though it can manifest itself in real practice to some extent.

Therefore, it is important to translate main propositions of the excellence model (Botan & Hazleton, 2006; Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozer, 2002) into an organizational and international context:

1. PR department in dominant coalition in terms of influence and power sharing;
2. Two-way communication in terms of communication and mixed motive in terms of loyalties to publics;
3. Senior PR manager has the knowledge and competence to use two-way communication excellent model in term of professional competence.

In the international dimension however, the research about PR has been somewhat limited. Since the information about PR is scarce in the democracies in transition, usually the analysis is primarily descriptive. Verčič (2009), explores the public relations in Slovenia, first of all by providing background historical information about the country, and then gives the timeline of the PR development after the independence, which is also a common pattern among the post-Soviet countries. “...the public relations industry
emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Slovenia, by the end of the 1990s it transformed itself into ‘total communication’ industry. Then it has transfused on other social spheres and merged with other communication fields as well.” (Verčič, 2009, p. 579).

To investigate into the global public relations different dimensions have been used including five categories of organizational impact on the model of public relations suggested by excellent study and social axes such as a nation’s political system; level of political-economic development, level of activism prevalent in that country, culture and mass media (Grunig J. et. al, 1992; Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier 2002). Among the important elements influencing the public relations is the Media ownership and access to information (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). The role of the media is highlighted also for the fact that it influences public opinion, cultivation and agenda setting theories should be considered when viewing the public opinion spectrum (Lewis, 2001).

The researchers focus more on describing experiences in other countries and try to discern the trends and patterns of the PR practice based on the variables defined by the authors and researchers investigating into public relations in global context (Grunig J., Grunig L., Sriramesh K., Huang Yi-Hui & Lyra, 1996). The commonly defined variables can have variations in specific contexts of each country. Braun (2007) has utilized Grunig’s theory of Excellence and five contextual variables—political systems, level of activism, culture, economics, and media systems suggested by Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) to analyze the public relations in Bulgaria. Braun (2007) suggests: “The effects of the political environment on public relations come through four major gateways of influence - a country’s political history, the pervading political philosophical climate, the
effects of economic policies created by political bodies, and the effects of political geographic.” (p. 199). This case exemplifies also how other parameters can be derived from the suggested variables and applied in a specific context. The findings of the study concentrate on the political effects on public relations in Bulgaria, which are (a) political history, (b) the pervading political philosophical climate, (c) the effects of politics on the economy, and (d) the effects of political geography (centralization of business and government) (Braun, 2007).

A study of the public relations in three Latin American countries by Molleda and Moreno (2008) also confirms that public relations is interlinked with sociopolitical developments in that countries. Moreover, the authors propose that “public relations professionals have a role to play in the transformation of countries toward globalized economies and more ethical participative political systems in which everyone has a public platform to voice their interests and achieve full social development” (Molleda & Moreno, 2008, para. 1).

Another study has been done on public relations in Romania, a country that is sharing some commonality with Armenia such as the history of communism, but currently has different status as a member of European Union. Here again, the rise of the public relations is attributed to democratization: “… the revival of democracy after December 1989 created the context in which all developments for communication field became” (Rogojinaru, 2009, p. 596). Again, the two-way symmetric communication becomes a goal to achieve, in this case like in any other country irrespective of the advancement of PR industry. The study of the Romanian public relations indicates progress in the field as well as outline avenues of development in terms of complying
with two-way symmetrical communication model and the level of education in public relations (Turk, 1996).

The context in which the Russian PR developed is characterized more in geopolitical terms by Tsetsura (2009). The concepts of “white and black” PR emerge describing ethical communication and defamatory propaganda. The focus on one of the difference between the emergence of Russian PR and PR in the U.S. is attributed not only to the “youth of the profession” but rather lack of communication tradition on scholarly or academic level (Tsetsura, 2004; p. 657).

Thus, on the international context Excellence theory functions more as a guiding landmark in the attempt of exploring public relations practice in different socio-political and cultural contexts. In the book of International Public Relations, Culbertson and Chen (1996), argue that “Grunig-Hunt evolutionary models of PR development” encompass opportunities of the global public relations, as the functions of PR extends the boundaries of simply raising awareness (asymmetric) to more engaging relational practice (symmetric). However, by neglecting the intricacies of application of symmetry to international context and value systems can pose a major challenge for the practitioners (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Hansen-Horn & Neff, 2008).

The theory of Grand Strategy (Botan, 2006), supports the argument about the dominant coalition, in which case quality of communication in the PR department depends on the goals and cultures of the dominant coalition and leadership. On the organizational level, power can translate into the interactions incorporated into the organization’s culture (Morgan, 2006). On the global context this argument projects to the component of power and dominance as well as peculiarities of the cultural values
In terms of symmetry, Pfau and Wan (2008) bring the argument that the symmetry model “presumes goal compatibility and a relatively even playing between organizations and their external publics”, in reality the goals of the organization and the publics are disparate (p. 90). However, the argument of symmetry by Grunig and his colleagues (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 1992; 2002) lies in the fact that public relations should be directed to eliminating conflict and balancing the interest of parties through mixed-motive practices. As a number of international studies in public relations demonstrate the trends of exploration of international PR practice are encompassing the concepts of excellence study, notwithstanding the contextual differences (Molleda & Laskin, Institute of Public Relations [IPR], n.d.).

While Grunig and his colleagues (Botan & Hazleton, 2006; Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 2002) focus on symmetry of communication as basis for ethics, other scholars (Pfau & Wan, 2006) argue that persuasion is genuine to public relations and intrinsically does not contain an unethical element. The argument apposing to the ethical dilemma generated in the Excellence theory has its roots in treating public relations from the perspective of the rhetorical tradition (Heath, 2008). On the global context, the argument of ethics transforms into the discussion of ethnocentric versus polycentric communication in the host cultures (Curtin & Gaither, 2008). Notwithstanding the limitation of the concepts incorporated in the Excellence study and criticism of presumptions, Excellence theory has been used as guiding tool for exploring PR practice in difference countries (Grunig J., Grunig L., Sriramesh, Yi-Hui, Lyra, 1995; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009).
**Circuit of culture and other variables.**

Besides the approaches articulated in the *Global Public Relations Handbook* (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009), other prominent authors such as Curtin and Gaither (2007) suggest a complex cultural-economic matrix and circuit of culture as a fundamental model for investigating and understanding intricacies of public relations in different countries of the world. In the discussion about applicability of the two-way symmetrical model in a global context Curtin and Gaither (2007) discuss whether it is always possible or necessary to apply two-way symmetric communication. They argue that the model provides more holistic and in-depth contextual understanding to build a PR profile in a different cultural setting (Curtin & Gaither, 2008; Hansen-Horn & Neff, 2008). They state that “only by studying the production of meaning within the whole circuit as a synergistic process can an integrated conceptual basis for international public relations theory be formulated” (Curtin & Gaither, 2008, p. 290).

As Curtin and Gaither (2007) mention: “Politics, technology, economy, and culture can all regulate public relations practice” (p. 65). In general, the process of democratization of counties contributes to freedom of expression and gives opportunity for the public opinion to be heard and expressed (Ferguson, 2000). However, it is interesting to observe specific constructs and concepts within these proposed systems that influence or can be influenced by public relations.

The cultural circuit proposed by Curtin and Gaither (2007) can be a valuable asset to supplement to the Excellence study and the *Global Public Relations*, which propose the following parameters.

- Culture, including language
• The political system, including legal system
• The media system
• The level of economic development
• The extent and nature of activism

Being a descriptive rather than prescriptive model the Circuit of Culture proposes that in the international and multicultural context it is necessary to consider the following criteria:

• Production – language, meaning and culture
• Regulation – politics, technology, economy and other factor regulating global public relations
• Representation – meaning encoded into public relations content and messages as well as symbols (brands)
• Identity – competing identities of existing and new discourses
• Consumption – framing the discourse and creating new meanings from the public’s perspective

In the international studies, these categories are oftentimes substantiated also by Hofstede’s (2001) criteria for cultural variables such as: (a) power distance; (b) uncertainty avoidance; (c) individualism and collectivism, (d) masculinity and femininity, (e) long versus short term orientation (Hofstede, 2001, 2005; Feehery-Simmons, 2002).

As proposed by Sharpe (2009), Change theory is another valuable resource for a PR practitioner when dealing with flux and change both on organizations and international context. The investigation into the wide spectrum of change theories by Sharpe (2009), proposes cultural, economic, technical innovation and social parameters of adoption and resistance to change (p. 13). While resistance to change is normal the change agents should consider the cultural factors and levers of change such as value systems, communication, management behavior and style, progress of innovation and its perceives as well as intrinsic value in a culture where it is implanted. It is critical to acknowledge also the factor of empowerment i.e. whether the culture embracing the
change has the capacity and resources to accommodate to it (Sharpe, 2009, pp. 14-17, 29-32). Thus, the complexity of consolidating theories and approaches for international and global public relations lies in many aspects, including diversity of cultural and societal contexts in which public relations is practiced. Notwithstanding all the differences and similarities among cultures, there are three major factors or variables that impact and determine the public relations in any country: these are socio-cultural, economic and political factors (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). However, these factors should be viewed in a more complex cultural and sociopolitical context of cultural dimensions (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Hofstede, 2001). The five moments of Circuit of Culture model: regulation, consumption, production, identity and representation shall drive the public relations activity and research around the world in a dynamic circular rather than linear model, since public relations serves different worldviews, purposes and contexts over the word (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). Culture is the process by which meaning is produced, circulated, consumed, modified, and endlessly renegotiated in society (Williams, 1961, 1981; Hall, 1980: as quoted in Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 35). As a construct, culture is socially constructed (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). To serve the purpose of identifying and utilizing cultural dimensions for the study of nation-states, Hofstede (2001) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p. 9).

Besides the recommendation to view and analyze the public relations in lines with political infrastructure, economic system, legal system, activism, as well as culture and media, as suggested by Sriramesh and Verčič (2009), there is need to be able to evaluate the concept of trust, credibility, integrity as well as ethics, when analyzing public
relations in domestic or international context. The elements of culture such as meaning, discourse, values, practices and rituals (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Hofstede, 2001) are not the only constructs that impact the development of public relations. At the core of any form of the relationship is the value of trust (Fukuyama 1995; Habermas, 1976).

Fukuyama (1999) defines trust as the values that the communicators within the group share based on common norms. The construct of trust is core value for bringing in understating and cooperation among the different entities of the globe, irrespective of their differences or contradictions. As Habermas (1976) notes, the intention to be truthful of communication can be the basis of understanding “the speaker must have the intension of communicating a true [wahr] proposition… so that the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker”. Moreover, “The goal of common understanding is to bring about an agreement… The typical states are in the gray areas in between: on the one hand, incomprehension and misunderstanding, intentional or involuntary untruthfulness, concealed and open discord; and, on the other hand, pre-existing and achieved consensus” (Habermas 1976, p. 2-3). It is essential than for the international public relations not only to analyze the context of a country or make technical comparisons, but also consider bonding avenues of building trust and understanding.

Communication and building relationship in a trustful way largely depends on the qualities of the leadership, since it is accountable for building relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Principles of ethical leadership and ethics in general can be supported by PR professional as well as the leadership: “An ethical leader takes into account the purposes of everyone involved in the group and is attentive to the interest of the community and the culture” (Northouse, 2004, p. 356). This aspect can closely relate to
Habermas’ idea of communication network, in which every member of the group can volunteer his other opinion (Habermas, 1973). In the attempt of building a more synergetic and cooperative world, PR as a profession can become the liaison between different groups to build that network of trust, on organizational, community, national or international levels. Leadership function of public relations as an agent of communication leading to mutually beneficial change is embraced also in emerging PR theories such as the Speech Act Theory (Hunsen-Horn & Neff, 2008). The factor of leadership also implies presence of power and level of acceptance of that power as defined by the power distance dimension (Hofstede, 2001).

The culture of organizations is also the key to quality of communication or miscommunication (Morgan, 2006). Expansion of the public relations in geographic terms is often attributed to organizations and corporations, who seek new markets over the globe (Wakefield, 1996, pp. 17-30). Hence, the organizations are also responsible for disseminating the values and practices when they communicate within a new context (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). Depending on the ethics and values cherished in the organization it can either succeed or fail to relate. Thus, PR has the potential to extend over the management function of building mutually influential relationships within a web of stakeholder and organizational relationships (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). Moreover, multinational organizations are not only perceived in view of their organizational cultures but also the cultures of the countries that they represent, even though these perceptions are stereotypical. Proliferation of multinational companies around the world indicates also the blurring of the cultural boundaries of nation-states (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Hofstede, 2001, Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009).
In the book *Collapse, How the Societies Chose to Fail or Succeed*, Diamond (2005) presents factors that determining success or collapse of societies such as environmental damage, climate change, hostile neighbors, and friendly trade partners. Environment and external factors are critical. PR cannot eliminate all the misunderstandings or conflicts, but it has the potential to create equal power in opposition to hierarchic power of the elites. From the perspective of Ethical leadership theory leadership is about influence: “Leadership is the process of influencing others; it has moral dimension that distinguishes it from other types of influence, such as coercion and despotic control. Leadership involves values, including showing respect for followers, being fair, to others and building community” (Northouse, 2004, p. 357). Given the characteristics of PR these attributes of leadership can as well be projected to PR practice in ideal sense. In public relations, this type of communication is articulated more in the form of two-way symmetric communication (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 2002). Since in the real public relations practice there is predisposition to power relativity, which means the party with relatively more power affords a public relations council, symmetry becomes impractical (Curtin & Gaither, 2007). On the other hand, social activism (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009) becomes a factor for defining the practice of public relations and can tilt the balance of power to the public opposing the organization.

Wakefield (Culbertson & Chen, 1996, pp. 17-30) proposes to look at the global public relations not only through the Excellence theory but also by considering global society, cultural and communication theories that will support the understand the haphazard developments in the field on the global context. Wakefield (2008) proposes arguments on the theoretical frames for PR practitioner who are working across the
culture and economic boundaries to comprise international public relations in the article *Theory of International Public Relations, the Internet, and Activism*. In order to explain the difference between the purely domestic public relations and international public relations, Wakefield (2008) first defines the public relations in these contexts. He distinguishes between the public relation practices in a multi-cultural setting such as the U.S., investigating public relations operations in a foreign country and the public relations collaboration on a transnational level.

Since public relations on the international level deals with additional complexities and variables, there is need for not only quality of professionalism (Wakefield, 2008) but also for sustainable research and theory basis. In this respect, public relations scholars have attempted to fill in the gaps. Considering the research in the field of public relations, Culbertson and Chen (1996), differentiate two types of research comparative public relations and international public relations.

Furthermore, besides the environmental variables, Stevenson (2009) suggests considering facets of international communication: (a) a focal variable that is some aspect of communication; (b) a unit of analysis that can range from the individual to the entire globe; and (c) delineation of nation or cultural boundaries that, in most studies, provide the basis for comparison and explanation. These stratifications of cultural dimensions can contribute to filling the gaps of the excellence study. As an evidence a number of the researchers use the theoretical and conceptual “triangulation” to be able to discern and analyze complexity of the PR within a country or cross-culturally. A collection of such studies that are contained in the major books on international public relations such as *Global Public Relations* (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009), *International
Public Relations (Culbertson & Chen, 1996), the Public Relations and Communication Management in Europe by Ruler and Verčič (2004) demonstrate the applicability of Excellence theory to the context of various Western and non-Western countries.

A number of non-Western countries such as China, Singapore and Taiwan have demonstrated that the concepts of the symmetry and open communication, if not completely, albeit can be applied to the cultural contexts (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; Lim, Goh, & Sriramesh, 2005). The proposition of the Excellence theory that symmetry is more viable in the democratic systems (Grunig J., Grunig L. & and Dozier, 2002) manifests itself in the expansion of the public relations to the new democracies such as Slovenia, and Romania (Culbertson & Chen, 1996; Tilson & Alozie 2004; Van Ruler, Verčič, Btschi & Flodin, 2004). On the other hand, as stipulated by the same assumption, it may have limited application in the more authoritative political systems such as in Russia (Erzikova & Berger, 2008). However, even if for the research purposes the Excellence theory is a valuable tool, it should be cautiously applied as a practice depending on the specifics of each country. The cases such as of Arla foods (Gaither & Curtin, 2008), or power and relationship differences in the organizational context in Mexico (Howard, Hackley &Dong, [IPR], n.d.; Molleto & Morena, 2008) indicate the need for cultural and contextual sensitivity when projecting presumptions of excellence to different value systems.

Thus, the authors investigating international public relations mostly agree that public relations in each country can have common ground, but the preconditions for the development of public relations emergence and practice are unique. It is commonly argued that there are certain key aspects of the society that define the practice of public
relations evolution in the country – socio-cultural factor, political system, economic structures, history and others (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Molleda & Moreno, 2008; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009;). Nonetheless, it is possible to observe and speculate about certain traits and characteristics as well as models and theories in place, which can help to explicate the intricacies of PR context in a specific country and globally.

**Research Questions**

Deriving from the literature review and pertaining to the interest of investigating public relations practice in Armenia, the research proposed to answer the following questions:

1. What factors have contributed to the development of PR in Armenia?
2. What are the specific factors that define and characterize PR practices in Armenia?
3. How do organizations utilize PR function from the perspective of PR practitioners?
4. How is PR positioned in Armenia in terms of quality, scope of the practice, qualifications and education?
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Frame

The methodology derives from literature review and preliminary findings and assumptions about public relations sphere in Armenia. The selected qualitative and quantitative methods are guided by the theoretical framework of Hofstede’s (2001) cultural dimensions, Circuit of Culture (Du Gay, Hall, Jones, Mackay, & Negus, 2003; Curtin & Gaither, 2007) and environmental factors for global public relations as proposed by Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) as well as Excellence study defining the role of public relations within organizations (Grunig J. et al., 1992; Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier 2002). Though the concept of triangulation applies to research approach mainly, the study employed the logic to the mixed theoretical frame by utilizing it as a roadmap to guide rather than to define the outcomes of the grounded research. Triangulation is “collection of data from different sources or different surveyors in different places based on the assumption that of multiple sources of information produce similar results, the credibility of the survey’s findings are enhanced” (Fink, 2003, v1. p. 165). Likewise, the mentioned theories and models are combined to advise the research questions and assure that the researcher has considered essential aspects of public relations construct during the research process. This approach to theoretical frameworks is applied to both quantitative and qualitative research because “they provide a conceptual guide for choosing the concepts to be investigated, for suggesting research question and for framing research
findings” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 37). Given that this is an exploratory study, the research methods that derived from theoretical frame did not aim to build an overarching hypothesis or theory about PR in Armenia. However, the results provided room for inducted proposition for formulating the research questions, arrays and foci of investigation as well as for delimiting trends of characteristic functions of PR industry in Armenia based on the analysis of the collected data.

For the practical purpose of this study the environmental factors proposed by Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) such as political and legal parameters of the country, economy, socio-cultural attributes, mass media and activism, outlined the frame in which the background information of environmental factors for PR development in Armenia were discussed. Researchers commonly reference these factors when investigating PR in the context of a country as well as transnational and international organizations (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). It should be noted, that causal relationship between these factors and PR practice in Armenia cannot be proved at this point: the study provided an overview of the context to guide into the analysis of the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research. A more in-depth scientific analysis of each factor and its correlation to PR practice shall apply in the future, which is out of the scope of this study. The association between some factors and the practice, was more closely investigated during the inquiry of the in-depth expert interviews, when the respondents were asked to mention any factors that they thought could have influenced development of PR in Armenia. Thus, the environmental factors were discussed in lines with the themes suggested by Sriramesh and Verčič (2009).
Ideally, the five cultural indicators of Hofstede (2001) – power distance, uncertainly avoidance, individualism and collectivism, masculinity and femininity as well as long versus short-term orientation, would comprise the set of indicators to define of the culture as an environmental factor. However, Hofstede’s (2001) study did not include data about Armenia, and the country culturally cannot automatically fit either Europe or Asia. The indicators guided the assumptions for building the frame of the secondary research. Moreover, since Hofstede’s dimensions are static and treat culture as monolithic entity at a certain point of time without differentiating the subcultures (Curtin & Gaither, 2007), in this study discussion about the culture derives from core concept of overlapping moments of the circuit-of culture and Sharpe’s (2009) conceptualization of Change theory within the public relations domain. Therefore, the study focused on specific aspect of cultural identity, defined as competing existing and new discourses. Dominant discourse is defined as “language signifying a particular cultural meaning, certain unstated assumptions, that color how we think and act (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 37).

The survey questionnaire was adopted from the Excellence study used by Grunig J., Grunig L. and Dozier (2002) which was developed to understand PR role in organizational excellence by inquiring the senior PR managers, top management and other employees in the U.S., UK and Canada. For disambiguation, it should be mentioned, that this exploratory study did not test the factors of communication models as defined by the Excellence study. Adopting the scientifically tested statements of the Excellence study helped to inquire into to understanding the scope of the role and function that public relations practice has on organizational level in Armenia.
It should be noted also that the study did not intend to prove or disprove the validly of any of the proposed theoretical models. The models served as a starting point to formulate the research questions and instruments as well as areas of focus. The employed research methodology is predominantly deductive and examines the patterns of PR specifics in Armenia independently based on the collected data. On the other hand, the findings connect to theoretical propositions of the frame.

**Qualitative and Quantitative Paradigms**

As McCracken (1988), posits that only after utilizing the capacity of quantitative research can an investigator substantiate the distribution and frequency of phenomenon. The research employed simultaneous triangulation in which case the answers to the qualitative and quantitative research questions are discussed at the same time (Creswell, 1994).

Qualitative methods such as the secondary research and in-depth interviews, were used to cover the overlapping or diverging features of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1994), in this case of public relations practice in Armenia. Survey was the main quantitative research method for this study.

**Qualitative Methods.**

Qualitative methods were applied for the purpose of describing the general context and factors of public relations in Armenia. Morse (1991, as quoted in Creswell, 1994, p. 146) stated that qualitative research is useful for the following conditions: a) when the concept is immature due to lack of theory and research b) notion available in theory is inaccurate or biased c) there is need to explore and describe the phenomena and
to develop theory. The points a) and c) serve the purpose of this exploratory study, except that instead of developing theory the reach focuses on answering the research questions. However, the descriptive nature of the exploratory study did not aim at hypothesis formulation or theory testing at this point.

*Secondary research.*

Since all research starts with the question of definition, secondary research was one of the methodologies to answer that inquiry. Secondary research analysis is a primary step to define whether previous research describes the current realities efficiently and whether such information has been available previously (Stacks, 2002). For the purposes of this study, the secondary research was distinct from the review of literature, which derives mainly from scholarship and research used for investigating global and international PR. Therefore, the secondary research helped to accumulate data to describe the context of Armenia. Primary materials for the secondary research were limited, however, these helped to identify gaps in research and indicate at avenues of further investigation.

The secondary research intended to answer the RQ1 about the environmental factors that comprise the context in which public relations as a discipline or industry formed and has been developing in Armenia. This information provided a starting point to be substantiated by in-depth interviews and the survey.

*In-depth interview.*

In-depth interview is a method of inquiry that is used to answer the questions of definition, value and policy. It is lengthier than survey interviews and follows a well-
organized pattern of questions (Stacks, 2002). The in-depth interview was used as a research method to collect data and substantiate answers to the RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4. The structured open-ended questionnaire including six questions was constructed as an instrument. However, the questions were used as a guiding frame and did not limit the emerging themes during the interview.

The questions of in-depth interview aligned with the theoretic conceptualization of the study and were compatible to the survey questions. This approach helped to make inferences about the discovered patterns from both qualitative and quantitative data. Through in-depth interviews it was possible to formulate and analyze recurring themes of public relations practice as explicated and perceived by the respondents. In-depth interviews helped also to transition from accumulated secondary research to survey findings by providing deeper insight into the qualitative interpretation of the PR practices. Most importantly, the in-depth interviews put the theoretical assumptions and conclusions made at the beginning of the study on a more focused perspective, substantiated and gave more depth to the quantitative data of survey interviews by answering questions that could not be retrieved from the survey data such as the question of policy. The in-depth interview covered questions ranging from professional and demographic information to knowledge, attitude, and beliefs about the practices of PR in Armenia.

The interviews were conducted with the convenience sample by contacting PR practitioners that the researcher personally knows, except for one responded who was referred to by a friend. The interviews had a time load of one hour. Interviews were conducted via Skype conference call or by phone (in one case) to enable direct interaction
of question and answer dynamics, especially that the respondents were located in Armenia, and the researcher was in the US.

*Sampling method for in-depth interview.*

Preliminarily it was decided to conduct in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of ten PR practitioners. As McCracken (1988) defined, small number of respondents for qualitative research enables the researcher to gain deep insight into a phenomenon.

For the convenience sample, a database of about fifteen professionals working either in PR or communications was composed. Convenience sample is one that depends on the willingness and availability of the people to respond to the research inquiry (Fink, 2006). Criteria for selection were based on proximity and availability as well as the factor of representing diverse fields of industry and organizations as far as possible. The respondents were contacted via Email individually for their consent to participate. Out of fifteen possible respondents that were contacted, the three could not participate because of other commitments, and one did not respond. Eleven practitioners agreed to participate and were interviewed. The convenient day and time was scheduled for the interview. Each interview lasted on average one hour as planned, depending on the technique of reaching out for the audience. The identified key informants of convenience sample helped also to expend the snowball sample survey interviews by recommending other PR practitioners. Information of referents was not revealed to survey participants for the purposes of confidentiality.
Coding and analysis of in-depth interview data.

All the interviews were recorded after asking the respondents for their informed consent, which was included both in the invitation Email and was pronounced before starting the interview. The interviews were informed that the information would be kept confidential and identifying names and characteristics would not appear or be published in the study. All interviews were conducted in Armenian except one.

Besides the recording, the researcher took handwritten notes that were summarized as key points to identify the preliminary patterns and emerging themes from the discussions. The recorded information was fully transcribed and translated into English, provided that the researcher had professional qualifications and expertise to do the translations. Each recorded interview took on average three hours to transcribe.

To retrieve the data and understand the underlying patterns and concepts the interview raw data was coded through open and axial coding. Open coding is defined as process of “cutting the data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks or raw data” and axial coding is defined as “cross-cutting and relating concepts to each other” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 195). The unit of analysis was the sentence or the paragraph referring to a given question or a probe.

The transcribed material was preliminary electronically coded by inserting notes in the margins and highlighting the repeating themes throughout all interviews. Each interview was further coded in more detail based on methods of open and axial coding. The aim of the coding was to identify patterns in the discussions of all the respondents as well as to link the recurring themes with the variables and concepts generated through the survey and secondary research. Open coding helped to examine the open data and to
summarize it for labeling and categorizing. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) define, “Conceptualizing data not only reduces the amount of data the researcher has to work with, but at the same time provides a language to talk about the data” (p. 160). Axial coding was used to make references, comparisons and to find common patterns among the interviews and the survey results.

There is an argument whether for developing a grounded theory the qualitative data should be framed in advance or shall the frame derive from the bulk of accumulated qualitative data in order to produce enough rigorous data to formulate the theory and not only describe a phenomenon (Kendall, 1999). This study is descriptive and does not aim either to test or formulate a theory, but to describe the practice of PR in Armenia, therefore the deductive method of coding from data was appropriate. In-vivo coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was done to define the direct quotes of the respondents to support the arguments in the discussion of the study.

The analysis of the data was mainly qualitative, in which case the aim was not simply to count the number of occurrences of the themes and concepts but as Rubin and Rubin (2005) explain “to reflect the complexity of human interaction by portraying it in the words of the interviewees” (p. 202). The first stage of coding identified the main concepts and categorized the themes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) define higher-level concepts like themes and categories that define what lower level concepts indicate. According to this hierarchic approach, the codebook was constructed to include the themes and their subcategories much like the hierarchy of the variables used for the study. Though Glaser and Strauss (2009) mention that “comparison of qualitative data based on the account of each incidence can be done by memory and not necessarily
referring to reach individual note” (p. 106), after the first stage of coding the transcripts were reviewed again to track redundancies in the codebook and to add the nuances that were missed. The codebook included also reference codes to the survey questions and variable to formulate possible analogies.

**Quantitative Method.**

For the purpose of obtaining quantitative data about PR in Armenia a cross-sectional survey was conducted. The aim of employing quantitative method in the study was to generate measureable data that could summarize observations provided by PR practitioners and make quantifiable conclusions. Measurement is a characteristic of quantitative method when research inquires into the reasons of why people behave in a certain way (Stacks, 2002). The quantitative data was not supposed to be representative of the whole PR practitioner’s population in Armenia, as it was based on convenience sample. However, it enabled to reach out to more respondents than through in-depth interview and make interconnected observations between the qualitative and quantitative findings.

**Survey research.**

The survey research was conducted with PR practitioners working in wide spectrum of organizations and spheres in Armenia. Survey is defined as a method for “collecting information from or about people to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behavior (hence KAB) (Fink, 2003, v. 2, p. 142). Survey enabled to accumulate specific quantifiable data about the knowledge and attitude of PR practitioners regarding practices of the profession in Armenia. Stacks (2002) stated that
the construct of behavior can be explained and predicted by knowledge of public’s attitudes, which can be described as a predisposition to behave. The behavior is measured through opinion in how people will behave based on “(1) knowledge about the behavior in question, (2) how they feel about the behavior, and (3) how they think they will behave prior to having to behave” (p. 134). Therefore, even if the practices were not directly observed, based on Stacks’ (2002) formulations, the attitudes could indicate potential behavior.

The Email invitation was sent to the identified population and included the following information in the cover letter: introducing the researcher, explaining the purpose of the research and its ethics and provisions of confidentiality, highlighting importance of participation, and the link to on-line survey, as well as contact information for questions or request of the executive summary. The invitation, consent message, and the questionnaire were written in English. These were approved by Ball State University Institutional Review Board, after which the materials were translated into Armenian. These were reviewed and pretested with a friend and colleague in Armenia who has professional training and experience both in public relations and translation. The invitation to participate in the survey and the questionnaire was sent to all the identified practitioners with valid Email addresses.

**Sampling method for survey.**

The survey sampling would ideally dwell on the analogy of census, in which case universe, population, sample and the frame are the same, and the researcher reaches all members of the population. However, the survey frame was limited due to geographic
distance and unavailability of information about all the members of the community under study. The survey questionnaire was sent to all the population identified in the survey frame without randomization, therefore, the results were not generalizeable.

The sample frame of PR professionals in Armenia was compiled from databases enlisting companies and organizations operating in Armenia. For the survey sample www.spyur.am information database was consulted to build a list of organizations, since there is no readily available comprehensive database of PR professionals in Armenia. In addition, websites of the organizations identified from the preliminary database were browsed for PR contacts information. The frame was supplemented with the data from other databases such as the Armenian PR Association website and contacts provided by the respondents of in-depth interviews, as a snowball sample. The organizations were coded into matrix of the following categories: private/corporate, governmental/state, public and international that would fit into two subtypes – profit or non-for-profit. The category other was added to in case the proposed categories were not representative or exhaustive.

The list of the PR professionals was far from exhaustive but great effort was put to include a number of practitioners from each sector or each type of organization for ensuring variability. As the analysis of the survey returns showed it was possible to ensure diversity of organizational types and include respondent both from Yerevan – the capital, and the regions. Unfortunately, most of the company websites lacked information about their PR staff and their contacts. It was impossible to evaluate also whether they employed PR practitioners at all.
Eventually a small sample frame of 141 entries was comprised. In case of standard on-line survey response rate of 10-15% this frame could generate about 20 responses. This sample could serve as a pre-test sample for further more generalizable research outside the scope of this study, based on the recommendation of 25-50 responses (Fink, 2006). The research aimed to generate from thirty to fifty survey returns by sending follow-up reminder if the response rate was low. To achieve higher response rate the Email invitation was not automated but was send to each potential respondent individually and included personal address line if names were available. Email addresses were specific and not generic as far as possible. This substantially contributed to response-rate. Each respondent received a link with customized ID to access the on-line survey hosted on www.surveymonkey.com platform, so that it would be possible to track the responses, to send acknowledgement and reminder Emails as well as the executive summary of the study if the respondents requested it. For keeping confidentiality and conducting unbiased analysis, the ID codes were kept separate from the names of respondents during the analysis at all times.

Though the response rate was high within the two weeks of collecting the responses, a reminder was sent to non-respondents, which generated additional feedback. Besides, for generating high response the survey was kept concise within total of 47 questions distributed along five digital pages. The design and logic of the self-administered survey was made user-friendly to ensure that there were no skipping and missing data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Characteristics of PR in Armenia with three subgroups of total 35 statements to be rated on a ratio scale; and the demographic section with 12 close-ended and short open-ended questions inquiring about
professional and educational background of the respondents. The settings of the Web-based survey allowed the respondents to go back and forth the pages to change their answers or to exit the survey at any time, based on the principle of voluntary participation.

**Sampling limitations and bias.**

Since the survey was conducted on-line only respondents with valid personal Email addresses were included in the frame. Therefore, the data will not be generalized for two reasons – the total number of PR professionals in Armenia was unknown, and even if census were used the survey questionnaire would reach only to population that used the Internet.

The majority of the sample included respondents living and working in Yerevan, the capital city. Though the Information Communication Technology companies gradually ensure Internet coverage in the regions of Armenia, there is still limited Internet access or usage in the regions. It was difficult to find PR practitioner data from the available websites of regional organizations, as it was the case in general.

**Description of research public.**

The primary public of the research were PR practitioners working in organizations operating in Armenia. For the purposes of the research and for analyzing multiple positions, all the respondents undertaking any form of communication activity related to PR, public communications or Media relations were included into the category of *PR practitioner* (see Appendix H). The distinction between the full or partial application of PR practice was made during the coding and analysis based on the answers
given to in the demographic and practice sections of the questionnaire. The titles of the respondents in the questionnaire were also coded. The participants that were included in the final analysis had to meet the criteria of inclusion and exclusion.

**Inclusion criteria.**

To be included in the survey the respondents needed to meet the definition of PR practitioner as operationalized for this study and must have worked and accumulated at least one year of relevant work experience in any type of organization operating in Armenia, even if the respondent had related work experience abroad. The point of including this criterion was to make sure that information provided by the respondents pertained to the context under study, which was Armenia. Since the survey frame did not include information on the years of experience, the category *less than a year* was also included in the questionnaire to collect accurate information if there were such respondents.

**Exclusion criteria.**

In addition to inclusion parameters, the exclusion criteria were the following: respondents holding Journalism or other positions were not considered unless they carried out PR tasks irrespective of holding or not holding the title. Non-PR specialists not practicing PR but teaching academic public relations courses would fall into a separate category, however the latter case was not encountered.

**Survey Instrument.**

“A reliable survey provides a consistent measure of important characteristics despite background functions. It reflects “true” score – one that is free from random
errors” (Fink, 2006, p. 38). One way to make sure the survey is reliable and valid is to use one that someone else has prepared and demonstrated to be reliable and valid through careful testing. This is particularly important when survey tests attitude, emotions, quality of life and moral values (Fink, 2006). To make sure that these and other requirements of reliability were met, an already pre-tested reliable instrument was used for the purposes of this study. One such instrument was the questionnaire for heads of PR departments in Excellence study found in the Excellent Public Relations and Effective Organizations by Grunig J., Grunig L. and Dozier (2002).

The Excellence study used complex set of coded items to answer two main sets of research questions: How, why, and to what extent does communication affect the achievement of organizational objectives? Second: How does public relations make an organization more effective and how much is that contribution worth economically?

The purpose of the Excellence study was to join middle range theories under one umbrella of comprehensive analysis and derive the factor of excellence. The proposed study used some attributes of the public relations as identified in the Excellence study and dwelled on those as variables to describe the public relations practice in organizations in Armenia. For the purpose of this study, the instrument was adopted and utilized to answer RQ2 – characteristics, RQ3 - function of public relations as well as some aspects of RQ4: quality and scope of expertise as operationalized through tasks performed, years of experience and education of PR practitioners.

From the two comprehensive and abridged versions of the Excellence study questionnaires for the heads of the public relations departments, the short version was adapted focusing mainly on the characteristic of PR department and skipping the section
about the PR programs. In addition, the evaluation section about the role of women practitioners and response to activism was omitted to keep the questionnaire short considering that this study focused on general attributes of practice. The statements and coding system were fully adopted. In the demographic section information was tailored to the context in Armenia such as in case of subscription of professional journals or education degrees. It should be noted also that the modified version of the questionnaire was intended for all the PR practitioners and not only heads of the departments which was the case in Excellence study.

The Excellence study instrument used the same open-end scale system throughout the whole questionnaire. Though this helped to avoid shifting from one semantic formulation to another, the numerical values could cause some confusion when answering items that might not be much practiced in Armenia. This could result in skipping considerable number of items on the questionnaire. Also from the language perspective, the descriptions of the numerical values would not adequately reflect the measure and the purpose of this study.

Therefore, the original measurement was shifted to Likert-type scale measurement, since the unusual format could contribute to reluctance of respondents to participate (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 2002) and also cause errors or missing data in self-administered survey. The 5-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree to strongly agree” and range from “never to always” were used. The survey questionnaire was complied in English and was translated into Armenian.
Analysis and interpretation of survey data.

Descriptive statistics provides a basis for more advanced techniques and includes counts (numbers or frequencies); measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode); measures of variation (range and standard deviation) (Fink, 2006) as well as measures of relationship, which indicates the “degree to which quantifiable variables are related to each other” (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005, p.8). The data collected from the survey sample yielded in two types of information – demographic (nominal) and quantifiable (ordinal or ratio) data about the knowledge, attitudes, behavior and practice of the PR practitioners in the context of Armenia. Since the proposed survey combines qualitative and quantitative paradigms (Creswell, 1994), the accumulated qualitative and quantative data were analyzed separately. Correlations between the dependent and independent variables were tested as applicable.

The demographic data was analyzed to understand the characteristics of the PR practitioners who work in the PR sphere in Armenia. This included measures of central tendency for the age, years of experience in PR, and descriptive data for general education, education in PR if applicable. This enabled to gain understanding in the qualifications of the respondents.

The KAB data analysis provided insight into PR practitioners’ understanding, perceptions, beliefs, anticipations about public relations as well as values they attach to PR. As Stacks (2002) notes attitudes are the bridge to behavior, or otherwise behavior is measured through opinions on how respondents think would behave in the proposed hypothetical situation. The analysis of this data was conducted through descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency, variance, measures of relationship.
(Mertler & Vannatta, 2010, p. 8). Since all the data of both the interviews and survey was collected from convenience sample the findings pertain to the sample population at this stage of the study. Theretofore, more advanced inferential statistical analysis was not applied, which deals with accumulating and analyzing information from the sample to make inferences about the general population as defined by Mertler and Vannatta (2010). However, representation of PR practitioners from diverse sectors and types or organizations, as well as wide scope of PR practice provided some level of validity to the sample.

Besides using reliable survey instrument, the reliability of the conclusions was ensured through generating high response rate and possible high quality of the collected data that was included in the analysis. High quality of the data provides room to have confidence that the resulting analysis and conclusions are reliable and accurate (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010, p. 4). The surveys were self-administrated, which eliminated researcher bias. The data was collected and retrieved from the web instrument automatically into EXCEL spreadsheet, which eliminated data entry errors. For accuracy, the data was cross and double-checked manually using the EXCEL 2007. Only fully completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis. Though the web-based instrument provided option of automatic analysis, this was not used upon which to base the study conclusions. First, because the automated analysis had limited variation and did not provide all the nuances required to answer the research questions. Secondly, the comparison on raw and filtered data showed that automatic filters have the tendency to skip some valid questionnaires. Therefore, human analysis was conducted.
Confidentiality and Informed Consent

If identifying study participants is necessary during the research project, their answers must be kept confidential: “Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the privacy of study participants must be respected by guarding their identity. If possible study participants must be anonymous - the answers that they provide should not be traceable to them” (Peterson, 2000, p. 7).

Though the convenience sample and the survey frame used identifiable data about the respondents, such as their names and Emails for correspondence, the survey questionnaire did request for names or identifiable information. Both the survey and in-depth interview participants were informed that all the provided information was strictly confidential and the data would be used only for the purpose of the academic research and would not serve any purpose other than explained in the consent letter. This provision was clearly stated during the correspondence with all the potential respondents.

The unique ID together with the IP address were used in on-line instrument settings to make sure that there was one respondent per questionnaire and there were no repeating entries to keep the data clean. It should be emphasized, that these parameters were not used as an indefinable data during either the analysis or publication of the study, and all the information was transformed into quantifiable numbered and coded data in the instrument of analysis.

The respondents of the in-depth or survey were informed and asked for consent for their answers to be audio recorded, besides the researcher taking notes. The in-depth interviews were carefully coded to ensure full confidentiality of the provided information and anonymity of the respondents.
Only the researcher had access to password protected on-line survey instrument and the password protected computer where the dataset and recordings were stored.

**Assumptions and Implications**

The given research is an exploratory study that has no precedent data, therefore the limitations of the scope of the study and the methods must be accounted for. This research cannot exhaust all the aspects of public relations practice that need to be investigated. The theories under discussion may not directly define the characteristics of PR practice in Armenia but only guide the research process.

1. The sample size was limited and given the restrains of sample frame and electronic method of conducting the survey, the data is not generalizable.
2. Reliability of the instrument was achieved by using a pre-tested and survey instrument that is widely used in PR research and scholarship to analyze global practice of the profession in various countries. However, shifting the scales and combining several parts of the instruments may account for some instrument bias.
3. There is no a readily available list of all PR professionals in Armenia nor there is a comprehensive list of all the organizations that have PR department or employ PR professionals. Thus, the sample was compiled from scratch, which did not include every PR practitioner in the country.
4. The sample included PR practitioners predominantly working in the organizations based in the capital - Yerevan.
5. Sampling methods depended on the sample frame and availability of the target populations.
6. The questionnaire was prepared in both the Armenian and English languages. The terms PR has various interpretations in Armenian and the selection of the best term was a challenge.
7. The method of conducting the survey was based on the Internet. Though it was assumed that most of the PR and Communication specialists in Armenia are computer literate and use electronic media efficiently, it may have excluded respondents who did not have Internet access.
8. Internet-based survey was a quick and efficient method to reach out to respondents. Since the researcher anticipated low return response rate as characteristic of this data collection technique, she took steps to do follow-up.
9. Being far from the situation and the public under study may have limited having the insight into nuances that that face-to-face interview or a larger number of survey respondents could provide.
Variables

Variable is a discrete phenomenon that can be measured or observed in two or more categories (Kerlinger, 1979 as quoted in Creswell 1994, p. 62). Variables might be distinguished by two characteristics: temporal order and their measurement. (Creswell, 1994). For the purpose of this study the main variables are categorized into dependent, independent to specify what type of relationships the study intended to investigate and find among those.

The PR practice was treated as a dependent variable that is investigated through answering the RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4. The dependent variables are generally defined as response to or result of intervention (Creswell, 1994, p. 63). The dependent variable of PR practice (DV1) relates to three sets of independent variables: PR department and practitioner function (IV1), PR practitioner role in the organization (IV2), PR practitioner expertise (IV3). The independent variables are defined as descriptive variables to explain a response or result of dependent variable (Creswell, 1994, p. 63). The environmental factors were treated as external variables (EV). These can also be considered as independent variables presumably influencing PR practice. However, this assumption was not tested through quantified data in the survey. On the other hand, the in-depth interview respondents provided sound insight by expressing their opinion about possible factors that most of the times matched with the theoretical assumption of five –factor frame for Global PR practice (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009). The Variable Matrix (Figure 3.1) includes hierarchy of operationalized variables. Variables were tested both qualitatively and quantitatively through triangulated research methods, so that internal consistency and reliability of measure is possible.
Function of the PR department within the organization was measured through statements identifying whether it had strategic or tactical value to the organization. In the in-depth interview the same variable was investigated through accounts of the respondents as how important their supervisors thought PR was for the organization, how valuable they found PR function and how the practitioners were able to demonstrate or measure PR value. In addition, similar to the survey the PR function was accounted for by identifying whether the practitioners were involved in strategic decision-making.

More details for the in-depth interview variables can be found in the codebook in Appendix C.

Role was operationalized and measured through the statements developed and coded for the Excellence Study (Grunig J. Grunig L. & Dozier, 2001). These were coded
as: M=Manager; T=Technician; MR=Media Relations CL=Communication Liaison. The intent was to understand the range of diversity or the tendency of roles through the statements about the performed tasks. In this case performed tasks and responsibilities became intervening variables expressed in the statements or demographic data. Intervening variables are defined as intermediary between the dependent and independent variables and are statistically controlled (Creswell, 1994, p. 63).

Expertise was operationalized through performed tasks and professional demographic attributes. The tasks were coded the same way as in Excellence study: T=Technician; 2S=two-way symmetry; PI =Public Information; PA=Press Agentry; M=Management; 2A=2 way asymmetric. The models of communication were intermediary measure of describing the tasks performed through provided statements. These did not aim to test whether any of those described the main practice of a respondent. Expertise was also operationalized through level of highest education, years of experience, and training in PR. In this case, expertise became a dependent variable. This category was more insightful based on the in-depth interview in which case expertise included also knowledge and application of research methods, use of theoretical and practical PR strategies, attitudes and opinions about PR sphere in Armenia.

Other characteristics such as membership and use of literature were of secondary interest for measuring expertise and related more directly to practice. The demographic data about the size and type of the organization, number of employed PR practitioners, age and title of the position were important for understanding organizational and personal context where PR practice applied.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Study Demographics

All the personal and professional identifiable information was coded to ensure the information is confidential and non-identifiable. For confidentiality reasons the respondents of in-depth interview were indicated in alphabetical letters in the codebook (see Appendix C). These are random codes and not initials of the names of the interviewees. The names of organizations are not mentioned except for the type and sphere of industry. Organizations or alphabetical codes of the interview participants are not included in discussion or when presenting direct quotes to assure full confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and their organizations. In order to differentiate between in-depth interview and survey participants and to avoid repetition during comparisons, the sample populations are termed as interviewee and respondent respectively.

For the study, the data of eleven in-depth interviews and 46 on-line surveys was collected from the PR practitioners working in various organizations in Armenia. The aim was to reach out to a diverse sample of practitioners that have experience in different organizations such as local and international non-profits, corporate and governmental, private and public sectors, working both in the capital and in the regions. The number of responses for both qualitative and qualitative data met the expectations. For both methods of research inquiry the respondents and interviewees were asked two sets of
questions: information pertaining to characteristics of the PR department and
demographic, which included age, gender, highest education and training in PR, years of
experience, and professional affiliation. The first set included statements or questions to
understand and measure characteristics of PR practice through the role, function and
expertise of the PR practitioners. In this chapter the findings about the measured variables
for PR practice are presented separately for survey and in-depth interviewed for the large
amount of data. The comparison of trends for both qualitative and quantitative methods
as well as overviews of five environmental factors are introduced in Chapter V.

**In-depth interview sample demographics.**

Total eleven (n=11) PR practitioners participated in the in-depth interview out of
fifteen that were invited to participate. Three of the invited professionals could not
participate because of time and other commitments, and one did not respond to the
invitation. The in-depth interviews were conducted within about one month’s period. All
the interviews, but one, were conducted in Armenian. The interviews lasted on average
one hour and focused on the six open-ended questions developed for the semi-structured
interview. All the respondents were asked the same questions but they were asked to
elaborate on their specific experiences outside the question frame. This enabled to
compare answers and to see if there was a general pattern of practice. Moreover, the logic
of questions for the in-depth interview tied into the survey, so that it was possible to
compare or find patterns and associations between the qualitative and quantitative data.

The gender distribution of the in-depth interview participants is the following:
nine (82%) of the respondents were female and two (18%) were male. The in-depth
interview convenience sample included PR practitioners working mainly in the capital, however, their activities stretched from national to regional, as well as international projects and campaigns. The age of almost all the interviewees was between 25 and 34, and one that fell into the range of 35-49. The age distribution of the interview population has the similar trend of age distribution as the survey respondents, where the mode of the age range was 25-34.

**Survey sample demographics**

For the survey invitation a customized Email containing salutation, details of the study, consent information, contact information as well as the customized link to on-line questionnaire sent to each potential respondent (n=141). The on-line questionnaire was designed and supported on the Survey Monkey platform (www.surveymonkey.com). Each link sent to a potential respondent had a unique ID code, to enable the researcher to send acknowledgement note, follow-up Email, and executive summary of the study. However, the unique ID was used only for correspondence purposes and was not used in the process of the data analysis to ensure confidentiality. The survey data was collected within the period of one month. All the respondents who completed the questionnaire received acknowledgement letter and notification that the executive summary of the study would be sent to them at the end of May, 2011 after the study had been completed.

Overall response rate by the end of the survey data collection was 38% from the modified population (n=121) and 33% of the original population (n=141). Out of total 141 sent Emails, 20 (14%) were undeliverable, and there were 67 (48%) non-responses after the follow-up Email. Of total 54 attempts of completing the on-line survey 8 (6%)
were partially completed or not completed. For the purpose of the study only fully completed 46 questionnaires were considered for the analysis.

The gender distribution of the survey was close to that of the frame and the in-depth interviews based on the modified population. The preliminary frame included 34 male (24%), 100 female (74%) and 7 (5%) unidentified. The gender of the seven respondents could not be identified because of generic Email and unavailability of names. After the undeliverable Emails were eliminated, the modified frame included 29 male (24%), 85 female (70%) and 7 (6%) unidentified potential respondents. From the modified frame (n=121), the received 46 completed responses had the following gender distribution: 9 male (20%), 34 female (80%), and no missing data. For comparison, the in-depth interview included 2 male (18%) and 9 female (82%) respondents. More than half of the respondents – 27(59%) indicated their age was between 25-34, which reflects the age representation of the in-depth interview. Almost one in four respondents (24%) indicated age range 35-49. Only five respondents (7%) mentioned they were between 18 and 24, and the smallest group 3 people (7%) were in the age range 50-64. No one mentioned age group 65+. The age distribution indicates that the PR is a young profession in terms of age groups that mostly practice the profession.

It is not possible to argue whether this pattern represents the gender and age distribution of PR practitioners in Armenia because the data for both the in-depth interviews and the survey was retrieved from non-randomized convenience sample. However, similarity between the frame and two research samples demonstrate a pattern and allow making an assumption that female practitioners are considerably more represented in the PR industry than the males.
Characteristics of PR department.

Type of organization
The industries that the organizations represent based on which the interviewees gave their accounts were the following: healthcare, arts and culture, education, community and national infrastructure development, telecommunications, foreign representation, youth exchange, environment/ecology, and communications. The background work experience of the interviewees was mostly in non-profit local and international organizations (six) and various for-profit organizations both local and international (five).

Like in case of the in-depth interview, the survey also included PR practitioners from different organizations both from the capital and from each of the ten regions. Regional organizations were predominantly governmental, however these were not analyzed separately, for the overall small sample (10). PR practitioners working in the region comprised 7% of the sample frame. Survey response rate from the regions was only 3 respondents (7%) out of total number of completed responses. The organizations in the questionnaire were introduced as for-profit and non-for-profit and were divided into three categories as private, state or governmental, public and international. If not marked as international, the organization was considered local. The 44 respondents indicated an organization, and two (8%) did not indicate any. The category “other” that was included, resulted in proportionally equal number of responses to the rest of the categories and mostly includes mixed types of organizations such as privately, publicly or state funded projects, organizations and foundations. As can be seem from Figure 4.1, the organizations are equally distributed, however, the private sector - 14 (30%) was
almost twice as much as the public sector 6 (13%). The state/governmental, international and other mixed types of organizations were mentioned 17% of times. Of all the mentioned types of organizations 16 (36%) were for-profit and 20 (45%) were non-for-profit. For the mixed types of organizations it was impossible to define the category of profit, so 18% was unidentifiable for this category. For the public sector all the organizations were non-for-profit.

![Bar chart showing distribution of organizations from survey sample (n=44)](image)

**Figure 4.1 Distribution of organizations from survey sample (n=44)**

**Size of PR department.**

Based on the information provided by the interviewees, the number of PR staff in the PR department ranged from one to five, one being predominant. Eight of the interviewees were in one-person PR department. They sometimes outsourced ancillary services such as design and printing of promotional materials; or counted on the support of other departments or team members if there were major undertakings such as opening
or public events, awareness or media campaigns. Three interviewees had supporting staff in the department: one had an assistant, one had two team members, plus a separate marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) departments within the organization, and one had four other team members in PR department. If there was a PR team, than PR department management included additional responsibilities such as supervision, task delegation and mentoring. On the other hand, having a support reduced the burden of being involved in many tactical tasks which the one-person departments had to accommodate to.

The relation between size of the organization and the department could not be tested, because the number of the overall staff of the organization was not asked during the interview. For understanding if the size of the organization and the number of employed PR practitioner had any correlation, the survey respondents were asked to indicate the number for both in the questionnaire. The average size of the organization as of number of people employed was 287 people with the range from 6 to 3500. The mode was 20 people. For the number of PR practitioners employed the average number was 2 PR practitioners with a range from 1 to 5, and mode was one PR practitioner. For the small sample size statistical test was not performed, however the trends were viewed based on descriptive statistics. The organization with most number of employees 3200 employed 5 PR practitioners, the next biggest with 3000 employees – 3 PR practitioners, while the third biggest with 2500 employees had only one PR practitioner. Taking the minimum of the range an organization with 6 employees had one PR practitioner, while an organization with 30 employees had 5 PR practitioners. This could be logical if the organization were a PR agency.
However, the inconsistency between the available data about the number of employees and number of PR practitioners cannot account for any correlation between the two variables, therefore in the future analysis other factors must be considered as well. As the survey results demonstrate the size of the organization and number of the PR staff is not congruent. Therefore, size cannot be a priority indicator. Other factors, such as financial capacity, may influence the decision of how many PR practitioners to employ in an organization.

*Position and years of experience.*

The average years of experience of the interviewees in public relations was seven years, the mode was six years. The range for the years of experience in public relations was 13 years, with minimum 2 and maximum 15 years of experience. The PR practice of the interviewees included diverse foci such as non-profit PR, corporate PR, PR consulting, community relations and public affairs. The interviewees were asked to elaborate on their experience based on the context of the organizations that they worked for at the time of the interview, or the most recent organization where they performed role of PR practitioner, if not employed. Seven of the interviewees were employed as PR practitioners at the time of the interview, three were employed in a different capacity, and one was unemployed. Irrespective of the employment status they were encouraged to evaluate their experience as PR practitioners within the context of the organization that they last worked as PR practitioner as well as elaborate on their overall work experience in the field.
More than half of the respondents held senior positions in their organizations such as PR/Communications manager or director, two of the respondents had senior positions but PR was a supplementary function to their main management tasks. One had a position of PR officer, however being the only in-house PR staff, the interviewee performed wide range of management and communication functions. In general the overall experiences of the interviewees combined a mix of management, communication liaison and technician functions. The scope of practice is introduced in more details in Chapter V of the study.

Based on the context of the organization that the interviewees depicted their experiences all of them were employed in-house except for one who was involved in the organization as a consultant. In the survey, the respondents were also asked to indicate the title of their position as an open-ended entry. After collection of the data, the positions were grouped into coded categories, depending on the level of hierarchy. Slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) held senior position of either as PR director or a manager. The title such as coordinator or responsible could be either senior staff or not, so it was analyzed separately. Six respondents (13%) did not indicate any title. It should be noted that the in-depth interview sample also included predominantly senior level PR staff.
All respondents indicated year of experience based on the ranges provided in the questionnaire. The most commonly encountered range for experience in PR was 1-5 years that was mentioned by 23 respondents and accounted for half of total responses. The next more commonly mentioned range was 6-10 years, for 12 (26%) respondents. The options less than a year and more than 10 years were mentioned only by 7 (15%) and 4 (7%) respondents respectively.

However, the level of seniority was not always related to the years of experience. When comparing the years of experience with the titles out of 24 respondent with senior positions half had 1-5 years of experience, 8 (33%) had 6-10 years of experience, and equal number of respondents – 2 (8%) had either less than one year more than 10 years of experience.
Findings

Scope of PR practice.

The scope of PR practice in Armenia was discussed with in-depth interview participants by inquiring into contribution that the PR department made into the organization, perceptions of practitioners and senior management about the role of PR as well as the tasks the interviewees performed on organizational level. The survey respondents answered similar questions by evaluating the proposed statements in the first three sections of the questionnaire. Asking compatible questions for both qualitative and quantitative research helped to develop general themes and recognize the main trends. In this part of the findings the survey and in-depth interview are presented separately for practical reasons.

Qualitative findings

Function and value of PR department.

The in-depth interview included six main open-ended questions that were divided into two parts like the survey questionnaire. The first part covered four questions intended to inquire into the opinions of PR practitioners concerning their function, role and tasks that they performed as well as the value that they thought their senior management placed on PR function. Question five inquired into the opinions about the factors contributing to the development of PR in Armenia, and the last question inquired into the educational and professional background of the interviewees. All of the questions were coded according to the main themes around which the findings of the interview data clustered. These were also compatible to the data of the survey and were compared through axial coding whenever appropriate.
The question 1: *How and to what extent does public relations contribute to your organization?* generated the following results from the large scope of the interview data. Most of the depictions by the interviewees clustered around the strategic and tactical functions. Among the strategic function the most commonly mentioned were the following subcategories: policy and decision making; strategic participation in organizational operations mentioned predominantly by the interviewees in management positions; liaison between the organization and key publics of the organization; image, brand and reputation management.

Being a council to the senior management was mentioned by half of the interviewees. This function was expressed by providing advice on strategic decisions, and project developments, generating and proposing new ideas about organization’s communication.

I started working and collaborating with the CEO and senior management, I introduced the whole scope of PR function to them. My responsibilities accordingly increased and the role of PR as well. As a summary, the vision and importance of PR was very narrow – I introduced the big picture (Personal correspondence, January 26, 2011).

Only three interviewees addressed conflict and issues management which was mostly related to reacting to the unfavorable media coverage or avoiding client/beneficiary dissatisfaction. Another three interviewees directly mentioned they were multitasking, though based on the accounts and descriptions of their duties all of the interviewees were multitasking. Only one respondent directly mentioned PR function for long-term relationship building.
The interviewees concentrated more on strategic function of PR and mentioned only a few tactical functions which were grouped into categories such as preparation of collateral materials and information dissemination.

To further investigate and understand what value the PR department and PR practitioner function had, the interviewees were asked to provide the evaluation of their senior management by answering the question 2: *How does your senior management perceive the role of public relations in your organization?*

To describe the PR value ascribed by the senior management the interviewees used the words such as “key role”, “pivotal”, “very important”, “second position after the CEO”, “one of the few departments directly reporting to CEO”, “the organization could not do without PR function”, etc.

The Executive Director recognized PR as one of the most important areas. (Personal correspondence, January 24, 2011).

Many of the interviewees also stated that the value of PR was expressed not only through the evaluation of the senior management but also the respect and understanding of their colleagues.

The main theme that embraces all the depictions was *part of dominant coalition* with the subcategories. The most commonly mentioned were the following categories: strategic function; key department or equal to the other departments in status; direct reporting and access to the CEO; recognition, understanding and feedback from the senior management.
We have several directions and components in the project, and PR is one of the key components. From the inception of the project PR has been pivotal. During the years the PR strategy has expended, modified and new elements have added (Personal correspondence, January 28, 2011).

Four of the interviews mentioned that the senior management had high expectations from PR function in terms of efficiency, economy and positive outcomes for the organization. One interviewee, who was performing PR tasks by personal initiative along with the main managerial functions, mentioned that in their organization in general PR activities were less visible or reactive at most because senior management did not see PR as a priority. Another interviewee who had director position in the organization in a different capacity and performed some aspects of PR mainly as communication and press liaison, mentioned that PR was an important function but was secondary to other responsibilities.

As for demonstrating the value of PR activities to the senior management all the interviewees conducted some formal or informal research to evaluate their work. The interviewees indicated a number of evaluation techniques that they used, such as measuring PR impact through sales, informal interviews, and mostly media clipping. Two used studies done by other companies or external audit of overall organizational performance. The interviewees, who used also new media to communicate with their publics, found it an effective tool for measurement such as monitoring Google analytics or number of fans on the Facebook.

Most of the interviewees considered scientific research such as surveys, polls, and outcome analysis very important. However, as they mentioned there were financial,
human resource and time limitations that hampered conducting extensive scientific research for PR activities.

Research is the most difficult question. To show the effectiveness of the work or activities you need to have enough resources to do the research. Even for outsourcing research team who would evaluate situation before PR activity, unfortunately we do not have those resources. Most of our sponsoring headquarter offices do research periodically and these indicate the importance and effectiveness of PR (Personal correspondence, February 9, 2011).

Besides, though most of the interviewees mentioned the value of research and later described several mostly informal methods of evaluating their work, nobody specifically mentioned publics segmentation and analysis. When directly asked whether they do publics analysis, one interviewee mentioned it would be very helpful but was not done, two others said that was not done in-depth through some formal survey, rather approximately by knowing the specific public that the organization was working with.

Another indicator of PR value in the organization was PR strategy being a component of overall strategic plan of the organization. When the organization did not have a clearly identifiable vision or strategic direction, it was difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of PR strategy especially when the department was in the set-up stage.

The interviewees were not directly asked whether the PR department had or managed its own budget but some of the interviewees mentioned it in the context of the value of PR as a strategic function. In this case PR helped to use the communication budget efficiently and contributed to financial sustainability of the organization, as four of the interviewees mentioned.
Role of PR practitioners.

For deeper insight into the specific trends of the roles that PR practitioners played on the organizational level, the interviewees were asked to elaborate on the following question: *How would you describe your role in the organization?*

The responses were categorized into four themes that were compatible with the coding which Excellence study applied. The main roles of the interviewees were the following: manager, communication liaison, media liaison, and technician. In general the interviewees performed all of the roles in the mixed form. The extent to which role dominated, depended on a number of characteristics and factors of the PR department: the specifics of the organization, number of staff in the PR department, the position of the PR practitioner, and whether PR was a strategic or tactical function. The manager role incorporated the following key activities among others: strategy and implementation plan development; counseling senior management and team members on communication strategies, managing the PR team whenever there was one (see detailed list of functions in Appendix C).

Notwithstanding being a council to the senior management and developing PR strategy, only three interviewees mentioned developing communication policy.

As for the crisis communication and management, this was done mostly to deal with the effects of negative media coverage. One interviewee mentioned it would be hard to persuade the senior management in the importance of having a crisis communication plan. Another interviewee said the organization did not have a crisis management document in place but they constantly did issues and competitor monitoring, as well as environmental scanning. However, since the question was not included on the
list and was not asked to all of the interviewees it would hard to evaluate the overall trends among the interviewees.

In the technician function there were two main tendencies: almost all of the interviewees wrote news releases and stories. Design, collateral materials, photo and video were mentioned less, either because these functions were performed by the assisting team, or were outsourced. However, in one-person departments that did not outsource these services, three interviewees mentioned doing all of these tasks. The other conspicuous trend was that most of the interviewees did website update and maintenance. Even if not directly managing the website they provided audiovisual and textual materials to the headquarter offices for website content updates.

Media liaison was a predominant role: the interviewees were always engaged in media relations as key publics for their organizations. All of the interviewees established and maintained media contacts, and most of them organized media events or opportunities for media coverage. However, only three mentioned directly facilitating news conferences, and two said they were facilitating media appearance for the organization’s CEO or other representatives.

The theme of the communication liaison had a number of different categories, none of which was mentioned by the great majority of the interviewees mostly because these were specific to the organization’s profile and its publics. The categories were in the following distribution:

*Community relations* and *public awareness* were mentioned mostly by all interviewees whose organizations offered community based services or realized such projects. *Client* and *beneficiary relations* were mentioned by interviewees from both
profit and non-for profit organizations. *Partnerships* and *donor relations* were organization specific. Other rarely mentioned categories that were bound to the specific activities of the organization were *international relations* (3), and *public affairs* (1). However, it is hard to argue that main tasks and responsibilities were specific to PR subspecialties. As one of the interviewees noted, it would be ideal to have specialized professionals if there were a PR team:

> If I had my own team, I would like each team member to focus on some specific area of public relations such as donor relations, media relations, fundraising, and others that would be relevant to the organization (Personal correspondence, January 26, 2011)

As for promoting the organization and ensuring its visibility, all of the interviewees mentioned organization public events or campaigns, however only four directly stated representing their organization at events. Two interviewees indicated that their organization integrated CSR program in their organizational operations.

**Expertise of PR practitioners.**

To complete the section about the characteristics of the PR department in the organization the interviewees were asked the following question: *What are the main tasks that you carry out on a daily basis?* This question enabled to understand not only a more specific breakdown of tasks but also have an outlook on the expertise and skills of the PR practitioners. Since it is impossible to evaluate the PR practice by a typical day (White, L´Etang & Moss: Srirarmesh & Verčič, 2009), unless directly observed, the tasks are
approximate account of what the interviewees recollected as their main overall performance.

The most commonly stated answers were coded in the following major themes: media management; research and measurement; strategic management; supervision; communication; and coordination.

*Media management* included tasks such as media review and monitoring, media digest preparation to share with the team, media pitching, media briefings or conferences and media appearances. Altogether all of the interviewees took steps to ensure media coverage of their activities. Besides the conventional media, again most of the interviewees engaged in website maintenance and two mentioned social media management. Those interviewees who used some form a media, blog, Facebook, tweeter, indicated the effectiveness for reaching out to their niche audiences. Another interviewee was actively preparing a social media policy for their organization, and one said it would be very beneficial to use new media. Two others said their headquarter offices were engaged in management of the new media communications. Overall, the interactive new media has started immersing into the practice of PR in the organizations. This could be a good indicator that the organizations are trying establish a two-way rapport by reaching out to their publics more directly.

Electronic media has become very important for our message distribution. Traditional media uses our social media resources from our news pool (Personal correspondence, February 2, 2011).
Research and measurement tasks were multidimensional and mostly confined to informal methods. The main forms of the research related tasks mentioned by three or more interviewees were the following: informal surveys, media clipping and archiving mentioned by all, website and social media monitoring, collecting information and reporting, output/outcome analysis, PR activity assessment based on return of investment and market analysis.

The research methods that were used by one, but not one and the same interviewee were focus groups or town hall meetings, environmental scanning, issues monitoring, outsourced research on media, competitor analysis, and benchmarking. Two interviewees mentioned also that experience and professional intuition were helpful for decision making.

Strategic management included PR strategy development, which all the interviewees did, four did counseling, and two also policy development. However none of the respondents directly mentioned issues or crisis management.

Supervision referred to the six interviewees who had PR team, though not all of the following subcategories necessarily apply to each of them. Supervision included: team management, team briefing and brainstorming, troubleshooting and task delegation, quality control of the service or communication items, mentoring and capacity building.

Communication on the team level included meetings and correspondence with the team, department management, and senior staff. All of the interviewees with or without the teams mentioned this. This could indicate at the active role of the PR practitioner in managing internal communication, though almost none of interviewees mentioned this
function when asked to describe their role. In addition, three of the interviewees mentioned being engaged in answering public inquiries.

*Coordination* category included organization of events involving the team and counterparts, facilitating team meetings, training sessions, or outsourcing some support services such as design and printing.

The next level of questions asked about the specific factors that the interviewees thought influenced the development and practice of PR in Armenia. The interviewees shared their thoughts and opinions about the question 5: *What do you think are the specific factors that define and characterize PR practices in Armenia?* The two main factors that all of the interviewees mentioned were the economy and the media. They indicated the political system and activism by mentioning pluralism, freedom of speech as well as political campaigns. None of the interviewees directly indicated democracy as a factor, and only one directly stated activism was influencing development of PR. The survey questionnaire did not include this question. The environmental factors are presented in detail at the beginning of the Chapter V.

*Education and professional affiliation.*

Besides demographic and practice related information participants of both in-depth interview and the survey were asked to provide information about their higher degree of education and PR training. This information helped to understand what level of academic and professional expertise the respondents and the interviewees bring to the field of PR. In case of the survey options of education degrees were proposed, from which the respondents could choose. In case of the in-depth interview it was possible also
to define the main fields of expertise from where the interviewees proceeded into the PR industry. The collected data was useful for substantiating the discussion around the PR education developments, progress made and perspectives. In addition, the respondents and interviewees were asked to provide information about their professional affiliation and resources that they used for professional information.

The interviewees came from diverse educational backgrounds. All of them held a higher education degree. Three of the interviewees held Bachelor’s Degree or Diploma, others Master’s Degree or MBA degrees from either local or international universities, sometimes from both. One of the respondents was currently working on earning PhD degree. Most of the respondents were exposed to international education systems either by attending training sessions or participating in short and long term degree and non-degree programs abroad. All of the respondents had experience with international organizations either by working in one or being a counterpart. The interviewees studied wide range of educational disciplines as their first university degree: five majored in foreign languages and linguistics, three in journalism, one in political science, one in Eastern studies, and one in polytechnic sciences. Most of the respondents had one or two second graduate degrees such as MA or MBA in marketing, communications, political studies, international relations and law.

As for the education in PR, all of the interviewees had some level of training at some point of their career as a PR practitioner. The training was mentioned by six of the interviewees, and included either a university or vocational course in PR, and job shadowing. Some of the interviewees had several different training courses in PR. Six of the interviewees held MA or MBA degree in related communications fields such as
marketing, communications and international relations from Armenian or international universities. Three of the interviewees also taught vocational and/or academic courses in PR. In addition, all of the interviewees were fluent in at least two foreign languages – Russian and English, besides Armenian. The knowledge of foreign languages was not asked in the survey.

When asked if they had any professional membership in Armenian or international associations, most of the interviews said they were not affiliated to any except for three, of which two were members of the Armenian PR Association, and one Union of Journalists of Armenia. Interviewees had different reasons of why and why not they join or do not join professional associations. Some of the interviewees, who were not affiliated to local professional associations, indicated they did not consider the existing unions proactive in providing platform for professional networking. Instead they mentioned personal networking and peer support as their main source of professional exchange and sharing. Those who were affiliated to APRA used the services on different capacity either the library resources or training opportunities.

The main sources of information about PR were Russian or Western books, mainly authors from the US or UK, as well as Internet articles and blogs. Only two of the interviewees mentioned being familiar with Armenian language PR text books, which were supplemented with foreign literature and resources. No local academic and peer reviewed journals were mentioned, confirming the assumption that such resources are not available at this point.
Quantitative findings

Function and value of PR department

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the main findings about the strategic function that the respondents perform in their organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>never N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>seldom N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>sometimes N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>often N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>always N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Strategic planning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Response to social issues</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Major initiatives (e.g. acquisitions, major new programs, movement into new markets, launches of new products or services)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Routine operations (e.g. development and maintenance of employee communication, community relations, or media relations programs)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Regularly conducted and routine research activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making other than research</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Informal approaches to gathering information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Contact with knowledgeable people outside the organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The most frequently mentioned answers are in boldface

Figure 4.3 Contribution of PR in the organization

The statements indicate mostly strategic and managerial tasks. The respondents were asked to evaluate the statements as pertaining to their performance on the scale of “never” to “always” to indicate the range and the scope of strategic functions that PR practitioner or department performs on the organizational level. A small majority of respondents (65%) mentioned that they were often or always engaged in strategic planning, and only 13% mentioned they seldom did strategic planning, while a small
number of respondents (22%) did strategic planning only sometimes. There were no respondents who never did any strategic planning. This indicates that for most of the times strategic planning is part of the PR operations.

As for PR practitioner or department participation in operations of the organization, again a vast majority (89%) mentioned that they often or always were engaged in daily operations of their organization, and another majority of respondents (72%) indicated also being engaged in major initiatives of the organization. A small number of the respondents (27%) mentioned they never or seldom participated in major initiatives of the organization. The responses to questions about research by using formal and informal methods were more dispersed among the answers that the respondents provided. One in three (33%) respondents always regularly conducted routine research, and approximately one in four (22%) always conducting formal research. Almost equal number of respondents (24%) conducted formal research for decision making. More than one in three respondents (39%) indicated they often applied research to their activities. Same number of respondents often used informal methods and slightly fewer respondents (30%) used formal research methods. On the other hand, very few respondents (7%) indicated that they seldom did research on regular basis and no respondent indicated they never did. Almost, equal number respondents (7%) mentioned they never conducted formal research. Overall more than half of the respondents indicated utilizing formal or informal methods of research in their strategic activities. This research trend was compared to the similar statements in Figure 4.4.

The responses to the two of the statements about strategic external communication such as responding to social issues and establishing contacts with experts
outside the organization also made the impression that PR practitioners were actively engaged in external communication on strategic level. Almost half of the respondents (48%) indicated they always responded to social issues, and 35% indicted they often did. Another 13% mentioned they sometimes responded to social issues, thus indicating that the vast majority of the respondents exercised some symmetry of communication with the external publics. Again, only very few (4%) indicated they seldom responded to social issues. It should be noted that the statements did not measure the frequency of issues arising; consequently the responses indicate the perceptions of the PR practitioners about the level of their involvement in issues management as those arise. Another majority (83%) indicated that they acted as a liaison between the organization and the external experts.

The responses towards active engagement in all these management roles also indicate that PR played active role in the operations of the organization and connecting the organization to its publics. Taking into consideration that more than half of the respondents in the sample had PR manger or director positions, this could be a possible outcome. In general the responses of the survey data match with the indicators of the themes of the in-depth interview in which case most of the interviewees, especially those in managerial positions, were predominantly part of the dominant coalition and played active role in multiple operations of the organization, as well as functioned as communicators and relationship building agents between the organization and its publics.

However, to test whether the responses were skewed towards socially desirable answers, those were tested through a number of similar follow-up and more specific
segmented statements about performed tasks. This enabled to get more insight into specific roles that the PR practitioner played in the organization.

*Role of PR practitioners.*

The respondents were asked to rank the responses based on their experiences within the setting of the organization that they currently worked for. They ranked the proposed statements based on 5-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The statements did not include exhaustive list of all the possible roles that a PR practitioner could perform, but presented some balanced representation of each of possible roles. The roles were stratified, and each of the statements coincides with a specific code denoting whether it was a manager, communication liaison or media relations or technician role. The coding based on the indices of the Excellence study (Grunig J. Grunig L. & Dozier, 2001) refers to the analysis only and was not presented as a part of the questionnaire.

The aim of the inquiry was to identify the scope of performed roles. In general, again the respondents were inclined to mostly agree or strongly agree with the proposed statements. Only few respondents were undecided by indicating that they neither agree nor disagree with the statements.
As can be seen from the results in Figure 4.4, the respondents seemed to perform overall multiple roles with some standing out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>neither disagree nor agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>15 33%</td>
<td>28 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I create opportunities for the management to hear the views of various internal and external publics</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>18 39%</td>
<td>17 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication or public relations campaigns</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>17 37%</td>
<td>23 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I represent the organization at events and meetings</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>20 43%</td>
<td>21 46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I maintain media contacts for my organization</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td>9 20%</td>
<td>34 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I make communication policy decisions</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>4 9%</td>
<td>17 37%</td>
<td>16 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for success or failure of communication or public relations programs</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td>15 33%</td>
<td>22 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I keep others in the organization informed of what they report about our organization and important issues</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>14 30%</td>
<td>29 63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Although I do not make communication policy decisions, I provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>5 11%</td>
<td>17 37%</td>
<td>11 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I do photography and graphs for communication or public relations materials</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>8 17%</td>
<td>10 22%</td>
<td>16 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I edit or rewrite for grammar and spelling of the materials written by others in the organization</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>5 11%</td>
<td>18 39%</td>
<td>15 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving communication or public relations problems</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>20 43%</td>
<td>16 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am senior council to top decision makers when communication or public relations issues are involved</td>
<td>2 4%</td>
<td>3 7%</td>
<td>18 39%</td>
<td>20 43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The most frequently mentioned answers are in boldface

**Figure 4.4 Role of PR practitioners**
In the Figure 4.4 the most predominantly mentioned tasks concerned media relations. While the majority of the respondents indicated that they often or always were engaged in strategic functions, when answering the statements describing their roles almost all the respondents (94%) agreed or strongly agreed performing media relations tasks. Another majority of respondents (63%) strongly agreed or agreed (30%) that they inform their staff about the media coverage. This trend of media relations being a form of accountability and information dissemination was observed also while clustering the responses of the interviewees from the qualitative research in which case all of the interviewees mentioned media clipping, archiving, media monitoring and media content analysis to evaluate the PR activities. However, the weight of media liaison role among others was difficult to measure based on qualitative accounts.

The next most often indicated response was about the technician role activities. The majority (61%) of respondents strongly agreed and another 33% agreed that they make promotional materials. Statements 10 and 11 in Figure 4.4 were also indicative of technician function presenting subcategories such as proofreading, or taking photos, in which case half as many respondents indicated that they strongly agreed (35%) with performing the tasks and almost equal number of respondents (39%) indicated they agreed with the statement.

If compared to the findings of the in-depth interview, this tendency presents a complex duality of PR practitioner function. On the one hand, the PR practitioners performed strategic manger functions that would take a lot of time on the other hand they were also engaged in tactical tasks, which is specifically the case for on-person in-house PR practitioners. This trend was endorsed not only by the accounts of the interviewees
when enumerating their tasks, but also when they were asked to express their opinion about the PR practice development and trends.

Statements 2, 4, 9, 13, of Figure 4.4 indicate at the communication liaison role of a PR practitioner. The answers of strongly agree and agree were within the range of 24% to almost 50%. This function could be divided into two levels – communication liaison within the organization in a decision-making capacity (statements 9 and 13), and external relations (statements 2 and 4). Great majority of the respondents (89%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they represented organization at events and meetings or created opportunities for management’s communication with the publics (76%). However, in this case the responses between agree and strongly agree were almost equally split, and 22% percent was unsure. This function was not directly stated during in-depth interviews, but again a lot of interviewees were engaged in communication with diverse publics and public campaign events.

The management role statements such as taking responsibility were included from different perspectives – the practitioner feeling responsible for the failure and success of the PR activities (statement 3) and the colleagues keeping him/her accountable for success or failure (statement 12). In the first case half of the respondents (50%) indicated they strongly agree another 37% agreed that they felt responsible for PR performance and. Only one person indicated they disagreed and four were unsure. In case of others holding PR practitioners responsible for the expertise again the majority (78%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

These statements indicate at the self-perceived and expected value of the PR practitioner within the organization. Likewise interviewees of the qualitative inquiry
expressed the idea that they felt responsible and their senior management as well as colleagues approached them for ideas, solutions, information, and council on strategic decisions and overall had high expectations from PR function.

However, when decision making about policies or contributing to decision making was directly stated, the answers were not as congruent. For the statement 6, *I make policy decisions* only 37% of respondents agreed they did, and equal number of respondents agreed they contributed to decision making by providing recommendations. While only 35% and 24% of respondents strongly agreed with the statements respectively. In this case more respondents were undecided (20%), and 5 respondents (11%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the making policy decisions and 6 (12%) with providing recommendations.

Overall, the answers to the management and communication liaison statements were congruent with the responses of the strategic functions in Figure 4.3. Compared to the in-depth interview responses, again the statements provided by the interviewees confirm that management function on the level of expectations is high and somewhat limited in decision-making. It can be concluded that PR practitioner has multiple roles.

*Expertise of PR professionals*

The next set of statements in the Figure 4.5, present some tasks to indirectly evaluate the expertise of PR practitioners. Since the statements are not exhaustive, the expertise was specifically investigated also through demographic inquiry about experience, education, PR training as well as professional affiliation. The answers to the statement enabled also to delineate the overall consistency of responses provided in
Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4.

The answers provided by the respondents can be divided into three main themes, media relations, strategic management and research activities in terms of understating the publics and context. The most conspicuous and most frequently mentioned tasks were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Coordinate the press conference or arrange media coverage of an event</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Negotiate with an activist group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Provide objective information about the organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Get your organization's name into the media</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Write speeches</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Develop goals and objectives for your department</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Prepare department budget</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Perform environmental scanning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Write news releases and feature articles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Develop strategies for solving public relations and communication problems</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Use research to segment publics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Manage the organization's response to issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The most frequently mentioned answers are in boldface*
media related activities. As in case of describing their role, a small majority respondents (65%) mentioned being always engaged in media related activities such as ensuring coverage, events, and conferences, and only two respondents indicated they never did. A small number of respondents indicated they sometimes (13%) and often (17%) perform such tasks. Another majority (70%) responded they always provided objective information which, indicates at public information model, and 70% said they always try to get their organizations name in the media, which coincides with press agentry model. Same number of respondents (22%) indicated they often were engaged in both activities. Related to media relations one of the technician roles that most of the respondents performed was writing news releases and feature articles: 67% indicated they always and 17% often did. While writing speeches was not as common with only 20% indicating that they always or often wrote speeches. Altogether media related activities whether in terms of communication symmetry or task level were the most commonly mentioned activities by the majority of respondents. On the organizational level, the management function such as developing strategies for the department or for solving PR problems was the second set of most frequently mentioned responses. Almost half of the respondents (46%) mentioned doing strategic planning for the department and 37% - for solving PR related issues. One in three (33%) was equally involved in both aspects of strategic planning. The rest of the responses were distributed among other response choices.

However, management function directed at research for understanding the public was less frequently mentioned. Use of research to segment publics could be divided into three sections: 30% of respondents never or seldom conducted such research, equal number of respondents did sometimes, and slightly more - 39% often or always did.
However, only 13% of the respondents always conducted research to segment the publics.

The research statements also indicated at managerial role according to coding in the Excellence study (Grunig J., Grunig L. & Dozier, 2002). In case of the second research related statement about performing environmental scanning, the pattern of responses was similar to the ones indicated in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.5, with almost one in three respondents indicating to be always or often doing environmental scanning.

As for preparing the PR department’s budget again the responses were almost equally distributed among the four answer options. Only 28% of the respondents always prepared department budget, 22% would often do, thus half of the respondents was engaged in preparing the departmental budget. While almost one in three (33%) never or seldom prepared a departmental budget, and 17% would do sometimes. However, preparing a budget may not indicate whether the PR department had an independent budget or whether PR practitioner managed it. Neither survey nor the in-depth interview questions specified this aspect of PR management.

Two of the statements specifically indicated at two-way symmetric communication. These were negotiating with activist groups and using conflict resolution theories in dealing with publics. Responses to both statements had very similar pattern of answers. Only about 20% of the respondents would always engage in activist groups or public to negotiate, about 30% would often or sometimes do, and the rest of respondents (20%) would seldom or never do. These statements were related to each other, but it is difficult to argue whether in the context of Armenia it represented a common practice. On the one hand, activist groups are not always challenging the organizations, though this
has been changing with the increase of activist movements in the last years (see Chapter V Environmental factors). It only can be assumed from the responses that communicating with such publics on a regular basis is not a dominant PR activity.

The symmetry of communication was not a primary focus of the research. However, most of the responses demonstrate a trend of public relations being predominantly asymmetric provided that majority of respondents indicated often or always performing public information, press agentry or two-way asymmetric activities. On the other hand, the responses to the statements about two-way symmetric do not provide enough information to make conclusive assumptions about symmetry in PR practice. The Figure 4.5 demonstrates that media relations and PR strategic management were overall predominant choices. Research and public analysis were moderately mentioned by the respondents, while segmentation of public was the least of the mentioned as always being performed.

Education and professional affiliation

In the survey results, slightly more than half of the respondents 24 people (52%) mentioned that they held Masters Degree as the last highest education, 10 (22%) indicated they held a University Diploma, 7 (15%) had Bachelor’s degree and 5 (5%) were candidates of sciences\(^1\). There were no indications of lower than BA Degree or as high as PhD degree. As for the education in public relations the respondents were offered to select the option that would best describe their level of education in public relations.

\(^1\) Candidate of sciences is a graduate degree preceding PhD based on the former higher education system, before Armenia joined the Bologna process http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/.
All the respondents answered this question as was the case with the general education. Slightly more than half of the respondents 24 (54%) indicated they had some continuous education in PR in the form of training, 7 (15%) took some University courses, 2 (4%) had Bachelor’s degree in PR and another 4 (9%) had Masters Degree in PR or related communication fields. Only 6 of the survey respondents (13%) did not have any form of training or education in PR.

The overall responses of both the respondents and interviewees about professional education demonstrate that all of the PR practitioners included in the sample had higher education degree on undergraduate or graduate levels. In vast majority of cases they also have at least some form of training in public relations. The level education was inquired as one of the indicators for expertise of PR practitioners in Armenia.

The survey data also confirmed the trend concerning the professional affiliation. Majority of the respondents (67%) did not have any affiliation to professional organizations though three options were provided with an alternative of indicating any other Armenian or international professional association. Almost one in three respondents (30%) indicated that they were affiliated to a professional association, and one respondent did not answer the question. Of the 14 respondents who indicated professional affiliation, 6 (43%) mentioned Armenian PR Association, one person mentioned Armenian PR Development center, and 7 respondents (50%) indicated other mostly Armenian associations such as Press Club, Union of Journalists of Armenia, Advertiser’s Council, Armenian Chamber of Commerce etc.

As for the main sources of using professional literature, 30 of the survey respondents (65%) mentioned international resources, 10 respondents (22%) – some
Armenian resource. Thus, the majority of the respondents (87%) used some professional resource and only five (11%) indicated they were not using any. Though the respondents had an option to specify the resources that they were using, they rarely did so. The in-depth interview participants mentioned using predominantly Russian and Western literature and the Internet sources about PR. The tendency of using foreign literature can be explained by the dearth of Armenian literature focusing on Armenia’s context. For example only two of the interviewees mentioned the Armenian textbook, which provides overview of PR practice.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The following chapter discusses the main findings accumulated from all methods of the research - secondary research, in-depth interviews and the survey, to answer the questions posited for the purpose of this study.

Environmental Factors

*Research Question 1: What factors have contributed to development of PR in Armenia?*

This question was answered through study of reports and articles on sociopolitical and economic analysis of Armenia. The secondary research accumulated information about the environmental factors in which the PR practice emerged and has been developing in Armenia. This follows the framework that Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) proposed for generating preliminary descriptive data about PR industry in a country. The framework included the following environmental factors: culture, economic system, political system of the country including also the legal system and their correlation, activism and the media. These factors have been generally discussed in Chapter 1 of the thesis. Hereby, an attempt was made to provide a brief overview of the country’s socio-cultural, political and economic profile within the limits of this study pertaining to sphere of public relations.

The preliminary findings were substantiated and compared to the opinions of PR practitioners participating in the in-depth interview. The in-depth interview question was
specifically formulated the following way: *What do you think are the specific factors that define and characterize PR practices in Armenia?* The interviewees expended also on evaluating the current state of PR development in Armenia in their own terms. The secondary research findings and interviewee comments fuse into one discussion.

**Culture.**

Culture is a complex construct that is composed of the value system in the society, which is usually invisible, and of more visible attributes on a comparatively superficial layer of practice (Hofstede G & Hofstede J., 2005). Values develop at early age predominantly in the institute of the family, while organizational values and practices develop later in the adulthood when a person has already formed his/her worldview. Moreover, the term culture as used in defining organizational cultures is not the same as the societal culture, since the members of the organization by definition do not “grow in the organization” and get exposed to core value systems in the process of childrearing (Hofstede G. & Hofstede J., 2005).

The core values that define five cultural dimensions in a broad sense (Hofstede. 2001; Hofstede G, & Hofstede J, 2005) are not investigated or measured in case of Armenia in any comprehensive research. Some attempts are underway. At this point the discussion about values would exceed the existing data and would go beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, the discussion of culture is limited to the visible layer - mainly practice. This approach enables to somewhat overcome the limitation of research on value system in Armenia.
The discussion of culture becomes important in the context of public relations because as the Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) argue in formulating the paradigm of investigating the global public relations practices, communication both influences and is influenced by the culture.

Since the scope of national culture is a more complex construct, the discussion refers to the organizational culture where the topic of PR practice pertains. The practice can be demonstrated through the institutions, governments, laws and organizations in the society (Hofstede G, & Hofstede J, 2005). Organization was the context from where the main data of the study was collected. Many of the interviewees mentioned the fact that PR practice differed based on juxtaposition of local versus international organizations. There are other axes that demonstrate this dichotomy, for example big organizations and small ones practicing PR differently based on the availability of resources.

At this point it is difficult to evaluate directly where exactly PR belongs in the society in Armenia. Indirectly, the discourse about the profession can provide some hint on its current status, meanwhile the duality of practice and perception remain. This can be a normal phenomenon for a country that has been transforming many other structures such political, economic, media and educational systems.

The interviewees noted that PR is better incorporated at full capacity in non-governmental organizations, and corporate sphere rather than in state or governmental structures. However, it should be noted that since 2003 most governmental structures have been actively creating PR departments. Overall, the evaluation of the profession by the interviewees was that PR is a Western discipline which was imported together with the competitive free-market business model after the country’s independence.
PR in Armenia cannot develop without referring to the Western school, from where it emerged (Personal correspondence, February 2, 2011).

On a broader context, the same dichotomy can be observed regarding the question of Armenian identity in a changing world. Armenians usually perceive themselves as belonging in between West and East, Europe and Asia both geographically and culturally. In the transition period and globalization the quest for identity becomes more diffused (Abrahamian, 2006). However, as Hofstede G. and Hofstede J. (2005) admonish, identity is not the same as culture or the values that the people hold in a society: identity answers to the question of where I belong to rather than what values I hold. Identity is defined also as competing of existing and new discourses (Curtin & Gaither 2007). Studies of discourse of opinion leaders in Armenian socio-political reality demonstrate the duality concerning how to look at the values and incoming perspectives from the West more specifically from Europe (Matosyan, 2008). While integrating into the European institutions from 2001-2007 and expending Armenia’s European relations, there was a debate about the impact of Eurocentric values on Armenian identity (Matosyan, 2008).

The search for locating cultural identity between the Western and local models of organizational cultures becomes a prominent factor as far as public relations is concerned. During the discussion with the interviewees the theme of long and short term orientation on the goals of the organizations emerged. For disambiguation it should be noted that this is not exactly the same continuum of long and short-term orientation as Hofstede (2001) discussed when defining culture. Focus on short term results was
expressed in different variations, such as businesses focusing on one-time events and hoping these would create long term loyalty of the customers, senior management sometimes also having unrealistic expectations that PR should solve major problems in limited time, also clients wanting to invest little money and time in PR campaigns or events, but expecting high quality outcomes.

It would be logical that new businesses would need PR more, but businesses and companies focus of short term goals and quick profit. There are very few companies that do more than three years’ planning and it is mostly financial rather than PR planning (Personal correspondence, February 12, 2011).

Moreover, some of the interviewees critiqued that PR efforts are oftentimes aimed at outputs rather than outcomes, the results were not measured and there was lack creativity in communication. These observations of the interviewees indicated at some aspects of the organizational culture in which PR practitioners have to navigate.

In addition, the way PR is positioned in the mainstream information flows such as the media can also be an indicator of the developing discourse around the profession. Dominant discourses are defined as “truths” that emerge within articulations and define subsequent action (Curtin & Gaither, 2007, p. 42). To define contexts and discourse where PR in Armenia was mentioned on-line news articles and blogs were reviewed. To optimize the process of tracking those mentions Google alert system was used with key words “public relations in Armenia”. The Armenian media coverage was reviewed since 2008 when the Center for Information and Public Relations was established and started its operation. There were few mentions about the PR as a discipline in Armenia. Most
often the context in which PR was mentioned (often using English term) pertained to international relations rather than PR, or was unfavorable connecting PR with political spin or advertising.

Another format where PR was mentioned (using the Armenian term) were the news releases or announcements dispatched by the PR departments of governmental agencies and ministries. It should be noted that almost all the ministries and local governmental offices employ PR practitioners. The PR department has distinctly outlined set of responsibilities regulated by ministerial statutes. The description of the PR in such institutions is summarized in the Armenian language textbook *Public Relations* (Avetisyan, 2008). To what capacity that assigned functions are performed cannot be analyzed at this point. The activities of the employed PR practitioners employed at the governmental structures were not factored in the survey. Since no PR practitioner from a governmental structure participated in the in-depth interview it is not possible to provide insight from their position. The activities of the ministerial PR practitioners were indirectly observed from the media mentions collected on-line in the period of 2008-2011. In these mentions most of the times when the ministries were covered the name of the PR practitioner was rarely mentioned, the format reminded a news release or an official announcement that was copied to the media outlet’s website which indicates at a press agentry or one-way communication model. However, this observation is limited to on-line resources only and cannot be generalized to overall patterns of PR practice in the ministries.

Nonetheless organizations in Armenia embrace many specifically Western elements such as profession of public relations among other communication functions
like marketing, advertising, and social media. As some of the interviews indicated the inception of PR in Armenia as a profession came with the international non-profits about fifteen years ago. On the other hand, the development and expansion of PR was due to transformation of corporate culture and more competitive market, which links to corporate culture in which PR is trying to embed its practice as a part of the management function. The interviewees mentioned PR was being gradually accepted on higher organizational levels, but there was need for developing overall understanding about the profession. That the localization of PR in Armenia is in process was evident also from the language and terms that the interviewees used: the terms such as “public relations”, “public affairs”, “output/outcome”, “publics”, “outsourcing”, “image”, “brand”, “benchmarking” etc. were used mostly in English during the discussion.

To have deeper insight into the implications that influence the communication process in Armenia there is need to delve deeper into the core cultural values.

**Economic system.**

All the interviewees mentioned that the main factor contributing to the development of PR in Armenia was the free-market economy. This factor was further described in terms of competition, brand and reputation management.

As indicated by the interviewees competition and free market economy have contributed to the efforts of organizations to make investment in their image building and consistent communication with their respective publics. On the other hand, the interviewees pointed at the fact that Armenia is a very small market and very close competition creates the disadvantages for PR development as well. Big companies have
the advantage of financial capacity to build their brand and ensure visibility. They afford to employ and pay for PR practitioners and provide resources for PR activities. The interviewees mentioned that this competitive disadvantage could be manifested in the form of indirect media buys by the big companies, through paying for media coverage by creating media partnerships and buying advertisement packages (see details in Media).

Overall according to the interviewees economic factor had the most influence on the development of PR. According to them, the most active sectors that employ PR are corporate and non-governmental non-for-profit companies, while public and governmental sectors being relatively passive in adopting PR as part of the organizational business model.

PR is a serious investment, which shall lead to prosperity in a long term. People in Armenia do not yet perceive it as a business investment (Personal correspondence, February 12, 2011).

The opinions and concerns of the PR practitioners can have ground in some of the specific characteristics of Armenian economy, some of which are covered in this brief overview.

First of all in the last decade Armenia has seen some economic stability, often claimed by the Government to be a two digit growth, which was a stride ahead after the transition from collapsed centralized market to free economy system in early 90s. Since mid 2000s the economic stability enabled the local small and big companies to enjoy flow of revenue, as well as generated influx of foreign investment offering various
services and commodities as the population became more capable to afford commodities as well as luxury products.

The Civilitas Foundation Report 2008 provides the overview of the three main factors that contributed to the rebuilding of economy in the past decade:

1. “sound and consistent macroeconomic policy”;
2. “a steady pursuit of first generation structural reforms, including free price formation, convertibility of domestic currency, liberal trade and investment, promoting large scale privatization”;  
3. “finally, reliance on high foreign assistance, investment and remittances” (p. 41).

However according to the same report, the attempts of the second generation reforms such as good governance, competition, policy, anti-corruption efforts, development of banking and capital markets, and building the basis for innovation and knowledge-based development, were hardly underway when the global economic crisis hit (Civilitas Foundation, 2008).

As mentioned earlier, Armenia’s economy is also dependent on the loans of the World Bank, foreign transfers and currency fluctuations of the local Dram\(^2\). This undoubtedly has made economy sensitive to crisis that emerged in early 2008, slowing down the economic progress made earlier.

Armenia’s GDP growth rate had stayed above 13 percent in 2003–07, but dropped to 6.8 percent in 2008. The 16 percent economic drop from January to December 2009 showed the vulnerability of Armenia’s economy, with its small size, narrow base, and strong dependence on transfers from labor migrants abroad. (Iskandaryan 2010, p. 46).

\(^2\) Dram or AMD is local currency of the Republic of Armenia
Besides foreign aid from different institutions like USAID, UNDP or World Bank, the Armenian Diaspora has been supporting the Armenian government to rebuild infrastructures in the country. Some affluent individuals from the Diaspora launched their businesses in Armenia. Armenian Diaspora also tried to encourage the World Bank to provide assistance to Armenia (Esman, 2009, p. 24). The role of the Armenian Diaspora in participating on different level in the country was marked also by the establishment of the Ministry of Diaspora on October 1, 2008 to reinforce bilateral and multilateral relations (http://www.mindiaspora.am).

However, foreign aid such as from World Bank can create dependence when externally funded programs and policies to do not engage into the local culture for sustainable replenishment. Economy is primarily about developing human potential and not only the resources (Hofstede G. & Hofstede J., 2005).

Unlike other countries as the Civilitas Foundation Report (2010) stated, Armenian banking system did not collapse after world economic crisis. This can be attributed not so much to the strength of the banking infrastructure as to the small size of the sector which comprises 30 percent of GDP, and more importantly “lack of established stock markets” (p. 45), which mostly likely enables to exercise more centralized regulation. This might limit financial participation of the citizens and open competition for the interest of publics, if investor relations are considered.

As for the correlations of competition and monopoly, Armenian market exhibits some specifics as well.

Though there is an established State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition, it cannot reverse the overall shrinking of the market where big companies
grow larger and the number of enterprises decreases (Civilitas Foundation 2009, p.45). In this atmosphere monopolization of the companies creates less opportunities for “healthy” competition, as the interviewees usually attributed the economic competition. This also creates unequal positions for price regulation (Civilitas Foundation 2009, p.46).

As two of the interviewees noted, PR in some major companies the image and brand that was build on the financial assets of the company, rather than in the process of cultivating relations with its publics.

Another health indicator for activating public relations in business environment is incorporation of CSR practice in the Armenian private sector. According to the exploratory study conducted by the Eurasia Foundation in 2006, there was a gradually increasing tendency of CSR or CSR-like activities; however there need to increase the level of understanding about how this component should be strategically applied to the business aspect of an organization. In the World Guide to CSR, in the report about Armenia Seferian (2010) indicates a number of reasons and factors that either contribute or inhabit the practice of social responsibility. The challenges include, focusing on short term and immediate gains of public acceptance and realizing more philanthropic activities which are confused with CSR.

On legislative level, the businesses in Armenia do not have much financial incentive, because CSR activities do not make them exempt from taxes. On the other hand, steps are taken to improve the situation. After the 2008 elections, president Sargsyan introduced ‘Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility’ in the government’s 2008-2012 program to contribute to the socially responsible practices among the local businesses (Seferian, 2010).
CSR is also a more common practice among the international companies operating in Armenia (Seferian, 2010) which links to the discussion about the corporate culture of local versus international. That PR and CSR are most commonly exercised by organizations embracing Western business models or corporate culture, was mentioned also by the interviewees.

Nevertheless, institutions and legislation supporting market relations, as well as relative economic stability in the past five years before the world economic crisis of 2008, have contributed to the growth in private corporate sector in the spheres of production, banking, and telecommunications. Many of the big businesses in Armenia have started investing greatly into their PR activities, and have established some type of standard for best practices. The interviewees as well connect the growth of corporate sphere with the development of PR profession.

PR as a profession is an art of business communication. PR is connected with marketing, as both function in the same sphere. Both are important for professional communication and market development (Personal correspondence, February 2, 2011).

**Political system.**

Armenia is a presidential democratic welfare state with three branches of power division: legislative, executive and judiciary. The main laws of the country are stipulated by the Constitution of the country written in 1995, after the independence in 1991. It was amended through referendum in 2005 (www.president.am). Legislative branch is regulated by the National Assembly with 131 seats of elected representatives, the
Executive branch is regulated by the government including the ministries. Judiciary branch operates under the auspices of the Constitution and supporting statutes that regulate the court system. The president of the republic and the representatives of the national assembly are elected through universal suffrage and direct ballot. All citizens of age 18 can vote. Local administrative bodies in the regions are appointed or elected. Since 2010 the mayor of Yerevan, the capital city, is not appointed but elected through representative vote. The elected Council of the Alderman regulates the activities of the Mayor (www.yerevan.am). Armenia has a multiparty system which should enable pluralistic voice in the sphere of politics.

The constitution and legal system create conditions for the democratic rule and civic as well as political participation. However, according to the Freedom House reports in the last years Armenia is not getting better score than 5 out of 6 and is usually on the list of partially free countries (Iskandaryan, 2010).

The communication of the National Assembly and the Government with their constituencies has been sporadic and activated predominantly before elections (Barseghyan, 2009). On the other hand the political campaigns in the recent years have been actively incorporating component of public relations and communication in their counseling package. Multiple political technologies and PR techniques including message development, dissemination and speech writing as well as public events and meeting have become key component of presidential and other campaigns (Barseghyan, 2009).

After the disputed elections of the 2008, the president of Armenia Sargsyan initiated the project of establishing intermediary structure called Public Council (www.publiccouncil.am) adjacent to National Assembly to give voice to grassroots
groups, prominent political and non-governmental organizations in different social spheres and activate their participation in political decision making process. Another initiative to connect the president and the citizens was through the establishment of the Information and PR Center (Panorama.am, 2008). However, the two-way active communication is not yet substantial or at least not visible, based on the information of on-line sources and websites. Some of the interviewees as well talked about these attempts but evaluated those as very passive or in a standstill.

In the Judicial system there has been an initiative in 2009 to make the work of the courts more transparent for the citizens. The DataLex public information system and on-line portal was launched, and automated information booths were stationed near the constitutional and other courts in the major cities of Armenia (Iskandaryan, 2010). The aim was to provide information and more public scrutiny of legal and legislative information, except for criminal cases. (Iskandaryan, 2010). There is a public debate going on about the effectiveness of those, but the experts and professionals find the system useful (Badalyan, 2011). The system is new, so it requires time for the citizens to embrace the innovation for more active civic participation.

Sriramesh and Verčič (2009) proposed that democratic system is a major contributor to the development of the public relations profession and industry, when asked to indicate the possible factors or PR development in Armenia, only one interviewee mentioned democracy. Two mentioned pluralism mostly in terms of civic participation. Most likely the concept of democracy was imbedded in the free market economic system that all of the interviewees referred to most often.
Activism.

Activism in Armenia is expressed on several platforms and in a number of directions. Grassroots activism is particularly visible in form of environmental movements boosted by environmental activists, youth, public figures and environmental non-profits that want to impact legislative changes in natural resource management as well as call the heavy and chemical industries as well as construction companies for more responsible business and practices in Armenia. This of course creates a challenging environment for the businesses that either ignore the demands, or employ some form or public relations and CSR activities to rebuild public trust. So far the companies have not visibly changed the direction of their corporate interest, but the activists persist. They demands also generate consistent media coverage\(^3\).

Another platform where civic participation is active is the political participation, usually leveraged by the pro-governmental or coalition parties to demonstrate public support, or the opposition parties to challenge the government. In general the legislation provides overall favorable conditions for the development non-profit organizations that have a voice in raising issues and formulating public debate in Armenia.

The legal and political environment for nongovernmental organization (NGO) activity in Armenia is generally favorable. The 2009 amendments to the Law on Public Organizations aim to increase transparency but were criticized for potentially complicating NGO activity. Civil society organizations were increasingly active in 2009, playing an important role in forming public opinion, engaging more with public offices, and participating in international cooperation. Iskandaryan, (2010, p. 67)

\(^3\) Based on monitoring of news coverage
Thus, among all the sectors that were assessed as indicators of democracy, civic society had the best performance score of 3.75 with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest (Iskandaryan, 2010, p.66).

The interviewees did not mention activism as a factor for PR development. Only one interviewee indicated that recent increase in environmental and human rights activism is an important indicator for PR. Two others mentioned pluralism of citizen voice as a factor, which was implied in the context freedom of expression and freedom of speech.

**Media.**

The Media was a major topic of discussion both as a factor and a channel of disseminating public relations messages. All of the interviewees gave input from where multiple perspectives of the media can build.

Media in Armenia has been also undergoing the processes of transition like the economic and the political systems. There have been attempts to regulate the sphere of information by a number of laws such as Law on public Radio and Television, Law on Freedom of Speech and Information, and others that supplement freedoms of speech and expression stipulated by the National Constitution of Armenia. The law on libel and defamation that was criminally punishable received much criticism from Europe structures. Since 2010 the cases of libel and defamation have been regulated by the states of civic codex. In 2010 according to the Reporters without Borders review freedom of press in Armenia improved with ten points from 111 to 101, so the local media crossed the threshold to semi free status at least (Gevorgyan, 2010).
In 2009 the Government initiated the project of digitization of broadcast media by 2015 as an opportunity of advancing the Media sphere and bringing it to a new level of technical capacity along with other goals outlined in the bill (Decree on media digitalization, 2009). However, the bill spurred public debate on whether transformation would bring more freedom or limitation to the media market since according to the submitted bill the number of TV will decrease from 25 to 18, infringing pluralism according to some politicians (Panarmenian.net, 2010). Local public grassroots groups such as the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression proposed their amendments to the law of TV digitalization and airwave licenses (Mkrtchyan, 2010). The pressure on preserving pluralistic representation of the Armenian broadcast media was posed not only internally by the grassroots groups and commissions but also externally. The OSCE media freedom representatives also recommended improvements (ArmeniaNow, 2010). Two of the interviewees also commented on the bill, and one of them mentioned participating in the public discussions about the draft of broadcast media digitalization law.

Thus, the mass media performance is under the scrutiny of monitoring groups inside and outside Armenia not only in terms of the performance but also in respect to defending the rights of the journalists and reporters and monitoring violations of freedom of speech and expression (Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression, 2011).

The interviewees mentioned also a number of factors of the media reality, some of which were related to the ownership of the major TVs and Newspapers by the parties with political ties and interests. Also, they indicated that the newspapers struggle with financial dependence on paid advertising space and other types of sponsorships. These
circumstances were articulated by the interviewees in the form of concerns and critiques about how the lack of freedom in media and evident political polarization impacts PR sphere. As can be observed from both the survey and the in-depth interviews media oriented activities were mentioned by a majority of the research participants.

In terms of the quality of the media involvement and coverage, the interviewees expressed concerns such as bias or reproducing the news releases without adding substantial commentary or additional information.

It is hard to garner media attention for information that does not have political, scandalous or polarized connotation. To cultivate interest for the discussion is very difficult (Personal correspondence, February 3, 2011).

Some of interviewees raised the dilemma of paid and earned media, noting that non-profits usually aim for earned media. While the major corporate organizations, have the advantage of resources to pay the media indirectly by purchasing offered advertising packages or buying the airtime. There is also an indication that sometimes a media outlet would directly ask for pay for media pitching, in another cases an outlet would consider such an offer indecent and unprofessional.

According to the Nations in Transition report (Iskandaryan, 2010), the Armenian media is described in the following terms, which reflects some of the concerns that the interviewees expressed:

- “Except for the public television, Armenia’s broadcasters (around 50 television stations, about 40 of them local) are privately owned by individuals or companies. Television companies may undergo political pressure or de facto support a particular political party (which contradicts the Law on Television and Radio)”,
“Armenia’s print media are pluralistic, but not strong. [depend on] “political patronage, reporting is biased, leading to a diminished information sphere, poor journalism, and small print runs (1,000–10,000)—which also accounts for lack of government pressure and little interest from advertisers” (p. 46).

During political campaigns as well the conventional media especially the broadcast television and newspapers are the most powerful leverages of agenda setting and message dissemination (Barseghyan, 2009).

There are emerging opportunities for PR to connect with their publics through the new media technologies and the Internet. The Internet is not controlled or filtered by the government or any political power in Armenia (Iskandaryan, 2010). One of the interviewees mentioned also that the Internet and the social media enable to connect with the organization’s public directly.

The Internet and mobile communications bring new opportunities. Out of 3.2 million population in the country over 2.6 million had mobile connection in 2009, of which 1.1 million had mobile access to the Internet. The number of non-mobile Internet subscribers is comparatively modest - 120 thousand, with one third growth compared to the 2008 numbers (Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2009; 2010). This means that though Information technologies and telecommunications is one of the fastest growing industries in Armenia, only 27% of the households own Internet access. However there is tendency of increase with the introduction of easy to use wireless Internet devices. At this point, the early adapters of information and communication technologies innovations are the young people. The mainstream media especially the television remains dominant source of information especially in the regions of Armenia, where even the local newspapers have limited circulation, and local television has limited coverage and broadcast hours. If
an organization wants to reach out to a different demographic in the regions the Internet would not be the first most efficient choice.

According to Civilitas Foundation Report 2010 the mainstream media is pushed by the Internet publications like the fast growing on-line news agencies and newspapers as well as blogs that provide information about and for Armenia. There is also a tendency for conventional media outlets to try to converge multimedia into their communications and websites, which diversifies the media products. Most importantly, the Internet requires interactivity and more symmetric communication which is both a challenge and an opportunity for both the media and PR professionals.

Overall, the media relations is an essential aspect of practice for the Armenian PR practitioners. There is co-dependence between the two communication spheres. The situation for both the media and PR is in the stage of transformation while both do their best to adapt to challenges of change, financial limitations and uncertainly. The interviewees expressed hope, that while the these spheres are transitioning through structural changes, in the next five or ten years both will rise to a new level of professionalism and synergy.

I think they [Media and PR] are kind of conforming or accommodating to each other now. Both are trying to master the rules of PR specifics in Armenian and Armenian Journalism (Personal correspondence, February 7, 2011).
Implications and opportunities.

The interviewees also provided their insight and opinions about how they saw the state of PR industry currently. They described the process of public relations emerging into the organizations as gradual, which provided for both challenges and opportunities. On the positive side, there is evidence of growing need for PR in businesses. There are also academic opportunities emerging in the Universities. The overall evaluation of the academic programs is that those are new and in development phase, some simply following the trends because “PR is a fashionable profession”, some provide practical training, others are doing their best to incorporate research and theory. This has been a tipping point effort especially in the last two years.

Moreover, there is openness and access to information, expertise and resources which enable the PR practitioners to engage in self-education and professional maturation. The interviewees stressed also that this brings an opportunity for the publics to be better informed, alert and proactive. The PR practice has diversified too and includes not only in-house services, but also counseling, free-lancing, and outsourcing PR and communications agencies.

On the other hand, some of the misconceptions about PR prevail. The profession is confused with marketing and advertising, also political propaganda. The organizations and the clients of PR services need to have better understand of what they expect from PR and what PR can provide for them. Most importantly, PR and media relations need improvement. Notwithstanding the challenges PR is practiced in Armenia and has all the potential to develop in the next decade.
In Armenia I think there is a bit of a misperception [about PR]. But overall I see big progress. They give key and responsible roles to the PR specialist in organizations (Personal communication, January 28, 2011).

Scope of PR Practice

PR function and value.

Research Question 2: What are the specific factors that define and characterize PR practices in Armenia?

This can be considered an umbrella question which integrates RQ3 - function of PR in the organizations and RQ4 – the scope and quality of PR practice. The answers to RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4 combine both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry, specifically the in-depth interview and the survey.

Research Question 3: How do organizations utilize PR function from the perspective of PR practitioners?

The interviewees were asked two main sets of questions that would help to identify the function and value of PR department and the role PR practitioner within the organizations. The perspective from the PR practitioner was inquired: 1. How and to what extent does public relations contribute to your organization? and 2. How does your senior management perceive the role of public relations in your organization?

When the eleven interviewees provided their answers it was possible to summarize and cluster the answers into two main themes: strategic and tactical. The coded analysis demonstrated also that the majority of interviewees, nine out of eleven, who were in management or director position and undertook predominantly PR tasks
were engaged mostly on strategic level in their organizations. They also engaged on tactical level especially in the departments where there was only one PR practitioner. The two interviewees, who were using PR as a supportive function to their other main responsibilities, gave more tactical descriptions of PR role. Overall, the interviewees contributed to their organization’s management and communication both on strategic and tactical levels. The specific tasks that they performed in each capacity were detailed further by asking questions about their role and tasks that they typically performed.

The extent to which PR contributed to the organization was asked also to the respondents of the survey, to gain quantifiable data. The question was formulated the same way as in the in-depth interview, though in this case the respondents were asked to evaluate the proposed statements on the scale of performance from “never” to “always”. The statements were predominantly about strategic function, so if the answers were scaled to “never” than it was considered that the respondents were not engaged in that specific strategic function. The answer “seldom” or “sometimes” would indicate some extend of strategic engagement, the answers “often” and “always” would indicate great extent of performance on strategic level. The Figure 4.3 summarizes the main findings of the survey. Like in case of the in-depth interview the majority of the survey respondents indicated high level of strategic performance. It should be noted that more than half of the respondents also indicated that they held positions on managerial or director level. There were also moderate number of answers for “seldom” and “sometimes”. The results from both qualitative and quantitative research provided data to assume that PR practitioners performed predominantly strategic function in their organization, the extent of which was tested by questions about PR practitioner role and tasks.
The tendency of being a more strategic function in the organization indirectly indicated at the value that the PR has in the organization. The value was evaluated through the role that PR had as perceived by the senior management. In the survey this value was not measured specifically by another set of questions. According to the logic of the Excellence study, from which the questions 1-8 in Figure 4.3 were fully adopted for the survey, strategic function also indicated that the senior management valued PR function. The interviewees were asked to provide their opinion of how senior management valued the role of PR in the organization, which enabled to have a more substantive explanation. It should be noted that this is the evaluation of PR practitioners about the perceptions of their senior management and not the assessment of the senior management themselves.

Most of the interviewees indicated that PR function was highly valued by the senior management. Their answers and statements such as direct access to senior management, being a key department performing strategic function, PR strategy being component of the overall strategy of the organization, as well as demonstrating PR value through some type of measurement, were coded and grouped under the theme of PR being part of the dominant coalition. The appreciation of colleagues was also indicative of PR value in the organization. Even when PR was a supportive function, PR practitioner directly reported to the senior management.

The interviewees also mentioned that senior management had high expectations from PR function and PR personnel in terms of ensuring cost-effective result by using limited resources, creating opportunities for competitive advantage, visibility and brand, being an idea generator and introducing innovations to the organization’s communicative
and operational performance, as well as being the key to relationship cultivation and maintenance. Recognition, understanding and feedback of the senior management were also indicative of PR being valued.

Thus, most of the description provided by the interviewees were close to the statements 1-8 of the survey presented in Figure 4.4. It should be noted that the primary goal was to understand the characteristics of the PR function. The data enabled to conclude that in most cases PR had high value and strategic role in the organizations of the PR practitioners that were included in the study sample. However, at this point it was not feasible to statistically measure the extent and strength of correlation between the value and strategic function of PR due to the mix of qualitative and quantitative data of a non-representative sample.

**PR role.**

*Research Question 4: How is PR positioned in Armenia in terms of scope of practice, qualifications and education of PR practitioners?* Since the RQ4 includes multiple components, these were addressed through answers to a subset of questions about PR practitioner role, tasks, qualification and expertise.

For RQ4, the interviewees were asked to describe their role and main tasks in the organization by expending on the following two questions: *How would you describe your role in the organization?* and *What are the main tasks that you carry out on a daily basis?* The survey respondents were also asked to evaluate two subsets of statements on their role and tasks on different measurement scales. The subset of questions 1-13 in Figure 4.4 asked to choose a response that indicated how well each of the items described
the work that respondents performed as a public relations practitioner. The scale for these questions ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” with a neutral option of “neither agree nor disagree”. If the respondent agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, it was considered as characteristic practice, if the respondent indicated “strongly disagree” or “disagree” it indicated that he/she was not performing that task. For defining the specific tasks on the level of expertise the respondents were asked to describe the extent to which they performed each of the proposed tasks on the scale from “never” to “always”. If the answers were scaled “never” than it was considered that the respondents were not performing the specific task. The answer “seldom” or “sometimes” would indicate that the task was performed in some cases, the answers “often” and “always” would indicate that the specific task was a more common practice (see Figure 4.5).

Both the interviewees and the respondents were asked to provide also some demographic and professional information on the basis of confidentiality. The qualitative and quantitative findings are discussed in sequence.

When asked How would you describe your role in the organization? the interviewees provided their feedback in two formats: through descriptive attributes such as important, pivotal, responsible etc., and through comprehensive overview of the responsibilities. The most commonly occurring statements again were coded and grouped in themes. The themes were matched also with the codes of the survey statements, thus it was possible to make links between the qualitative and quantitative findings.

All of the interviewees who performed predominantly PR function on managerial position were engaged in most of the activities of all the functions predominantly
manager, media relations and communication liaison, and to some extent in the
technician function particularly if they did not have a team. The two interviewees with
supportive PR function had different dynamics. One acted more as a communication and
media liaison, the other engaged only as a communication liaison and technician roles.
This can indicate that in strategic management function PR practitioners exercised a full
scope of PR roles and activities, while in supportive function the scope of PR was very
limited. Overall, the interviewees were multitasking.

The specifics of the dominant role or subtype of activity depended on the type of
the organizations as well, for example in non-profits the practitioners would engage more
in community relations from the perspective of raising public awareness on issues, while
the for-profits would focus on brand and reputation management. However, in most cases
they all performed generic PR functions.

Among all of the roles and activities the media liaison and media relations stood
out for both the interviewees and the survey respondents. All of the interviewees and
great majority of the respondents were engaged in cultivating media relations, either by
pitching stories and news releases, organizing media events or garnering media coverage
of organization’s PR events. Media monitoring and media clipping were also one of the
main evaluation methods for the interviewees. Interviewees specified also that they could
assess the success of a PR activity by the extent to which it ensured mainstream media
coverage. This would consequently demonstrate the value of PR activity to the senior
management. In general both qualitative and quantitative data provided ample evidence
to conclude that media relations was a key in the task-role continuum of the study
population. This was once again confirmed by the fact that all of the interviewees found
media as an important channel to reach out to their target publics, expressed concern about media quality as well as PR and media relationships in Armenia. This was presented in the discussion of the environmental factors at the beginning of this chapter.

The survey participants were also asked to indicate their role by selecting the statements describing some different roles. The survey findings in Figure 4.4 also enabled to conclude that manager and media liaison roles were relatively dominant, however there was an overall tendency of performing mixed roles.

**PR expertise.**

Both the interviewees and the respondents were asked to indicate their main tasks that could somehow describe both their role and skills. The interviewees again combined multiple responsibilities, most frequently mentioning the management and media tasks, however the specifics of the performed tasks depended on the characteristics of the organizations. Research became a major theme that derived from the discussions, which demonstrated that interviewees had knowledge and understanding of various research methods, but there were a number of limitations for conducting scientific research on a regular basis. This was also evident in the results of the survey, which demonstrated moderate use of some form and informal research methods (see Figure 4.5).

Investigating into the role and function as well as performed tasks it can be concluded that PR practice is relying on press agentry and public information that are indicative of two-way asymmetric models of communication. However, individual PR practitioners are trying to accommodate to two way symmetric communication by utilizing new media opportunities and listening to the public through informal research
such as meetings, convenience surveys and focus groups. It can be assumed that due to research and media implications the two-way communication is somewhat limited at this point.

The demographic and professional characteristics that directly link to the RQ2: were discussed at length in Chapter IV. The findings of the interview and the survey indicate that the majority of the sample had managerial position, perceived their role and function as pivotal, demonstrated good level of knowledge in research and strategic planning, in most cases had some level of PR training and were following the trends and developments in the communication market. Professional affiliations were predominantly dependent on peer networking. Moreover, PR practitioners have high expectations of what institutionalized PR networks and education opportunities should provide for them.

Conclusions

The study made two preliminary assumptions which were the following. First, different organizations in Armenia employ some form of PR function, which was proved by the study findings. Second, the PR practitioner function is confined to technician role. The findings of the study exceeded the limitation of the second assumption, since the majority of the sample performed mixed roles. The study can conclude also that PR practice has expanded and diversified in Armenia diffusing into multiple spheres and industries.

PR practice demonstrates certain attributes of progress based on the findings from the study sample. The profession has acquired more visibility and acceptance due to factors of institutionalization such as employing PR component by major companies and
organizations in Armenia, emergence of academic programs and enhanced number of skilled PR practitioners. The most conspicuous sectors that employ PR are the corporate and non-profit sectors either local or internationally funded.

The perceived value of PR on organizational level is high when senior management puts emphasize on PR and acknowledges it as a key function in the organization. Moreover, the expectations from PR function are high both in terms of cost-efficiency, productivity, providing immediate results and all rounded multi-task performance. The conclusions about the value are primarily based on the accounts of the PR practitioners involved in the in-depth interview.

PR practitioners are engaged in mixed and diverse roles sometimes expending the scope of PR practice sometimes limiting it. The PR professionals mostly perform multiple tasks, trying to balance the management, communication liaison, and technician functions particularly in one-person departments. The increasing expertise of PR practitioners of the sample include at least some level professional training, access to PR literature, exposure to global practice, knowledge of research and strategic management methods.

The PR practitioners themselves have higher demands and expectation of what opportunities of growth the professional literature and networking should provide. Innovation, exchange of ideas, having leaders in the industry sharing best practices and expertise are only some of the items on the wish list of the PR practitioners in Armenia. Reinforcing and sharing best practices is seen as an opportunity to foster the development of PR Armenia in the next decade as the PR practitioners indicate.
On the other hand PR has implications and PR practitioners face challenges according to the outcomes of the study. Though PR practitioners demonstrate sound knowledge of the practice, the profession needs more understanding from the clients, management and the public as well as other professionals such as the mass media representatives. The environmental factors, such as media being not completely free, create vacuum for the information of some organizations. Economic limitations including unequal capacities of the originations misbalance both for scope and depth of PR practice as well as public visibility through media representation. This results in a gap between the organizations brand, reputation and communication management based on whether these can or cannot afford PR departments, measurement, paid or earned media coverage.

Multitasking is a challenge for the PR practitioners, who ascertain that having a team or specialized communication departments could help to ensure more in-depth and research-based practice. Most of the organizations cannot afford expensive and time-consuming evaluation. The research therefore is not yet efficiently used as an evaluative tool for two-way communication.

**Strengths of the study.**

This exploratory study aimed to generate consistent data to understand the trends and potential of PR practice in Armenia. Strengths of the study include the following attributes:

A comprehensive approach was applied to investigate into the core aspects of PR practice in the Armenian organizations as viewed from the perspective of the PR
practitioners themselves. Accumulating information from PR practitioners provided first-hand accountability and proximity to the context under study. The researcher utilized a broader theoretical framework and triangulated research by combining existing models and approaches of global and international public relations for investing specifics of public relations in Armenia.

The study was conducted in a time period when the PR sphere in Armenia has been transitioning into a new stage of development after having incorporated fundamental elements of the practice: it moves towards accumulating local and international expertise, as well as ensuring academic and professional institutionalization. This tendency is more apparent in the last decade and expended especially in the last five years. In this respect, though being an explorative study, it also serves as an evaluative tool for the progress made, presents gaps and areas of improvement as well as opportunities for the profession in Armenia.

The study combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods for collecting, analyzing and deriving conclusions from the data to ensure scientific rigor and objectivity. The qualitative in-depth interviews combined with the quantitative survey enabled to accumulate pilot data and deduce the main trends of PR function, value, role and expertise, as well as provide demographic and professional description about the PR practitioners in Armenia. The arguments and findings were based on interconnected and mutually supported data. These categories were cross-checked through deductive qualitative methods and objectively reflected in the inductive quantitative data.

The study also provided methodological framework that can be improved, expended and used for the future research in specific areas of PR practice demarcated by
the findings and conclusions of the study. The study met the set goals of describing some general aspects of PR practice in Armenian as well as delineated avenues for further research.

**Limitations of the study.**

The main limitation of the study is the convenience sample that does not permit to make generalizable inferences of the findings to all the population of PR practitioners in Armenia. However, including as many diverse organizations as possible ensured some level of representativeness of the PR practice in different spheres. In addition, the size of the survey frame and the sample was exploratory. Therefore, it limited the possibility of doing inferential analysis. The analysis confined to mainly descriptive statistics which agreed with the direction of the study inquiring mostly into the questions of definition.

The instrument, though a reliable one, used a modified measure to meet the needs of the study. This may have some instrument bias, the level and extent of which was impossible to measure. However, the possibility of such a bias was considered during combining the research methods and conducting the analysis.

It should be noted also, that the study is mainly descriptive answering the question of definition. The normative value of the study is limited to providing recommendations for best practices and further research.

Analysis of country and organization’s contextual variables was limited to the existing reports about Armenia and reflections of the PR practitioners. Availability of baseline research in Hofstede’s cultural indicators about Armenia could have added substantial ground to the arguments. On the one hand, attitudes and opinions of the PR
practitioners enabled to have general first-hand accounts about the specifics of the context where PR was practiced.

**Future directions.**

One of the conspicuous themes that emerged from the discussion is the factor of research. Though the practitioners employ some variety of research to evaluate their work, there is dearth of quantitative scientific data about the practice in general. On the other hand, PR practitioners have limited resources and financial capacity to do comprehensive evaluative and measurement research. That the research was used and yet needs reinforcement was supported by the survey data as well. Though based on a convenience sample, the study findings enabled to generate a broad overview of the scope of PR application, tendencies and areas that need further research and improvement.

First of all, the research on PR practice in Armenia needs to expend. This study is only one of such attempts. Ideally, other research efforts of investigating PR in Armenia should be amalgamated, and PR professionals interested in such research should join forces to conduct a comprehensive baseline study to be able to make generalizable and valid inferences about the development, trends and perspectives of the PR industry in Armenia. On the other hand, more focused research efforts could investigate specific areas of PR practice such as perceptions of PR by different publics, value and PR measurements, reasons for practicing an aspect of PR more than the other etc.

This study has provided also some generic overview on the country’s context and some limited indicators of organizational and PR department’s characteristics. A more
focused research on organizational culture and PR function could provide thorough understanding of the micro-environmental factors that define PR practice. Inquiring into the perspective of senior management on the role and function would provide a comprehensive picture on the practice and value of public relations in Armenia. Such research would enable to delineate how PR and organizational communication influence each other and therefore to understand how to make improvements.

The most discussed aspect of PR practice during the in-depth interviews was the media. This was backed also by the findings of the survey, which indicated that media relations is one of the most common practices. Deriving from this finding, it is recommended to develop and conduct a formal or non-formal study on relationships between PR and media practices, which would enable to understand the context, factors and reasons for dissatisfaction as well as provide recommendations for improving the situation and relationships.

As for the professional opportunities, investigating further into the needs of PR professionals will enable to understand what educational, vocation and professional networking opportunities would interest them. The study has revealed that there is a generation of PR practitioners who have accumulated diverse knowledge and practice, therefore training sessions and newly emerging academic courses will not suffice to meet their needs. More advanced professional collaboration is needed to bring PR profession to a new level of development in Armenia.
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Armenian Electronic Resources


Laws and Decrees


APPENDICES

Appendix A. In-depth Interview Questions English

Study of Public Relations in Armenia

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the in-depth interview as a part of the exploratory study on PR in Armenia. The interview should last no longer than an hour. It is important that you answer and elaborate on all the questions as far as possible. However, you can stop your participation in the interview at any time at your discretion. The questions do not intend to test your knowledge: these ask for your opinion concerning your professional experiences and perceptions of public relations in Armenia. The demographic information that you share will be kept strictly confidential and will be used as a general descriptive data. Names of persons and organizations will not be mentioned in the study.

Part 1. Characteristics of public relations in Armenia

1. How and to what extent does public relations contribute to your organization?
2. How does your senior management perceive the role of public relations in your organization?
3. How would you describe your role in the organization?
4. What are the main tasks that you carry out on a daily basis?
5. What do you think are the specific factors that contribute to, define and characterize PR practices in Armenia?

Part 2: Demographic and professional information

6. Would you, please, describe your professional and educational experience in PR (e.g. years of working in PR sphere, training, professional affiliations, knowledge of PR and communication research and theories etc.)

Note: Please indicate if you would like to receive the executive summary of the research.
Appendix B. In-depth Interview Questions Armenian

Հարցազրույցի երկրաչափություն

Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների ոլորտի ուսումնասիրություն

Յուն ձերս, որ համաձայնեցիք մասնակցել հարցազույցին, որը կազմում է Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների /PR/ ոլորտի առաջնակից ուսումնասիրության մի մասը: Հարցազույցը կտևի մեկ ժամից ոչ ավելի:

Խնդրում եմ պատասխանել բոլոր հարցերին, սակայն կարող եք հարցազույցին ցանկացած պահի ըստ Ձեր հայեցողության: Հարցազույցը համապատասխան է հետազոտության առաջին փուլին: Ապագային հարցերից մեկը ներկայացնում է այսպիսի հարցազույցի կարևորությունը և ընդգրկվում է Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների ոլորտի համապատասխան մասում, հավանաբար այնպիսի փուլին է, որը հայտնի է որպես Հայաստանի առաջնակից հարաբերությունների ոլորտի կատարող ուսումնական սարքվանակ սարքավորման միջոցով: Մասնակի և համակարգչային ուսումնասիրությունների համակարգչային գործածության և պրակտիկաների մեջ կարող են հանձնվել:

Մաս 1-ին. Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերություններ

1. Ինչպե՞ս և որքանո՞վ է հանրային հարաբերությունների ոլորտի անհրաժեշտությունը զիջելու ձեր կազմակերպության համար?

2. Ինչպե՞ս է Ձեր դերի համար արդյունավետ ռեալիզմին մեկնարկելու ձեր դերի խնդիրներին համապատասխան ձեր կազմակերպության մեջ?

3. Ինչպե՞ս ձեր կազմակերպության մեջ արդյունավետ լինելու ուղղությունը?

4. Որքան է Ձեր անվճար երաշխատական ու կարգավորման գործում?

5. Որպես պրակառուցող է ոչնչացվում ձեր կազմակերպության հարաբերությունների ոլորտի իննամասին Հայաստանում և որոնք են բխում Ձեր դերի պրակառուցողություններ/դերասանությունների զարգացման համար:
Սեր 2-րդ: Դեմոգրաֆիկ և մասնագիտական տեղեկություն

6. Ակնառույթերը իրադարձան հարաբերությունների պետք, որևէ քանակական կողքեր կրակների կողքորեն լինեն, որտեղ հանրային հարաբերությունների մեջ, մասնագիտական տեղեկություն ունի ուսուցման էվուկուկեր։ Ունենալով այս այն հաճախ, որ մասնագիտական տեխնիկական գործողությունների մեջ ապրել: Տեսնեք էկոնոմիկ մասնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ տեսնեք էկոնոմիկ մասնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունների մեջ և միջնագիտական տեղեկություն

Նշեք, որ միջնագիտական տեղեկությունը կարող է իրականացնել իրենից մեկ տեղեկության սեղմագրի:
Appendix C. In-depth Interview Code-Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Organization type (code compatible with survey)</th>
<th>Depiction (industry)</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Public/private funded local profit</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Public/private funded local profit</td>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Public local profit</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Local non-profit</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Local for profit</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>International non-profit</td>
<td>Foreign representation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Local/International non-profit</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>International non-profit</td>
<td>Youth/environmental</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Local for-profit</td>
<td>Communications agency</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>International non-profit</td>
<td>Community development/healthcare</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Public/private local governmental</td>
<td>National development/infrastructure</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions

Part 1. Characteristics of public relations in Armenia

1. How and to what extent does public relations contribute to your organization?
   - Open Code: Theme - Function (function of PR department in the organization)
• **Axial Code: Survey – Questions 1-8:** A. Express the extent to which public relations makes a contribution to your organization.

A. **Strategic**
   a. Policy and decision making  
   b. Strategic participation in operations  
   c. Council/generator of ideas on communication and management of the organization  
   d. Liaison between the organization and key publics  
   e. Conflict and issues management  
   f. Formal and informal research and evaluation  
   g. Image, brand and reputation management  
   h. Promotion of the organization  
   i. Multitask and multifaceted  
   j. Long-term relationship building

B. **Tactical**
   a. Preparation of collateral materials  
   b. Information dissemination/accountability (internal and external)

2. How does your senior management perceive the role of public relations in your organization?
   • **Open Code: Theme - Value of PR**
   • **Axial Code: Connect with the concept of dominant coalition as defined by Excellence study (Survey questions 1-8)**

A. **Part of dominant coalition (indicators – yes/no)**
   a. Strategic function  
   b. Key department or equal to the other departments in status  
   c. Direct reporting and access to the CEO  
   d. Recognition, understanding and feedback from the CEO
3. How would you describe your role in the organization?

- Open Code: Theme - Role (PR practitioner’s role in the organization)
- Axial Code: Survey – Questions 9-21: B. Describe the work that you do as a public relations practitioner (based on the statements).

A. Manager

- Strategy and Implementation plan
- PR department budget management
- Communication policy development and management
- Crisis communication and management
- Research and evaluation
- Public’s analysis and segmentation
- Managing the PR team (as applicable)
- Counseling senior management and team members on communication strategies

B. Technician

- Writing news releases and news stories
- Design and printing
- Photo and video
- Promotion – distribution of collateral materials
- Speechwriting
- Copyediting
g. Website content update and maintenance

C. Media liaison
   a. Establishing and maintaining media contacts
   b. Facilitating news conferences
   c. Ensuring media coverage
   d. Organizing Media events
   e. Facilitating Media appearances for the CEO and other speakers

D. Communication liaison
   a. Community relations/public awareness
   b. Internal/interdepartmental and employee relations
   c. International relations
   d. Partnerships and B2B,
   e. Donor and investor relations
   f. Client and beneficiary relations
   g. Public Affairs
   h. Representing the organization
   i. Public/community events
   j. CSR (as applicable)

4. What are the main tasks that you carry out on a daily basis?
   
   - Open Code: Theme – Expertise/Knowledge
   - Axial Code: Survey - questions 22-35: C. Describe the tasks that you perform (based on statements)

A. Media management
   a. Media review/monitoring
   b. Media digest preparation and sharing
   c. Media pitching (articles and news releases)
   d. Media briefings and news conferences
   e. Media appearances
f. Ensuring media coverage of events
g. Blog writing and update
h. Website content management and update

B. Research and measurement
a. Formal and informal surveys
b. Media clipping/archiving
c. Content analysis
d. Website Social Network monitoring/traffic analytics
e. Focus groups/town hall meetings
f. Informal interviews
g. Market research
h. Publics analysis and segmentation
i. Issues/project progress monitoring
j. Environmental scanning
k. Collecting information/report compilation
l. ROI and PR activity assessment
m. Benchmark analysis
n. Output/outcome analysis
o. Outsourcing research such as media and competitor analysis
p. Experience/intuition

C. Strategic management
a. Planning and strategy development
b. Policy and guidelines development
c. Counseling
d. Issues and crisis management

D. Supervision (no entry in survey)
   a. Team management
   b. Team briefing/brainstorming
   c. Troubleshooting
d. Task delegation

e. Quality control of communication products and services

f. Mentoring/guidance/capacity building

E. Communication

a. Meetings/correspondence with the team

b. Meetings with other departments/CEO/partners

c. Answering public inquiries

d. Preparing and distributing collateral materials

F. Organization

a. Organization and implementation of events

b. Round table discussions/brainstorming

c. Facilitation of team meetings

5. What do you think are the specific factors that define and characterize PR practices in Armenia?

- Open Code – Environmental factors
- Axial Code – link with secondary research (survey does not provide such data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. 1 Factors mentioned by respondents</th>
<th>Matching factors of secondary research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Competition in free market economy</strong></td>
<td>Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Competition/small market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Big companies/ investments/ business sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) International and local non-profits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) PR as a part of business model</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Political pluralism</strong></td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Political campaigns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Pluralism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Foreign Investment and international</strong></td>
<td>Cultural/organizational culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Organizations
- a) Western model of management
- b) Organizational culture local vs. foreign/change in mode of communication
- c) Short versus long-term orientation as of results

### D. Freedom of speech/ expression/information
- a) Laws and regulations
- b) Information/access
- c) Internet/social media

### E. Civic activism
- a) Civic participation
- b) Freedom of expression/choice
- c) Pluralism

### 5.2 Implications of PR in Armenia

#### A. Misperceptions and understanding about PR
1. PR function is confused with other communication functions such as marketing and advertising
2. There is need to educate the clients and the public about expectations concerning PR and its value
3. PR is not fully realized on governmental and public sectors

#### B. PR and Media
1. The relations between PR professional and journalists are essential
2. Media market is not totally free, and paid media coverage is an impediment for PR
3. PR is gradually grasping opportunities provided by the Internet and social media
4. Media quality
C. PR Education
   1. Education and research in public relations are still in inchoate state
   2. PR is mostly on training level
   3. Practical versus academic training

Opportunities
   1. Growing need for PR in organizations
   2. Open and expanded access to resources, global best practices and education

Part 2: Demographic and professional information
6. Would you, please, describe your professional and educational experience in PR
   (Codes in parenthesis are compatible with the survey codes)

   Years of working in PR sphere
   1. 1-5 years (2)
   2. 6-10 years (3)
   3. More than 10 years (4)

   A. Highest level of education
   1. BA/University Diploma (3, 4)
   2. MA/MBA or equivalent (5)

   B. Field of Study before any training related to PR or communications (not available in survey)
   1. Foreign languages
   2. Journalism
   3. International relations
   4. MBA
   5. Political science
   6. Eastern studies

   C. Training in PR
   1. Some vocational training in Armenia or abroad (2)
2. MA in Communications/Marketing or International relations in Armenia or abroad (5)

D. Professional affiliations

1. None (1)
2. Armenian PR Association (2)
3. Other (5)
4. Networking with peer professionals and experts in related fields (not available in the survey)

E. Sources of information about PR

1. Armenian (1)
2. Foreign literature on PR mainly from U.S., U.K or Russia (3)
3. Internet – articles, blogs, news, social media developments (3)

F. Knowledge of PR and communication research and theories (not available in survey)

1. Research methods
2. Grunig’s models of communication
3. Western “classic” practices of PR

Gender

1. Male (1)
2. Female (2)

Age

1. 25-34 (2)
2. 35-49 (3)

Position code

1. PR/Communication Director (1)
2. PR Manager (1)
3. Media relations Coordinator (2)
4. PR Officer (3)
5. Other related to communications and management (6)
Status of employment (*not available in the survey*)

1. In-house
2. Consultant
3. Currently holding other position

Number of PR practitioners in the PR department

1. One
2. Two
3. Three
4. Five

Note: Number of the employees in the organization was not asked
Appendix D. Survey Instrument English

Study of PR in Armenia - ENG


A. Please, use the scale to express the extent to which public relations makes a contribution to your organization in the following areas.

How frequently do you engage in the following activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strategic planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Response to social issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Major initiatives (e.g. acquisitions, major new programs, movement into new markets, launches of new products or services)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Routine operations (e.g. development and maintenance of employee communication, community relations, or media relations programs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Regularly conducted and routine research activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Formal approaches to gathering information for use in decision making other than research</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Informal approaches to gathering information</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Contact with knowledgeable people outside the organization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Study of PR in Armenia - ENG


**B. Please choose a response that indicates how well each of the following items describes the work that you do as a public relations practitioner.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>neither disagree nor agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I create opportunities for the management to hear the views of various internal and external publics</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication or public relations campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I represent the organization at events and meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I maintain media contacts for my organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I make communication policy decisions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for success or failure of communication or public relations programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I keep others in the organization informed of what they report about our organization and important issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Although I do not make communication policy decisions, I provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendations and plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I do photography and graphs for communication or public relations materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I edit or rewrite for grammar and spelling of the materials written by others in the organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving communication or public relations problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am senior council to top decision makers when communication or public relations issues are involved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study of PR in Armenia - ENG


C. Please select an answer that describes the extent to which you perform each of the following tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>seldom</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate the press conference or arrange media coverage of an event</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with an activist group</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide objective information about the organization</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get your organization's name into the media</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write speeches</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop goals and objectives for your department</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare department budget</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform environmental scanning</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write news releases and feature articles</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop strategies for solving public relations and communication problems</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use research to segment publics</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage the organization's response to issues</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
<td>☦</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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4. Part 2: Demographic and professional information.

D. Finally, there are a few questions about you and your organization

1. Approximately how many people are employed in your organization?

2. Approximately how many public relations or communications professionals are employed in your department?

3. Your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

4. Age (check)
   - 18-24
   - 25-34
   - 35-49
   - 50-64
   - 65 and older

5. Your highest degree in any education is:
   - No college
   - Some college level courses
   - BA degree
   - MA degree
   - PhD degree
   - Other
   (please specify)

[Blank space for input]
Study of PR in Armenia - ENG

6. The highest level of training you have completed in public relations is:

- [ ] No training in PR
- [ ] Some continuing education
- [ ] Some college level courses
- [ ] BA degree
- [ ] MA degree
- [ ] PhD degree
- [ ] Other

(please specify)
Study of PR in Armenia - ENG

5. Part 2: Demographic and professional information.

7. Check any of the following professional associations to which you belong

☐ Do not belong to any professional association
☐ Armenian PR Association
☐ Armenian Marketing Association
☐ Armenian Center of PR Development
☐ Other Armenian or International association (please specify)

8. What public relations professional literature or periodicals do you use?

☐ None
☐ Armenian
☐ International

(please specify)

9. The title of your position


10. How long have you been working in PR/Communication sphere

☐ less than a year  ☐ 1-5 years  ☐ 5-10 years  ☐ over 10 years

11. Choose the type of your organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>non-profit</th>
<th>for-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>private</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>governmental</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>international</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please, indicate if you would like to receive the executive summary of the study

☐ Yes  ☐ No
Appendix E. Survey Instrument Armenian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Առանձին հարցերի հարցումների քանակի բազմազանությունը</th>
<th>Հանելի չէ հաղորդի չվածքի սխալը</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Խոսումի դեմքահարկության սպառմանը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Արդարաձևության լիարժեկցության ժամանակ հարցերի համարը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Առանձին հարցերի հարցահարվածության ժամանակ հարցերի սպառմանը (այսինքն սպառման վրա կարգավորման սպառման սպառման)</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Հարցերի դասակարգման ըթացումը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Սպառման հաղորդակցության ըթացումը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Սպառման դասակարգման ըթացումը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Սպառման հաղորդակցության ըթացումը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Հարցերի դպրոցական հաղորդակցության հաղորդակցության ըթացումը</td>
<td>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Կողմի համախումբ հարվածախումբի անդամ պարտավորություն

1. Պարտավորություն ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն և այլ
  հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

2. Առաջարկություն ու սովորական պատմություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

3. Պարտավորություն ու տեղեկություն տարածում, որ հարվածախումբի
  Պարտավորություն ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

4. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

5. Պարտավորություն ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

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  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

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  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

8. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

9. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

10. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

11. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

12. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.

13. Սենյակաշատ ու տեղեկություն տարածում, միջնորդություն
  և այլ հարցեր պարտավորության համար.
3. Սյուն 1. Համայնքի հարաբերությունների պահության փոփոխությունները

4. Համայնքի պահասպանության առաջին տարվա ընթացքում, որոն առաջացած են՝ հարաբերությունների փոփոխությունների համար պահմանարկելու համար պահանջվում է համալսարանի հարաբերությունների մատյանահրավիրման միջոցով:

| 1. Համակարգչային ծրագրերի ու ծառայությունների ՕՄ-ինչպես հարաբերությունների գործումունքների կատարումն է. | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 2. Ինժեներալային տեխնիկական շերտ | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 3. Մականորոշումների կազմում իրավունք տարածողության ու ուսումնասիրությունների որոշումներ | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 4. Համայնքի տարրերի շարքերի և հարաբերությունների կատարում/ինքնակառավարման/մեկնարկային համակարգչային տարրերի մարմարումներ | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 5. Համայնքի համախորհրդարանի գործումունքների մեկնարկային համակարգչային տարրեր | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 6. Այլ ազդեցություններ | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 7. Համախմբման ծրագրերի կազմում հարաբերությունների կատարումն է. | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 8. Պայմանավորված կազմակերպությունների համար իրավունք տարածում | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 9. Համայնքի համախորհրդարանի գործումունքների մեկնարկային տարրերի ուսումնասիրություններ | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 10. Համախորհրդարանի ծրագրերի կազմում հարաբերությունների կատարում | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 11. Համախորհրդարանի գործումունքների կազմում հարաբերությունների կատարում | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 12. Համախմբման ծրագրերի կազմում հարաբերությունների կատարում | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 13. Համախորհրդարանի գործումունքների մեկնարկային տարրեր | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
| 14. Համախորհրդարանի սահմանափակումներորեն պահպանողական համապատասխանություն | Համալսարան | Համայնք | Համախորհրդարան | Համալսարան
4. Մաս 2. ճնշումագրված և մասամբայնական ունիցանակություն

1. Սպասարկվող բուժում արարողությունը տեղի է ունեցել հայտնի հարցումում համար

2. Սպասարկվող բուժում հարցումից հաճախությունը համար հայտնի պահանջում է, այսինքն 2կր ռեկորդ

3. 2կր ռեկորդ
  ○ արդյունա  ○ հաջորդ

4. Տարիք (թվական)
  ○ 16-24  ○ 25-34  ○ 35-49  ○ 50-64  ○ 65 ու շատ

5. Բնակչության հիմն
  ○ Մարդկանց  ○ Սպասարկում թաղված անձին
  ○ Բանջարեղեն  ○ Բարձրաչափ թաղված անձին
  ○ մանկական տարածաշրջան
  ○ այլ բնակչության հիմն
  ○ այլ բնակչության հիմն
  ○ այլ բնակչության հիմն

Մյուս բնակչության հիմն
6. Հարաբերակցությունների արդյունքը առաջանալու համար պահպանվում է:

☐ Հարաբերակցությունների արդյունքը պահպանվող համարակալագրանցային գործողություն
☐ Սահմանադրական օրինաչափագրի պահպանություն
☐ Հարաբերակցության պահպանման պլանի հատկություն
☐ Հարաբերակցության բարեպաշտության կուսակցություն
☐ Հարաբերակցության բարեպաշտության ուսումնական տարածք
☐ Հարաբերակցության բարեպաշտության զարգացման տարածք

☐ Մյուր (փոփչափել)
5. Սետա 2. Ցույցադիտակիչն ու պահանջարկային անցկացուցակ

7. Այս այլ այլ պահանջարկային կատարումը, որպես անցկացուցակի կազմի մեջ

- [ ] մասնագիտական որոշ միջոցներ տեղի ունեն
- [ ] ցույցադիտակիչ հիմնականը համապատասխանության (APRA)
- [ ] կայսրական համտեյան հարցազրույց
- [ ] բռնագիտես համապատասխանող հնարավորություն
- [ ] դատարանի կողմից վերջնարկված փաստաթղթակցություն կամ մեկներ (մյուս)

8. Այս այլ այլ պահանջարկային կատարումը պահանջարկային կազմի մեջ անցկացուցակի կազմի մեջ չպետք է ներառվի:

- [ ] կենսական
- [ ] սուբհարկայն
- [ ] բնականամար

(դեպ)

9. Այլ պատասխան

10. Այս այլ պահանջական կատարումը կատարվող համապատասխանությունների տեսանկյունից

- [ ] այլ
- [ ] 1-3 ամս
- [ ] 4-6 ամս
- [ ] 7-10 ամս

11. Օրերում այս պահանջարկային կատարում

<table>
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<th>բաժանված համակարգեր</th>
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համար
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սովորության

○ u₀ ○ n₁
Appendix F. Correspondence and Consent Forms English

Survey invitation Email for PR practitioners in Armenia

Dear Mr./Ms. ----------------------

My name is Tatevik Avetisyan, and I am currently a graduate student majoring in public relations at Ball State University, U.S. I would like to invite you to participate in a brief survey, which is a part of the Study of Public Relations in Armenia research. By completing the survey questionnaire, you will support an exploratory study about public relations in Armenia and will greatly contribute to building research-based scholarship about the profession in the country.

Your responses will be kept confidential and will not be used for any purposes other than specified for this study. No identifying information such as names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data. If you agree to participate in the study, please click here [hyperlink] to access the questionnaire. Completing this questionnaire indicates your consent to participate in the study.

To be eligible to participate in the study you must be 18 years of age or older and must have at least one year of experience in public relations in any sphere in Armenia. Thank you in advance for taking time to complete the questionnaire, which should not take more than 15 minutes. The study is being conducted for academic purpose as a partial fulfillment for a degree program in Public Relations. The questionnaire was Emailed to organizations in Armenia that employ PR or communications staff.

The collected data will be stored electronically in the password-protected computer for three years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to the information. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no risk in participating in the study except if you feel uncomfortable answering some questions. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and may withdraw your permission to participate at anytime without penalty or prejudice from the researcher.

Thank you for your support in advance. If you have questions at any time, feel free to contact me.

Principal Investigator
Tatevik Avetisyan
Graduate Student, Public Relations
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
E-mail: tavetisyan@bsu.edu
Cell phone: (765) 631-6975

Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Dustin W. Supa
Assistant Professor of Journalism
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
E-mail: dwsupa@bsu.edu
Phone: 765-285-8215
Fax: 765-285-7997
**Follow-up Email**

Dear Mr./Ms. ---------------------

I would like to make a follow-up inquiry about the survey invitation I Emailed to you two weeks ago (indicate the date). I hope you have received the electronic invitation to participate in exploratory study about public relations in Armenia. If the information has not been received, please find the original message below. If you agree to participate in the study, please click here [hyperlink] to access the questionnaire. Thank you for your support in advance. If you have questions at any time, feel free to contact me.

**Acknowledgement note**

Dear Mr./Ms. ---------------------

Thank you for completing the survey questionnaire. I greatly appreciate your time and commitment to the study. If at the end of the questionnaire you have indicated willingness to receive executive summary of the study, I will send it to you after the study is completed in May 2011. If you have questions at any time, feel free to contact me.

**In-depth interview invitation Email for PR practitioners in Armenia**

Dear Mr./Ms. ----------------------(no introduction is needed since the researcher knows the respondent)

I would like to invite you to participate in an in-depth interview about public relations in Armenia, which is a part of the *Study of Public Relations in Armenia*.

By agreeing to participate in the interview you will support an exploratory study and will greatly contribute to building research-based scholarship about the profession in Armenia. The study is being conducted for academic purpose as a partial fulfillment for a degree program in Public Relations at Ball State University, U.S. The invitation was sent to ten PR practitioners that I know in person.

**IRB Contact Information**

For one’s rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu.
Your responses will be kept confidential and will not be used for any purposes other than specified for this study. No identifying information such as names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data. The collected data will be stored electronically in the password-protected computer for three years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to the information.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no risk in participating in the study except if you feel uncomfortable answering some questions. It is important that you answer and elaborate on all the questions as far as possible. However, you can stop your participation in the interview at any time at your discretion. The questions do not intend to test your knowledge: these ask for your opinion concerning your professional experiences and perceptions of PR in Armenia. Providing information at the interview indicates your consent to participate in the study.

The interview should last no longer than an hour. It will be conducted via Skype (Skype address of the researcher). If you prefer a phone interview, please indicate so, and I will arrange for that. The interview will be voice-recorded upon your consent. If you agree to participate, please indicate the most convenient dates and time of the week, when you can allocate one hour for this.

Thank you for your support in advance. I will be looking forward to your feedback.

Principal Investigator
Tatevik Avetisyan
Graduate Student, Public Relations
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
E-mail: tavetisyan@bsu.edu;
Cell phone: (765) 631-6975

Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Dustin W. Supa
Assistant Professor of Journalism
Department of Journalism
Ball State University
E-mail: dwsupa@bsu.edu
Phone: 765-285-8215
Fax: 765-285-7997

IRB Contact Information
For one’s rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu.
Appendix G. Correspondence and Consent Forms Armenian

Հարցաշար հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնագետների համար (1)

Հարգելի՛ ----------------------
Իմ անունը Տաթևիկ Ավետիսյան է ։ Այժմ ԱՄՆ-ի Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարանի ուսանող եմ, հանրային հարաբերություններ (PR) մասնագետակցության մեջ։ 

Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների ոլորտի վերաբերյալ:

Դա Ձեզնից կպահանջի առավելագույնը 15 րոպե: Հարցմանը մասնակցելով, Դոքսեքում կաջակցեք Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների մասին գիտելիքի հավաքագրման համար, ինչպես նաև այդ ոլորտի զարգացման համար:

Էլեկտրոնային հարցաշարը լրացնելու համար սեղմել այստեղ:

Սիրով, հերազանացեք զարգացման համար:

Ամենիստական ներկայացուցակ ուսումնասիրության սեղմագրի համար:

Ընդհանուր զենքագրություն:

Հեռ.
1-765-285-8215
Ֆաքս
1-765-285-7997

Մագիստրատուրայի ուսանող, Հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնագետակցության Լրագրության բաժին
Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարան
Էլ.փոստ tave81@gmail.com
dwsupa@bsu.edu

Դուք կաջակցեք Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների մասին գիտելիքի հավաքագրման համար, ինչպես նաև այդ ոլորտի զարգացման համար:

Պատկեր

Հեռ.
1-765-631-6975
Հետազոտությունների անցակաման քննող հանձնաժողով (Institutional Review Board) տեղեկություն

Այստեղ տեղեկատվություն տանում են օրինակ բոլոր հանձնաժողովի (Institutional Review Board) տեղեկատու տվյալները: Այստեղից ուսումնասիրության մասնակից Ձեր իրավունքների մասին տեղեկատվություն ստանալու համար, կարող եք դիմել Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարանի Հովանավոր ծրագրերի Ուսումնասիրությունների վերահսկման գրասենյակը (Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (00-1) 765-285-5070, irb@bsu.edu).

Հարցաշարը լրացնելու ուղեցույց

Ուսումնասիրությանը Ձեր մասնակցությունը որևէ ռիսկ չի ներառում և հիմնվում է ազատ կամքի և կամավորության սկզբունքների վրա: Շատ կարևոր է, որպեսզի պատասխանեք բոլոր հարցերին: Սակայն կարող եք չպատասխանել այն հարցին, որին չեք ցանկանում կամ հրաժարվել մասնակցուն քննակցուց: Հարցերի նպատակը Ձեր գիտելիքները ստուգելը չէ: Սակայն Դոքլեք գնահատում եք հանրային հարաբերության վերաբերյալ ներկայացված կարծիքների համատեքստը, որտեղ այժմ աշխատում եք: Ձեր տրամադրած ժողովրդագրական տեղեկատվությունը հույժ գաղտնի կպահվի և կօգտագործվի ընդհանրական վերլուծության համար միայն: Անձնանունները և կազմակերպությունների անվանումներն ուսումնասիրության նյութերի և արդյունքների մեջ չեն հրապարակվում:

Հարցաշարը հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնագիտության համար (2)

Իսիրեր Սառիկի Սարգսյան է: Այստեղ Է. Muskie դրաֆակին տանում են ԱՄՆ-ի Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարանի Համարը (PR) մասնակցությանը: Այստեղի համարը միայն համարելի կարգավորված իրավունքներով: Դա Ձեզ համարվում է համարյալ ընդհանուր հարաբերությունների կարծիքների վերաբերյալ: Դուք միայն կարող եք իրավունքից տեղեկատվություն ստանալ 15 տարից առաջ:

Հարցաշարը մասնակցելուց հետո, ինչպես նաև ինչպես կամ իրականում համարյալ հարաբերությունների մասնակցելու համար կարող եք հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնակցել այդ համարում, միայն որպես զանգվածային կամ սեփական անձի համար, որը ուսումնասիրության վերահսկման գրասենյակը Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարանի Հովանավոր ծրագրերի Ուսումնասիրությունների վերահսկման գրասենյակը (Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (00-1) 765-285-5070, irb@bsu.edu).
ուսումնասիրության շրջանակներում: Հարցաշարը լրացնելով Դուք հաստատում եք ուսումնասիրությանը մասնակցելու։

Էլեկտրոնային հարցաշարը լրացնելու համար սեղմել այստեղ:

Անդամանցել էլեկտրոնային փոստով Ուսումնասիրությունը անցկացվում է հարաբերությունների մասնագետի մագիստրոսի աստիճան ստանալու ծրագրի շրջանակներում որպես այս ավարտանակ անրային հարաբերությունների համար կուսարակներին վիճակահատում ուսանողներին ուսումնասիրության ընթացքին մասնակցելու համար նաև էլեկտրոնային հարցաշարն էլեկտրոնային փոստով ուղարկվում է Հայաստանի տարբեր կազմակերպությունների հանրային հարաբերություններին մականուն վարակած էլեկտրոնային փոստով մականոյին վերջիններից մեկը։

Եթե ցանկանում եք ուսումնասիրությունը անցկացնելու համար զարգացնել այս էլեկտրոնային փոստով հարցաշարը, պետք է միայն տեղեկագրություն ներկայացնեք այս էլեկտրոնային հարցաշարին հանրային հարաբերությունների համար, ինչպես նաև կուրսերի պարունական զարգացման համար կուրսների անցկացումների և առավելագույն հարցաշարտում կատարվող ռուսական հարցազարդակությունների համար սեղմել այստեղ։

Պատասխան ճնշելուց հետո,

Եռամսյակություն նամակ-հիշեցում

Հարգելի

Սույն հաղորդագրությամբ ցանկանում եմ հիշեցնել մոտ երկու շաբաթ առաջ
ուղարկված հանրային հարաբերությունների հարցազարդակությունների համար, հիմայից իսկ
0 քարտեզով զարգացման համար կուրսների պարունական ռուսական հարցազարդակությունների համար
կուրսների անցկացումների և առավելագույն հարցաշարտում կատարվող ռուսական
հարցազարդակությունների համար սեղմել այստեղ այրծարակների

Հարցազարդակություն նամակ-հիշեցում

Հայտնի է, որ ուսումնասիրության ավարտին asurerան մայիսի վերջին, Ձեզ
կուղարկեմ արդյունքների սեղմագիրը.

Հայտնի է, որ ուսումնասիրության ավարտին asurerան մայիսի վերջին, Ձեզ
կուղարկեմ արդյունքների սեղմագիրը.
Կրկին անգամ շնորհակալություն ժամանակ հատկացնելու և տեղեկատվություն տրամադրելու համար:

Եթե այլ հարցեր լինեն, սիրով կպատասխանեմ:

Հարցազրույցի հրավեր

Հարգելի՛ ----------------------

Սիրով հրավիրում եմ մասնակցելու հարցազրույցին

Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների ոլորտի ուսումնասիրության թեմայով:

Հարցազրույցին մասնակցություն ունենալով, Դուք աջակցում եք Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնագիտական ոլորտի գիտելիքի հավաքմանը ի նպաստ այդ ոլորտի զարգացմանը մեր երկրում:

Ուսումնասիրությունը անցկացվում է Հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնագիտական ոլորտի հատկացման նպատակով դրաբնակ չորս թվային՝ որպես դրական պատմության մասնակի նշանակման:

Ձեր պատասխանները հույժ գաղտնի կպահվեն և կօգտագործվեն միայն այս ուսումնասիրության ավարտից հետո:

Ուսումնասիրությանը Ձեր մասնակցությունը հիմնվում է ազատ կամավորության և ազատ կամավորության սկզբունքների վրա: Մասնակցությունը որոշ թեկնածություն չկա:

Անձը հաստատող տեղեկատվությունը, ինչպես նաև նախընտրած տեղեկատվությունը, չեն կիրառվում տվյալների ներկայացման կամ հրապարակման ժամանակ: Հավաքված տվյալներն ավելին կարճատև կամարգավորվեն երկեք տարի ժամկետով, այնուամենայնիվ ուսումնասիրությունը ձեզ նախատեսվել է ուսումնասիրության հատկացման համար:

Անձը հաստատող տեղեկատվությունը, ինչպես նաև նախընտրած տեղեկատվությունը, չեն կիրառվում տվյալների ներկայացման կամ հրապարակման ժամանակ: Հավաքված տվյալները կպահվեն ծածկագրով ամրափակված համակարգում երեք տարով, այնուհետև կջջվեն: Միայն ուսումնասիրության հեղինակը մուտք ունի այդ տվյալների պահոց:

Ուսումնասիրությանը Ձեր մասնակցությունը հրավիրում է ատոմ կամ դիտարկության հետաքրքրությունը ուսումնասիրության վրա: Մասնակցությունը որոշ թեկնածություն չկա:
Հարցազրույցը նպատակչիչ չի հետապնդում, ստուգել Ձեր գիտելիքները:

Առաջադրված հարցերի միջոցով խնդրում ենք արտահայտել Ձեր կարծիքը և ընկալումները Հայաստանում հանրային հարաբերությունների ոլորտի զարգացման մասին, ինչպես նաև ներկայացնել այդ ոլորտում Ձեր ունեցած փորձառությունը այժմ աշխատում եք 荆州մասին և պատասխանել Դուք հաստատում եք ուսումնասիրությանը մասնակցելու համաձայնությունը:

Հարցազրույցին մասնակցելու և տեղեկատվություն տրամադրելով Եթե նախընտրում եք հեռախոսային հարցազրույց, խնդրում եմ նշեք նախապատրաստվելու համար:

Հարցազրույցը կտևի մեկ ժամից ոչ ավելի:

Այն կանցկացվի Skype-ի միջոցով:

Եթե համաձայն եք մասնակցել, ապա նշեք շաբաթվա մեջ ամենից հարաձայն օրերն ու ժամերը, երբ կարող եք մեկ ժամ հարցազրույցին հատկացնել:

Կանխավ շնորհակալություն համար:

Ուսումնասիրության հեղինակ` Տաթևիկ Ավետիսյան
Մագիստրատուրայի ուսանող, Հանրային հարաբերությունների մասնագիտությամբ
Լրագրության բաժին
Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարան
Էլ.փոստ ` tavetisyan@bsu.edu; tatevik81@gmail.com
Բջջ.հեռ ` 1-765-631-6975

Գիտական խորհրդատու` Դասթին Ուոլթեր Սուպա
Լրագրության դասախոս
Լրագրության բաժին
Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարան
Էլ.փոստ ` dwsupa@bsu.edu
Բջջ.հեռ ` 1-765-285-8215
Ֆաքս ` 1-765-285-7997

Հետազոտությունների անցակացման քննող հանձնաժողովի (Institutional Review Board)
տեղեկություն տվյալներ` Որպես հաստատությունների մասին Ձեր իրավունքների մասին տեղեկատվություն ստանալու համար, կարող եք դիմել Բոլ Սթեյթ համալսարանի Հովանավորվող ծրագրերի Ուսումնասիրությունների վերահսկման գրասենյակ: Research Compliance, Sponsored Programs Office, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (00-1) 765-285-5070, irb@bsu.edu.
Appendix H. Terms and Definitions

Public Relations practitioner – for the purpose of the research, the term includes all the eligible respondents who undertake tasks related to PR or communications irrespective of having the title in their position.

Snow-ball sample – includes the PR practitioners (as operationalized above), who know the researcher in person, volunteer to participate in the research and can support to reach other eligible respondents.

Senior management – immediate non-PR supervisor of the PR practitioner if feasible, or senior executive of the organization (e.g. Executive Director, CEO etc.).

Survey sample frame – the frame that the researcher has developed based on the available databases of organizations operating in Armenia.
Appendix I. Matrix of Research Questions and Variables

Big Q
What is PR practice in Armenia?

Research process
Qualitative
Secondary research
RQ1, RQ4

Research methods and instruments
In-depth interview
RQ1,2,3,4

Research Questions
Survey questionnaire
RQ2,3,4

Theoractical background
Circuit of Culture
Hofstede's Cultural Indicators
Global PR Model
Excellence Study

Independent Variables
Culture
Economic development
Political system
Activism
Media system

PR Practice
Factors
Characteristics
Function
Expertise
Strategic; Tactical
M; CL; T; MR
Education; Experience; PR training

Organ. & Dept. characteristics
Function & role of PR department
Strategic vs technical heuristic value
Experience research theory
Function
Role
Expertise