

## 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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