

MASTER'S THESIS

Media relations in China: a study of professionals in Beijing

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**Media Relations in China:
A Study of Professionals in Beijing**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

Media relations is an important aspect of public relations practices, yet few studies of media relations have been carried out in the Chinese context. This thesis investigates several problems that are related to media relations in China. It will first investigate the perceptions that journalists have of PR practitioners and how these perceptions are formulated. It also investigates the perceptions PR practitioners have of journalists. Finally, it identifies several factors that contribute to good media relations.

The thesis features two complementary approaches, a quantitative survey and qualitative interviews. The results of quantitative study indicate that Chinese public relations practitioners have positive perceptions of journalists, whereas Chinese journalists have neutral perceptions of PR practitioners.

In probing the formulation of the perceptions of journalists, it was found that the poor understanding of the media among PR practitioners had a negative influence on the perceptions of journalists, and that the generally low quality of their information materials and the perceived lack of integrity of PR practitioners cause the journalists to have negative perceptions of PR practitioners. In addition, an interactive relationship was found between the perceptions of journalists and media relations, in that the favorable perceptions of journalists were found to have a positive effect on media relations, and good media relations were identified as generating positive perceptions of PR practitioners among journalists.

Four factors were examined in the survey to determine whether they contribute to good media relations, and were further discussed in the interviews. Two-way models of public relations, environmental scanning and evaluation, the skills and expertise of PR practitioners, and the managerial roles of senior PR practitioners were all believed to give rise to good media relations. However, although they are significant contributors, they are not good predictors of good media relations due to the low correlation coefficients. In addition, although both the Chinese journalists and PR practitioners who were surveyed made a similar evaluation of the four factors, there are certain disagreements. Chinese journalists reported that the technical role of senior PR people is crucial to good media relations, whereas PR practitioners opined that the managerial role of senior PR people exclusively has an exclusively positive impact on media relations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
LIST of FIGURES.....	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Development and evolution of public relations in China.....	1
1.2 Current status of public relations practices.....	3
1.3 Purpose and significance of the research.....	5
1.3.1 Purpose of the research.....	5
1.3.2 Significance of the study.....	7
1.3.3 Outline of the thesis.....	8
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Media relations.....	9
2.2 New media and traditional media.....	12
2.3 Mutual perceptions of journalists and public relations practitioners.....	16
2.4 Formulation of journalists' perceptions of PR practitioners.....	18
2.4.1 PR people' understanding of the media.....	19
2.4.2 News value in public relations material.....	20
2.4.3 Integrity of PR practitioners.....	21
2.4.4 Stereotypes in the journalistic profession.....	21
2.4.5 Other factors accounting for journalists' perceptions.....	22
2.5 Media evolution and media relations in China.....	24
2.5.1 Development of Chinese media.....	25
2.5.2 Media relations in China.....	29
2.6 Establishment of good media relations.....	33
2.6.1 Good media relations.....	35
2.6.2 Models of public relations.....	36
2.6.3 Environmental scanning and evaluation.....	38
2.6.4 Skills and expertise available in a communication unit.....	40
2.6.5 Roles of senior PR practitioners.....	42
2.7 Research questions and hypotheses.....	44
CHAPTER III METHOD.....	49
3.1 Overall design.....	49
3.2 Target city selection.....	50
3.3 Data collection.....	51
3.3.1 Data collection - journalists.....	51
3.3.2 Data collection - PR practitioners.....	53
3.4 Questionnaire design.....	56
3.4.1 Pre-test.....	56

3.4.2 Operational definition of variables used in survey of PR practitioners	57
3.4.3 Construction of questionnaire for PR practitioners	63
3.4.4 Operational definition of variables used in survey of journalists	64
3.4.5 Construction of questionnaire for journalists	70
3.5 Data analysis strategies	72
3.5.1 Stages of quantitative analysis	72
3.5.2 Stages of qualitative analysis	73
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS OF THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY	74
4.1 Research question 1 and testing of Hypotheses 1 to 4	74
4.1.1 Journalists' perceptions of PR practitioners	74
4.1.2 Interpreting the formation of perceptions of journalists	75
4.1.3 Relationship between the perceptions of journalists and media relations	82
4.2 Research question 2 and testing of Hypotheses 5 to 8	83
4.2.1 PR practitioners' perceptions of journalists	83
4.2.2 Contributing factors of good media relations	85
4.2.3 Comparison of the thinking of PR practitioners and journalists	90
CHAPTER V FINDINGS OF THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS	99
5.1 Introduction of qualitative research	99
5.2 Interview question 1:	100
5.3 Interview question 2:	102
5.4 Interview question 3:	105
5.5 Interview question 4:	106
CHAPTER VI DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	109
6.1 Discussion and conclusion	109
6.1.1 Perceptual inconsistencies	109
6.1.2 Explanation of perceptions of journalists	115
6.1.3 Interaction between journalists' perceptions and media relations	117
6.1.4 Factors contributing to good media relations	118
6.1.5 Consensus and disagreement between PR practitioners and journalists	123
6.2 Implications	126
6.2.1 Implications for journalists	127
6.2.2 Implications for PR practitioners' clients or top management	128
6.2.3 Implications for PR practitioners	128
6.3 Limitations and suggestions for future study	130
6.3.1 Limitations	130
6.3.2 Suggestions for future study	133
REFERENCE	134
APPENDIX A	146
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JOURNALISTS	146
APPENDIX B	156
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PR PRACTITIONERS	156

APPENDIX C	166
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	166
CURRICULUM VITAE	168