

A SURVEY OF PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR OPINION ABOUT
WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULUM

By

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

GENERAL

We are living in a world with a global economy.¹ The United States is more and more opening up to the world as U.S. organizations (companies, non-governmental organizations, and others) have plants and/or offices all around the world, many in different cultures. Events abroad have an influence on the U.S. market. Also, many foreign companies are exporting their products into the U.S. Because of this, contacts with other cultures have multiplied. Most public relations graduates today will have to function in this global environment. Morley, a public relations practitioner with international experience, starts his book, *How to Manage Your Global Reputation*, by saying that: "There is no better time to make a career in international public relations."² Wakefield, former director of Nu Skin international, says that:

No matter where you practice public relations, sooner or later the ceaseless march will catch up with you: if you don't reach out to emerging markets and acknowledge the accompanying public relations issues, global competition will come to your community with its own challenges.³

Communication now spans the globe, and organizations need practitioners who can function in this new environment. So public relations education should prepare them accordingly. It is not sufficient anymore for practitioners to know how public relations is practiced in the U.S. The same practitioners also have to be able to perform the same tasks in this new global environment. Students need to be prepared to work for and communicate with publics from different cultures; they need to be able to function in a worldwide environment.

The purpose of this research was to discover what students should learn about worldwide public relations and on which levels they should learn it. Those two main questions were asked of a group of recognized U.S. practitioners in the field of worldwide public relations. Based on their answers, an overall direction for worldwide public relations education at the university level will be suggested.

BACKGROUND

Public relations practitioners have to understand and direct the communication function of an organization. Communication and relationship building between an organization and its various publics are what public relations is about. It becomes even more important when practicing in a worldwide context. Worldwide organizations cross different cultures and need an educated practitioner to guide the organization through the various pitfalls that might be encountered. Burke indicates that a public relations practitioner, as a boundary spanner, needs “. . . cross-cultural skills . . . crucial to an international PR employee.”⁴ It is the role of the worldwide public relations practitioner to know how worldwide public relations in a cross-cultural perspective is practiced.

It seems obvious that knowing a different language other than English is highly desirable, but it alone is not sufficient. What, besides language, is necessary to prepare practitioners and students to work in an international communication environment? The aim of this thesis is to find out what the content of a curriculum in worldwide public relations should be. This is done by reviewing the literature about this subject and by

surveying public relations practitioners with international experience. They will be asked what the importance is of various topics like global media, politics, economics and so on.

The term “worldwide” is chosen to include two distinctive terms, international and global public relations. Wouters and Yeshin differentiate between internationalizing and globalization.⁵ International public relations practitioners implement distinctive programs in multicultural markets, with each program tailored to meet the often-acute distinctions of an individual geographic market, a single country, or a group of countries with a similar culture. This way, organizations and companies take into account the differences of each culture in their international markets.

Global public relations, on the other hand, imposes an overall perspective on a program that may cover several markets, recognizing similarities and adapting to differences. Those programs are “globally” the same and locally adaptable. While the strategy and program of an U.S. organization or company can be global, the public relations messages have to be local.⁶ The global way is much cheaper, whereas the first is not, but international public relations will, in the end, lead to better and lasting relations. The choice is based on the product and the mindset of the company as well as cultural differences. So the two terms indicate something different that is incorporated in the term worldwide public relations.

This thesis does not focus on the technology used, such as the Internet, but looks at the “human” strategic component of the communication process: the understanding and planning that goes into the public relations practice. Communication envelops human interactions and communications incorporate technological interactions.⁷ Different technologies are needed for interpersonal relations on a global scale, but the personal side

of communication is a highly important element in cultures other than U.S..⁸ This means that interpersonal contacts as well as traditional mass communications are studied in this work. Interactions between members of different cultures can be labeled as cross-cultural communication. Public relations communication involves two-way interaction; the communication is dependent on all the parties who participate in the process.

The literature review starts with a definition of U.S. public relations. Once this is done, culture and cultural differences are explained. Based on this, the literature explores how people in different cultures relate to each other, how it is different from interaction between members in the U.S. culture, and what influence it has on public relations on a worldwide scale. Diffusion of information in other cultures is then examined to look how these differences influence the practice of public relations in different cultures. Next, the literature review addresses the importance of worldwide public relations. Finally, an overview is given of what other authors consider to be important for a future practitioner to know.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Future practitioners need education about how public relations is practiced in a worldwide context.⁹ Thus, teachers of such courses need to know what to teach their students. The literature about worldwide public relations mostly addresses what an U.S. businessperson traveling abroad should expect and how he or she has to behave. Little of it tells what students should study. As mentioned before, this thesis wants to find an answer to the following question: What should students, based on comments from U.S. public relations practitioners with worldwide experience, learn in a course or courses that

will prepare them for worldwide public relations work? This question is approached from the U.S. perspective, meaning that this thesis does not ask practitioners how public relations is practiced in the U.S., but what future practitioners should know so that they are prepared to practice public relations in other cultures. Also, the reader should be aware that this thesis only reflects the viewpoint of U.S. practitioners.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The analysis of the survey results will give an indication of what current worldwide public relations practitioners believe is important for students to know about worldwide public relations. Comparison with the literature review will give an indication if previous opinions are supported. Based on this, recommendations for the content of a worldwide public relations course will be formulated.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a questionnaire sent to U.S. practitioners of international public relations. All respondent names were taken out of the international section of the "Blue Book" of the Public Relations Society of America, 1997 edition.¹⁰ Two mailings generated 92 valid responses, or a 45.5% response rate of the total population (N = 202).

Practitioners were asked to complete questions about their educational background and professional experience, the level at which they thought worldwide public relations should be taught, and what they thought undergraduate and graduate students and practitioners need to know for future, successful practice.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there a genuine need for such a course? Do practitioners feel that there is a need for students to learn about worldwide public relations? Or do practitioners think it should be learned only while doing?
2. What should be the content of a worldwide public relations course? Practitioners are asked if they think such things as knowledge of a different language and different media systems is valuable for students.
3. Should worldwide public relations be taught at the undergraduate level, at the graduate level, or at both levels?
4. What type or level of education do current practitioners have? Have they a specific public relations, communication, business education, or a more general liberal arts education?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work is useful for educators; it will tell them what students should study for an international career. This research did not seek to develop a theory of what might be useful, but asked for actual guidelines from practitioners in international public relations who have experienced what a student should learn. Grunig, professor of journalism at the University of Maryland and founding co-editor of the *Public Relations Research Journal*, remarks that: "The role of public relations educators and academic research should be to serve the profession: to conduct research that will advance the profession and train the

next generation of practitioners.”¹¹ As advocated earlier, most future public relations practitioners will need some international knowledge. “The public relations function will of necessity become a worldwide operation.”¹² This indicates the importance of studies like these.

Moreover, practitioners and students who do not work in or pursue an international career can still benefit from this work as the globe continues to shrink and economies become more entangled. “Even domestic companies that have no desire to ‘go international’ are experiencing the impact of globalization in the form of new global competitors.”¹³ It will help those people to gain a different view of their profession and the importance of international knowledge. Eventually it will also help practitioners when working for or with ethnic groups from different cultures within the U.S. It will be of value for a practitioner who has business in a neighboring country such as Canada. There are two culturally different groups in Canada, each with a different language. Communicating with both groups will have to be done differently.¹⁴

Finally, this thesis will also help U.S.-based practitioners to better understand which knowledge is important in their international profession.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of this study is explorative as few studies have approached this subject; therefore, it was not an easy task to know which questions had to be asked.

This study was also limited by its size. More research is needed that includes professionals who are internationally active and who are listed in other sources besides the "Blue Book." Including other professionals will lead to an expanded view of what practitioners think should be included in worldwide public relations courses.

Since the survey was only sent to practitioners, no comparison can be made with educators about the content of such a course. Also, only the U.S. point of view is heard; practitioners and educators from other cultures could give valuable input as what to teach U.S. students about worldwide public relations. Follow-up studies could compare their ideas about worldwide public relations courses with worldwide public relations practitioners all over the world. This tells U.S. worldwide public relations practitioners how public relations is practiced in other cultures. This would give educators an idea of what should be included in worldwide public relations courses.

More research is also needed to develop model curricula. What should be the exact content of these courses, how should it be introduced, in what parts should it be divided, and what experience do the educators need?

Survey methodology carries its own limitations. Surveys depend on honest responses from the respondents. Trust is placed in the survey respondents that they will respond honestly and completely.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Professional public relations and educational literature were reviewed for the importance of research in current international public relations practice. Literature about cultural differences was also consulted.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter describes the group that was surveyed, the survey instrument and a rationale for the survey questions asked. The chapter also outlines the timeline for the survey and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV: Findings and Analysis

The results of the practitioners' surveys are presented, analyzed, described and summarized.

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions are drawn from the data analysis; recommendations for further study are made.

ENDNOTES

¹ Joyce Wouters, *International Public Relations. How to Establish Your Company's Product, Service, and Image in Foreign Markets* (New York: Amacom, 1991), 168. and Mike Featherstone. *Localism, Globalism and Cultural Identity*. in Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanagake, eds. *Global/Local Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 46-7 and 60. and Michael Kunzick, *Images of Nations and International Public Relations* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996) And Robert L. Stevenson, *Global Communication in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Longman, 1994), 17. and Melvin Schnapper, *Multinational Training for Multinational Corporations*. in Molefi Kete Asante, Eileen Newmark and Cecil A. Blake, eds. *Handbook of Intercultural Communication* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979), 450.

² Michael Morley, *How to Manage your Global Reputation. A Guide to the Dynamics of International Public Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), vii.

³ Robert I. Wakefield, "Is International PR A Figment Of Someone's Imagination?" *PR Tactics* August 1998: 20.

⁴ John Burk, "Training MNC Employees as Culturally Sensitive Boundary Spanners." *Public Relations Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 43.

⁵ Joyce Wouters, 1991: 167-168. and Tony Yeshin, *Marketing Communication Strategy* (Oxford: Linacre House, 1995), 177.

⁶ Kathleen F. Connelly in Robert L. Dilenschneider, ed. *Dartell's Public Relations Handbook*, 4th ed. (Chicago: Dartnell, 1996), 96.

⁷ Hamid Mowlana, *Global Communication in Transition. The End of Diversity?* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 177.

⁸ Janette Patricia Ashley-Sloan, "International Public Relations: Hope for the 1990's in International Business." M.S., San Jose University, 1991: 22.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1-15.

¹⁰ Adam Shell, ed. *Public Relations Tactics: The Blue Book of Public Relations Practitioners* (New York: PRSA, 1996)

¹¹ James E. Grunig, "Basic Research Provides Knowledge That Makes Evaluation Possible." *Public Relations Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 28.

¹² Ann Wilkinson, "Globalization: Are We Up to the Challenges?" *Public Relations Journal* 46, no. 1 (January 1990): 12.

¹³ Kathy R. Fitzpatrick and Rita Kirk Whillock, "Assessing the Impact of Globalization on U.S. Public Relations." *Public Relations Review* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 316.

¹⁴ Carole M., Howard, "Going Global: How To Expand Your Horizons While Avoiding the 'Ugly American' Syndrome." *Public Relations Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 23.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

GENERAL

Worldwide public relations is a relatively new field of study in the U.S. To exactly know what the object of this field is, and to avoid confusion, worldwide public relations needs to be defined. Before students learn about worldwide public relations, they need to know what public relations means. Also, they need to know what its similarities and differences from marketing and advertising are. First, international marketing will be explained; secondly, public relations and worldwide public relations will be defined; thirdly, the importance of worldwide public relations will be clarified.

When this is done, culture will be defined and symbolic interactionism and audience interaction theories will be used to explain the importance of understanding cultures.

Then, current worldwide public relations education will be reviewed to see what is taught in this field. Finally, an overview is given of the literature concerning what experts say the content of worldwide public relations courses should be.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING DEFINED

Marketing mainly directs its efforts to the product. Churchill describes marketing as “. . . the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals.”¹ In their book, *Global Marketing Strategies*, Jeannet and Hennessey define marketing as: “. . . the performance of business activities directing the flow of products and services from producer to consumer.”² All this activities can be put together in the marketing mix, the four Ps: price, product, placement and promotion.³

Jeannet and Hennessey define international marketing as: “. . . the performance of marketing activities across two or more countries.”⁴ Jeannet and Hennessey also say that there are different steps in marketing on a global scale. Each step builds on the previous one. According to the authors, each step is a more complex form of marketing. They make a distinction between companies involved in domestic, export, international, multi-national, multi-regional and global marketing.⁵ Jeannet and Hennessey consider domestic marketing as a less complicated form, and global marketing as the nec plus ultra in marketing.⁶ Their theory can be applied to the public relations function, which is responsible for managing the communication and long-term relationship building that supports and surrounds specific marketing efforts.

Domestic marketing concentrates on the internal market only. Export marketing is applied when an U.S. company has some exports, but no subsidiaries or operations in other countries. International marketing is done when a firm exports to several markets and has a subsidiary in each market. This approach enables the company to approach each country differently and to adapt its marketing strategy to the local situation. The

overall strategy and its various adaptations in the different countries is still centrally coordinated.

In multi-national marketing, the company goes further. Each subsidiary develops its marketing approach independently from the headquarters. There is still one overall approach, but the different subsidiaries adapt this independently to their market. Multi-regional marketing aims at developing a unified approach for different countries with market similarities. Finally, global marketing approaches the whole world as one market and only uses a single strategy for a product service or company. Still, some adaptation has to be done for specific cultural differences. But, overall, one global strategy is chosen to market a product, service or company.⁷ This marketing division can also be used for public relations. The same distinction can be made, with domestic, export, international, multi-national, multi-regional and global public relations. This division is less visible and more long-term in public relations, but it does exist.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEFINED

Nessman indicates that most public relations definitions classify public relations as “planned communication.”⁸ According to Banks, public relations is defined as “. . . the communication between an organization and its publics.”⁹ There is a need for a company to relate to its audience or its various target groups. Hartley describes these target groups as “. . . customers, suppliers, employees, stockholders, financial institutions, the communities in which it dwells, and the various governments, both local and federal. And to these groups must be added the press . . .”¹⁰ All these target groups

are described by Traverse-Healy as “stake-holders”.¹¹ Each has to be approached differently, accordingly to its demographic and psychographic characteristics. The strategy will mainly depend on the kind of audience. Kendall defines public relations as a process that “. . . builds mutually beneficial associations with publics.”¹² According to Nessmann, Long and Hazelton’s description of public relations is the most exacting analytical definition. Their definition defines public relations as “. . . a communication function of management through which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organizational goals.”¹³ Cutlip, Center and Broom go further and give a more elaborate and more detailed definition of public relations. They see it as “. . . the management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends.”¹⁴

Whatever definition is used, it is evident that public relations must look at the long-term relations with an organization or client. Public relations performs a valuable, be it different, function than marketing and advertising. Generally speaking, public relations communicates the image and long-term relationships of the organization in the eyes of various publics, marketing takes care of the development of a product, and advertising will pay for time and space to try to persuade the customer to buy a product.¹⁵ Public relations is also not the same as propaganda, which is: “. . . a form of persuasive communication that succeeds in states where there are totalitarian governments and cannot exist in a true democracy.”¹⁶ Public relations differs from propaganda, which is generally government supported, international in scope, and politically dictated in nature.¹⁷

Public relations is also often called the conscience of the corporate world. When making a business decision, corporate executive officers don't always think about the ethical questions or consequences of their actions on long-term relationships. This is when public relations comes in to understand what the public wants of a organization and how the organization can act to adapt to the public's demands. Short-term goals like sales figures are not the primary goal of public relations; its primary goal is to stay in touch with the various publics with which the organization interacts. This will be profitable for the organization over time. "Many companies that fail in early attempts to penetrate foreign markets find that the battle for credibility gets harder each time because of accumulating burden of earlier failures."¹⁸

Public relations is also different from advertising.¹⁹ Public relations campaigns are generally "free." This means that no money is paid for articles that appear in newspapers or magazines, or for video or audio clips on television or radio. Public relations does not try to sell a product, but rather it tries to create an ongoing mutually beneficial environment in which both the organization and its publics can flourish.²⁰

According to Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore, public relations is a management function because it helps an organization shape its philosophy, achieve its objectives, adapt to a changing environment and competes in several markets.²¹ Culbertson and Chen add that future practitioners will more and more become involved in at the management level where they will receive top-level responsibilities.²²

Public relations practitioners are often called "boundary spanners".²³ Practitioners are the link between an organization and its various publics. Public relations practitioners are trained to look at the whole picture, to look at the whole communication process

between an organization and its various publics; it does not concentrate on one function like business. In the international field, where other cultures are encountered, public relations practitioners are in a position to understand culture and facilitate the communication to build and maintain favorable relationships.

Wilcox Ault and Agee assert that:

. . . the world needs not more information but sensitive communicators and facilitators who can explain the goals and methods of individuals, organizations, and governments to others in a socially responsible manner. Equally, these experts in communication and public opinion must provide their employers with knowledge of what others are thinking, to guide them in setting their policies wisely for the common good.²⁴

Traverse-Healy describes a public relations practitioner as an intelligence operator. The first task is to know where the information needed is located; who are the people who know what you need to know? Finding a good source is the first task of a practitioner. He said that, a practitioner should first look for sources in the country itself, before spending money on outside sources. Secondly, the same practitioner has to be able to assess the situation in any given country. Finally, a practitioner has to know who he or she can work with and with whom he or she cannot.²⁵

WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEFINED

Wilcox, Ault and Agee define international public relations as “. . . the planned and organized effort of a company, institution or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with the publics of other nations.”²⁶ Henry speaks of marketing public relations. By this, he means “. . . a comprehensive, all-encompassing, public awareness and information program or campaign directed to mass or special audiences to influence increased sales or use of an organization’s product or service.”²⁷ Coombs defines international public relations as a rather vast domain that includes “. . . communication between countries, between cultures, and the interaction of employees from different cultures within the same organization.”²⁸

Traverse-Healy pointed out that there is no such thing as international or global public relations; according to him, every public relations effort has to be adapted and implemented at the local level.²⁹ This does not mean that public relations cannot be organized around a global issue or target. A certain issue will need attention all over the world, but the attention given to it, and the way it is handled differs from country to country, which will have an influence on the local public relations programs and practices.³⁰

Those short definitions must be applied to a worldwide context when an organization goes abroad as it will encounter different cultures. The challenge of worldwide public relations is to eliminate the cultural barriers to effective communication.³¹ Public relations practitioners’ expertise as the relationship builders and communication specialists are well-suited to this role. A worldwide public relations

practitioner's main role is to counsel organizations that go abroad and operate in a different culture. Morely describes a worldwide public relations practitioner as a person that is multi-talented . . .

. . . educationally qualified, a skilled communicator, a thoughtful and calculating strategist, technologically proficient, multilingual, avidly interested in current affairs, knowledgeable about political affairs in many countries, respectful of a variety of customs and etiquette, and experienced in working in a number of countries, with a spell in general management.³²

Management has to understand that public relations practitioners can contribute to organizational well-being in different environments. Sommerness and Beaman agree and add “. . . it is recognized that a company's world-wide reputation and image have bottom-line implications.”³³ Accordingly, the growing globalization of the economy suggest that public relations will play a crucial role in adapting organizations to these changes.³⁴ A practitioner at the counseling level will be involved in management, and therefore need a broad knowledge base like history, economics, and media in addition to public relations skills like editing and writing news releases.

According to Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore, worldwide public relations has three distinct aspects.

In one role, public relations practitioners represent multinational corporations both at home, dealing with public opinions and governmental activities that relate both to specific corporations and to multinational enterprise as a whole. The second role of multinational public relations is to help bridge the communication gap that inevitably exists between foreign operations and top management in the world headquarters. Finally, public relations must be conducted in the corporations' various host countries.³⁵

Ignoring the practitioners' role in international efforts will cause communication mistakes and often result in being considered as an “ugly American.”³⁶ “Understanding the specific publics a multi-national works with is crucial.”³⁷ An example is the “Nova”

case in Latin America. Chevrolet introduced a new car, the Chevy Nova. The company exported it to Latin American countries, while keeping the same name. Sales in Spanish-speaking countries did not meet expectations. It was found that “nova” means “new” in Spanish, but “no va” means “no go”.³⁸ Hartley gives the example of difficult start of Euro Disney, in which the cultural differences between the U.S. and Europe were not taken into account.³⁹ Euro Disney initially refused to serve wine with lunch and dinner, much to the protest of customers.⁴⁰ In Eastern Europe, the Energizer Bunny commercials were perceived as selling pink bunnies.⁴¹ In West-Europe, a Coca-Cola commercial showed a glass filled with ice-cubes in which the soft drink was poured. Lots of ice cubes are normal in the States, but not in Western Europe.⁴² Asking for a lot of ice cubes in Belgium will result in a glass filled with only a few cubes. In Russia people wear their wedding ring on their right hands. This was important to a U.S. baby care company who aired a commercial which offended everyone when “. . . it showed a young girl with a baby. Scandalized consumers thought she was an unwed mother because she wore no ring on her right hand.”⁴³

What kind of communication is needed when dealing with different cultural publics? Few detailed plans about this subject exist. The commonly accepted definition of public relations of Cutlip, Center and Broom, can be adapted to an international context. Worldwide public relations is the management function that identifies cultural differences and establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various international and cultural different publics on whom its success or failure depends.

IMPORTANCE OF WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

Several authors have researched the importance of public relations education. In 1990 Farinelli pointed to the importance of worldwide public relations education in the light of “. . . breakdowns in international barriers and increases in international trade. In response, our educational focus must broaden . . .”⁴⁴ Banks said that “. . . several meta-analyses have concluded that cross cultural and managerial training can improve practitioners’ effectiveness in culturally diverse settings.”⁴⁵ Strenski added that understanding the local culture, language, customs, business protocol and government relations are “. . . mandatory for a successful business venture overseas.”⁴⁶ Intercultural education as part of a worldwide public relations education is important because:

. . . Americans are unaccustomed to a diverse types (sic) of interaction with people from different backgrounds. Rather, Americans are more comfortable with limited amounts of interaction according to well-defined roles. Consequently, they are somewhat inept at accepting people from other cultures as equals with a viewpoint worthy of attention. This ineptness, the product of history, has to be overcome if Americans are to interact effectively in today’s interdependent world.⁴⁷

The first reason to learn worldwide public relations is the difference between local public relations and public relations in a worldwide context, because “. . . PR is very different depending on the country where it is practiced.”⁴⁸ Studies reveal an enormous influence of cultural aspects on practical public relations in a worldwide context.⁴⁹ A survey of 376 public relations practitioners in 1993 by Fitzpatrick and Whillock revealed that 77 percent of the respondents perceived a significant difference between practicing national and international public relations.⁵⁰

According to Henry, practitioners have to understand that a different culture requires “. . . a different style and way of doing business.”⁵¹ Public relations as part of business must also be done differently. Ashley-Sloan indicated that there is a difference between how organizations practice public relations in the U.S. and how it is practiced abroad.⁵² Not only do people need to understand the different cultures in which they will be working, they also need to know how public relations is practiced in those cultures.

Katz, for example, indicates that the research methods used by Japanese public relations firms are different than in the States. He found that the Japanese were more interested in building awareness and interest while 72 percent of the United States practitioners said measuring behavior was their major goal.⁵³ According to Henry, the U.S. methods of practicing public relations are less applicable to international audiences and cannot be imposed on other cultures.⁵⁴ Accordingly, “. . . American professionals do not believe the skills utilized in domestic markets prepare them to practice in an international capacity.”⁵⁵ Traverse-Healy made the reflection that only approximately ten U.S. public relations firms have real knowledge about worldwide public relations. The rest of the firms say they know how to practice worldwide public relations, but according to Traverse-Healy, they do not.⁵⁶

Practitioners must acquire knowledge about the use of media and communication structures in each country to be able to integrate one public relations message into different cultural environments. In his thesis,¹ Preiritsch concludes that any public relations curriculum that excludes courses in international public relations is ineffective in addressing student and practitioner needs now and in the next century.⁵⁷

¹ His thesis was based on responses from 19 public relations practitioners.

The second main reason for a worldwide public relations course is the globalization of the economy in a culturally diverse world. Henry states that the decade of the 1990s means: “. . . a more competitive international marketplace. The role of marketing public relations became even more important in positioning a company or organization and its products and services to potential customers in many new and different countries.”⁵⁸ The globalization of the economy presents “. . . compelling reasons for the U.S. business leaders to re-evaluate their views on the importance of understanding how to communicate, how to promote their companies and how to market their products in other cultures.”⁵⁹

International firms are aware of these trends and demand that “. . . U.S. transnational marketers recognize the importance of local nationalism, customs, languages and press relations techniques before embarking on an overseas public relations campaign.”⁶⁰ According to Cushman, the U.S. public relations firms specializing in worldwide public relations are not up to this task.⁶¹ Pratt and Ogbondah say that this trend toward globalization has to be met by public relations firms and teaching institutions.⁶²

Although the U.S. is selling its products and services all over the globe, this does not mean that the U.S. is or should export its culture as well, or that the U.S. culture is automatically accepted in other cultures.

The factors that contribute to success in a company's domestic market do not necessarily make for success abroad The fact that local markets are becoming divergent and tolerate the coexistence of foreign goals alongside domestic goods does not lead to the conclusion that markets are becoming global.⁶³

Other cultures will be influenced to a certain extent by the American way of life, but important differences still remain. Wilson and Dissanagake agree and argue that globalization of the economy has no homogenizing cultural effects. They say that it does not produce a unified and integrated common culture.⁶⁴ According to Hachten, the global village that McLuhan talked about does not exist, instead, the world is divided in regions with different cultural preferences.⁶⁵ U.S. products and services are sold all over the world, but “This does not in any way imply that consumers across the globe are homogenous in terms of values, attitudes, and morals.”⁶⁶ The American way of life is gaining influence worldwide, but it is not sufficient to state that there is only one dominant culture left.⁶⁷ Since a truly global culture does not exist, it is clear that understanding cultural values is “. . . of primary importance in international marketing efforts.”⁶⁸ Trying to sell a product or service in another culture, a company has to know which differences there are and adapt its strategy to this different market.

For U.S. multi-national corporations (MNCs), worldwide public relations is the necessary element. MNCs are companies who are not only oriented to their domestic market such as the U.S., but also have trade links with companies in other countries and cultures. Worldwide public relations is a necessity for them because of the increasing globalization of economies of countries all over the globe.⁶⁹ More and more U.S. companies are involved in international trade. According to Jeannet and Hennessey, every year, “some 51,000 U.S. firms export regularly . . .”⁷⁰ One-third of U.S. corporate profits are generated through international business.⁷¹ Also, foreign companies acquire many U.S. organizations.⁷² Because of the globalizing economy, corporations and public relations firms “. . . are seeking employees who have obtained substantial knowledge in

international aspects of the social science, humanities, business, law, cross-cultural communications, and public relations.”⁷³ They look for employees who will “. . . pay the same attention to their worldwide public policies as they have done hitherto to their domestic affairs . . .”⁷⁴ According to Traverse-Healy, public relations firms should recruit people who are sensitive to different cultures and international current affairs.⁷⁵

A global economy means that U.S. companies, who do not export and thus have no contacts with other countries, also need to be aware of cultural differences. “Even domestic companies that have no desire to ‘go international’ are experiencing the impact of globalization in the form of new global competitors.” Companies from other countries come to the U.S. and will compete with the local companies.

A third reason for studying this topic is the growing importance of public relations in international business.⁷⁶ Wouters indicated that “. . . public relations assistance is becoming more, not less, important in an environment of global marketing.”⁷⁷ A related reason is the image of the U.S. businessperson overseas. This is partially due to the way U.S. businesspersons behave. An U.S. businessperson overseas “. . . is the corporation when working in another corporation.”⁷⁸

A fourth reason is the fact that the changing world sees a rise in nationalism. That is why it is necessary to “. . . give students of international relations a conceptual framework with which to see culture, world politics, and international communication in an integrative manner.”⁷⁹ Europe, for example, is unifying, but at the same time there is a rise in nationalistic pride in various European countries.

The fifth reason for the need for worldwide public relations education becomes clear “. . . in the light of U.S. students’ inadequate knowledge of world affairs as shown

in several studies.”⁸⁰ Farinelli asserts that most U.S. high school graduates “. . . lacked even the most rudimentary understanding of world geography, never mind world issues.”⁸¹ This is confirmed by a study of the U.S. Council on Education that found a “. . . dangerously inadequate understanding of world affairs among U.S. college students.”⁸²

Some U.S. students do not know which two countries border the U.S., or do not know that Mexico is to the south of the U.S. and Canada to the north!⁸³ A study of the National Geographic Association has determined that one in seven U.S. citizens cannot locate the U.S. on a world map.⁸⁴ In 1987, a news story revealed that “. . . half of the California college students polled placed Toronto in Italy . . .”⁸⁵ It is logical to assume that, if this is true, most U.S. students will not be able to indicate other countries on a world map. Moreover, the coverage of foreign news in U.S. newspapers dropped from ten percent in 1971 to 2.6 percent in 1986.⁸⁶ “Not many U.S. citizens read foreign publications.”⁸⁷ As a result, U.S. students are less informed what is happening in the rest of the world. Add to this the fact that in 1985, approximately five million U.S. citizens only had a passport, representing two percent of the total population of the U.S.⁸⁸ In 1995, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, 50,763 U.S. citizens traveled abroad.⁸⁹ Also, the International Section of the PRSA was only established in 1994, as an outgrowth of PRSA's former International Committee.⁹⁰

The final reason for this study is the historical dimension of other cultures. According to Kunczik, historical events in the past of a country are important in the way we look at them.⁹¹ Through these events, they acquired a certain image outside of their

own boundaries, which can be difficult to change. Historical events in a country will also shape the way the inhabitants of that country think of themselves and of other groups in the same society. Groups can be divided over fault lines that: “. . . reflect ancient splits between people based on ethnic, language, tribal and religious differences.”⁹² The differences can also be deepened because of economic or political reasons. These splits can be found between the former East and West Germany, North and South Vietnam, North and South Korea, Canada, Ireland and Cyprus. These are well-known examples of countries with internal conflicts. They have an influence on their contemporary values and attitudes and affect their everyday life. Future public relations practitioners must understand how this affects the communication with other cultures and how they have to deal with this.

Today it is possible for a general businessperson to follow an intense cross-cultural training to prepare for another culture.⁹³ There is sufficient material available for the manager who goes abroad for a business trip and wants to know more about the customs of the country to which he or she is going. These materials offer him or her useful information about the socially correct aspects of other cultures. Most of it contains valuable information about customs, formal and informal manners and so on, all very practical information. For a businessperson who did not prepare, this kind of literature is a last-minute help. Still, more information and study of the other culture is needed for a thorough understanding of creating a relationship and using communication in the other culture.

CULTURE DEFINED

Practitioners in this field encounter different cultures, so students need to know what culture is, how it can be defined, and how it has to be taken into account when practicing worldwide public relations. A different culture means a different audience that needs a different approach.

Every group of people or society has a culture; culture is the entire social heritage of the human race. Culture is “. . . the totality of the knowledge and practices . . .”⁹⁴ of a group of people. Culture embraces everything from food to dress, from household techniques to industrial techniques, from forms of politeness to mass media, from work rhythms to learning familiar rules. It also influences public relations, which is firmly based in media and communication.

Culture has been defined by many authors and in different ways. Young sees culture as “. . . a set of publicly observable symbols and rules, forming a relatively loose, sometimes ambiguous system, which purposive actors could ‘employ’ to give meaning to new lines of action.”⁹⁵ Cultural values “. . . are the principles, qualities, or beliefs that members of a culture consider desirable.”⁹⁶ Hawkins, Best and Coney define cultural values as “. . . widely held beliefs that affirm what is desirable.”⁹⁷ Geertz states that culture has to be seen as “. . . a set of control mechanism-plans, recipes, rules, instructions-for the governing of behavior.”⁹⁸ Banks defines culture as “. . . the system of meanings group members acquire through experiential apprenticeship . . .”⁹⁹ Prosser indicates that cultures survive because they are “. . . passed down from generation to generation.”¹⁰⁰ Gudykunst defines culture by the norms that a culture has and states that

they are guidelines that tell us how to behave. These rules are based in morality and tradition.¹⁰¹ Hofstede affirms this and defines culture as “. . . the collective mental programming of the people in an environment. Culture is not characteristic of individuals; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience.”¹⁰²

Cultures do have similarities in the way they are formed. McQuail noticed a number of characteristics that are common for all cultures. Those characteristics are: collective and shared experiences with others, some symbolic form of expression, some specific patterns, conformity rules, and dynamic continuity over time and communication.¹⁰³ McQuail further wrote that culture is in people, things and common practices.¹⁰⁴ But those common characteristics are only the same on an abstract level, a sort of meta-manner to construct and sustain a culture. The way they are applied differs from one culture to another. Public relations practitioners must establish and maintain an overall favorable environment for the organization in which positive communication can be conducted and maintained. So an understanding of culture is crucial.

Depending on the culture in which people live, the same experiences can be interpreted in different ways. This is because “. . . people of other countries and cultures have different sets of non-verbal symbols and meanings.”¹⁰⁵ This will have an influence on language, education, politics and relationship building. It will also influence the interactions between members of that culture, which, in turn, will have an influence on the public relations strategies of an outside communication effort. Practitioners have to understand these different sets of non-verbal symbols and meanings and apply this

knowledge to create and maintain a positive two-way communication flow for the organization.

When public relations practitioners want to know more about public relations in an international setting, they have to understand the impact different cultures have on communication. This cultural diversity can be defined as “. . . the normal human variation in the systems of meaning by which groups understand and enact their everyday lives, which they acquire through experiential apprenticeship.”¹⁰⁶ Students have to realize that everyone has similar experiences, but different interpretations of those experiences. People who grow up in the same town or country have equivalent experiences that are they interpret the same way as those around them because of their shared culture. “The theories that members of a culture share, however, overlap sufficiently so that they can co-ordinate their behavior in everyday life.”¹⁰⁷

The relationship of public relations and culture is to bridge the gap between different cultures by establishing an overall relationship which creates an environment in which to do business or international politics or any other communication effort that requires a healthy relationship. Public relations deals in relationship building, so practitioners have to understand how public relationships are built in different cultures. In a 1993 survey by Fitzpatrick and Whillock, 64 percent of the respondents with international experience said that understanding the local market is very important.¹⁰⁸ In understanding how public relations and communication in other cultures work, U.S. practitioners can try to enhance the communication between an U.S. organization or company and publics in other cultures. Understanding different cultures is necessary to avoid mistakes and, in the end, it will avoid losing a favorable image.

Part of the role of a worldwide public relations practitioner is environmental scanning, which includes “. . . understanding local history, customs, rituals, taboos and prejudices.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the practitioner has to keep track of changes in the different culture and be able to tell how it could influence the performance of the organization. Accordingly, he or she has to be able to translate any changes in an adapted communication strategy.

CULTURE EXPRESSED: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM AND AUDIENCE INTERACTION

General

An important aspect of worldwide public relations is to comprehend how public relations is practiced in countries and regions with different cultures than found in the U.S.¹¹⁰ This is necessary because “. . . international public relations is an intercultural experience.”¹¹¹ The learning process starts at home with an understanding how public relations is practiced in the U.S. Once this is understood, learning about public relations in other cultures and recognizing differences and similarities can begin. Once the differences are understood and the similarities recognized, adaptation to a different way of practicing public relations is possible. This way, a strategy can be established that is adapted to the local culture. Ashley-Sloan said that: “To succeed on an international public relations basis, all managers need to learn how to communicate effectively within different cultures.”¹¹² For example, in the U.S., independence from the group is highly regarded. In Eastern cultures, interdependence is more important than in Western

cultures.¹¹³ Understanding audiences from different cultures and the way they interact and respond so that public relations practitioners are able to reach them is more difficult in an international context where public relations faces different cultures and different audiences which need to be approached differently than in the U.S. Interpersonal communication is different in other cultures. That's why:

Cultural empathy must be cultivated; perhaps the most important step toward cultural empathy and objectivity is the recognition that cultures are not right or wrong, better or worse; they are simply different. For every amusing, annoying, peculiar, or repulsive cultural trait we find in a country, there is a similarly amusing, annoying, or repulsive trait others see in our culture.¹¹⁴

A different culture means a different pattern of interaction among people.

Acceptable and unacceptable interactions between members of different cultures are a result of acceptable and unacceptable communication. What is suitable in one culture is not in another one.¹¹⁵ Rationality, for example, is not perceived the same way everywhere.¹¹⁶

Young found that, "The problem for intercultural understanding then becomes a problem of incommensurability between sets of rules."¹¹⁷ Not knowing another culture may well lead to negative experiences. "Without increased cultural understanding accompanying increased education, intercultural exposure may worsen rather than improve international relations . . ."¹¹⁸ Not knowing the rules and not being able to adapt to them will lead to miscommunication at least and irreparable damage for your organization or client at worst. "Every market, nation and culture has its own totems and taboos to which the global communicator cannot afford to be oblivious if he or she wishes to have influence in the chosen market."¹¹⁹ These mistakes are not done on purpose, rather they were made because:

. . . many cultural aspects of communication are held 'out of awareness' – individuals are not aware of the effect that culture has on [their] behavior or perceptions. Hence, the goal of intercultural communication has been to identify hidden features and bring them 'in awareness' so that individuals can more effectively understand and guide communication.¹²⁰

Zahrana explains the difficulties she encountered during a ten-month Fulbright assignment at An-Najah national University in the West Bank. The project included a number of different public relations assignments, each posing its own cultural challenges. She had to prepare an International Conference on Palestinian Higher Education for the An-Najah National University. The tasks included preparing an official university brochure, staging a press conference, preparing a press release about the conference and writing an opening address speech for the president. Zahrana explains how she used the "in-awareness" model to cope with the cultural differences concerning the public relations tasks she was asked to perform.¹²¹

Theories

Okabe, Hall, and Gudykunst established several theories that conceptualize how cultures differ, which are useful in understanding similarities and differences in communication across cultures.¹²² According to them, cultures can be divided in broad categories: individualism, collectivism and low- and high-context communication.¹²³

An individualistic culture like the U.S. will place the individual in the foreground, whereas a collective culture like most Eastern cultures will emphasize the importance of the group.¹²⁴ Hall explains that low-context cultures as the western variety attach more importance to what is said than how it is said. High-context cultures attach more

importance to the context, the way something is said, and the hierarchical position of the other person or group. This will lead to a situation in which an U.S. citizen will be straightforward and say what he or she thinks, whereas an Asian person will not clearly state what he or she thinks, but will let the meaning of his or her words depend on the style in which he or she conveys the message. Asians attach importance to the context in which the message is communicated. Low-concept cultures attach more importance on what is said than on how it is said. The U.S. culture has impersonal communication methods, whereas eastern cultures have more personal communication methods.

Horizontal societies like the U.S. are based on the equalitarian principle. Everyone is equal; informality in the relations is widespread. Vertical societies, like most Asian cultures, tend to be more hierarchical, and relations are more formal.¹²⁵ Another difference between the U.S. culture and most Eastern cultures is the difference between guilt and shame. Shame cultures (Eastern) attach a stronger meaning to the judgment of society. What others think of you is the punishment. Guilt cultures (Western) rely on “. . . internalized convictions of sin.”¹²⁶ The punishment itself is more important than what others might think of you. Both cultures can also be differentiated as “doing” versus “being” cultures. Here, the U.S. culture is oriented towards doing, whereas the Asian culture is oriented towards being.¹²⁷ Yet another distinction of U.S. and Asian cultures is a difference found in pushing and pulling. The U.S. culture, with a strong practical and science orientation, is a pushing culture. The Asian culture, with its orientation towards humanistic and aesthetics, is a pulling culture.¹²⁸

Realizing that cultures can be divided according different categories as described above is an important step forward. Hawkins, Best and Coney offer a classification

scheme consisting of three broad forms of cultural values: other-oriented, environment-oriented and self-oriented values.¹²⁹ Their classification is supported by Jeannet and Hennessey; their categorization follows. Each category presents a certain value and is divided into different variables.

Other-Oriented Values:

- Individual/Collective. Are individual activity and initiative valued more highly than collective activity and conformity?
- Adult/child. Is family life organized to meet the needs of the children or the adults?
- Masculine/Feminine. To what extent does social power automatically go to males?
- Competition/Co-operation. Does one obtain success by excelling over others or by co-operating with them?
- Youth/Age. Are wisdom and prestige assigned to the younger or older members of a culture?

Environment-Oriented Values:

- Cleanliness. To what extent is cleanliness pursued beyond the minimum needed for health?
- Performance/Status. Is the culture's reward system based on performance or on inherited factors such as family or class?
- Tradition/change. Are existing patterns of behavior considered to be inherently superior to new patterns of behavior?
- Risk Taking/Security. Are those who risk their established positions to overcome obstacles or achieve high goals admired more than those who do not?
- Problem Solving/Fatalistic. Are people encouraged to overcome all problems, or do they take a "what will be, will be" attitude?
- Nature. Is nature regarded as something to be admired or overcome?

Self-Oriented Values:

- Active/Passive. Is a physically active approach to life valued more highly than a less active orientation?
- Material/Nonmaterial. How much importance is attached to the acquisition of material wealth?
- Hard Work/Leisure. Is a person who works harder than economically necessary admired more than who does not?
- Postponed Gratification/Immediate Gratification. Are people encouraged to "save for a rainy day" or to "live for today"?
- Sensual Gratification/Abstinence. To what extent is it acceptable to enjoy sensual pleasures such as food, drink, and sex?
- Humor/Serious. Is life to be regarded as a strictly serious affair, or is it to be treated lightly?¹³⁰

Jeannet and Hennessey also make a division of cultures based on time perception: monochronic (U.S.) culture versus polychronic (Asian) culture. Monochronic cultures see time as linear; persons of that culture will do one task at a time. Polychronic cultures see time differently; a person will be involved in many tasks at one time. Knowledge about these differences and similarities and their influence on the public relations practice will make future practitioners prepared when meeting people from other cultures.

Most of the differences explained were illustrated with examples of the differences between the U.S. and Eastern cultures. Future practitioners have to be aware that differences also exist between the U.S. and Europe, between countries in Europe, between Europe and Eastern cultures and so on. A good overview of these differences is given in de Mooij's book *Global Marketing and Advertising*.¹³¹

RELEVANT MASS COMMUNICATION THEORIES AND WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION

Rogers defines diffusion of information as “. . . a process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system.”¹³² Information will diffuse through different channels in other countries. Future practitioners must know which information is spread through which channels with what effect in different cultures. “Knowing the market means knowing the media. . . . most media is still very much a thing of its own country.”¹³³ U.S. public relations often uses media; what if cultures do not have the same media, or what if they are for example more face-to-face oriented? Worldwide public relations practitioners need to know the structure of the local media, and such things as who the key players are. Future practitioners need to know how “. . . the various media will present the message and how the various audiences will be affected by the message.”¹³⁴ Connelly indicates that the channels of public relations influence differ enormously from one culture to another.¹³⁵

The public relations practitioner acts as an adapter, a sort of exchange station between an organization and its various publics. The practitioner stands in between the organization and culturally different publics. He or she is the change agent that translates and adapts the communication between the organization and these publics. Public relations is both interpersonal and mass communication-oriented. Depending on the

culture, one of the two aspects will be more important. Therefore, it is important for the practitioner to know which method takes precedence.

An integrated public relations program to support your company's product, service, objective, or image in a particular region of the world needs to reflect an understanding of who needs to be influenced, in what order, and what communications vehicles and channels are most effective.¹³⁶

These channels of communications are dependent on the media channels. But the government can control these, or a form of self-censorship may exist.¹³⁷ Also, "Cultures differ greatly in the degree to which they impose controls on the free flow of information."¹³⁸ This means that the international practitioner needs "... to be especially sensitive as to what can be achieved through the media and what message must be conveyed to influencers by other means."¹³⁹

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Cognitive dissonance is defined by Festinger as "... the existence of nonfitting relations among cognitions ..."¹⁴⁰ He describes it as "... an antecedent condition which leads to activity oriented toward dissonance reduction just as hunger leads to activity oriented toward hunger reduction."¹⁴¹ Cognitive dissonance appears when experiencing culture shock. Oberg originally used the term culture shock.¹⁴² Culture shock can be defined as a situation in which "... people realize that everything about the host country is strange and confusing and that they cannot understand or be understood by the people of that culture."¹⁴³ The inability to cope with everyday situations leads to self-doubt.¹⁴⁴ If practitioners realize or are aware of those differences, culture shock will be avoided, or at least the effects will be diminished.

Toffler coined the term "Future Shock" in 1985. He termed the change we are experiencing as "... the emerging global order."¹⁴⁵ Stevenson sees future shock as a combination of culture shock and time. He describes this as a person of another culture who is not able to keep up with a changing world. A person from a less developed country will eventually experience this when travelling to another country.¹⁴⁶ The opposite could also be true; an U.S. citizen travelling abroad has to be prepared to adapt or adjust to lifestyles different than the in the U.S.

LANGUAGE AND WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Language is part of the culture and has an influence on the way people think.¹⁴⁷ A distinction has to be made between verbal and non-verbal language, denotative and connotative meaning of words, and formal and informal speech. Non-verbal communication can be defined as "... all those stimuli within a communication setting, both humanly generated and environmentally generated, that have potential message value for the sender or receiver."¹⁴⁸ Body language, including gestures and facial expressions, is part of non-verbal language. Black stated that non-verbal communication "... can be used advantageously or can give serious offence."¹⁴⁹ Awareness of the non-verbal language of a different culture will allow the practitioner to avoid making communication mistakes. The way people greet each other is not the same in every culture. Different cultures have differences in formal and informal speech, which depends on factors as status and others; and future practitioners have to be aware of this.

CURRENT WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

Because public relations is considered a desirable part of international business and communication, looking at what is and should be taught is valuable, if not critical.

Worldwide public relations courses are not taught everywhere. McDermott lists 15 universities where graduate and undergraduate courses in international public relations were taught by 1991.¹⁵⁰ In 1992, more than 72 percent of the respondents to a nationwide survey of public relations educators said they did not offer a single course in multicultural communication.¹⁵¹ A survey of 461 public relations practitioners in 1992 revealed that only two percent of the content for undergraduate public relations education was about international business trends.¹⁵² In 1993, Culbertson, and Chen remarked that “. . . only six institutions offer a course devoted primarily or entirely to international public relations.”¹⁵³ Sommerness and Beaman (1994) found that despite global trends towards increased internationalization, few courses at U.S. universities emphasized worldwide public relations at that time.¹⁵⁴

DeSanto found that only 126 (33.6%) of the 375 communication programs in the States she surveyed offered a course in communication research and fewer still specifically in public relations research, crucial to understanding audiences.¹⁵⁵ Pratt and Ogbondah added that “. . . most curricula do not include semester-long, regularly taught courses in international public relations.”¹⁵⁶ About the courses that exist, Morley commented that “The planning and implementation of concerted multi-national public relations programs are still in their infancy.”¹⁵⁷ Culbertson and Chen indicated that “. . .

authors of college-level public relations textbooks have not yet realized the growing importance of international public relations and, thus, deal only marginally with it."¹⁵⁸

According to Culbertson and Chen, worldwide public relations is increasingly taught in other countries on an undergraduate as well as on a graduate level.¹⁵⁹ According to Ogbondah and Pratt, U.S. colleges would do well to better prepare public relations students for complex and rapidly changing international business and governmental environments by offering courses in worldwide public relations in their programs.¹⁶⁰ The globalization of the economy changes in the political field and the low level of geographical and historical knowledge of U.S. students are cited as important factors for increased study.¹⁶¹ Mowlana points to the lack of sufficient amounts of skills in language and cultural studies.¹⁶² Students who desire an international career in public relations need to have a thorough understanding of worldwide public relations, what it means, and how it is done.

It is clear that another culture cannot be understood and internalized quickly.¹⁶³ It takes time to get to know another culture and to develop relationships. But what does a student who pursues an worldwide public relations career need to know? The next pages give a literature overview of what several practitioners and educators think is important for worldwide public relations education.

WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULA

A legitimate need for curricula in worldwide public relations exists. Culbertson and Chen are convinced that “Offering college-level courses in international public relations is one of the best avenues for preparing public relations staffs for global business challenges.”¹⁶⁴ What should be taught to worldwide public relations students? Gibson asked public relations practitioners what students should learn and came to the conclusion that:

The ideal applicant for a public relations job will have (1) a four-year undergraduate degree, (2) courses in news writing, public relations, business and the social sciences, (3) an ability to write and speak well, (4) some previous work experience in the field and (5) access to the “grapevine” of available jobs.¹⁶⁵

It is important to first teach the students how public relations is practiced in the U.S. before teaching them how the same tasks are performed in different cultures. Students have to realize that public relations practices that work in the U.S. will not always work overseas.¹⁶⁶ Culbertson and Chen came to the conclusion that international public relations courses:

. . . should introduce students to the history and development of public relations in other cultures; acquaint students with the practice and function of public relations abroad, emphasizing differences between American and non-American practices; and describe the internal and external dynamics of multinational corporations as well as the problems and difficulties of U.S. corporate public relations abroad, particularly in those countries where major U.S. corporations do business. In addition, these courses should introduce comparative legal, political and ethical dimensions of public relations practice at home and abroad. They should describe the history, organization, practice and professional operations of the media – a major public relations agenda item – abroad. Another goal of these courses is to analyze the public relations aspects of major international political, diplomatic, cultural and socioeconomic developments with special emphasis on superpower relations and regional bilateral cooperation.¹⁶⁷

Wilcox, Ault and Agee say that a student seeking an international career should take:

Multiple courses in international relations, global marketing techniques, the basics

of strategic public relations planning, foreign languages, social and economic geography, and cross-cultural communication. Graduate study is an asset. Many students serve internships with international corporations as a desirable starting point.¹⁶⁸

Morley describes a worldwide public relations practitioner as a person that is multi-talented,

. . . educationally qualified, a skilled communicator, a thoughtful and calculating strategist, technologically proficient, multilingual, avidly interested in current affairs, knowledgeable about political affairs in many countries, respectful of a variety of customs and etiquette, and experienced in working in a number of countries, with a spell in general management.¹⁶⁹

This indicates that there is a need for worldwide public relations education that takes into consideration the fact that diverse individual economies are melding into global networks. Therefore, “. . . public relations practitioners must be better trained to understand the dynamics of the business world and, in particular, the international marketplace.”¹⁷⁰

In addition to a strong public relations foundation, students of worldwide public relations must understand cultural differences and the ways to approach different cultures and need to learn another language besides English.

Reed, a noted worldwide public relations practitioner said that multicultural knowledge is essential for a public relations practitioner.¹⁷¹ Kruckeberg, 1995 recipient of the Public Relations Society of America’s Outstanding Educator Award, adds that “. . . tomorrow’s public relations practitioners will also need to be far more culturally astute and cosmopolitan – that is, particularly sensitive to the multicultural and international nuances of their organizations’ diverse publics.”¹⁷² Not only will the public of a different country have a different culture, but within this public, there will also be differences. As

Traverse-Healy said, there is no general public. He said that, “ There is only a series of overlapping minorities in any situation, each with their own different views which must be isolated, interpreted, analyzed and considered.”¹⁷³

Explicit and implicit in this task of understanding culture is an understanding of the value and belief systems that gives both unity and diversity and provides an environment for national, regional and even global institutions. “What matters most today are the specific value and belief systems embedded in the cultural and human dimensions of international and societal relations.”¹⁷⁴ Students also need to know that there is more to a culture than just “. . . a set of quaint customs. Necessary is the respect for difference and intercultural understanding.”¹⁷⁵ Mowlana said that, “. . . global communications does not mean universal communication.”¹⁷⁶ Just because a student knows all the customs in a culture does not mean that he or she will have no problem adapting and fitting into that culture. Banks points out that there is a difference between the acquisition of and the learning of a culture.¹⁷⁷ Gilbert Jr. and Peter agree with this, and add that learning about a culture is not difficult; acquiring it and becoming familiar with it is another thing.¹⁷⁸

Practitioners in the field of worldwide public relations encounter different cultures, so students need to know what culture is, how it can be defined and how it has to be taken into account. Students have to realize that everyone has similar experiences but different interpretations of those experiences. “The theories that members of a culture share, . . . overlap sufficiently so that they can co-ordinate their behavior in everyday life.”¹⁷⁹ Both sides know how to conduct themselves so mistakes or incorrect actions are avoided. Students also need to know their own culture before learning another one. This will enable them to find the similarities and understand the differences between their

culture and others.¹⁸⁰ According to Traverse-Healy, looking for similarities when confronted with a different culture, is the first thing a public relations practitioner needs to do.¹⁸¹

Future practitioners do not need to know all aspects of all cultures around the world. Understanding that there are groups of cultures with distinct characteristics as, for example, individualistic cultures versus collectivist cultures should be sufficient.¹⁸² When being able to differentiate these groups of cultures, a practitioner can easily locate a particular culture in a broader group. He or she will be able to adapt quicker and learn faster about the particular culture because of his knowledge of the existence of broad culture groups.

It needs no explanation that knowing one or more languages in addition to English is an important asset. Also important is knowing how to use languages and how culture influences the use of language. This signals respect for and interest in the people of other nations, and it will allow the practitioner to work more easily in a different environment.¹⁸³

Knowledge of the history of a country will help to understand the deeper meaning of a culture and will help to understand why these differences exist. "Public relations practitioners have always needed to be highly educated persons, with a strong sense of history and knowledge of current events . . ."¹⁸⁴ Today's world is marked by the rise of ethnicity and nationalism. That's why it is necessary to " . . . give a student of international relations a conceptual frame work with which to see culture, world politics, and international communication in an integrative manner."¹⁸⁵ Howard, an international practitioner, makes this clear when telling the following experience.

It also is useful to read up on the history of each market that is new to you. Sounds obvious – but it’s surprising how often it’s not done. A little history can help avoid offending local hosts. For example, in Warsaw I heard criticism of a prominent U.S.- based company that ran an ad produced in New York announcing they were ‘expanding into the emerging Polish market.’ The offended Pole was a professor at the Jagiellonian university in Krakow which at the end of the 15th century already was famous for mathematics, astronomy and graduates like Copernicus.¹⁸⁶

Other countries have different levels of economic growth and different national living standards.¹⁸⁷ Those living standards will have an influence on the price and product packaging.¹⁸⁸ According to Yeshin, the political environment of a country is of importance to the practitioner.¹⁸⁹ Knowing what the political situation is and what the internal different alienation’s or problems (taboos) are will help avoiding conflicts. A practitioner needs to stay abreast of the current and political affairs of a country; who is in power and how does the system work.¹⁹⁰ Morely insists that public relations practitioners must: “. . . be avid readers of newspapers and magazines, and followers of radio and television programs.”¹⁹¹ He adds that only reading U.S. newspapers will not suffice to stay updated on current affairs abroad, because most U.S. media is “. . . extremely parochial.”¹⁹²

Knowing how the local legal system relates to public relations and the media that are used is also necessary.¹⁹³ Assumptions that a similar country will have similar laws can result in serious legal trouble.¹⁹⁴ Howard indicates that the regulatory environment concerning the media in Europe is very different than in the U.S.¹⁹⁵ Knowledge of laws, certainly about business in general and public relations specifically, in other countries is necessary. “Few countries have [import] regulations as stringent as the USA but all have their own rules and customs.”¹⁹⁶ Yeshin stresses the importance of a basic knowledge of the laws in other countries and the differences with the U.S. system.¹⁹⁷

As previously indicated, students have to know how public relations is practiced in different cultures. Educators should “. . . address the comparative study of mass media practices in the U.S. and other nations.”¹⁹⁸ The role of media is different in other societies; that is why students have to know the media abroad.¹⁹⁹ The importance of knowing the media outside the U.S. is also underlined by Harris and Jefkins.²⁰⁰

In 1968, Kean said that, as at home, it is important to have a friendly press in foreign countries.²⁰¹ Because media is one of the main tools in public relations, knowing what media operate in a country is a plus for a practitioner. The practitioner needs to know what kind of media are available and how information is distributed.²⁰² They also need to know what media they should use in which situations. Still, a practitioner has to be aware that media is not as important in Europe or other parts of the world as the U.S. media. In some countries media even matter very little. More important is to know who the influencers are.²⁰³

Students should also learn the ethical side of worldwide public relations. Different cultures have different views on practices about gift giving, entertainment and junkets. As pointed out by Wilcox, Ault and Agee, there is a “. . . thin line between hospitality and bribery or illegal ‘influence peddling.’”²⁰⁴ Still, Traverse-Healy points out that the codes of ethics of different public relations societies around the world are based on the same principles.²⁰⁵

Kruckeberg points to “. . . a paramount need for the delineation of appropriate ethics and for mutual identification of an agreement on the responsibilities of both transnational corporations and their host nations.”²⁰⁶ Further, he states that ethics in an international setting shows a difference between universalism, which means applying one

set of rules everywhere and relativism, which means adapting to the ethical rules in the host country.²⁰⁷ Students have to be aware of the laws, certainly of those in the States, and eventually also some rules in other countries. U.S. organizations have to be aware that they are not allowed to bribe officials of other countries.²⁰⁸ In 1977, Congress passed the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, “. . . that forbids corporations from giving major gifts or bribes to foreign business contacts or government officials.”²⁰⁹

Lunczik made a distinction between structural and manipulative public relations. The former is directed at correcting the “false” information that has been created by the media. The latter “. . . tries to create a positive image that, in most cases, does not reflect reality, including lying and misinformation.”²¹⁰ What is “misleading” in one culture may not be considered so in another. Do U.S. practitioners stick to their rules or do they bend their rules a little bit and adapt to the others' rules? This highlights the need for adaptation.

The Internet is a valuable tool in public relations in general and certainly in worldwide public relations. Distances are a problem in this field; thus this communications tool can be of help to a certain extent. Students have to realize that this tool does not replace interpersonal contacts. There are some advantages and disadvantages to this medium. Advantages are the speed of the communication and the possibility of storing and manipulating the information received on a computer. Another advantage is the possibility of teleconferences. Disadvantages are the non-availability or scarcity of this medium in certain parts of the world and the influence of this medium on the content of the message and the relationship. As stated by Marken, this medium, particularly e-mail, enhances contact, but not the content.²¹¹ Practitioners need to know

how to use the Internet, and also how the Internet is used in other cultures. Kruckeberg points to a need for “. . . multicultural and international understanding among diverse peoples who will readily exploit technology to communicate with one another through time and space. Thus, an accompanying multicultural understanding also will be needed . . .”²¹²

Education can help a student to learn how to adapt to a different culture. This way students can come to a “. . . more mature two-way communication . . .”²¹³ on the international scene. Public relations “. . . involves a variety of two-way communication techniques . . . ,”²¹⁴ not only a two-way communication between two persons or groups, but also between the two cultures that they each represent.

Most of this cannot be learned through theoretical courses only. Training is needed for applying what is learned, especially concerning cultural differences. “Training for cultural sensitivity, international adjustment, intercultural communication, and valuing diversity are essential to creating personal changes in multicultural settings.”²¹⁵ This cultural adjustment is an important part of the preparation of a practitioner who will work in a different culture.²¹⁶ Training is needed to make the students feel that the cultural differences tend to lie below the surface of one’s awareness.²¹⁷

Role-playing is a recommended way to help students better understand the different situations that can occur.²¹⁸ It will help students to prepare for similar situations. Role-playing will help “. . . increase cultural sensitivity and awareness and thereby increase the behavioral adaptability and communicative skills of the overseas advisor.”²¹⁹ Training is needed to make the students feel that the cultural differences tend to lie below the surface of one’s awareness.²²⁰

Case studies should, according to Traverse-Healy, be the main ingredient of such a curriculum. At undergraduate level, this could be done by using international examples for writing and editing classes instead of U.S. examples. Other classes could use international examples to indicate the influence of cultural differences on the way public relations is practiced in other cultures.²²¹ Thomson speaks about “implication thinking” in which the students evaluate the impact of external force - business ethics, diversity, time, poor customers, health care reform, and the economy - on their organization.²²²

One goal of cross-cultural training should be the reduction of ethnocentrism. Future practitioners have to learn not to use their own standards when comparing another culture. Awareness of the ethnocentric reflex when meeting persons from another culture will help the future practitioner communicate better.²²³ Bhawuk says that future practitioners have to learn how to make isomorphic attributions (making the same judgment about something as someone from another culture), and have to learn how to handle disconfirmed expectancies (turning an unmet expectation into a negative stereotype).²²⁴

All these sources indicate the need for worldwide public relations education. Why should such worldwide related topics be taught specifically in the framework of public relations? Because strategic public relations practice is responsible for the communication function in and between organizations. As global economic activities increase, how that communication is planned and managed is crucial to creating and maintaining an environment in which worldwide business can be conducted. This means that cultural, economical, political and religious knowledge are crucial components in building effective and ongoing relationships – the ultimate definition of public relations.

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- ²¹⁰ Kuncsik, 25.

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²¹² Kruckeberg, 37.

²¹³ DeSanto, 4.

²¹⁴ DeSanto, 2.

²¹⁵ Banks, 116.

²¹⁶ Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore, 433.

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²¹⁸ Ashley-Sloan, 144. and Burk, 42 and Edward J. Lordan, "Using Group Projects to Help Students Sharpen PR Skills." *Public Relations Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 43-50.

²¹⁹ Winston L. Brembeck and William S. Howell, *Persuasion: A Means of Social Influence*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 32.

²²⁰ Zaharna, 242.

²²¹ Traverse-Healy, interview.

²²² Thomson, 16.

²²³ Burk, 40.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

GENERAL

This chapter explains in detail the research plan of this thesis. It gives information about how the data were collected and analyzed.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The analysis of the survey will give an indication of what current public relations practitioners believe is important for students to study about worldwide public relations. Based on this, recommendations for the content of a worldwide public relations education will be suggested.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This study was conducted to gather information about developing the content of education in worldwide public relations education. For the purpose of this study practitioners in the field of worldwide public relations have been selected. The selection is based on the International Section of the "Blue Book" of the Public Relations Society of America, a valuable source for finding respondents with international public relations

experience. Because the population included a relatively small number of members, all names were included in the survey, providing a total population of 202 subjects.

An exploratory and descriptive approach was used for this study explanatory because not much information was available that told what practitioners think worldwide public relations education should include. Therefore, this thesis describes what practitioners of worldwide public relations think ought to be included in courses about worldwide public relations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there a genuine need for such a course? Do practitioners feel that there is a need for students to learn about worldwide public relations? Or do practitioners think it should be learned in actual practice?
2. What should be the content of a worldwide public relations curriculum?
Practitioners were asked if they thought knowledge of such things as different languages and different media systems is valuable for students.
3. At what level should worldwide public relations be taught?
3. What type of education do current practitioners have? Have they a specific cultural or public relations education, or have they a more general education like business or economics?

SCHEDULE FOR CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

The first mailing was send out at the beginning of May 1998. The response date was set for July 15, 1998. A second mailing was send out on August 24, 1998, the response date was set for September 30, 1998. Data entry started on August 24, 1998. The data collection was ended on October 10, 1998, at which point the data analysis was conducted.

COVER LETTER AND THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The respondents were chosen out of the international section of the “Blue Book” of the Public Relations Society of America, 1997 edition. The survey was send out twice to generate sufficient data. All 202 subjects received the survey through the mail. On August 23, 1998, 66 surveys were completed and returned. This represented 33 percent of the total population. A second mailing was send out to those respondents who did not send back their survey. This second mailing netted an additional 32 surveys returned, or 16 percent of the population. Both mailings generated a total of 98 responses, 49 percent of the total population. Two respondents sent the mailing back; one indicated he was not active in WPR, the other respondent did not complete the questionnaire. Four questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. Thus, the number of valid responses was reduced to 92 questionnaires, 46 percent of the total population.

The cover letter is included in Appendix A; the questionnaire is included in Appendix B. The cover letter asked the respondents to participate because of their experience. It pointed to the importance of this study for educators who can use this

information to adapt their courses or start a course in worldwide public relations. But it is also pointed out that the practitioners themselves will profit from this study by being able to hire graduates who are better prepared for the global environment they will work in.

In the remainder of this chapter, the logic and importance of each question of the questionnaire will be explained. In the first section, the practitioners are asked to answer five questions related to their background. The second section is oriented towards the development of a worldwide public relations course; respondents were asked seven questions related to what future practitioners need to know.

The independent variables in this study are: respondents' gender, respondents' degree, the field in which the respondents' degrees were obtained, current public relations job level (counseling, technical or administrative), and the years of experience a practitioner had. Counseling is defined as tasks that include research, strategy, planning and evaluation, the highest strategic level of public relations practice generally associated with management roles. Technical tasks are defined as those associated with carrying out plans developed by public relations management, such as writing and editing. Technicians are generally not involved with decision-making, but with implementing decisions made by others. Administrative tasks are defined as general day-to-day departmental and operational tasks, such as budgeting, hiring and personnel management.¹

The dependent variables are the eleven topics listed in questions six. These include: speaking, reading and writing in a language other than English, travel, living and working in non-U.S. cultures, general knowledge of world history, world religions, and world media systems, knowledge of world politics and global economic principles.

These topics are based on what Morley defines as important for a skilled WPR practitioner.² Following are the questions and their rationale.

Section I. Background information.

Q1. Gender.

In this study, gender was asked so that the percentage of men versus women that participated in the study would be known. It also gives an indication if one of the genders is more active in worldwide public relations.

Q2. What is the highest degree you have completed?

Is there a relation between the level of education and the involvement in international public relations? One might expect that practitioners with more education or education directly related to international practice to be engaged in international practice rather than practitioners with less or little education related to international practice.

Q 3. What professional certifications have you earned or been awarded?

Knowing which certifications have been earned or awarded gives future practitioners an idea of what certifications they might need in their future career.

It also tells more about the respondents' background.

Q 4. What is the extent of your educational preparation for international work?

This will provide information about whom is participating in international public relations and whether they have formal public relations training.

Q 5. How many total years have you practiced in the field of international public relations?

This shows how long practitioners have been involved in worldwide public relations, which demonstrates their experience and level of practice.

Section II. Course information.

Q 6. As someone with experience in international public relations, indicate which topics are important to develop effective classes for international public relations.

This question is the core of the survey. There are three categories: “Expect undergraduate student to have”, “Expects graduate student to have”, and “Crucial for the practitioner to have.” It lists items identified in the literature as important in worldwide public relations practice. It asks if the respondent expects the undergraduate or graduate students to learn the different topics and asks if the topic is crucial for the worldwide public relations practitioner. By dividing the students into undergraduate and graduate, an indication should become evident about what should be taught at which levels.

Q 7. At what level should international public relations be taught?

Together with the previous question, the level at which the classes should be taught is asked.

Q 8. Should an internship be part of the education of a student in international public relations?

Respondents were given a yes/no option.

Q 9. Where should an internship be taken?

Seven possibilities are given, ranging from an internship in an American firm in the U.S. to the answer that all possibilities are good.

Q 10. As a public relations practitioner, in your international work what percentage of time do you spend on the following public relations tasks?

Respondents are asked to indicate what time they spend on three tasks: counseling, technical, and administrative. It is assumed that practitioners of worldwide public relations are mainly working on counseling, research and planning.

Q 11. What technical tools are most used in international public relations practice?

Knowing what tools will be used will also help educators to prepare their students. The basic aim is to know if the Internet is becoming important or not. The ‘other’ category also gives practitioners an option to point out other tools that are important.

Q 12. Add any comments you wish.

Finally, the last question gives practitioners the opportunity to comment the questionnaire and to add relevant information that could be useful for this study or suggest future research topics.

STATISTICS USED

The Alpha Chronbach measurement is used in this study. It indicates if a set of questions is reliable or not. A measure of reliability is “. . . a statement (usually quantified) about the degree of uncertainty associated with a statistical interference.”³ Estimates of reliability are concerned about the internal consistency within a test.⁴ It is a measurement of the internal validity that indicates if a set of questions is aimed at finding the respondents’ attitudes concerning a concept. In this case, the questions try to find what practitioners think students should learn if they want to be prepared for working in an

international environment. So the concept is “international environment”; this is the abstract idea that this research wants to know more about. It is divided into eleven questions, which, according to the high alpha, are internally consistent and aimed at finding answers to a similar concept.⁵ Alpha Chronbach is applicable to dichotomous data as used in this research and provides a good estimate of the reliability of dichotomous data.⁶

The Mann-Whitney U test looks for correlations between variables. The scores obtained are ranked from the highest number to the lowest number. The mean rank gives an indication of the importance that the respondents attach to a certain subject. When comparing two or more dichotomous variables, it gives an indication which variable the respondents prefer over another variable.

ENDNOTES

¹ Joseph Basso, "How Public Relations Professionals are Managing the Potential for Sabotage, Rumors, and Misinformation Disseminated Via the Internet by Computer Hackers." *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 40, no. 1 (March 1997): 28.

² Michael Morley, *How to Manage Your Global Reputation. A Guide to the Dynamics of International Public Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 4.

³ James T. McClave, Frank H. Dietrich, II and Terry Sincich, *Statistics*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992), 7.

⁴ Jum C. Nunnally, *Psychometric Theory* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 229.

⁵ James Lackey, Interview by author, transcript, Stillwater, Oklahoma. October 1998.

⁶ Nunnally, 230.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine what practitioners think should be included in a worldwide public relations curriculum. A questionnaire was sent to 202 practitioners in the field of international public relations. The respondents were chosen out of the international section of the "Blue Book" of the Public Relations Society of America, 1997 edition. All the names listed in this section, the total population, were surveyed. The survey was sent out twice to generate sufficient.

All 202 subjects received the survey through the mail. The first and second mailing generated 98 responses, 49 percent of the total population. Of the 92 responses, two subjects indicated they were not active in worldwide public relations and four questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. These six questionnaires were not included in the analysis; the number of valid responses was reduced to 92 questionnaires, 46 percent of the total population.

The analysis is descriptive using percentages. Where appropriate, chi-square tests were used to find any significant differences; those results are noted with the appropriate tables.

FINDINGS

The first four tables give an overview of the respondents' backgrounds. The first table gives an indication of the degrees earned by the respondents and is divided between men and women. The second table gives an overview of the educational background of the respondents. The third table indicates the years of experience by gender. The fourth table gives an indication of the time spent on the three main public relations levels, counseling, technical, and administrative work.

Women and men were almost equally represented. There were 45 men, or 49 percent and 47 women or 51 percent, among the 92 respondents (Table I). When asked for the highest degree that the respondents earned, 43 respondents (47%) indicated they earned a bachelor's degree, 38 respondents (41%) indicated they earned a master's degree and 11 respondents (12%) indicated they earned a doctoral degree. Twenty-three of the women (49%) and 20 of the men (44%) had a bachelor's degree. Twenty women (43%) had a master's degree, 18 men (40%) had a master's degree, and seven men (16%) had a doctoral degree, compared to four women (8%) with a doctoral degree.

Table I
Practitioners' Degrees by Gender
N = 92

Gender	Practitioners' Degrees				Total
	N	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	
Men	45	20	18	7	48.9%
Women	47	23	20	4	51.1%
TOTAL:	92	43	38	11	100%

Of the men, twelve (27%) had a communication degree, 12 (27%) men had a journalism degree, and eight (18%) men had a business degree. Fifteen (32%) women had a communication degree, nine (19%) had a journalism degree, and six (13%) had a business degree.

Most respondents had a degree in communication (29%), followed by a degree in journalism (23%), and 15 percent of the respondents had a degree in business. Only nine percent of the respondents had a specific degree in public relations. The other respondents had degrees in languages (10%), international relations (5%), or other (9%). Of all the respondents (N = 202), 52 percent had a degree in some type of communication field.

Of those respondents with a bachelor's degree (43), most had a degree in journalism or communication, respectively 12 and 11 respondents. Of those respondents with a master's degree (38), most had a business (10), journalism (9), or communication (8) degree. Of those respondents with a doctoral degree (11), eight had a communication degree, two had a degree in public relations, and one had a degree in philosophy.

Table II
Degrees Earned by the Practitioners
by Different Fields and Practitioners' Gender
N = 92

Degree	Gender	Practitioners' Field of Degree						TOTAL
		N	Comm	Journalism	Business	PR	Other	
Bachelor	Men	20	2	8	3	2	5	22%
	Women	23	9	4	1	1	8	26%
Master	Men	18	4	4	5	3	1	19%
	Women	20	4	5	5	0	6	22%
Doctorate	Men	7	6	0	0	0	1	7%
	Women	4	2	0	0	2	0	4%
TOTAL:		92	27	21	14	8	21	100%

When asked for their educational background, 80 percent of the respondents said that they learned about international public relations through their own experience working with operations outside their native country, 72 percent of the respondents said that they independently read about international public relations, 48 percent of the respondents said that they participated in a company or organization-based international seminar, 33 percent of the respondents said that they completed an undergraduate international course, 25 percent of the respondents said that they completed a graduate international course, 19 percent of the respondents said that they participated in an international seminar or course outside their organization, and 16 percent of the respondents said they never took any international training courses or seminars.

Table III
Extent of Practitioners' Formal Worldwide Public Relations Training
by Practitioners' Gender*
N = 92

Courses	Practitioners' Gender		
	Male	Female	TOTAL
Own Experience	41	33	80%
Independent Reading	33	33	72%
Organizational Seminar	23	21	48%
Seminar outside	11	6	18%
Undergraduate international course	10	20	33%
Graduate international course	11	12	25%
No education	8	7	16%

*Totals do not equal 100% since several answers could be given.

Table IV shows the years of experience survey respondents have in worldwide public relations. Twenty-four (26%) respondents worked less than five years in worldwide public relations, 19 (21%) respondents worked between five and ten years in

worldwide public relations, and 49 (53%) of the respondents indicated that they worked for more than 10 years in worldwide public relations. Of the men, 30 (33%) worked more than ten years, compared to 19 (21%) women who worked more than ten years.

Table IV
Practitioners' Years of Experience by
Gender and Practitioners' Degree
N = 92

Degree	Gender	N	Practitioners' Years of Experience			TOTAL
			>5	5-10	10<	
Bachelor's	Men	20	5	2	13	22%
	Women	23	6	8	9	25%
Master's	Men	18	3	4	11	19%
	Women	20	6	4	10	22%
Doctorate	Men	7	1	0	6	8%
	Women	4	3	1	0	4%
TOTAL		92	24	19	49	100%

When asked for the time spent on the counseling, technical and administrative aspects of public relations practice, the following results were obtained; table V indicates this. Fifty-five (60%) respondents indicated that they spend most of their time counseling, the highest strategic level of public relations practice generally associated with management roles. Thirty-two (35%) respondents indicated that they spend most of their time at technical tasks, carrying out plans developed by management, such as writing and editing. Technicians are generally not involved with decision-making, but with implementing decisions made by others. Five (5%) respondents were involved in administrative tasks, defined as general day-to-day departmental and operational tasks, such as budgeting and personnel management. Gender by itself was not a significant predictor of whether a practitioner spent the majority of his or her time as a counselor,

technician, or as administrator. When gender and years of experience were combined to predict levels of duties, no differences were found. Chi-Square tests indicate a difference between these groups, but because of the small size of the groups, the results were not statistically significant.

Table V
Tasks That Practitioners Perform
by Practitioners' Gender
N = 92

Gender	Type of Tasks Performed by Practitioners				TOTAL
	N	Counseling	Technical	Administrative	
Men	45	26	17	2	49%
Women	47	29	15	3	51%
TOTAL	92	55	32	5	100%

Table VI indicates which topics practitioners expect undergraduates to learn about worldwide public relations. When asked if general knowledge of world history is important for undergraduate students, 90 percent of the respondents said it was. Of the respondents, 84 percent said general knowledge of world politics is important, 74 percent said global economic principles are important for undergraduate students, 71 percent said general knowledge of world religions is important for undergraduate students, 66 percent said travel is important for undergraduate students, 62 percent said knowledge about the world media is important for undergraduate students, 62 percent expects an undergraduate student to speak another language than English, 57 percent expects an undergraduate student to read in another language, 47 percent of the respondents said that learning to write in another language besides English is important. When asked if living in a non-American culture is important for undergraduate students, 28 percent of the respondents said it was. When asked if working in a non-American culture is important

for undergraduate students, 19 percent of the respondents said it was. In order of importance, practitioners found that undergraduate students should learn about or experience:

Table VI
What practitioners Expected Undergraduate Students to Know*
N = 92

Topics	Practitioners' Gender			TOTAL
	N	Men	Women	
History	83	40	43	90%
Politics	78	41	37	84%
Economics	68	37	31	74%
Religions	65	31	34	71%
Travel	61	29	32	66%
Media	57	28	29	62%
Speaking	57	29	28	62%
Reading	52	25	27	57%
Writing	43	18	25	47%
Living	26	14	12	28%
Working	17	10	7	19%

*Totals do not equal 100% since respondents could select more than one answer.

What practitioners expect undergraduate students to know was also analyzed using Complex Chi Square methodology with the following independent variables: practitioners' degree, the field in which they have a degree, and the number of years they have been working. Some differences were found in what practitioners think undergraduate students should know when these independent variables were compared individually or together, but none of these differences had any statistical significance.

This does not mean that there is no difference between these groups, but because of the small size of the groups, the Chi-Squares obtained were not statistically significant.

The Mann-Whitney U Test indicated a significant difference between respondents with an undergraduate degree and respondents with a graduate degree. Respondents with an undergraduate degree attach more importance to religion ($Z = -2.456$, $M-T = .014$, $p = .05$) and media ($Z = -1.987$, $M-T = .047$, $p = .05$) being taught than respondents with a graduate degree (master's or doctorate).

Respondents were also asked what is important for graduate students to study in a worldwide public relations course or courses. When asked if general knowledge of world history is important for graduate students, 91 percent of the respondents said it was. Ninety-one percent also said that general knowledge of world politics is important, 88 percent said global economic principles are important for undergraduate students, 87 percent said knowledge about the world media is important for graduate students, 86 percent said travel is important for graduate students, 79 percent expects a graduate student to speak another language than English, 77 percent said general knowledge of world religions is important for graduate students, 72 percent expects a graduate student to read in another language, 59 percent of the respondents said that learning to write in another language besides English is important. When asked if living in a non-American culture is important for graduate students, 40 percent of the respondents said it was. When asked if working in a non-American culture is important for graduate students, 38 percent of the respondents said it was.

Table VII
 What practitioners Expect Graduate Students to Know*
 N = 92

Topics	N	Practitioners' Gender		TOTAL
		Men	Women	
History	84	41	43	91%
Politics	84	42	42	91%
Economics	81	42	39	88%
Media	80	40	40	87%
Travel	79	39	40	86%
Speaking	73	38	35	79%
Religions	71	34	37	77%
Reading	66	32	34	72%
Writing	54	23	31	59%
Living	37	19	18	40%
Working	35	14	21	38%

*Totals do not equal 100% since respondents could select more than one answer.

What practitioners expect graduate students to know was also analyzed with the use of Complex Chi Square methodology with the following independent variables: practitioners' degree, the field in which they have a degree, and the number of years they have been working. Some differences were found in what practitioners think graduate students should know when these independent variables were compared individually or together, but none of these differences were statistically significant.

Respondents were also asked what is crucial for practitioners to know. Of the respondents, 98 percent indicated that general knowledge of world media is important for practitioners. When asked if general knowledge of world politics is important for practitioners, 97 percent of the respondents said it was; 95 percent of the respondents also indicated that general knowledge of global economic principles is important for

practitioners. General knowledge of world history is important according to 90 percent of the respondents. When asked if travel in a non-American culture is important for practitioners, 87 percent of the respondents said it was. When asked if general knowledge of world religions is important for practitioners, 76 percent of the respondents said it was. Being able to speak another language than English is crucial for 58 percent of the respondents, 57 percent of the respondents indicated working in a non-American culture is important, 57 percent of the respondents indicated reading in another language as important, 47 percent of the respondents said that being able to write in another language besides English is important. When asked if living in a non-American culture is important for practitioners, 47 percent of the respondents said it was.

Table VIII
What Practitioners Think Is Crucial For Practitioners*
N = 92

Topics	Practitioners' Gender			TOTAL
	N	Men	Women	
Media	90	44	46	98%
Politics	89	43	46	97%
Economics	87	43	44	95%
History	83	40	43	90%
Travel	80	39	41	87%
Religions	70	32	38	76%
Speaking	53	21	32	58%
Working	52	21	31	57%
Reading	52	20	32	57%
Writing	43	16	27	47%
Living	43	17	26	47%

*Totals do not equal 100% since respondents could select more than one answer.

What practitioners think is crucial to practitioners was also analyzed using of Complex Chi Square methodology with the following independent variables: practitioners' degree, the field in which they have a degree, and the number of years they have been working. Some differences were found in what practitioners think undergraduate students should know when these independent variables were compared individually or together, but none of these differences had any statistically significant. This does not mean that there is no difference between these groups, but because of the small size of the groups, the Chi-Squares that were obtained were not statistically significant. In other words, the significance obtained was not valid because the total population was too small. Also, the data used is categorical, and most data is dichotomous (answers range between yes or no).

When applying the Mann-Whitney U Test, a few differences were found between men and women concerning what is crucial for practitioners to know. There, men attached more importance to practitioners being able to speak ($Z = -2.067$, $M-T = .039$, $p = .05$), read ($Z = -2.274$, $M-T = .023$, $p = .05$) and write ($Z = -2.092$, $M-T = .036$, $p = .05$) another language besides English than women did.

Application of the Alpha Chronbach measurement to the previous questions, in which practitioners indicate what is important to know for undergraduate and graduate students and for practitioners, revealed that there is a high reliability between the various topics that were proposed ($\text{Alpha} = .8737$; $N = 92$).

After having established what practitioners think is important for undergraduates, graduates and practitioners to know, the respondents were asked to indicate at which level a course or courses in worldwide public relations should be given. When asked for

the level at which courses in worldwide public relations should be taught, 16 (18%) of the respondents indicated they should be taught at the graduate level only, 75 (82%) of the respondents said it should be taught at both undergraduate and graduate level. None of the respondents said it should be taught at the undergraduate level only. Table IX indicates at which level, according to the practitioners, a course in worldwide public relations should be taught.

Table IX
Level at Which Worldwide Public Relations Should Be Taught
by Practitioners' Gender
N = 92

Respondents' Gender	Practitioners' Gender			TOTAL
	N	Men	Women	
Undergraduate only	0	0	0	0%
Graduate only	17	9	8	18%
Undergraduate and Graduate	75	36	39	82%
TOTAL	92	45	47	100%

Table X indicates at which level a course in worldwide public relations should be taught, according to practitioners and based on their degrees. Of those with a bachelor's degree, nine (21%) said it should be taught at the graduate level, 34 (79%) said it should be taught at both graduate and undergraduate level. Of those with a master's degree, five (14%) said it should be taught at the graduate level, 32 (87%) said it should be taught at both graduate and undergraduate level. Of those with a doctoral degree, two (18%) said it should be taught at the graduate level, nine (82%) said it should be taught at both graduate and undergraduate level.

Table X
Level At Which WPR Should Be Taught
by Practitioners' Degree
N = 92

Level	Practitioners' Degree				TOTAL
	N	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	
Undergraduate	0	0	0	0	0%
Graduate	16	9	6	2	18%
Graduate and undergraduate	75	34	32	9	82%
TOTAL	92	43	38	11	100%

When asked if an internship should be part of the education of a student in worldwide public relations, 87 (95%) of the respondents (n = 92) said it should be (Table XI). Of the men, 41 (91%) said it should be part of a student's education; and women, 46 (98%) said it should be part of a student's education.

Table XI
The Need of an Internship for Students
by Practitioners' Gender
N = 92

Preference	Practitioners' Gender			TOTAL
	N	Men	Women	
Yes	87	41	46	95%
No	4	3	1	4%
Optional	1	1	0	1%
TOTAL	92	45	47	100%

When looking at the degree of the respondents, we see that all the respondents (100%) with a bachelor's degree favor an internship, 34 (90%) of the respondents with a master's degree favor an internship, and 10 (91%) of the respondents with a doctoral degree favor an internship. The other respondent with a doctoral degree indicated that an

internship was optional. Only four (12%) respondents indicated that an internship is not necessary. Of these four, all of them had a master's degree, three were men.

Table XII
The Need of an Internship for Students
by Practitioners' Degree
N = 92

Internship	Practitioners' Degree				TOTAL
	N	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	
Yes	87	43	34	10	94.6%
No	4	0	4	0	4.3%
TOTAL	92	43	38	11	100%

When asked where an internship should be taken, most respondents indicated it should be taken in an U.S. company inside the U.S. (17%) or in a U.S. company outside the U.S. (30%). An important number of respondents (29%) indicated that any internship experience is valuable.

Table XIII
Place That Students Should Take an Internship According to Practitioners
By Practitioners' Gender
N = 92

Where	Practitioners' Gender			TOTAL
	N	Men	Women	
Us Company out US	28	12	16	30%
All	27	11	16	29%
US company in US	16	10	6	17%
Non US company out US	11	7	4	12%
Other	6	3	3	6%
Non US company in US	2	1	1	2%
None	2	1	1	2%
TOTAL	92	43	37	100%

Where practitioners think students should take an internship was also analyzed using Complex Chi Square methodology with the following independent variables: degree of the practitioners, the field that they have a degree in and the number of years they have been working. Some differences were found, but none had any statistically significant value. This does not mean that there is no difference between these groups, but because of the small size of the groups, the Chi-Squares that were obtained were not statistically significant. In other words, the significance obtained was not valid because the total population was too small. Also, the data used is categorical, and most data is dichotomous (answers range between yes or no).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL

The literature revealed a great number of articles and books addressing public relations education in general, but only a few mentioned specific education in the field of international public relations. Most of the articles and books stressed the importance of worldwide public relations in a world with a globalizing economy. Some of the articles or books pointed out what was important for students, but none was based on scientifically conducted research. None of the articles or books gave an overview based on a survey of practitioners, what the content of a course or courses in worldwide public relations should be. Rather, they were valuable opinions of practitioners who knew from firsthand experience that worldwide public relations was becoming more important.

Different practitioners and teachers support the need for courses in worldwide public relations, but few courses exist. A brief overview of what should be taught is found in the literature, but this is not sufficient to set up a course. The authors give a good summary of what is needed, but it is only based on a few sources. Also, these sources give valuable, but opinionated, recommendations of practitioners in the field of worldwide public relations. Therefore, more in-depth research is needed to shape courses in worldwide public relations. The information and opinions found in the literature are interesting, but one might ask if this really reflects what practitioners think should be included in a course or courses about worldwide public relations education.

One main concern is prevalent in the literature. Current public relations education is not sufficient, which provided two main reasons for this research study. First, courses in worldwide public relations at American universities are not widespread or standardized. Secondly, in the light of a globalizing economy, international companies need practitioners with this kind of education. A global economy means contacts with different cultures, something practitioners need to be prepared for.

The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by asking practitioners with international experience what they think students pursuing a career in worldwide public relations should learn.

Four questions guided this study: (1) Is there a genuine need for such a course? Do practitioners feel that there is a need for students to learn about worldwide public relations? Or do practitioners think it should be learned on the job? (2) What should the content of a WPR course be? (3) At what level should WPR be taught? (4) What type or level of education do current practitioners have? Have they a specific cultural or public relations education or a more general education like business or economics?

Overall, respondents indicated it is important for students at any level to learn about history, politics, economics, religion and media in the world. Travel abroad was indicated as an important part of the education process while speaking another language was also seen as valuable.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The extent of the practitioners' educational background was almost identical between men and women. Overall, current practitioners indicated experience (80%), and independent study (72%) as the most important ways that they learned about worldwide public relations. Only 33 percent of the respondents took an undergraduate course and 25 percent took a graduate international course. This indicates that the educational background of the respondents was not strong; most of their learned skills came from their own experience working in worldwide public relations or from independent study about the subject. But they felt that teaching worldwide public relations was important. When asked what topics were important for students to learn about, a wide range of topics was indicated as important for future practitioners to know or learn about.

Most practitioners (53%) had more than ten years of experience in the field. Most practitioners (60%) were, for most of the time, involved in counseling tasks, which indicate the relatively high management level of the respondents in their organizations. The high level of experience of most respondents and their involvement in counseling tasks give another indication of the importance of worldwide public relations education. These people know out of first hand experience what future practitioners should learn. Those practitioners with more than ten years of experience were more often than not people in counseling positions. A practitioner at the counseling level will be involved in management, and therefore be more involved in activities and decision making that requires knowledge of history, economics and media than lower-level technical skills like editing and writing news releases. Future practitioners will one day also arrive at these

top-levels, so it is logical for current practitioners to ask for an education that will prepare future practitioners for work at the counseling level in addition to developing their skill base.

Almost all of the respondents agreed that courses in worldwide public relations should be taught at both undergraduate and graduate levels. None of the respondents indicated that it should be taught at the undergraduate level only. This means that worldwide public relations education cannot be taught in one course only. It has to be taught throughout the public relations curriculum, not just in one course at a graduate level. Worldwide public relations is important enough for future practitioners to be aware of this early in their studies and to continue to follow courses.

When asked what is important for undergraduate students to know, politics, economics, religion, travel, speaking another language than English was mentioned by more than 60 percent of the respondents. While travel in other countries was highly rated, living and working in another culture was indicated by less than 60 percent of the respondents.

Application of the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed that respondents with an undergraduate degree attach more importance to religion ($Z = -2.456$, $M-T = .014$, $p = .05$) and media ($Z = -1.987$, $M-T = .047$, $p = .05$) being taught than respondents with a graduate degree (master's or doctorate).

When asked what is important for graduate students to know, history, politics, economics, media, travel, speaking another language than English, religion, and reading another language than English was indicated by more than 70 percent of the respondents.

While travel was indicated as highly important, living and working in another culture was indicated by less than 60 percent of the respondents.

When asked what is crucial for practitioners to know, history, politics, economics, media, travel, speaking another language than English, religion, and reading another language than English was indicated by more than 70 percent of the respondents. While travel was indicated as highly important, living and working in another culture was indicated less than 60 percent of the respondents.

When applying the Mann-Whitney U Test, three differences were found between men and women concerning what is crucial for practitioners to know. There, men attached more importance to practitioners being able to speak ($Z = -2.067$, $M-T = .039$, $p = .05$), read ($Z = -2.274$, $M-T = .023$, $p = .05$) and write ($Z = -2.092$, $M-T = .036$, $p = .05$) another language besides English than women did. This might be a reflection of the roles that both genders have. It might well be that men still have leading roles, and in that role, their ability to speak another languages is important, whereas women have more technical and administrative roles and thus their abilities to be able to speak another languages besides English are less important to them. Still, when we look at table V, we see that 32 percent of the women perform counseling roles, slightly more than men (28%).

Based on the data, we can assume that media, politics, economics and history are crucial for practitioners to know. Media was indicated as the most crucial thing for practitioners to know, it was indicated by 98 percent of the respondents as crucial, the highest scores if the three levels are compared. Politics and economics were also

extremely crucial for practitioners. This makes it clear that these topics should certainly be included in a course about worldwide public relations.

Less important are writing skills and living in another culture; both topics were indicated by less than 50 percent of the respondents as important. The literature often referred language skills as important a practitioner in worldwide public relations. Based on the data obtained, we can say that language skills, relatively speaking, are lower in importance when compared to other skills and knowledge, than most of the literature said.

The content of courses in worldwide public relations has to be aimed at raising the students' awareness of the existence of different cultures. Students do not need to know all aspects of all cultures, but they do need to have a framework in which they can place the different cultures they meet and work in. Other components might include economy, laws, politics, history, religion, media and ethical issues in other countries or cultures.

The high place of religion at the undergraduate level does make sense. Religion and culture are highly tied together; knowledge about the religion of a country will give some insight and deeper understanding of the values and mores of that culture. The same logic can be applied to the high importance practitioners attach to history, which also shapes the culture of a group of people.

Since most of the respondents classified themselves as counselors, it is not surprising that language skills were not very highly rated in comparison to other topics listed. Of the language skills, writing another language was always the least important for students to master. This make sense because a practitioner can always rely on the services of translating bureaus. This is also a safe thing to do, this way mistakes like "Nova" will

be avoided. Speaking another language was valued higher than writing by the respondents. Being able to speak at least a few words will enhance the communication and will show members of the other language group that there is interest in their language and also in their culture and history.

The data indicates that a large knowledge of other cultures' media, politics, history, economics and religion was highly recommended by current practitioners. Overall, this indicates that future practitioners need to have an overall grasp of these topics. This will be build on skills like editing and writing news releases. Practitioners in the field of worldwide public relations will have acquired these skills from previous experience, but it will not be the core of their international education. In addition to traditional communication skills of writing and speaking, future practitioners need a liberal arts component, with an emphasis on history, economics, history and economy, geography, religion, sociology, and general humanities. This confirms what other authors have said about the education of a future worldwide public relations practitioner. Morely describes a worldwide public relations practitioner as a person that has different talents and is,

. . . educationally qualified, a skilled communicator, a thoughtful and calculating strategist, technologically proficient, multilingual, avidly interested in current affairs, knowledgeable about political affairs in many countries, respectful of a variety of customs and etiquette, and experienced in working in a number of countries, with a spell in general management.¹

Culbertson and Chen came to the conclusion that international public relations courses:

. . . should introduce students to the history and development of public relations in other cultures; acquaint students with the practice and function of public relations abroad, emphasizing differences between U.S. and non-U.S. practices; and describe the internal and external dynamics of multinational corporations as well as the problems and difficulties of U.S. corporate public relations abroad, particularly in those countries where mayor U.S. corporations do business.²

Wilcox, Ault and Agee say that a student seeking an international career should take:

. . . multiple courses in international relations, global marketing techniques, the basics of strategic public relations planning, foreign languages, social and economic geography, and cross-cultural communication. Graduate study is an asset. Many students serve internships with international corporations as a desirable starting point.³

For each of the topics, future practitioners have to be aware how it will influence their public relations practice. Future practitioners should also be skilled in one or more languages, from which speaking skills are more important than reading and writing another language. All of this knowledge, however, needs to be applied from the public relations perspective of relationship building.

The results of this study indicate that courses in worldwide public relations should be taught at the undergraduate as well as at the graduate level. Teaching worldwide public relations at the undergraduate level could be done by incorporating worldwide public relations into the existing courses. At the graduate level, the following courses could be taught: worldwide media systems, worldwide economics, worldwide religions and history, worldwide current affairs and political systems, cross-cultural communication and ethics, worldwide public relations tactics and strategies, worldwide public relations research methods and a seminar dedicated to worldwide public relations campaigns. Additionally, students should master one or more languages other than English.

FUTURE RESEARCH

First, future research should analyze current worldwide public relations syllabi and compare them with the recommendations based on what current practitioners expect from such courses. Should they only be given in a university setting, or do current practitioners also want continuing education, seminars, or on site, in an organization training?

Secondly, future research should ask current public relations practitioners if they teach worldwide public relations and how and why they accomplish this task. If they do not teach it, they should be asked why.

Third, current educators should be asked how the recommendations in this study should be developed into courses. What should be the content of the courses in general, what should be the content of an introductory course, how should the different courses be divided and how do they fit together?

Fourth, future research should ask in which year at the undergraduate level (freshman, sophomore, junior and/or senior) worldwide public relations courses should be taught.

Besides these four main recommendations, future research can profit from this study when designing their research. The questionnaire should also be adapted in such a way that high internal reliability is still maintained, which can be done by expanding the number of respondents and also by refining the questions.

Should worldwide public relations courses be taught in public relations only or in combination with other disciplines such as business or international relations? When

should an international internship be taken, at the undergraduate or the graduate level?

Should study-abroad be included?

Traverse-Healy also recommended that future research should concentrate on the difference between international marketing and worldwide public relations practice. How do they practice, which tactics and strategies do they use, and more important, how are they organized? Future research should indicate how worldwide public relations is and should be organized. According to Traverse-Healy, future research should also indicate what makes public relations agencies different from an international law firm.⁴

Another potential area of research would be looking at the differences and similarities between public relations education in the United States and public relations education abroad. How is the topic taught in the U.S. and how is it taught abroad? Additionally, the difference in practice could be studied so that this knowledge could help teachers to direct their courses toward a more international course or courses. This would not only result in recommendations for worldwide public relations curriculum, but could also lead to further studies aimed to understand worldwide public relations.

ENDNOTES

¹ Michael Morley. *How to Manage Your Global Reputation. A Guide to the Dynamics of International Public Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 4.

² Hugh M. Culbertson. and Ni Chen, eds., *International Public Relations. A Comparative Analysis* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996), 391.

³ Wilcox, Ault, and Agee, 365.

⁴ Tim Traverse-Healy, interview by author and Barbara DeSanto, 17 November 1998. Stillwater, transcript. Private collection, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Cover Letter

206 Paul Miller Building
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
May 15, 1998 / August 27, 1998

Dear Public Relations Practitioner,

I'm once more asking for your help. Enclosed is a second* questionnaire about international public relations. I appreciate the time it takes to complete this – but your input is very valuable to me and to the public relations field.

I'm an international graduate student from Belgium studying Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University in the School of Journalism and Broadcasting. Your help is needed for my thesis, "Worldwide Public Relations Education." The aim of this thesis is to find out what practitioners such as you think should be included in courses at the university level addressing this topic.

As you understand, your co-operation is necessary to find significant results that can be of help to teachers. Teachers need to know what you expect recent graduates to know so they can adapt their courses to your advice. Filling out this questionnaire will also benefit you. Students will receive an education that is better adapted to the market and its needs.

This survey is completely confidential. The number in the upper right corner is for administrative purposes only. The survey will only be seen by my adviser and me; you can always contact my adviser, Dr. Barbara DeSanto (405 744-8276), for additional information. I have also enclosed a **stamped, addressed envelope** for your convenience. Or you could **fax** the questionnaire to me (405-743-2396).

Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible.

Thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Michel Verbiest
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Stillwater, OK 74074
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Email: verbies@okstate.edu

Dr. Barbara DeSanto, APR, MIPRA
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* First introduction letter did not include the paragraph.

Appendix B

Questionnaire

Section I: General information about yourself. In this section, please provide some background information about your education, your current job status and your past experience working with communication or public relations outside the United States.

Question 1: Male Female

Q2: What is the highest degree you have completed?

Bachelor's degree subject area: _____

Master's degree subject area: _____

Doctoral degree subject area: _____

Other _____ subject area: _____

Q3: What professional certifications have you earned or been awarded?

APR Year earned _____ PRSA Fellow Year earned _____

ABC Year earned _____

International Certification Organization _____ Year earned _____

Q4: What is the extent of your educational preparation for international work?

Please answer all that apply:

I took an undergraduate international course - Department in which the course was offered:

I took a graduate international course - Department in which the course was offered:

I participated in a company or organization-based international seminar - which type of company/ organization:

I participated in an international seminar or course based outside of a university or company/organization, such as an airline seminar, etc. Please describe:

I have never taken any international training courses or seminars.

I independently read about international work on my own.

I learned about international work through my own experience working with operations outside of my native country.

Other, please describe: _____

None of the above

Q5: How many total years have you practiced in the field of international public relations? Full-time: Part-time:

- Less than five
 Five to ten years
 More than ten years

- Less than five
 Five to ten years
 More than ten years

Section II: Developing international public relations classes. The questions in this section relate to what types of things are important to include in an undergraduate and graduate public relations curriculum.

Q6: As someone with experience in international public relations, indicate which topics are important to develop effective classes for international public relations.

	Expect undergraduate student to have:	Expect graduate student to have:	Crucial for practitioners:
Speaking language other than English	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Reading language other than English	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Writing language other than English	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Travel in a non-American culture	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Living in a non-American culture	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Working in a non-American culture	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
General knowledge of world history	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
General knowledge of world religions	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Knowledge of world media	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Knowledge of world politics	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Global economic principles	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

Q7: At what level should international public relations be taught?

- Undergraduate level Graduate level Both

Q8: Should an internship be part of the education of a student in international public relations?

- Yes No

Q9: Where has an internship to be taken? Please indicate ONE only.

- An American international company inside the United States
 An American international company outside the United States
 A non-American company located inside the United States
 A non-American company located outside the United States
 Other. Please describe: _____
 None.
 All apply.

Q10: As a public relations practitioner, in your international work, what percentage of time do you spend on the following public relations tasks? Answers must add up to 100%.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Counseling, doing research, planning | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing, editing, working with media | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative, budgeting, hiring staff and training | _____ |
| | 100% |

Q11: What technical tools are most used in international public relations practice? Indicate all that apply.

- E-mail Fax Regular Mail
 Web pages Telephone Other: _____

Q12: Please add any other concerns or comments you wish.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Michel Verbiest
Oklahoma State University
School of Journalism and Broadcasting
206 Paul Miller Building
Stillwater, OK 74078

**APPENDIX C:
IRB APPROVAL FORM**

VITA²

Michel Verbiest

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A SURVEY OF PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR OPINION ABOUT
WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULUM

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Wilrijk, Belgium, on January 21, 1972, the son of Eudore Verbiest and Brigitte Thuysbaert-Verbiest.

Education: Graduated from Sint Lievens College, Antwerp, Belgium; received Bachelor of Arts in Political and Social Sciences from the University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium in July 1997.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University in December 1, 1998.

Experience: Internship at Burson-Marsteller, June-August 1998.

Professional Membership: International Public Relations Society, Public Relations Society of Belgium.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 05-22-98

IRB #: AS-98-058

Proposal Title: WORLDWIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

Principal Investigator(s): Barbara DeSanto, Michel Verbiest, Paul Smeyak

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

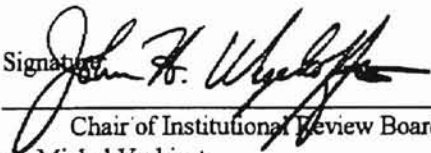
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature



Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc: Michel Verbiest

Date: May 22, 1998

MICHEL VERBIEST

DATE: December 1, 1998

TO: Institutional Review Board
& Graduate College
203 Whitehurst Hall
Stillwater, OK 74078

FROM: Michel Verbiest

SUBJECT: Change in my Thesis Title

Please be advised that I have changed my thesis title "Worldwide Public Relations Education" to "A Survey of Practitioners and their Opinion about Worldwide Public Relations Curriculum." The reason for this is that the new title is more descriptive.

Michel Verbiest