



TITLE: MANAGERIAL PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE ROLE OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS: PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN THE
MALAYSIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY.

CHIN XIN YI
KHO JIAT SUAN
TEY CHORNG KUAN
WONG SUET MAY
YEW JIONG JUN

A RESEARCH PROJECT
SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE BACHELOR OF COMMUNICATION (HONS) PUBLIC RELATIONS
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

MARCH. 2017

ABSTRACT

This research is conducted to study the managerial perceptions toward Public Relations in Malaysian hotel industry, and how it affects the roles and practices of Public Relations. We have used semi-structured interview to collect in-depth information on the managerial perception towards Public Relations in the hotel industry. This research has identified few important hiring requirements for Public Relations in the hotel industry, from a managerial perspective, which are experience, academic qualifications, hard skills, soft skills and impression. The results indicated that managerial perspectives have huge impact on Public Relations where the practitioners are playing technician role and minor practitioner role in the hotel industry. In addition, the results showed the hotel industry will apply the four roles of Public Relations which proposed by Grunig (1982), depends on various situations. Besides the suggested four roles of Public Relations, Public Relations in Malaysian hotel industry also play the roles of Marketing and Community Relations. Moreover, we agreed that the Four Models of Public Relations proposed by James Grunig and Todd Hunt is applicable in the practices of Malaysian hotel industry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis would not be complete without the assistance and cooperation of a list of people. Firstly, we are deeply grateful to our final year project supervisor Ms Yvonne Hoh Jgin Jit for her patience in guiding us throughout the whole process. Besides, we are deeply thankful to our interviewees from the hotel industry who are willing to participate in this research by sharing with us such valuable information that had inspired us in different ways. Thanks to all of you and this thesis has been completed by having all of your efforts and kind contributions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii - iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1-14
1.1 Background of study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	12
1.3 Research Objectives	13
1.4 Research Questions	13
1.5 Significance of Research	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15-33
2.1 Public Relations Practice	15
2.2 Perception of Public Relations	23
2.3 Communication in Hotel Industry	27
2.4 Theoretical Framework	30
Chapter 3: Methodology	34-39
3.1 Research Approach	34
3.2 Sample Selection	34
3.3 Instrument	36
3.4 Data Collection	36
3.5 Data Collection Protocol	36
3.6 Data Analysis	37
3.7 Ethical Consideration	38

Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis	40-76
4.1 Hiring Requirements	40
4.2 Roles of Public Relations Practitioners	56
4.3 Practices of Public Relations Practitioners	69
Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion	77-86
5.1 Discussion	77
5.2 Conclusion	83
5.3 Limitations	84
5.4 Recommendations	85
References	87-100
Appendix	100

Chapter 1

1.1 Background of study:

There are different definitions of Public Relations derived by various scholars with different perspectives. Public Relations Society of America defined Public Relations, ‘it helps an organization and its public to adapt reciprocally to each other’ (Public Relations Society of America, n.d.). Moreover, Grunig (as cited in Tench & Yeomans, 2014) defined Public Relations in a simpler way, he referred Public Relations as ‘an organization’s managed communications behavior’, and he also defined Public Relations as ‘the administration of communication between an organization and its publics’, earlier at 1984. There may be differences in Public Relations practices, but this definition still includes few important elements which are communication management and external relationships (Tench & Yeomans, 2014).

1.1.1 Public Relations practice in Asia

The role of Public Relations has become more important nowadays. Organizations hired Public Relations practitioners to manage organization’s reputation, relationships with both external and internal clients and most of the time to increase sales in order to maximize profit of the organization. However, Public Relations practitioner role varies in different countries depend on the country’s political ideology, level of economic developments, degree of activism, culture and media system (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2003). In addition, Chmielecki (2012) stated that business practices are often affected by cultural aspects which indirectly affected the Public Relations profession too. Hence, the role of Public Relations in an organization will also differ based on the of the organization culture.

Public Relations was introduced and adapted into Asia through government department (Ayish & Kruckeberg, 1999; Chan, 2006; Inoue, 2003; Lorenzo-Molo, 2007). Countries such

as Philippines, Japan, China, Malaysia and Singapore, Public Relations used by the government to deliver their messages or used as a political and propaganda tool. Davis (as cited in Jempson, 2005) stated that the close relationship between news media and public relation industry proved that there is a mutual need among them. Hence, despite time passed and Public Relations practitioner role in government had slowly shifted towards the private sector, majority of the public still have negative perception towards Public Relations practitioners.

Culture is always discussed as a key influence on the practice in Public Relations literature (Gupta & Bartlett, 2009). Different culture will results in different type of practices of Public Relations and in China, it is important to understand the protection of *mianzi* (face) and return one's *renqing* (favor) in order to build a *guanxi* (relationship) in business (Chan, 2006). Hence in order to establish a long term relationship, Public Relations practitioner must return one's favor to show appreciation in continuing the relationship. Favor exchange will also allow one to have *mianzi* (face) as it is a kind of recognition of reputation (Chan, 2006).

Lorenzo-Molo (2007) discovered that Public Relations in Philippines were joined by mostly journalist who have large connections in the media or government based on a personal interview conducted by her. The connections built by the journalists will be utilized whenever was needed in their Public Relations career. Hence, assumption of the ideal Public Relations role in the Western normally will not be able to fully apply at Asian as the difference of culture causes the role and practices of Public Relations different from each other.

Despite many of the efforts in introducing the role of Public Relations to the public in Asia, there are still certain misconception occurred. The public in China thinks that Public Relations usually practiced by young and beautiful ladies to build *guanxi* (relationship) but with only little training. They play the role as "guest relations" and known as "Ms. PR" which their job is to ensure the guests or clients are keep accompanied and entertained (Culbertson &

Chen & 1996). Besides that, Badran, Turk and Walters (2003) also explained that public often viewed professional Public Relations practitioners to be equipped with characteristics such as good-looking, educated, open-minded and highly sociable.

Reputation of Public Relations in Philippine is quite negative due to the culture of *pakikiusap* (asking for favors) and *utang-na-loob* (having to constantly seek gratitude) are being practiced in business and media so that Public Relations are able to sale their stories on the media (Lorenzo-Molo, 2007). In Japan, people often confuse publicity as Public Relations which they believe that Public Relations was equated with marketing (Inoue, 2003). Ayish and Kruckeberg (1999) stated that those who procuring visas, arranging transportation and performing hospitality functions may know as Public Relations in United Arab Emirates (UAE). However, more Public Relations firms were established in the country and public are able to understand the role of Public Relations better as time passed. This can be seen when more courses in Public Relations are offered in Asian tertiary education.

1.1.2 Public Relations in Malaysia

The development of Public Relations practice in Malaysia could be divided into three stages, which are before independence, after independence, and in the new era. Before independence, the establishment of Department of Public Relations used Public Relations practitioners as a tool of disseminating official information such as policies, program, and action plan (Idid, 2004). He further stated that Malaysian government has practiced its power to control and shape people's mind set by injecting information to them. Public has no rights to decide the content of information they received and just compromised with it.

Public Relations were used to repair or maintain the image and reputation of government. According to Ismail & Ahmad (2015), people lost their confidence in the British government after the ruling of Japanese. In here, the Department of Information Services,

renamed after Department of Public Relations, try to enhance the image of government in order to win back the heart and mind of people. It also tried to solve the communication barrier between people and government to ensure both parties communicate smoothly.

After the independence of Malaya in 1957, the imbalance of wealth among different races causes instability of economy in the country. The Chinese had a higher living standard compared to Malays and Indians (Mokhtar, Reen & Jamir Singh, 2013). This situation aroused dissatisfaction among the Malaysian and to solve this problem, government has implemented New Economic Policy (NEP) to eliminate poverty in the country. Public Relations has been appointed to address the objectives of this new policy to the public. Besides, they are also responsible to help the public to understand the significance of this society restructuring action. They have to make sure this policy is understood by all the different of racial population in Malaysia (Idid, 2004).

When Tun Dr. Mahathir ruled Malaysian government, he started to look into Public Relations sector and Public Relations was used to enhance the image of the government and influence the perception of public. Public Relations practitioners will have effect on convincing the governmental body and corporate key leaders in the development of the country in term of political, economic or even social development (Abdullah, 2011.).

Furthermore, the introduction of Industrial Policy and Privatization policy brought in privatized companies and this has strengthen the opportunities of Public Relations unit. Economic prosperity under the leadership of Tun Dr. Mahathir had influenced new industries coming into Malaysia where more private organizations form their own Public Relations unit. Therefore, many companies started to hire Public Relations practitioners to expand its business. In the early days, Public Relations was mainly used by government for the purpose of

information and services while in today, Public Relations is one that is cultured, contemporary, and heavily marketed (Idid, 2004).

1Malaysia program has been implemented to promote the national harmony concept (Idid & Ahmad, 2013). The Information Department had conducted various programs to support 1Malaysia concept, an event marketing approach was applied in these activities to reach intended audiences and manage to have two-way communication. It helps to engage different races through programs and activities they coordinated, such as The 1Malaysia Speech (Non Malay) program, 1Malaysia Nationhood Story, Information Service Centre program, etc. The goal of 1 Malaysia with the concerted public relations campaign that is implemented to accomplish the vision, by communicate the 1Malaysia concept to ensure that every ethnic group could understand it. Visual play and printed materials such as poster, leaflet, and booklet also provided to promote 1Malaysia campaign and these will be the communication tools when government delivered this concept to its public. Not only using new media, the Information Department also sent published pamphlets and booklets to government buildings, school, publics, or any event they participated as well (Ismail & Ahmad, 2014).

Public Relations is a practice that has been recognized in Malaysia for its role in government sector (Kaur & Shaari, 2006). Malaysia government has used Public Relations to communicate and disseminate its policies to public through campaigns in different fields such as health, transportation, agriculture and commerce. For instance, health campaigns to increase the awareness of diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. There are also campaigns that focus on various forms of cancer and the necessary to reduce tobacco consumption (Idid, 2004).

Other than that, Malaysian government views Public Relations as a tool to enhance social development and nation building. For example, during the economic crisis in 1999, the former Finance Minister Daim Zainnudin emphasized the role of Public Relations in gaining

the confidence of investors and general public (Idid, 2004). In addition, in order to gain support for policies in the election, Malaysian government disseminates information to general public through the media. Instead of shaping public opinion, Public Relations practitioners are responsible to influence public opinion through communication skills and strategies especially during the election period, government intend to change the public's attitude and ensure the public are well informed. Undoubtedly, the assistances from Public Relations is necessary as political campaign have to obtain public support for their campaign by disseminating information (Ahmad, 2007).

Private sector did not adopt the Public Relations as early as government but this situation changed when the public became more educated and started to aware of their right and there were many pressure groups were formed to defend various issues that affecting everyone in our country. Since those people are more expressive and those pressure groups are able to exert influence on the government and politicians, there were more laws and regulations to govern the conduct of the business, therefore private organizations only then started to establish Public Relations unit which function as press agents (Idid, 1998). The responsibilities of the Public Relations in private sector are writing press releases, organizing press conferences, drafting speeches for senior officials and managing protocol which aims to maintain a good relationship between the organization and the public. Public Relations in private sector is actively centralizing on media relations (Idid, 2004). In additional, Public Relations in private sector is a tool to increase the bottom-line and help the organization to be a good citizen (Idid, 2004).

As time passed, privatization urged the organizations to have a professional communicator to do "environmental scanning" and to be "boundary spanner" (Kaur & Shaari, 2006). In other words, Dozier (1992) explained that environmental scanning serve as an alert for the organization to change in the environment as the change can help to prevent from

problem occur whereas boundary spanner means the person within the organization who consistently interact between the organization and it's environment. Thus, these communicators are able to ensure that conflict is minimize and productive relationships are built with strategic audiences (Ahmad, 2007). Ahmad (2014) further explained that Public Relations agencies were sought by private companies for their privatization exercise. Ahmad (2014) also stated that the process of privatization had changed a corporation's focus to profit-driven entities from just providing services to the public.

Abdullah & Threadgold (as cited in Idid & Arandas, 2016) stated that Malaysian believe that become a Public Relations practitioner, it is more important to obtain an academic qualification in Public Relations than obtaining experience in Public Relations. In Malaysia, Public Relations programs are offered at both undergraduate and graduate levels (Idid, 1998). There were more universities in Malaysia that were promoting Public Relations courses after the introductory course offered by Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in year 1971, followed by Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) in 1972 and has developed ever since (Idid, 2004). Ahmad (as cited in Idid & Arandas, 2016) said that there are other universities and colleges in Malaysia that offer Public Relations course such as USM, UM, UUM, UPM and IIUM. According to Idid (2004), he stated that this phenomena can ensure that the Public Relations in Malaysia has sufficient qualifications and experience.

1.1.3 Roles of PR practitioner in industry

James Peter Chin, the former vice president for Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM), view Public Relations as an action to maintain harmony between the organization and the general public (Idid, 2004). Public Relations practitioners plays an integrative role in empowering the organization which helps in building a good relationship between the organization and its subordinate or even to the client (Abdullah, 2011). Abdullah further stated

that Public Relations perceived as an intermediate to reach more potential stakeholders by projecting corporate image and allow the stakeholders to understand that the company is steady, reliable, profitable, progressive and innovative.

In western country, Public Relations practitioners have two broad roles which are:-

Technician role (writing, editing, taking photos, handling communication production, manage event and deal with media) which helps the management in implementing the communication strategies and manager role (expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solving facilitator) which helps in identifying and solving Public Relations problems. Managers also play a vital role to advise senior management about the communication needs and responsible for broad organizational results (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012, p.61).

1.1.4 Professionalism of Public Relations

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), for any occupation to be considered as a profession, five criteria are required: knowledge based on theory and research, a program of formal education, professional associations, codes of ethics, and professional autonomy and allegiance. The establishment of Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM), well designed curriculum for the Public Relations and code of ethics which developed by IPRM had contributed into the efforts of making Public Relations a professions.

However, the professionalism of Public Relations was not recognized by the managerial level of the organization as the quality of professionals and experience amongst the Public Relations practitioners are still immature (Abdullah, 2011). This is due to the roles and functions of the associations such as Public Relations Consultants' Association of Malaysia (PRCAM) and Institute of Public Relations are not effective as the internal politics occurred among the associate members. This is one of the reasons that the association accreditation does not really matters. Apart from this, the establishment of IPRM does not reflects the standard of

Public Relations professionalism due to several reasons such as there are no clear scope of Public Relations practice set by the institute, no exclusive qualification and training has been accredited, and low understanding on the exclusive ethnic codes which could be set by the institute (Abdullah, 2011).

Due to IPRM only gain little support from private sector, they faced difficulties in recruiting private Public Relations practitioner and they have not been impressed by privilege of membership. According to Ahmad (2007), they stated that although the amount of Public Relations consultancy and in-house Public Relations are increasing, Public Relations industry in Malaysia has not successfully defined itself as a profession. A study has been conducted to investigate the professionalism among Malaysian practitioners of 123 department heads. The result showed that 72% of their working experience in Public Relations field were not more than 10 years. Some of them might transferred from others fields such as journalism and administrative (Kaur & Shaari, 2006). This can explain the situation where some public relation practitioner just carry out the task of Public Relations based on what they know instead of having the real knowledge of what a Public Relations really do.

Abdullah (2011) found out that Malaysian Public Relations practices are based on the traditional and one way communication function which is similar to the technician role that mainly handling event management and media relations. Idid (1998) stated that Public Relations practitioners are mostly played the technician role instead of the managerial role. The services that they provided such as writing is very technical oriented and it cannot be compared to the developed countries. The practices of Malaysian Public Relations practitioners (e.g. obtaining publicity in press) are exactly what United States Public Relations consultant did in 1980s. Hence, this situation resulted Public Relations not being recognized as a profession which leads to Public Relations practitioner often underpaid (Ian Griggs, 2016).

1.1.5 Public Relations in hotel industry

Tourism is one of the prominent economic income for Malaysia and it create job opportunities for Malaysian. Travel and Tourism have contributed RM61 Billion which is 5.7% of *gross domestic product (GDP)*. There was a prediction in 2015 whereby an increment of 5.6 % to RM64.4 Billion in tourism sector. This indicates that the economic activities generated by the industries such as hotels, travel agents, transport services, restaurant and leisure industries directly support to it (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). According to the speech of Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, tourism sector was the 6th largest contributor to the Malaysian economy as it had contributed RM161 billion (14.9%) of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014. The tourism industry plays an important role as it strengthens and diversify the Malaysian economy (Mohsen, 2015).

In service sector, investment would be driven by the continued implementation of existing capacity expansion projects, particularly in the tourism, transportation, healthcare and telecommunications sub-sectors. Tourism-related project is one of the expansion project that will attract more investment where this was targeted by the government which stated in the annual report of Malaysia in year 2015 (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2016). Hotel industry is one of the important developing sector in Malaysia that targeted in increasing Gross Domestic Product of Malaysia (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015).

Organizations are concerned about how others perceive them (Tench & Yeomans, 2014). As for hotel industry, customer tend to trust the reviews by other travelers rather than the hotel advertisement (Mayer, 2015). Online review is becoming a trend before customers made a booking for accommodation and travel even they did not book online but they will at least review the comments on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) before make a booking (Mayer, 2015). For instance, there is an increase of 10.2% in Europe and 7.8% in Asia-Pacific if there is 5-bubble review in the Trip advisor (Margaret, 2015). Therefore, reputation management is

crucial in the hotel industry. This is also the reason why Public Relations is highly significant in organizations. Hasan (2013) conducted a research on the roles of Public Relations in corporations and some of the participants highlighted that they are mostly responsible in reputation management. Moreover, Abdullah and Threadgold (2008) stated in their research, that Public Relations is more needed and demanded in the service corporations as corporations nowadays need to have a good relationship with internal and external stakeholders, Public Relations roles and responsibilities would be able to assist in these interactions.

Public Relations practitioners develop and enhance the organization's reputation and also maintain relationships that are significant to the organization through Public Relations communication planning (Mehta & Xavier, 2009). Hence, Public Relations can bring huge impact to an organization's image and communication. For example, an excellent working strategy can be provided by the well-articulated Public Relations strategies which aim to improve the company's image to the public.

According to Richmond (2002), Public Relations and nonprofits have strong influence on the meeting planner and major association on decision of the destination as hotel allot the time and effort to these two aspects. This shows the significance of Public Relations in the hotel industry. For instance, Seattle Sheraton Hotel received up to 1000 donation requests annually but there was an exceptional case. They received a handwritten note from a primary school student who requested rooms sponsor for the school raffle team and Seattle Sheraton hotel sponsored them a room package due to their sincerity.

After 4 months, Seattle Sheraton received rooms booking from a big company. This is because the staff's son was a student of the elementary school raffle team that received the sponsor. He mentioned that Seattle Sheraton is the only hotel that sponsored the school and hence, he felt obligated to switch their guests from another hotel to Seattle Sheraton. The unexpected revenue of this booking was valued in thousands from a sponsors of \$35

(Richmond, 2002). This case showed the influence of Public Relations in a company through unexpected way. In this case, an unplanned corporate social responsibility activity had generated a huge amount of revenue for the hotel.

1.2 Problem Statement

Organization is a big system, it built up by different departments, which we known as subsystem. Each department play their own role to ensure the operation of organization run smoothly, such as marketing department, finance department etc. (Mehta & Xavier, 2009). However, the importance of Public Relations has been ignored as many organizations tend to merge it with other departments. There are two main problems that we would like to study in our research, firstly, **organizational ignorance of the roles of Public Relations efforts towards organizational efforts (DeSanto & Moss, 2011)**. The management do not fully recognize the importance of Public Relations in organization. Due to the limited scope of operation of Public Relations in organization, it often replaced or encroached by other department.

The second problem is **the lack of formally recognized professionalism of Public Relations within the organization (Abdullah, 2011)**. In Wu and Taylor studies stated that “The managerial role and the concept of professionalism are closely related with each other” (Wu and Taylor, 2003, p. 481). In Wu and Baah-Boakye (2014) research, they found out that Public Relations practitioners’ positions on the organizational chart were very low although both management and practitioners viewed Public Relations as a management function in their organizations. Most of them were involved in the technician role instead of the managerial role. Hence, this shows there is lacking of formally recognized profession of Public Relations. The quality of profession and experience are still immature where they just carry out the tasks based on what they know instead of really understand what they doing. Based on the problems stated,

we would want to know about the reasons that cause such a situation occur. In this research, we would want to understand the managerial perception towards Public Relations practitioners' roles, in the Malaysian hotel industry because it brings a great impact to our country revenue.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To investigate hiring practices of Public Relations practitioners in hotels.
2. To understand the impact of managerial perception towards the roles of Public Relations practitioners in hotels.
3. To understand the impact of managerial perception towards the practices of Public Relations practitioners in hotels.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the hiring practices of Public Relations practitioners in hotels?
2. What is the impact of managerial perception towards the roles of Public Relations practitioners in hotels?
3. What is the impact of managerial perception towards the practices of Public Relations practitioners in hotels?

1.5 Significance of Research

This research will provide insight into how Public Relations is defined in the Malaysia hotel industry, especially by the managerial level. The findings of our research will benefit Public Relations students by allowing them to understand how Public Relations is viewed and practiced in the hotel industry. Moreover, this will also benefits the current or future researchers who are interested in the similar topic, or who wish to broaden the scope of research to different industries.

Secondly, this research will reveal the importance of Public Relations in the hotel industry, whether can it be replaced by marketing department or combine with it. The roles of

Public Relations might seem to be unclear to certain industries, and the findings from this research can clarify if the job of Public Relations practitioners can be carried out by other departments.

Thirdly, this research is able to show the difference between the practices of Public Relations in academic and the practices of Public Relations in reality, to let Public Relations students have a better insight in the real Public Relations industry, and also to make improvements in the industry. Last but not least, there are little research regarding this topic carried out in Malaysia. Hence, this research can fulfill the knowledge gap of Public Relations studies.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Public Relations Practice and Roles

Today, Public Relations is a complex profession practiced by people around the world. Some of the Public Relations practitioners are employed by organizations as in-house practitioner; others might be employed by Public Relations firm. Public Relations field is extensive where practitioners work for business, government agencies, association, school, hospital, hotel, etc. However, the practices of Public Relations are somehow argumentative as different scholars and researchers had different perspective on it (Grunig, 2001).

Becker (2007) stated that the academic theory of Public Relations is somehow difficult to be practice in reality. Practitioners argue that the related theories of Public Relations are inapplicable in their daily tasks as they found that it is unrealistic, impracticable, and inaccessible. Although the theories are idealistic, it could not show a desirable effect in reality. According to Grunig (2001), he pointed out that there are no formal education in Public Relations has carried out as there was no full body of theoretical knowledge of Public Relations that could be taught. Hence, Grunig explained that most of the practitioners do not really understand what they are doing as well as why Public Relations play an important role in organization. Pieczka (2002) carried out a similar study that the application of knowledge into practice is difficult as discrepancy occurred between knowing and doing. It showed the differences between 'book knowledge' and 'reality experience'. This indicates that knowledge learned is insufficient for practical in the reality.

Although some scholars asserted that the full body knowledge of Public Relations could not impart to practitioners due to the lack of formal education, some scholars actually declared that there a lot of sources that could enhance the practices of Public Relations, such as academic journals and research (Wilcox, 2006). Hatzios (2003) stated that there has been a growth of scholars articles published in recent years, such as extensive content analysis of academic in

Public Relations, and major academic books of international Public Relations. Wilcox (2006) also noted that there are plenty of educational institutions that offer Public Relations courses, for example, more than 200 universities in United States had offered major course of study in this field. In short, the development of Public Relations education has been expanded and is becoming a popular study to be explored in order to provide formal education to those who are interested in exploring the field of Public Relations.

Ruler (2000) stated that the practitioners in Netherland are well educated, but not within Public Relations field. They have little knowledge on it and they just learned everything based on their perception on what Public Relations should do. Tikolo (2011) studied about the status of Public Relations practices in Kenya and found out that, they mostly practice writing skills, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, positive attitude, and the ability to communicate with public effectively. In this context, practitioners are mostly viewed as ‘technician’, as organizations are more concerned on their technical aspect of jobs. Grunig (2001) also listed down the common practices of practitioners in organizations, such as dealing with media, preparing press releases, writing speeches, designing brochures, managing events, and even preparing annual reports. This would imply that organizations assumed Public Relations to be practice technician role which helps the management in implementing communication strategies, instead of the manager role which help to identify and solve Public Relations problems.

In the discussion of Public Relations’ roles, Broom and Smith (1979) firstly introduced the studies of practitioner role in their research and they provided a foundation for those related studies. Originally, there were five models proposed by them which are *expert prescriber*, *communication process facilitator*, *technical services provider* and *problem-solving/ task facilitator* and *acceptant-legitimazer*. However, they found that acceptant-legitimazer was significantly rated lowest in their experiments and this role is then concluded as not important.

Broom (2009) stated that these roles had been developed into four major roles which are *expert prescriber*, *communication facilitator*, *problem-solving facilitator*, and *communication technician*.

- *Expert prescriber* is the expert who has the authority to solve Public Relations problem. Expert prescriber defines problem, develop program and responsible for the whole implementation.
- *Communication facilitator* maintains two-way communication and facilitates the exchanging of information between an organization and its public.
- *Problem-solving facilitator* collaborate with the management to define and solve the problem and they were a part of strategic planning team.
- *Communication technician* provides technical communication services such as writing release, feature article, preparing newsletter and dealing with the press.

Dozier (1992) mentioned in his previous study in 1984, he found that this four-way typology can reduce into two-way typology which is *Public Relations technician & Public Relations manager*. Characteristic of Public Relations technician matches with the communication technician whereas Public Relations manager plays the three other roles which are expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solving facilitator, this is because in Dozier's previous research, he found that these three roles are intercorrelated.

Dozier and Broom (1995), who continue explained that “manager and technician role activities are different but neither mutually exclusive nor in opposition to one another” (p.6). However, Guth (1995) stated that it was difficult to achieve organizational goal if an organization misplaced the function, especially when task-oriented technician can't perform as policy- oriented manager to address the organizational goal.

On the other hand, Dozier (1992) said that environment influences can affect the enactment of the Public Relations role. When the environment is unstable, practitioners keen

to enact manager role, in contrast, practitioners will enact technician role when the environment is stable. Broom (2009) partially agree with Dozier and he stated that in high-threat environment, the practitioners keen to enact expert prescriber and problem-solving facilitator whereas in low-threat environment, the practitioner keen to enact communication technician and communication facilitator. In addition, Guth (1995) stated that an organization has higher crisis experiential level keen to hire rich experienced and high salary Public Relations.

The other approach is that Public Relations seen as a boundary spanner. According to Abdullah & Threadgold (2008), he stated that boundary-spanning can identify the distinctive roles for Public Relations, at the same time it also improves the quality of Public Relations professionalism. White and Dozier (1992) conceptualized boundary-spanner as a middle person to help the organization react to the environment and also provide important source to the decision maker in the dominant coalition. Leifer & Delbecq (1978) explained the responsibility of boundary spanner is to exchange the information between an organization and its environment. In this context, Public Relations is much considered as a 'manager' instead of 'technician' as they able to exert their power in decision-making process.

The involvement of Public Relations in organization's decision making had always become a controversial issue. Desanto and Moss (2005) argued that Public Relations work is increasingly being recognized by top management. However, Reber and Berger (2006) refuted this statement in an interview study, stated that practitioners does not influence much in decision making and struggle to establish influence in strategy. In their opinion, practitioners should seize the opportunities to earn respect and the rights to participate in decision making process. In this context, Grunig (2011) believed that a strategic management will focus on the involvement of Public Relations in decision making process in order for them to assist in managing the behaviour of the organization instead of just interpreting it to the public.

It is essential for practitioners to access the role of leadership in the communication process in order to take part in the organization decision-making process (Meng, 2012). Oldenbanning (2013) has conducted a study of excellent leadership in Public Relations and found out that important qualities of excellent leadership included strategic decision-making ability, problem-solving ability, communication knowledge and expertise. Moreover, excellent Public Relations leadership can be achieved through communication skills training, individual initiative and desire, and on-the-job experience.

Despite that, according to Kaur and Shaari (2006), organization's view on Public Relations will affect the understanding of the organization towards the function of Public Relations practitioners. Public Relations practitioners will look into several aspects, for example, decisions that will influence the reputation of the company and trust from the stakeholders. Hence, organization should actually involves Public Relations profession into the management team in making decision process (Freitag & Stokes, 2009). By involving Public Relations in the making decision process, decision making process will be more integrally. This is why Oldenbanning (2013) explained that Public Relations is different from other fields, from the aspect of the leader to construct message strategically, to better understand on how communication connect the organization to its public in the larger social system, and have a strong belief in the importance of honest and ethical organization communication and action.

However, the Public Relations must first understand their own task and job scope.. They also stated that an effective Public Relations leader should have a clear understanding on the communication process between management and public (Meng, Berger, Gower & Heyman, 2012). In order to achieve the communication effectiveness, leader's effort is crucial in connecting the organization with the people and society. To advance the leadership in Public Relations, Choi and Choi (2007) identified Public Relations leadership behavior will influence the value of Public Relations in organization, including provide organization with a clear vision

about the organization's Public Relations policies and strategies and exert upward influence in organization.

Chmielecki (2012) had different perspectives of Public Relations in organization, which is more towards management function, Public Relations should involve in counselling management in all level of organization which include policy, action and communication. Wilcox (2006) looked into a more in-depth perspective, he stated that Public Relations today is not only practices media relations and disseminating information, but also emphasizing mutual understanding and conflict solution. This could conclude that media relations is not the major scope of practitioners and they should possess these skills at the same time in order to assist the organization in all level of management.

Despite this, the position of Public Relations in organization has always been questioned by top management (Idid & Arandas, 2016). They said that Public Relations itself has been misunderstood as the upper management in the organization lacked of knowledge to define Public Relations functions and values (Idid & Arandas, 2016). Upper management just assigned job based on what they think a Public Relations should do in an organization and therefore, the importance of Public Relations in an organization has lost (Rawjee, Veerasamy & Gqamane, 2012). DeSanto & Moss (2011) stated that the functions of Public Relations in organization is vague as it often replaced or encroached by other department such as human resource management or marketing. Hence, the opportunities of Public Relations to perform in organization has been decreased.

Through understanding the requirements of achieving professionalism in Public Relations, we are able to understand the roles and practices of Public Relations. Several scholars said that Public Relations is an ongoing process to achieve professionalism. Palea (2012) noted that there is still no consensus among researchers and scholars regarding the status of Public Relations profession. Abdullah & Threadgold (2008) mentioned that nurturing

professionals depends on two core elements, which need to determine the distinct domain of expertise for Public Relations and identify level of practice and competencies among Public Relations practitioner. L'Etang (1999) explained that some scholars think that Public Relations must taught at the university level to obtain the qualification, while other scholars think that individual critical ability to be able to assess a situation is more important. It can be noted that qualification and personal abilities are equally important to obtain the highest standards of Public Relations professionalism. Importantly, Public Relations industry should produce a strong academic background for practitioners. Also, practitioners are advised to go through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to develop their personal competencies. It forms the integration of educational and professional standards of Public Relations professionalism (Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008).

Wong (2011) mentioned that to achieve professionalism, professional values should be practice by practitioners to maintain the feasibility of a profession. Professional practice can be improved through commitment to professional values. Hence, affecting the reputation of organization could reflect a positive image to its stakeholder. Organization without professional values will have negative impact on the behavior of practitioners, the reputation of organization, the decision making, and the perceptions among its public (Idid & Arandas, 2016). Therefore, professional values could lead to the success and the advancement of any organization.

It is crucial for Public Relations to achieve profession status by gaining acceptance of its social role that is valuable to the society (Gupta, 2006). Once the society able to accept and understand the role of Public Relations, only the Public Relations practitioner able to carry out their tasks. In order to establish a vital communication between the public and organizations, public acceptance are needed. As what Daugherty (2001) mentioned, organizations nowadays are not only business entity, but also social institutions, they not only judged on the delivery of

products and services, but more on their social policies. They are expected to contribute to the well-being of society. Like what Reeves (2013) said that Public Relations is an intermediary between organization and stakeholders, they should act ethically in a manner that benefits all stakeholders in the surrounding community.

Benn, Todd, and Pendleton (2010) stated that organization should use corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a tool to balance their interests with its public. It enables Public Relations to achieve goals that shared by organization themselves and its public. Organization should be socially responsible by sharing power with their stakeholders (Black & Hartel, 2003). Although different stakeholders will have conflict interests, stakeholder engagement should not be focus on seeking consent, but to address public concerns (Cooperrider & Fry, 2010).

According to Lim & Hussein (2006), most practitioners are being socially responsible to enhance organization's credibility and boost its profit making potential. Practitioners should adopt more strategic managerial role to promote the organization and engage with its public, and also define the social role of the company. Senior management can also improve on their strategic management in order to improve the company image by using the Public Relations strategy because Public Relations strategy can be treated as the results of strategic thinking. Public Relations strategy can also help in increasing the vast of communication of the management to the public (Shamsan & Otieno, 2015). Grunig (2001) stated that the image of the organization will be affected by how well the organization in handling its social problems. If the organization failed to solve its societal problems, for example, environmental issue, it will results a negative relationship with its publics such as stakeholders, employees, and communities. In contrast, if the organization able to respond well to these pressures, it will be more likely for them to gain support from its public. Onyiengo (2014) also noticed that Public Relations cannot achieve its full impact in the organization to become a professional if the role of Public Relations could not be recognized by top management.

Different methods have been proposed by different scholars to enhance Public Relations become a profession. Hornaman (2000) stated that it included the use of special skills and knowledge in Public Relations field. The principles had modified after this, Rhee (2004) argued that Public Relations could contribute to organization effectiveness if they able to build a good relationship and resolve the conflicts between organization and its publics. Therefore, it is essential for Public Relations to involve in strategic management and enhance the position of Public Relations in dominant coalition so that they able to communicate effectively with both internal and external publics. In short, by applying and practicing these methods and principles, it is more likely that Public Relations can achieve professionalism.

2.2 Perception of Public Relations

Although the term ‘Public Relations’ is defined academically, the way it is perceived is far different from its definition. The media has portrayed Public Relations in a negative way for over several decades, and this affects how public perceive the credibility of this profession and the public also doubt the value of Public Relations to society (White, 2010). Moreover, the public opinion surveys and experiments on source credibility have not given Public Relations a commendatory image (Callison, 2004).

Public Relations is mostly being conceptualized as damage control, publicity, hiding truth, progressing an organization’s agenda and non-substantive activities (White, 2010). Public Relations may be helpful to an organization but it is negatively viewed by the public. Studies have shown that the term ‘Public Relations’ has been used negatively more than 80% of the time and that it was portrayed as an attempt in avoiding or fiddling the truth (White, 2010). Moreover, sources from Public Relations was also doubted with its possibility in telling the truth, honesty, and its trustworthiness (Callison, 2004).

Public Relations should possess the most basic characteristic, which is credibility, as various research have confirmed the importance of being credible as a Public Relations

practitioner (Callison, 2004). Bowen (2009) stated that lack of credibility for the Public Relations field might be the reason of the fiasco of Public Relations to achieve professional standards and be widely recognized as a profession (Bowen, 2009).

Yeap and Abbas (as cited in Abdullah, 2011) stated that ‘Karaoke singers and social escorts’ is another term that used to perceive Public Relations practitioners. One of the TV series in China “ Miss PR” were aired in Guangzhou during 1984 which it described the working life of young Public Relations practitioner in a hotel line (Hung-Baesecke & Chen, 2014). The series had portrayed the role of Public Relations practitioner as guest relations which focus solely on just manage the *Guanxi* (relationship) with the clients (Hung-Baesecke & Chen, 2014).

Additionally, the ignorance of organization towards the roles of Public Relations in organization could lead to a negative perception on Public Relations practice (DeSanto & Moss, 2011). According to Idid and Arandas (2016), the management of organization lacked of knowledge in the definition of Public Relations and the values of Public Relations itself has been misunderstood. Besides, the organizations do not really understand the direction of Public Relations practices as they failed to figure out the importance of Public Relations as they think that what Public Relations mainly perform is just to conceal the negative sides of the government. Most of the organization disregard Public Relations as an essential part of organization. Certain organizations believe that Public Relations is only needed when there is a crisis happens in the organization and therefore, it become a responsibility that Public Relations practitioners apologize to the public and assure them everything is under control (Rawjee, Veerasamy & Gqamane, 2012). In other words, they will be the one who take all the blames from the public.

Callison (2001) stated that Public Relations were consistently labeled as lacking in reliability, capability and credibility because the public believes that the word have been

beautified. There are also negative perceptions when the organization use the spokesperson in the similar ways. People are aware of the motives behind featured publicity and these practices become the influence factor on how people perceive the profession. Public Relations are the one whom always get the less liked and trusted. They has been assumed that they are acting with strategic planning to manage the reputation for the media articulation (Sallot, 2002). One of the reasons that causes public to have such perception towards Malaysian Public Relations practitioners is because the elites or the one who have the power will normally hire Public Relations to achieve their interest (Ahmad, 2014).

Some organizations view Public Relations as a disjoined entity where it is against marketing, while some assumed that these two functions share similarities (Rawjee, Veerasamy & Gqamane, 2012). Besides, Public Relations often replaced or encroached by other departments such as human resource management or marketing. Organizations failed to distinguish the differences between Public Relations and other departments and therefore, their activities often been seized and annex to marketing communications, for example, relationship-building activities with stakeholder (DeSanto & Moss, 2011). This causes an encroachment of other managerial functions on Public Relations functions and roles and most of the time being viewed as subordinate to other managerial functions, whereby they do not recognize equal status with another manager (DeSanto & Moss, 2011). Hence, the boundaries between Public Relations and marketing is vague as the public could not really differentiate the task they carried out.

Not only this, people often confused advertising with Public Relations. This confusion originates from the fact that the two activities are a unit of function when it comes to promoting a product and both often use the same techniques, methods and media (Arionesei & Ivan, 2012). Undeniably, Public Relations is a means of advertising, but a more subtle and advanced one than advertising itself (Arionesei & Ivan, 2012). Gabriela & Paul (2014) also agree that Public

Relations looks into a more comprehensive way by not just focus solely on promoting but also concern with public's feedback. In this context, the stands of Public Relations has decreased as it lost the importance of managerial role in organization (DeSanto & Moss, 2011). The 'real' Public Relations has been ignored and the opportunities for Public Relations to perform in an organization has decreased (DeSanto & Moss, 2011). Hence, Public Relations practitioner not being valued and their roles are being ignored.

As Malaysia moving towards vision 2020, Malaysian organization have been urged to have expert communicators to conduct "environmental scanning" and to be the "boundary spanners" for the organization (Kaur & Shaari, 2006). Those who have high academic education in industrial does not really recognize or perceive Public Relations as a professionalism as they are related with the spinning doctor role for trying to build a positive image for the organization (Lwin & Pang, 2014). One of the PRSA members stated that Public Relations profession is still being perceived as someone who will 'spin' the truth. "Spin doctor works with myths, not facts... they are not concerned with the truth. They are concerned on the outcome" (Lewis as cited in Freitag & Stokes, 2009).

However, it is not all negative when it comes to perception towards Public Relations, through Abdullah and Threadgold (2008)'s research in the Malaysian context, they found that the corporate level has been highly recognizing Public Relations, because the communication and interaction between internal and external stakeholders are inevitable in corporations nowadays (Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008). Moreover, they also found out that Public Relations is viewed and agreed as a 'true' profession if all Public Relations related parties work together to develop a standardized, universal forms of Public Relations practice when they interviewed several management personnel who are able to influence Public Relations practice in large Malaysian corporations (Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008).

Hasan (2013) conducted a similar research as Abdullah & Threadgold (2008) in Malaysia, the results showed that not many people understand the importance of Public Relations, regard it as the 'nice-to-have' department, division that wastes companies' money, and that causes Public Relations practitioners often feel that they are not being appreciated (Hasan, 2013). Abdullah & Threadgold (2008) concluded that real Public Relations professionals safeguard and maintain an organization's reputation, and that they are 'the key representative and flag bearer of corporations'.

Despite the negative perceptions of the public and the media towards Public Relations, some of the corporate companies in Malaysia has confirmed the importance of Public Relations in an organization. The limited research and studies in this topic has also contributed to the significance of our research.

2.3 Communications in Hotel Industry

The global economic crisis and the outbreak of H1N1 in 2008 and 2009 had affected the tourism and hospitality industry. Negative impacts such as reservation cancellation and length of stay reduction from tourist causes decreasing in revenue of tourism. This leads to a sharp decrease in hotel occupancy rates (AlBattata & MatSom, 2004). Disasters include diseases, terrorism, natural disasters, and economics crisis. Each disaster had its own characteristics and they will produce various impacts. For instance, the outbreak of SARS caused hospitality industry received a formidable shock and led to reduction by 20% of international arrivals in some states. SARS and Avian flu took 6 months to recover on the economic (AlBattata & MatSom, 2004). This indicate the importance of crisis management as a written crisis management plan is positively perceived as management's commitment to protect their guests and cable to attract and retain tourists (Bach & Pizam,1996).

Introduction of the recovery marketing campaigns like "Cuti-Cuti Malaysia" aims to attract more domestic tourist to sustain the economy throughout the crisis recovery period

(AlBattata & MatSom, 2004). Marketing campaign strategies such as “Visit Malaysia Year”, “Malaysia Truly Asia”, and “Malaysia My Second Home” seems to have instill confidence among foreign tourists to visit and migrate to Malaysia (AlBattata & MatSom, 2004). This helps in developing the image of Malaysia and recovering the tourism and hospitality industry. Hence, there is a need of managers to plan a strategic plan for the communication program from time to time and research and evaluation on system mechanisms need to be conducted too (Fall, 2004).

Tsunami in year 2004 had caused a huge damage in the hotel industry in the affected countries. International chain hotels that experienced tsunami have been carried out crisis management while local brand mid-priced hotels are not likely to emphasize on the crisis management (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2012). Crisis management strategy mostly practiced in the international brand hotels while the locally-owned budget and mid-priced hotels does not emphasize and initiate to write on the crisis management plan and test on the plan either. AlBattata and Marsom (2004) stated that disasters affected hospitality in Malaysia, they acted based on a particular guideline. Most of the hotels in Malaysia do not have a proactive strategy to act upon the crisis and do not have a particular department to carry out the planning to encounter the crisis.

During the joint venture of the Multinational companies with Sino-Foreign in China, they established Public Relations department in hospitality field to assist foreign visitors during their stay in Great Wall Hotel in Beijing and White Swam Hotel in Guang Zhou and to support marketing activities (Hung-Baesecke & Chen, 2014).

The current belief of the contemporary Public Relations industry suggested that Public Relations should be able to maintain the relationship between organization and its stakeholders (Cameron, Wilcox, Reber, & Shin, 2008; Phillips, 2006; Skinner, Essen, & Mersham, 2004; Theaker & Yaxley, 2013). Practitioners should often monitor the perception of stakeholders

towards organization's' performance and current issues that might affects the organization. Sometimes, practitioners might need to identify the concerns in order to let the organization to react accordingly (Heath, 2010; Theaker, 2012). Besides, this media monitoring function might also help the organization to be responsive to the current trend align with the stakeholders interest (Cheng, 2013). Hotels need to be alert with the surrounding issues as it will always affect the business of the hotel. For instance, terrorists attack, contagious diseases, economic crisis and any other potential incidents that might affect their operation. Public Relations practitioners are able to prepare for such incident and reduce the negative impact to minimum in order to ensure the sustainability of the hotels.

Other than that, as the world is emerging with the global village, the consumer started to purchase or make a reservation through online. According to Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) hundreds of millions of potential travelers read hotel reviews online and this influence 80% of the travelers on the hotel choices and it generate over \$10 billion a year in online travel purchases. Hence, good hotel reviews can help to build a good rapport with the consumer and this is also a good marketing strategy. The action of the consumer reading on hotel review is known as contemporary culture which also called as “consumer culture” or “promotional culture” is perceived as (Wernick, 1991). Public Relations practitioners play a key role where they will need to monitor on this hotel review so that they would be able to develop a good reputation of the hotel and consumer trust. As mentioned by Quelch and Klein (1996), consumer trust will trigger consumers' purchases over the Internet. Therefore, once the consumer have a trust to the hotel, it could stimulate the reservation and booking.

Based on these studies, we can state that the Public Relations has play a very crucial part in hospitality especially in building confidence and trust in customers. It can also help to increase the confidence of the tourists to visit Malaysia. Besides, Public Relations practitioners

can also help in developing a good relations with the media and helps the hotel to manage its reputation and branding as well.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that we will be using in framing this study is the Four Models of Public Relations was published by James Grunig and Todd Hunt in the year 1984 and the Four Roles of Public Relations by Broom in year 1982. These four models of Public Relations are the types of Public Relations being practiced and the models are used to help the public to understand the history of formal Public Relations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). However, Grunig and Hunt emphasized that the models are always simplified and generalized, and generalizations are always deceptive as something might left out during the simplification process.

The first model of Public Relations is known as publicity or press agent model. Grunig and Hunt (1984) claimed that the press agent at that moment were the first full-time specialist who practice Public Relations. The purpose of press agency practitioners is propaganda and information disseminated are mostly incomplete, half-true or distorted. The nature of communication in publicity or press agent model is always one-way as the practitioners only view communication as telling from their part and not listening from the public.

The second model of Public Relations is public information model. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), this model was developed when many muckraking journalists attacked on large corporation and government agencies and the leaders realized that propaganda by press agents was no longer sufficient to counter the attacks of those journalists. Hence, "journalists-in-residence" are hired as Public Relations practitioners to explain the organization's action. In public information model, the purpose is to disseminate information to public. The nature of communication in public information model is similar with publicity or press agent model which is one-way.

The third model of Public Relations is two-way asymmetrical model and some Public Relations practitioners used their knowledge from behavioral and social science theory to research on the behavior and attitudes in order to allow them to persuade the public to accept the viewpoint of the organizations. Hence, the purpose of two-way asymmetrical model is scientific persuasion despite it had a function like the publicity or press agent model. In two-way asymmetrical model, communication is two-way and flows both to and from the public. However, the model is asymmetrical and imbalance as the organization only try to change the public behavior.

The fourth model is two-way symmetrical model where Public Relations practitioners become the mediators that ensuring the good relationships between organization and the public. It uses communication theories rather than persuasion theories in their communication as Public Relations practitioner aims to allow the organizations and the public to understand each other's position. The purpose of this model is to create mutual understanding between organizations and their public. The nature of communication in two-way symmetrical model is two-way and understanding, hence ideally both management and the public will change in a small part to tolerate among each other when both understand each situation.

Broom (2009) stated that there are four major roles in Public Relations practitioner which are *expert prescriber*, *communication facilitator*, *problem-solving facilitator*, and *communication technician*.

Communication technician mainly are responsible in written communication and do not involved in decision making process among the management. However, they will be the one who communicate the changes to employees or the press. The tasks carried out by the communication technician are:

- Write and edit employee newsletters
- Write news release, speeches, feature stories and annual report

- Develop website content
- Deal with media content

Expert prescriber are seen as the authority in matters related to Public Relations problems and solutions in an organization. They will take over the problems when needed and have full control as other key top managers will have limited participation in problem-solving process. The tasks carried out by the expert prescriber are:

- Develop program based on identified problem
- Implement the developed program
- Provide suggestions during crisis

Communication facilitator play the role as the middle person of an organization. They act as the source of information to both organization and public to ensure mutual benefits for both parties during decisions making process. The tasks carried out by the communication facilitator are:

- Liaison, interpreters, and mediators between organization and public
- Establish discussion agendas
- Summarize and restate views
- Call for reaction

Problem-solving facilitator will collaborate with managers from different department to identify and solve problems and public relation practitioners will become a part of the strategic planning team. The tasks carried out by the problem-solving facilitator are:

- Define and solve problems with line managers
- Evaluate final program carried out with line managers
- Assist line managers to avoid problems

The Four Models of Public Relations and Four Roles of Public Relations will be used as a framework for our research in providing us the basic knowledge on the roles and

practices carried out by different Public Relations practitioners. Despite the models are developed for many years and undergone many criticism, the models are still widely used and often being cited in many Public Relations courses, readings and study at tertiary level education. Interview questions will be designed using these two models as a framework to help us categorizing the practices and roles of Public Relations in different hotels accordingly and systematically.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research approach

Qualitative research had been chosen as the approach in conducting this research. It relies on collecting verbal, visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, and gustatory data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994), which are based on observation and experience. By using qualitative research, we were able to get a better understanding and further explanation on interviewees' perception towards Public Relations. There were few methods for data collection in qualitative research, which includes focus group, field observation, in-depth interviews, and case studies (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). In this research, intense interview was used as a data collection method under the qualitative research. As this research was mainly focusing on investigating managerial perception towards Public Relations, it was hard to collect data using quantitative research as perception was very subjective, and was difficult to be measured by quantity. As stated by LeCompte & Preissle (1994), qualitative research is used to investigate on subjective issues, which involves attitudes, values, beliefs, and meaning.

3.2 Sample selection

We had chosen purposive sampling which was also known as judgmental sampling as our sampling method (Neuman, 2014). Neuman further stated that purposive sampling is suitable for researchers who wish to select members that are difficult to reach or specialized population. Besides, Bernard explained that purposive sampling is used to find people who are able and willing to provide information, knowledge and experience that are related to their research. Besides, purposive sampling is used when the research focuses on the depth of information generated by the studies or cases (Bernard as cited in Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In short, purposive sampling is to target on people with certain characteristics who will be able to assist relevant research better.

The interviewees that we had selected for this study were recruitment managers (Human Resource manager, General Manager etc.) who were responsible for hiring Public Relations practitioners in the hotel and communication manager who managed the department that responsible for all communication (Public Relations manager, Marketing communication manager, Corporate communication manager etc.). We targeted a minimum of two persons to interview from each hotel and each from both recruitment manager and communication manager as the practices and roles of Public Relations practitioners and the basic requirements of Public Relations practitioners' employment were influenced by the managers' perspectives. However interview questions on hiring practices could be answered by communication manager if the recruitment manager is not available.

The hotel list in Malaysia was first identified on the official portal of Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (Rated Tourist Accommodation Premises, 2016). There was a general rule to reach sufficient sample size for interviews. By having the same stories, themes or issues, and topics that would be emerge from the interviewees, sufficient sample size was achieve (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Ninety seven hotels were selected and request letters were sent through e-mail to briefly explain our research objectives. Hotels that were selected were mostly international hotel chain which required Public Relations to manage their reputation. However, there were only 6 hotels accepted request and our response rate was 6.25%. The e-mail were followed up with telephone calls to arrange interview schedules, and interviewees who agreed to be involved in the research received Volunteer Information and Consent Form and Verification letter through email. (Kindly refer to appendix 3 and 4) The purpose of Volunteer Information and Consent Form were to provide an introduction of the research purposes in details to the interviewees and it included the explanation that their participations ware voluntary and information gathered would be used in the research to complete our Final Year Project for Degree level. Besides, our research supervisor's contact details were included

in case there were any inquiries or clarification needed by interviewees. Eventually, all the interviewees were selected based on their availability at the period of our data collection.

3.3 Instrument

There were two sets of interview questions target to both recruitment manager and communication manager. (Kindly refer to Appendix 1 and 2) There were two type of interview questions and each aimed to explore on different aspects. The interview questions targeted on recruiting manager and aimed to explore on the hiring practices of Public Relations in the hotel industry. Interview questions were designed to explore on the basic skill sets requirement of Public Relations employee.

The next set of interview questions targeted on the communication manager was designed to explore on the roles and practices of Public Relations in the hotel industry. By using the framework, we explored the type of roles and practices of Public Relations in the hotel industry and managerial perception towards Public Relations.

3.4 Data collection protocol

In this research, we used intensive interview as our method of data collection. Due to different organizational structures and beliefs towards Public Relations, intensive interview is a more suitable method for data collection. This method not only allowed us to explore the subjective views and opinions from the experts, but also enabled us to collect the in-depth information of managerial perception toward public relation practices (Paramonovs & Ijevleva, 2016). By using this method, we could observe the interviewee's nonverbal responses, and obtain a more accurate answer when the interviewee was responding (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011).

We did a semi- structured interview which is more flexible. The semi structure interview not only allowed us to ask both closed-ended and open-ended questions, it could also allow us to adjust the sequence of the questions and add questions based on the answers from

the interviewee (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). This type of interview could be less formal and more relax which could allow the interviewee to offer more answers (Cheng, 2013). Therefore, we could get more in-depth answer by this semi-structure interview.

A digital recording device was placed near to the interviewees which could ensure high audio recording quality and the researcher needed to ask for the permission to record the interview process. We generated the transcript for all interviews. Furthermore, the interviews were set at the place based on the convenience of all the interviewees which meant the interviewees decided the places for interviews. The interviews were conducted for around 30 to 120 minutes.

3.5 Data analysis

The tool that we had selected to investigate data was thematic analysis. It is one of the most common types of analysis in qualitative research. It is used to analyse classification and different themes (patterns) that relate to the data (Ibrahim, 2013). Mostly, it is common to be used in interpretative research for identifying and analysing themes from qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). Also, thematic analysis provides opportunities for researchers to understand any issues in wider perspectives (Marks & Yardley, 2004).

By adopting thematic analysis in our intensive interview, the results collected from interviewees could provide diversified perspectives to our study as we wanted to know the perception of management in hotel towards Public Relations. Thematic analysis would be able to detect and identify the factors or variables that influenced any issues generated by interviewees. Therefore, the interviewee's interpretation were significant in terms of giving the appropriate explanations for their behaviors, actions, and thoughts (Ibrahim, 2013). Thematic analysis could help us to identify the factors that influence hotel management decision in hiring Public Relations and how it affected the Public Relations practices. The most critical part of thematic analysis is that it able to identify the 'themes' which arise from interviewee's

responses that convey similar meaning (Cheng, 2013). In simple words, we discovered the repetition of keywords that were often mentioned in the interview to understand the similarities, patterns, or issues shared among the interviewees. It would be easier for us to analyze the themes as we separated the participants' answers into different categories, such as practices of Public Relations in organization and skills sets to carry out Public Relations work in organization.

The Four Models of Public Relations and Four Roles of Public Relations would provide us a guideline in identifying the practices and roles of Public Relations in hotel industry. Based on the answers that we obtained from our interviewees, the daily tasks of Public Relations practitioner in their hotel would be grouped according to the Four Roles of Public Relations and through this, we were able to identify the roles of Public Relations in the hotel industry. (Kindly refer to Appendix 3) Tasks that carried the same meaning will be grouped according to the roles and it does not require the same exact words suggested by the model to be mentioned. Besides, feedbacks on the hotel's communication method with examples would be categorized into respective Models of Public Relations to help us understand the practices of Public Relations. The themes in this research reflected the factors that influence managerial perception in hiring Public Relations and the impact of managerial perceptions towards roles and practice of Public Relations practitioners in Malaysian hotel industry.

3.6 Ethical consideration

We informed the interviewee of the estimated time spent for each interview before they agree to participate for our studies. The term of participation had a consent that there were recording of audio during the interviews and there might be a follow up interview in the future if needed. We would disclose this facts to the interviewee before they agreed to take part in our studies. The interviewees needed to fulfil the terms and conditions which we had disclosed to them to reach a consensus from both parties. Besides, the signing on the agreement also

indicated that the interviewees volunteered to participate the interview and had control over what they disclosed during the interview. The identity of each interviewee would be codified and remain not identical in the research. Volunteer Information and Consent Form will be sent to the interviewees to seek for their acknowledgement, agreement and signature prior to the interview. The confidentiality of the interviewees remained unidentified throughout the studies.

Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis

There are total 12 interviewees from 6 hotels participated in our research. Six of them are from Marketing and Communications department (Communication department) and another six from Human Resources department. The demographic of interviewees for Communication department and Human Resources department are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Working Experience	Qualifications
Interviewee 1	Female	Marketing and Communications Manager	More than 10 years	SPM
Interviewee 2	Female	Public Relations Executive	More than 2 years	Diploma in Hotel Management
Interviewee 3	Female	Assistant manager Marketing Communications	More than 5 years	Master in Business Management
Interviewee 4	Female	Marketing Communications Director	8 years	Degree in Business Administrative
Interviewee 5	Female	Digital and Marketing Communications Executive	1 years 2 months	Degree in Mass Communication - Major in PR - Minor in Journalism
Interviewee 6	Female	Assistant Marketing and Communications Manager	9 years	Hotel Management major

Table 1-Demographic of Marketing and Communications department interviewees.

Table 1 presented an outline of the Marketing and Communication department interviewees for this study. There are two interviewees who participated in our interview do not hold the

managerial position. Firstly, Interviewee 2 is the only person handling Public Relations matters in hotel although she is just an executive. As for interviewee 5, the department director is still vacant. Hence, she is the one who handle the department in the hotel despite she is just an executive.

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Working Experience	Qualifications
Interviewee 1A	Female	Human Resources Manager	More than 12 years	Degree in Communication
Interviewee 2A	Female	Senior Executive Human Resources	At least 7 years	Not answered
Interviewee 3A	Female	Senior Executive Human Resources	19 years	Certificate in Secretarial and IT
Interviewee 4A	Male	Human Resources Coordinator	Almost 1 year	Degree in hospitality management
Interviewee 5A	Male	Human Resources Manager	7 years	Degree in law
Interviewee 6A	Female	Human Resources Manager	20 years	- Hotel management - LCCI - ACCA level one

Table 2- Demographic of Human Resources department interviewees

Table 2 presented an outline of the Human Resources department participant sample for this study. Most of the interviewees has at least more than 5 years of experience in recruiting however we have one outliers which the participants has approximately 1 year experience in recruitment. This is because the director was on emergency during the interview and the Human Resources coordinator represented the director to attend our interview session.

4.1 Hiring Requirements

Table 3 listed the coding themes that we have retrieved from our collected data for research question 1 which is regarding the hiring practices of Public Relations practitioners in hotels. All the coding themes were extracted from our interviews and we had identified six of them. Experience is the years of employment in respective field. Academic qualification is the minimum qualification for related tertiary education either diploma or degree for courses such as Hotel Management, Business and Communications. Hard skills is a set of skills that included writing skills, speaking skills and designing skills. Soft skills that required are appearance, attitude, personality and impression. Lastly, accreditation is the system to set international benchmark standards for Public Relations practitioners in Malaysia by The Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM) as the national PR association (Institute of Public Relations Malaysia, 2012).

Research Questions	Coding Themes
1. What are the hiring practices of public relations practitioners in hotels?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Experience2. Academic Qualification3. Hard Skills4. Soft Skills5. Impression (Chemistry)6. Accreditation

Table 3- Research Question 1 Coding Themes

4.1.1 Experience

Experience is one of the important requirements for the hotel industry in the recruitment of Marketing and Communications department. Interviewees believe that certain soft skills and hard skills can be learned through working experience such as writing skills, speaking skills, appearance and so on. Hence, it is important that students develop these skills before entering the workforce, and not solely rely on academic knowledge.

All Human Resources department interviewees emphasized on working experience

when they were asked about hiring requirements. Two of them also explained that they prefer people who have experience and able to start immediately. This is because the Human Resources do not wish to spend time in training staff who are inexperienced and would leave hotels once they had learned everything. Hotels do not have sufficient staff to train inexperienced staff, hence experience become one of the important criteria in recruitment. On the other hand, five out of twelve interviewees still expect fresh graduates to have some experience in hotel industry and they preferred fresh graduates who had internship experience in hotel industry.

Interviewee 3A: We don't have people to train, that's why we need experienced people.

Internship experience is essential in three interviewees' opinion as this showed that fresh graduates have a basic understanding on the department instead of zero knowledge about the department. Since the hotel industry has high turnover rate, the interviewed hotels would prefer people with experience who can start their work immediately rather than spending extra time to train inexperienced employees.

Interviewee 6A: The most important thing that we look into is the experience because we need somebody who can start immediately and then hands on everything. Usually in hotels, they will go for those who have experience first.

Based on our understanding from the statements made by the two interviewees above, lack of manpower to conduct training leads them to hire experienced candidates. Hence, experience is one of the crucial criteria that the interviewed hotels concern.

4.1.2 Academic Qualifications

All interviewees said that relevant tertiary education academic qualifications either diploma or degree are the basic requirements when it comes to hiring a candidates into the Communication department. Relevant courses that are accepted are Hotel management, Business and Communication. It is not compulsory for candidates to have a Public Relations academic qualifications to join the Public Relations department in the hotel. Interviewees mainly focus on the practical skills such as hard skills and soft skills of the employees. Most of them agreed that a high academic qualification does not define a person's ability, especially when it comes to communication skills.

Interviewee 6A: Someone who is a PhD holder, when they come, they can't talk.

As what Cornelissen (2000) stated, academic knowledge can be rather ideal and conceptual in nature, most of the interviewees claimed that theory is only an idea. Knowledge from textbook are just guidelines but the reality need more than just theories as experience is real life practice and it is permanent. Interviewees have different opinions on academic qualification and there are three main types of opinions on academic qualification. Firstly, eight interviewees claimed that experience comes first as compared to the academic qualification because experience is gained by individual from daily practices while academic qualification is just a general knowledge for individual.

Interviewee 3A: You have the master, degree or PhD, sometimes during your study is different with work wise. During your study is almost not practical and all are the theories.

The second type of opinion is academic qualification are required based on the position and three of the interviewees mentioned that during the interview.

Interviewee 5A: It depends on the position level. If you're talking about entry level then at least a diploma level. If you're talking about mid-managerial or managerial and above, then of course we will be looking at degree and above.

The third type of opinion believed that both academic qualification and experience are essential. One of the interviewees thinks that qualification and experience need to have a balance. This showed that academic qualification is important but still require working experience to hold a managerial position. It is similar to the second type of opinion but it require experience as well in the same time.

Interviewee 1A: You need to have the certificate and you need to have the experience.

Academic qualification are still required for applying a job. A relevant academic qualification will be take into consideration during recruitment. Based on our findings, most

interviewees stated that experience is very important and the academic qualification will act as a token to apply for jobs and to get promoted to a higher position. However, experienced candidates will be offered with a higher payment as compared to candidates with high academic qualification.

4.1.3 Hard Skills

Hard skills are abilities that are teachable, and can be measured, for example, writing, reading, and using software programs (Robles, 2012). From our findings, writing skills, speaking skills and designing skills are the hard skills listed by the interviewees.

4.1.3.1 Writing Skills

All of the interviewees said that writing skills is essential and language proficiency is very important especially in the Communication department. Good writing skills are the basic skills that required for communication department.

Interviewee 1A: I would say very important is the communication skill and writing skill, because you will be doing a lot of text. And of course we need those who are really good in English, because everything, our advertisement is in English, so that is the most important thing that I'm looking for.

Interviewee 3A: Writing skill is a must.

Writing skills is crucial and there are times that candidate required to send in a piece of writing for communication department to review. This is because Marketing and

Communications department is the department that handle all communication works and therefore, it is very important to have a good command of English.

Interviewee 3A: The first thing is interview with HR and we ask them to type in. Normally, we asked them to write something about hotel or what. We give something and typing and do a storyline, like how to promote a coconut, that story we will look whether your English is good.

However, only one of the interviewees stated that language is not the main criteria, but it is the writing technique that attracts people. Despite creativity is the skill that emphasized in this situation, but basic writing skills are still required as without basic writing skills, one is unable to produce a creative copy writing.

Interviewee 4: I think it is not about how good your language is, is how you actually think as a marketer actually attracts to bring the message and you write it, because sometime you may write in a good grammar but not attract the reader.

Hence, it is important to have a good command in English as Marketing and Communications department handles most of the written communication of the hotel.

4.1.3.2 Speaking Skills

All Human Resources department interviewees answered that speaking skills is very important because Communication department needs to deal with the media and public. However, some of the fresh graduates' writing and speaking skills do not meet the expectations of the hotel industry despite having basic academic qualification.

Interviewee 3A: The most important one need to be speaking and writing in English very well because Marcomm is a communication department communicate to others like public and the media.

Interviewee 6A: For me, I think is communication skill, because they are the first person to talk to other person, through social media. If they are afraid to talk in front of everyone, who can you get this done? Because for a company which have a Marcomm department, they will let the person to talk. They will be the first one to communicate to the public.

When the interviewees were asked about the expectation of speaking skills toward fresh graduates, six out of twelve interviewees said that speaking skills are one of the skills they expected from the fresh graduates.

Interviewee 5A: I would say that most of the candidates I've interviewed fall into that category (poor English language). Not everyone can speak good

English, which is a requirement especially when you are in the hotel industry. Not perfect but at least able to converse.

Language proficiency is a required skills and candidates who mastered various foreign languages will have additional advantage because they have to deal with stakeholders and customer from different countries. English Language is still one of the important requirements for Marketing and Communications department.

4.1.3.3 Designing Skills

Only four out of twelve interviewees mentioned that designing skills are required for the Communication department, and they prefer people who are able to work with computer software. This is because all hotels appointed their Communication department to handle design tasks. Therefore, designing skills are considered as a supplementary in the Communication department of the hotel.

Interviewee 4A: In term of skill, we are looking for someone who is expert of using the software such as PowerPoint, graphic design software, Microsoft Word.

One of the interviewees who does not mentioned designing skills are required for the Communication department said that the organization hires freelance designers, but if there is someone in the Communications department with designing skills, it will be a bonus for the department.

Interviewee 6: If I want to hire an assistant or executive under me, if they have a designing skill, that is a plus point.

Not all of the hotels require Marketing and Communications department to handle design matters on their own, but some of them agree that it is definitely a bonus if they have people with designing skills in the department. When some of the hotels do not hire graphic designers, the Marketing and Communications department will need to design.

4.1.4 Soft skills

Soft skills are interpersonal qualities, also known as people skills, and personal attributes that one possesses (Robles, 2012). From our findings, we found that appearance, attitude, personality and impression is the soft skills mentioned by our interviewees.

4.1.4.1 Appearance

There are only four out of twelve interviewees mentioned that appearance is important and will be taken into consideration during recruitment, in term of grooming.

Interviewee 1A: I also look on the physical. Because for Public Relations or sales, these people are the one who want to carry the image of the hotel. You are going to meet up with people. I am not saying that... I am not putting down on people. But I need someone who looks presentable to meet up with people.

In hotel industry, appearance is important as everyone in the Marketing and Communications department must be presentable because they are the one who represents the hotel to deal with the public and media.

4.1.4.2 Attitude

When all the interviewees were asked about the expectation towards the fresh graduates, seven out of twelve interviewees mentioned that attitude is imperative for someone who works in the hotel industry. In term of attitude, the interviewees mentioned that fresh graduates should have initiative to work and be passionate towards their works.

Interviewee 4: You can be very good in term of education, when comes to experience you still lack of it, a lot of people don't practice good attitude as they think they are fantastic.....So attitude is very important, and has be very humble. Next expectation is initiative, they know how to get information and have common sense. These are the criteria I expected, because this kind of people are able to learn a lot of thing for example write on website, this is where the experience come in.

Interviewee 5A: Of course we do have expectations such as right attitude. Attitude is very important. If you don't have experience, you can learn it; but attitude cannot be learnt.

Furthermore, attitude is one of the important requirements in recruitment of Marketing and Communications department. Some people might not have much experiences, but if they have positive attitude such as humble and willing to learn, the hotel industry will welcome the fresh graduates. Attitude is a criterion that able to make up for deficiency for lack of experience. One of the interviewees was asked the question of the preference of a person with three years

of experience in the Marketing and Communications department to a fresh graduate with a high academic qualification. The interviewee answered that it depends on the candidate's' attitude.

Interviewee 4A: we will depend on the personality of the candidates. Let say the candidate who has three years experiences in this department, but he or she doesn't have good attitude, always limit themselves or doesn't want to do extra work and a fresh graduate with a very good personality who is willing to learn, if in this kind of situation, we will take the fresh graduate also.

An extra question were asked to five hotels regarding a news article on whether it is true that fresh graduates are demanding for unrealistic salary, do not have a good attitude and poor command for English (themalaymailonline, 2016, December 22). All interviewees agreed with the statement stating that one of the reasons that fresh graduates were not reaching their expectation is because fresh graduates do not have good attitude yet requiring high salary which are above RM 2, 200 in the hotel industry.

4.1.4.3 Personality

Only three out of six Human Resources department interviewees mentioned that personality does matter when it comes to hiring requirement for Marketing and Communications department. Personality is the combination of qualities and characteristics of an individual and there are certain characteristics are required by Marketing and Communications department.

Interviewees 4A: We want someone who is outspoken as they want to deal with media, during interview, when we ask one question, he or she only

answers few sentences. They also have to be very friendly and active.

Meanwhile, eight out of twelve interviewees expected fresh graduates to have a good personalities such as being patient, able to react quickly, outspoken and more.

Interviewees 6A: the personality whether you are the outspoken person, when during interview, these people are very quiet, you ask them one question, they answer you one question, then that's not opening, those people is not the people we wanted.

Besides, the personality of a Marketing and Communication employees must be very outspoken and outgoing because the spokesperson of the hotel should not be introvert. These personalities are required and considered important as these are also the expectation from the interviewed hotels' Human Resources department.

4.1.5 Impression

When Human Resources department hire people, the first impression of candidates will affects the result of the interview. There are only three out of twelve interviewees mentioned that first impression is very important and this is one of their expectation towards candidates. Impression involved various aspects such as grooming, writing skills (resume), attitude, personality, rapport so on.

Interviewee 4A: There was a candidate who came to interview, he didn't shave, didn't style his hair and also wore slipper, I gave his appearance bad.....it is because we are very concern about the first impression, if a

candidate who come to interview like that which mean you will wear like this to work.

Interviewee 3A: How you communicate then body language you can also know that is (whether) that person want to work or you don't want to work and then you can see how their body language and how they attend the training.

During the interview session, if the candidate is well-prepared and managed to provide a good impression to the recruitment manager, this would increase the possibilities of being recruited.. The first impression that the candidates provide to the Human Resources Recruitment Manager by showcasing their hard skills, soft skills and take care of their grooming will show that they respect and concern about the interview and thus increasing the success rate in an interview.

4.1.6 Accreditation

When the interviewees were asked whether accredited Public Relations makes a difference, three out of twelve interviewees agreed with this statement as they believed that accredited Public Relations practitioners will obtain connections and first hand sources.

Interviewee 2: It doesn't affect the performance because from I understand the question is that if you are in the professional body, is the connection because it help you in delivering the things faster, but I believe you can always build connection also, so somehow it plays but not really 100%.

Interviewee 6: It is important if you involved with them, if you are accredited by them or you are the member of the association then you get the first hand news from the updated styles or patterns.

However, eight out of twelve interviewees out of said that accredited public relations does not makes a difference in hotel industry. They think that Public Relations practitioners in hotel industry are not necessary to be accredited, because it does not affect the operations of the department.

Interviewee 4: It is very different from ACCA, which is a professional body that for you to become a professional accountant, but this one you do not have the certification and you can become a PR practitioner.

Interviewee 2A: But in terms of PR, it does not, because in hotel line, we haven't reach the level yet, because PR is something that important to us, but we don't have that exclusiveness that you must have this accreditation.

One of the interviewee was not asked on this question. Despite the various opinions on accreditation for Public Relations, there is no hotel has hired accredited public relations practitioners as they believed that individual experience is more important.

Interviewee 2A: Because statistics has also shown people who are successful is also from experience, and even the statistics has shown the level of how high people who grows with experiences, but in terms of this the area you must have the basic.

Regarding to accreditation, most of the interviewees said that accreditation does not makes a difference in the hotel industry. This had supported the finding of Abdullah (2011) which stated that professionalism of Public Relations is not being recognized by the managerial level of the organizations. This research data shown that accreditation neither affect the performance of the people in this department nor helping them to reach a higher position in the hotel as most of the interviewees perceived that experience comes before academic qualifications and accreditation. The only reason to them to consider accreditation of Public Relations is a supplementary is because of the alternative connection they acquire by being a part of accredited Public Relations.

4.2 Roles of Public Relations practitioners

Table 4 listed the coding themes that we aimed to explore in our research which align with our research question 2 which is regarding the effect of managerial perceptions towards the roles of public relations practitioners in hotels.

Research Questions	Coding Themes
2. How do the managerial perceptions affect the roles of public relations practitioners in hotels?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of Staffs in the Department 2. Public Relations as an Independent Department 3. Technician Role versus Practitioner Role 4. Roles of Public Relations 5. Decision Making

Table 4- Research Question 2 Coding Themes

4.2.1 Number of Staffs and Positions in the Department

The number of staff and respective position in the department are presented in Table 6.

Hotel	Number of Staffs and Positions in the Department
A	2 persons (1) Marketing and Communication Manager (1) Public Relations Executive
B	1 person (1) Public Relations Executive
C	4 persons (1) Marketing and Communication Assistant Director (1) Assistant Manager (1) Graphic Designer (1) Digital Marketing
D	4 persons (1) Marketing and Communication Director (1) Assistant Manager (1) Executive (1) Graphic Designer
E	4 persons (1) Marketing and Communication Director (Vacant) (1) Digital & Marketing Communications Executive (1) Graphic Designer (Vacant) (1) Public Relations Executives (Vacant)
F	1 person (1) Assistant Marketing Communication Manager

Table 6- Number of staff and position in the department

According to our data, two hotels only hired one person to manage Marketing and Communications department while four hotels assigned several positions in the Marketing and Communications department. However, only one hotel have one staff among those who offered several positions in their department due to the vacancy in the positions of the Marketing and Communications department and not because of the organization structure that only assigned one position in the department.

Our data shows that Marketing and Communications department is relatively small in number as the highest number of staff allocated to this department is only four persons. The roles of Public Relations is not recognized by the hotel as there are hotels who only assign one person to handle Public Relations works.

4.2.2 Public Relations as an Independent Department

The independence of Public Relations department is mainly affected by the organization structure of the hotel. Managerial perceptions will decide the importance of Public Relations and this will affect the independence of this department. In this section, we had gathered data on the Marketing and Communications department's opinion on the independence of Public Relations department and the real practices in the hotels. Marketing and Communications department interviewees stated that in the hotel industry, Public Relations is combined with Marketing and known as Marketing and Communications department because the tasks are interrelated. Marketing and Communications department interviewees were asked on their opinion whether Public Relations department should be independent.

Only one Marketing and Communications department interviewee thinks that Public Relations should be an independent department because the interviewees stated that it is unnecessary to go through various levels or departments for approval other than the General Manager. The interviewee believe that this would only make decision making process less efficient and time consuming.

However, three of our Marketing and Communications department interviewees stated that Public Relations should not be an independent department. They claimed that Public Relations should work with the Sales and Marketing department as they believe that their works are interrelated and it is hard to truly distinguish the roles and tasks. Hence, Public Relations department should be combined with Sales and Marketing department and parked under it.

Interviewee 2: I think should be under sales as well because we need to work closely with the directors, and then from what sales sell we need to deliver out, we need to market out, so I think it should be still under the same roof.

Two of the Marketing and Communications department interviewees think that Public Relations department can be either an independent department or a combined department with Sales and Marketing department. They claimed that independence of Public Relations department depends on the size of an organization or the director's opinions.

However, based on our analysis on the transcripts, the hotels' practices is contradict with their opinions. Four out of six hotels' Marketing and Communications department are actually an independent department. Two of these four hotels are independent and they report directly to their General Manager whereas the other two hotels' Marketing and Communications department will need to report to the Sales and Marketing director despite they are independent. According to our data, the other two hotels' Marketing and Communications department is not independent as the department is parked under Sales and Marketing department. However, there is one interviewee stated that in future, Sales department maybe will park under Marketing department.

Interviewee 4: They (sales) may not, could be or would be park under marketing.

4.2.3 Roles

By referring to our theoretical framework, the Four Roles of Public Relations by Broom (1982) are expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator and communication technician. However, according to our research, we have discovered that there

are two additional roles played by Public Relations practitioners in the six hotels which are Marketing and Community Relations (Corporate Social Responsibilities).

	Expert Prescriber	Communication Facilitator	Problem-Solving Facilitator	Communication Technician	Others (Marketing)	Others (Community Relations)
Hotel A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel B		✓		✓	✓	✓
Hotel C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel E			✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5- Roles of Public Relations

4.2.3.1 Expert Prescriber

Four out of six Marketing and Communications department interviewees claimed that they have authority in matters related to Public Relations problems and solutions in an organization.

Interviewee 1: I will be the advisor to my GM in case of management crisis.

Every morning we have a morning briefing and all the departments will talk.

Interviewee 3: We are the one mastered in advising the hotel as a whole, advising the GM (General Manager).....We have a SOP (Standard

Operation Procedure) and let say we have an ad hoc during the crisis and we are the one whom handle the crisis and we will bring out this under SOP.

Interviewee 6: We advise GM on what the media want to ask from what perspective and what answers they should prepared for.

Our research showed that four out of six Marketing and Communications department interviewees claimed to have autonomy in handling crisis, they serve like a ‘doctor’ in analyzing the problems and provide suggestions and solutions to General Manager. Since Marketing and Communications department is the department that is going to analyze the problem comprehensively, they should understand the situation and therefore, they are the most suitable spokesperson in crisis in order to answer the questions by the media. Besides, all of the interviewed hotels’ Marketing and Communications department has the authority in controlling the corporate identity to ensure that the company’s image and reputation are well maintained.

4.2.3.2 Communication Facilitator

All of the Marketing and Communications department interviewees claimed that they are practicing Communication Facilitator role as the middle person between organization and public.

Interviewee 1: I will read trip advisor and inform about the good and bad comment.....I reply Tripadvisor as well.

Interviewee 2: Make sure our ratings also good on trip advisors especially, and also on Facebook because that's how people reviewing these anyway.

Interviewee 3: We will reply the comment from the trip advisor and also the social media Facebook, Instagram or whatever come out.

The data showed that most Marketing and Communications department interviewees are practicing Communication Facilitator role as it is essential for them to act as the middle person between organization and public. The hotels are very concerned with the public's feedback and it is essential for them to constantly review the ratings and reply to comments on Online Travel Agency (OTA) such as Trip Advisor, as well as social media (Facebook and Instagram). Hence, hotels will try to understand and fulfill customers' needs in order to build a good reputation for the company.

4.2.3.3 Problem-Solving Facilitator

Five Marketing and Communications department interviewees mentioned that they are practicing Problem-solving Facilitator role which focus on identifying and solving problems with other line managers.

Interviewee 3: We cooperate with the security, F&B for whatever complaint that people put into trip advisor.

Interviewee 4: We have to discuss with them, when you discuss like that what is the consequence will be, but all these have to discuss and get the approval from GM as well as area manager.

Our data showed that Marketing and Communications department cooperate with other departments (F&B, Security) in solving crisis, which correlates with Broom (2009). It explained that Marketing and Communications department is not the only department that is involved in crisis management, they work closely with other departments and provide suggestions and procedures for them as every department have their roles to carry out during crisis. It is crucial for them to work together so that they can solve the problems integrally.

4.2.3.4 Communication Technician

All Marketing and Communications department interviewees stated that Communication Technician role is essential in nowadays and responsible for written communication and communicate the changes to employees or the press.

Interviewee 2: So basically news monitoring is very important whether Hotel is featuring the magazines or newspapers.....Work closely with the media friends and press, so you maintain good relationship with them.

Interviewee 3: My job is mainly is in charge of media and things that related to communications.

The data showed that the hotel industry still widely practicing Communication Technician role which focus on producing communication materials, design materials, and deal with media. The interviewees stated that these are their daily tasks, they need to go through every single communication materials as well as dealing with the media as this is their responsibilities to ensure company's information has clearly disseminated to public.

4.2.3.5 Others (Marketing and Community Relations)

Based on our data, we found that Marketing and Communications department is multi-tasking as they are not only conducting for Public Relations related works, but also doing marketing and community relations activities. This is necessary for them to do so as they need to promote the hotel promotions as well as conduct community relations activities which could enhance the image and reputation of the hotel.

Interviewee 2: Here also do the all marketing collaterals and posters to make sure that always up-to-date and all the expired need to take out.

Interviewee 3: We want to promote our club wed (clubs wedding) then we have to come out with the strategy planning and marketing raise and what is the good way to promote clubs wed (clubs wedding).

After analyzing the data, results showed that Broom (2009) four major roles can be applied in these six hotels. However, there are even more roles that a Public Relations practitioners practice in these six hotels, as compared to the four suggested roles by Broom. Interviewees mentioned that besides doing communication work, Public Relations nowadays

have to be multi-tasking by also covering marketing works as Public Relations has combined with marketing and fall under Marketing and Communications department. The responsibilities of this marketing position are establishing marketing plan, handling digital marketing, planning promotions for special events, and establishing marketing collaterals and branding. Moreover, hotels also carry out Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that enhance the reputation of company as well as contribute back to the society.

Interviewee 3: We have to also know. For example, like we involve in TV, Radio, printing and also any CSR (Corporate social responsibility) programme that been held in here by Hotel C group or we also having our own CSR program every year but is related to festive at the first two years.

Interviewee 4: We hosted them for Chineses New Year, Christmas. We also did donation to these kids, and also identify the school then only donate the money.

Hotels are concern with the relationship with its public, therefore Community Relations is important in the hotel industry. Marketing and Communications department conducts Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to enhance the reputation of company and contribute back to the society. All Marketing and Communications department interviewees said that they will conduct CSR at least once annually.

One of the interviewees stated that one CSR activity is not merely a way for a hotel to publicise through charity, but it is also an alternative way for them to create and enhance brand awareness. These CSR activities have to be compatible with hotel's core values.

Respondent 4: Like last year, we did a tree of books, we identify the NGO and get people to donate the books, the objective is to enhance their knowledge because they might be the future leader and some of them are really good, how to ask people to donate the books. At the same time, we arrange the book like a twin tower which emphasize our property is KLCC, so what we do will tie back to the hotel, and promote this, we don't really promote one thing.

4.2.4 Technician Role versus Practitioner Role

Four Marketing and Communications department interviewees claimed that Public Relations practitioners did a more practitioner role instead of technician role.

Interviewee 1: You (PR) are hired as your job to give advice.

Interviewee 3: ..Meeting with the HODs, board of directors, the person from the corporate comm have to be there because they are the first person have to know what is going on in that company...We control the corporate identity...

They think that Public Relations did a more practitioner job such as giving advice, making decisions when it comes to crisis and matters regarding to corporate identity. Besides, one of the Marketing and Communications department interviewees think that Public Relations cannot solely rely on technical role and it has slowly transformed into a more practitioner role for Public Relations in hotels.

Interviewee 5: Different companies and different industries need different roles. Technician role was twenty thirty years back, the kind of old way of thinking. I believe most of the hotel is doing this right now because you cannot survive for just being technical.

However, one Marketing and Communications department interviewee thinks that Public Relations is practicing a technician role rather than practitioner role.

Interviewee 4: PR just do their job, they just write and then proceed, and they don't really think how to use marketing to push it.

One Marketing and Communications department interviewee did not stated her opinion on the statement but she believes that Public Relations are practicing both technician and practitioner role equally.

Interviewee 2: ...director of sales give me the decision making as well.. whether to host this media...approving of the collaterals... She (PR

Executive) is the one who going to handle media, doing the writing and everything...

However, all the hotels that we have interviewed are practicing both roles. One interviewee claimed that Public relations in the hotel are practicing practitioner role but instead the department is practicing both of the roles.

Interviewee 5: I did handling little things like design, flyers and newsletters...From my understanding on these two roles, practitioner role is what I'm practicing now, decision making all that it all makes sense. Most of the companies are using practitioner role.

4.2.5 Decision Making

Three Marketing and Communications department interviewees stated that they are involving in the decision making process in the organization for matters such as advising General Manager, advising other departments to maintain the image of the hotel and approving of the collaterals. Marketing and Communications department is involved in HOD meetings and even daily briefings. Most of the types of decision made by Marketing and Communications Department are on promotional items. Only one Marketing and Communications department interviewee stated that 50% power given in decision making but it depends on situation.

Interviewee 2: ...the director of sales give me the decision making as well, although sometimes I do consult her, but she will give you the opportunity, if it fits the organization, then yes you can do. So sometimes 50% decision I will say.

Two Marketing and Communications department interviewees stated that the answer can be both. There are two different reasons for this answer. Firstly, it is because the General Manager can make decision by their own and they do not take in Public Relations as a part of consideration.

Interviewee 4: ...unless the decision is related to marketing communication then yes. Otherwise, GM will make decision by himself. Generally, they (GM) will not see PR as a part of consideration when making the decision.

Secondly, Public Relations give advice to senior management and most of the time Public Relations just influence the decision making process by providing opinions.

Interviewee 6: You are basically an advisor rather than deciding. You will sort of influence them when they decide.

4.3 Practices of Public Relations practitioners

Table 7 listed the coding themes that we aimed to explore in our research which align with our research question 3 which is regarding the Public Relations practices in hotels.

Research Questions	Coding Themes
3. How do the managerial perceptions affect the practices of public relations practitioners in hotels?	1. Communication Methods - Press Agency Model - Public Information Model - Two-way Asymmetrical Model - Two-way Symmetrical Model

Table 7- Research Question 3 Coding Themes

4.3.1 Communication Methods

According to our theoretical framework, the Four Models of Public Relations that published by James Grunig and Todd Hunt in the year 1984, there are four types of models which are Press Agency Model, Public Information Model, Two-way Asymmetrical Model and Two-way Symmetrical Model. Communication method practiced in hotels based on our collected data are presented in Table 8.

	Press Agency Model	Public Information Model	Two-way Asymmetrical Model	Two-way Symmetrical Model
Hotel A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel B	✓			✓
Hotel C	✓			✓
Hotel D	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel E				✓
Hotel F	✓	✓		✓

Table 8- Communication methods practiced in hotels

Out of six Marketing and Communications department interviewees, five of them are practicing more than one model in their hotel.

Interviewee 4: I don't think that every hotel or company only practice one type of method. We react the market, we don't wait the market to react to us.

For hotel industry, it is very limit in a sense that you meet lot of people and deal with a lot of people, we need to communicate with different way or method.

Most of the Marketing and Communications department interviewees believe that communication methods vary depends on situation, type of audience and content of communication. Hence, most hotels don't solely practice one type of communication method as they believe that certain messages have to use specific communication method to increase its efficiency. Marketing and Communications department will selects the most suitable communication method by taking in consideration of many aspects. It is hard to practice only a single model in the hotel because most hotels believe that it won't have its greatest efficient. However, there is only one Marketing and Communications department interviewee who claimed that they practice only one model as the other three models does not match with their brand values.

Respondent 5: Our brand has three values: being honest, being uncomplicated, being comfortable. The first value speaks it all. We do not selectively tell only the good things to the guests. We have to also admit certain challenges that we are having. This is why we do not give selective information. Secondly, we do not give all as well, because that is being blunt and that is not being honest.....We don't repackage because we are honest. It is more about our second brand value which is being uncomplicated. Don't make things complicated. If we have a problem, we just say it out in a good way, but not telling in another story.

4.3.1.1 Press Agency Model

Five Marketing and Communications department interviewees are practicing Press Agency Model in their hotel and they claimed that they only disclose selective information that will bring benefits to the organization.

Interviewee 6: Let say we want to achieve a big sale coming up like Air Asia, the free seat that kind of thing, for those kind of information, you are telling people that you are giving free seats but at the same time, it is favor to organization and people will log on to your site and check without knowing there is underlying news that there are actually charges.

Information that were chosen to disseminate to the public are being filtered first and identified as beneficial to the hotel and will bring certain positive outcomes such as increase in sales or increase in the number of website viewers. A hotel will not reveal all the comments and feedback from their public as it would influence and reduce the possibility of public choosing the hotel. In such case, hotel will choose to disseminate only the positive feedbacks from the public to maintain their good reputation. Hotel will not disclose untruth information as they will be condemned by the public and it is considered unethical. Hence, Press Agency Model will be used under the condition where the hotel choose to disseminate only the information that favor to the hotel.

4.3.1.2 Public Information Model

For Public Information Model, only two Marketing and Communications department interviewees practice this model as their communication method in their company. This model was chosen to disseminate all truth information to their targeted public.

Interviewee 4: When we do rebranding, we give out all the information about the hotel, disseminate all the fact to the public about the hotel. We send this kind of information to both internal and external. For internal, when the guests come, they can give the true message to them.

Public Information Model was used when it comes to provide important information to the target public in order them to understand and have knowledge regarding the company. Hotel will not apply this model that often because complete truth without filter will not bring benefits to the hotel. However, this model will be mainly used when a hotel undergo rebranding or a new hotel just started operated. The hotel have to disclose all information to the public in order to educate and provide basic knowledge to the public about their hotel. Hence, Public Information Model will not use in daily communication because there is no necessity for disseminating all the information that they considered private and confidential.

4.3.1.3 Two-way Asymmetrical Model

There is only one Marketing and Communications department interviewee practices Two-way Asymmetrical Model in their hotel with the aim of repackage their product after taking in feedback from customers in order to convince them to buy their product.

Interviewee 4: One of our promotion, we called it “all you can eat dinner”, in the beginning, it is like a buffet, the response is not so good, what we did is we repackage the word, the name is still same “all you can eat dinner”, but we focus on the menu, because we receive the feedback like variety is not there, you should have this and that. We can see the statistic that how many guest comment for the particular dish, from there, we pick around 5 dish and we

just change a bit, but basically it is almost same, then we send the message to the media and blogger, we receive that a lot guest actually come to eat.

Two-way Asymmetrical Model is used by the Marketing and Communications department when they wish to persuade the public to accept their product. For a hotel to operate, it require a huge budget and most of the time, it is hard for hotel to satisfy all of the request and wishes from their customers. Hotel will try to understand the request from the public and figure ways to persuade the public to accept. For unrealistic demands, hotel will try to persuade the public by repackaging their information. For instance, if the customers are not satisfy with the services, hotel can provide training to their employee, however if the customers complain that the hotel room is old, it is impossible for the hotel to renovate as it requires budget and long process of approvals. Hence, hotel will use different method to persuade the customers in staying with them by repackage their previous marketing plan.

4.3.1.4 Two-way Symmetrical Model

All of the Marketing and Communications department interviewees claimed that they practice Two-way Symmetrical Model in their hotels as they believe that they are the one who ensure and maintain the good relationships between organization and the public.

Interviewee 1: Because if I want to sell my product, is not what I want. It is depends on what the public want. You cannot be stubborn. You don't force people for something they don't want.

Interviewee 2: Because you are the middle person, so when you get reviews you disseminate to the organization as well as you need to revert back to the public.

Interviewee 3: We will reply the comment from the trip advisor and also the social media Facebook, Instagram or whatever come out.....Everyday this matter we will bring to all the HODs, so the trip advisor will be share to all.

Interviewees believe that they play an important role in conveying the message to the public and retrieve feedbacks from the targeted public in order to understand what they need from them. They also believe that this is the best way to build a healthy and good relationships with different publics. Marketing and Communications department believe that it is crucial to have good relationships with the public and in order to achieve this, Marketing and Communications department ensure that both public and organization understand each other wishes.

Despite the main purpose of the hotel is to gain profit but the Marketing and Communications department believe that if the hotel remain as a closed system and do not tolerate with the public, the hotel will not able to survive. Using the Two-way Symmetrical Model allows the Marketing and Communications department also focus on communication with stakeholders and this will allow the hotel to have a mutual understanding with related public and bring more benefits to the hotel. Hence, all hotels do agree that the communication model that they will practice is Two-way Symmetrical Model.

In short, the most practiced models in ascending order are Two-way Asymmetrical Model (2), Public Information Model (3), Press Agency Model (5) and Two-way Symmetrical

Model (6). It shows that the importance of Two-way Symmetrical Model in allowing information flow between hotel and public is the best way to establish a relationship that benefit both hotel and public.

Chapter 5 Discussions and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

Hiring requirements

Experience and academic qualification (tertiary education qualification) are both essential requirements for Marketing and Communications department recruitment. In order for an individual to obtain a higher position or get promoted, both higher academic qualification and years of experience are required by the hotels. However, Public Relations academic qualification is not compulsory as long as it is relevant to the department is acceptable such as Hotel Management, Business and Communication but degree in Communications field will be the priority. This showed that the hotel does not concern on the importance of Public Relations certification for a Public Relations position in the hotel.

Despite accreditation of Public Relations are considered as a recognition from professional body such as Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM), accreditation does not taken into consideration in hiring requirements of hotel industry but only considered as an additional advantage in term of connections and alternative sources. Accreditation of Public Relations is not important in the eyes of hotels' senior management as a degree of Public Relations is not required to be a Public Relations practitioners. This indicates that the roles of Public Relations do not truly recognized by these six hotels. As discussed in chapter 2, professionalism of Public Relations was not recognized by the managerial level of the organization as the quality of professionals and experience amongst the Public Relations practitioners are still immature (Abdullah, 2011). Our research supported Abdullah findings whereby Public Relations practitioners are not considered as a profession among the six hotels as the hotels did not recognize the importance of the Public Relations.

Experience viewed as a more important criteria than academic qualification because of hotel industry have high turnover rate (Albattat, Som & Helalat, 2013) and the experienced one is more preferred as the hotel do not have sufficient time and manpower to provide training to the inexperienced but high academic qualification candidate. This fact is totally contradict with Abdullah & Threadgold (as cited in Idid & Arandas, 2016) findings, Malaysian believed that become a Public Relations practitioner, it is more important to obtain an academic qualification in Public Relations.

As discussed in Chapter two, Badran, Turk and Walters (2003) explained about public often viewed professional Public Relations practitioners to be equipped with characteristics such as good-looking, educated, open-minded and highly sociable. This is a stereotype towards Public Relations practitioners. Based on our findings, Malaysian hotel industry requires Public Relations practitioners to have good looking appearance and highly sociable. They wish to have someone who is presentable and good-looking. They also believe that individual with outgoing personality would be a better Public Relations practitioner as they are the organization's spokesperson. Hence, in hiring process, candidates who have pleasant physical appearance will be preferred by recruitment manager for Public Relations department. This situation continue to worsen the stereotype on Public Relations practitioners where one must have good-looking appearance.

Language proficiency is the most important criteria needed to be a good Public Relations practitioners as writing skills and speaking skills are the basic skills needed to convey messages. Good looking and highly sociable is just a supplementary and not as essential and a must have criteria as the public thought. As stated in PRSA (2011), expertise in the basics of good writing, pitching, communications and crisis management will remain vitally important. Hiring requirements for Public Relations practitioners in the hotel industry required all of the stated criteria and one would not succeed if they lack of any of these. However, these criteria

are more technical-based, which showed that hotel industry views public relations as a technician role.

Roles of Public Relations

Idid (1998) stated that Public Relations practitioners mostly played the technician role instead of the managerial role. However, our finding showed that Marketing and Communications interviewees claimed that they only either practice practitioner role or technician role but in reality, they are practicing both technician and practitioner roles. The roles of Public Relations in the hotel are mainly technician role and minor practitioner role and this supported the ideas of Dozier and Broom (1995), who stated that “manager and technician role activities are different but neither mutually exclusive nor in opposition to one another” (p.6) whereby both roles can’t be separated in a department.

Public Relations practitioners in hotel industry do not have the autonomy in decision making. Such condition happened in the hotel industry are mainly caused by the ignorance of organization. Organization does not valued Public Relations as the managerial role whereby Public Relations practitioners only have limited decision making power and even if the Public Relations practitioner is managerial position, they still need to do technician role sometimes.

This can be proven from their job scope when they need to produce materials such as promotional items, collaterals and press releases. The same situation happened when most of the hotels claimed that they play expert prescriber role but in fact they are not really practicing it. In order to be the expert prescriber, Public Relations practitioner must have the decision making power but we found that Public Relations practitioner in Malaysian hotel industry only have decision making power for their own respective department and most of the time, they plan and provide a solution to a crisis but the decision making still fall under senior management.

The Public Relations department is not an independent department in the hotel industry as it was combined with Marketing department and become Marketing and Communications department. However, Public relations practitioner agree that Public Relations is not a sub-department under marketing and have its own role (Jo, 2007). In Han studies (2002), Public Relations practitioner recognize their responsibilities and functions as *all-rounded* public relations rather than as practical public relations manager with a supportive role towards marketing. This leads to most of the practitioner perceive that Public Relations should have own identity and domain where being recognized as an independent department (Jo, 2007).

Public Relations practitioners in the international hotel chain industry only possesses middle management decision making such as marketing plan, designs, media relations and so on while brand guidelines, brand values and brand images are decided by the regional Public Relations department instead of the hotels' Public Relations department. During crisis, most Public Relations practitioners only able to advise the General Manager instead of making decision on behalf of the hotel, this also prove that Public Relations practitioners in Malaysian hotel industry does not really play the expert prescriber role as they claimed. This also proved that Public Relations practitioner does not involve in policies making but only providing advice to the senior management. These showed that decision making power is limited and Public Relations practitioners in these six hotels practicing a major technician role.

Due to Public Relations are combined with Marketing in these six hotels, Public Relations practitioners have to play the Marketing role. We also found that Public Relations practitioners play the Community Relations role besides the Four Roles of Public Relations suggested by Broom (2009). Wu and Taylor's (2003) research suggested that Public Relations and Marketing are complementary corporate functions and predicted that the future development of Public Relations in Taiwan will be closely linked to marketing. Malaysian

hotel industry are having a similar situation whereby Public Relations is combined with Marketing and have complementary corporate functions.

Hasan (2013) conducted a research on the roles of Public Relations in corporations and some of the participants highlighted that they are mostly responsible in reputation management. Hence, the organization had conduct Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) activities in order to enhance the image of the organizations. CSR activities is often carried out by the Public Relations department because the studies shows that CSR are closely related to Public Relations (Ilieş, 2011). Based on our findings, all the interviewees stated that CSR activities is a part of their job. We found out that the role of community relations exists and it is fall under Public Relations practitioner's responsibilities which is not categories under the Four Roles of Public Relations suggested by Broom (2009).

According to Abdullah (2011) studies, he stated that the professionalism of Public Relations was not recognized by the managerial level of the organization as the quality of professionals and experience amongst the Public Relations practitioners are still immature. Hence, our findings can supported his findings as Public Relations is not considered as important enough to have an independent department in Malaysian hotel industry as they are combined with Marketing. In other words, marketing is more important than the Public Relations as Marketing department can helps in generate revenue while Public Relations focus on developing the corporate identity and helps to publicize the hotel.

This situation had affected their roles, as Public Relations has divert their focus to Marketing while they also helps in establishing or maintaining a good relationship with the stakeholders in long term efforts. This bring an impact to the roles of Public Relations when there is combination of the Marketing with Public Relations. If this situation continue, Marketing and Communications department will be leading the Sales department in the future

instead of the current situation where Sales department is leading Marketing and Communications department and view Marketing department as a tool to boost sales. In future, Marketing and Communications department will be deciding on marketing plan and promotions while Sales department will just focus on selling and taking orders from Marketing department.

In Abdullah and Threadgold (2008)'s research in the Malaysian context, they found that the corporate level has been highly recognizing Public Relations, because the communication and interaction between internal and external stakeholders are inevitable in corporations nowadays. However, the reality in Malaysian hotel industry is contrast with this statement. The allocation of number of staff in the Marketing and Communication shows that organizational does not recognize the importance of Public Relations in the Malaysian hotel industry. Based on our analyzed data, hotel's' senior management believe that the task of Public Relations does not require a huge number of staff to operate whereby the highest number of staff allocated in the Marketing and Communications department is just four person and as low as one person.

Insufficient manpower and vacancy are the factors that affect the amount of tasks and responsibilities handle by the staff. The staff in the department have to take over the tasks of vacant position and hence, the role and responsibilities are temporary change. In this situation, their roles are overlapped as they are not solely playing one role in the department. Based on our interpretations of data, this happened due to high turnover rate, long working hour and low salary compared to corporate. In our opinion, there is also a possibility whereby the hotel's senior management wanted to save budget and hence increase the workload of other employees. There is also a possibility that the managerial position in the department is vacant which lead to inefficiency of communications and decisions. The executive will need to report to multi-department as they are in executive level instead of management level and this will lead to

disrespect from other departments' manager too. Besides, the decision making process will be not effective because multi-level approval.

Public Relations practices

Most hotels claimed that they are practicing two-way symmetrical model in their company. However, two-way symmetrical model involves management decision whereby the hotel will take in consideration of the feedback from the public and try to fulfill their request. In fact, this is not really happening in Malaysia, if the hotel decide to fulfill all request from the public, the hotel will need to undergo lots of changes. There is one interviewee who claimed that their organization applied two-way symmetrical model but we found that in the job scope, the interviewee still practice one way communication when comes to press releases and designs and not solely practicing two-way symmetrical model. Hence, Marketing and Communications department should practice both one-way and two-way communication and not solely one-way or just two-way communication.

According to our analyzed data, Press Agency model is the second highest model practiced in all hotels. In Ha & Ferguson studies (2015) stated that the press agency function of public relations is one of the most important roles for Public Relations department. Our findings showed that most hotels are actually practicing this model and align with the practice such as publicity writing, contacting reporters editing newsletter as stated in Shin & Yoon studies in 1992. This indicates despite being a service industry, hotels still mainly practice one-way communication as their communication method. This supported Abdullah's research in 2011 whereby Malaysian Public Relations practices are based on the traditional and one way communication function which is similar to the technician role that mainly handling event management and media relations.

5.2 Conclusion

There were many efforts carried out by Public Relations practitioners in making Public Relations a professions in the society. However, Public Relations in these six hotels is still not progressed enough to be considered seriously as a professions like doctors and engineers. Public Relations practitioners in these six hotels are not given authority in major decision making and treated merely as a tool to boost sales like Marketing. This situation makes the process of making Public Relations a professions more challenging because it is hard and time consuming to change the perspective of society and resulting in Public Relations practitioners hired in these six hotels as supportive role towards Sales and Marketing department.

Public Relations practitioners in Malaysian hotel industry practicing more on technician roles and minor practitioner role as only limited decision making power are authorized to them. Due to the combination of Marketing department with Public Relations department in these six hotels, Public practitioners need to carry out the duty of Marketing too. Community Relations role is also one of the role that Public Relations practitioners in these six hotels practice. Public Relations practitioners in these six hotels practice various communication methods depending on the situation and purpose but all of them do practice mix methods.

5.3 Limitations

The first limitation of this research is that **the result could not be generalized** to other contexts because our study only focused on small number of subjects instead of a large sample or population (Cheng, 2013). However, this method can contribute valuable information for other methods of data collection. The studies will only be conducted in the Malaysian hotel industry, therefore it cannot represent the perception of the managerial role towards public relations practitioners in the hotel industry for other countries. By conducting this studies, our result would not be generalizable. Moreover, this research is only focusing on the hotel industry in Malaysia, hence the results do not represent the managerial perspectives in other industries, and the results are **not generalizable in all industries**.

We do not have enough **experience in conducting interviews**, therefore some of the interviewees did not directly answer the questions which have caused some difficulties when we are analyzing the collected data. Moreover, during the first interview, we are carried away by the interviewee which caused us to be confused with the sequence of the interview questions.

Some of the hotels have rejected our interview request because of the hotel's policies that they are **unable to disclose their hotels' information**. Moreover, some of the hotels have tight schedule and we are unable to arrange suitable time for the interviews as we have limited time to carry out our research. Hence, we were only able to interview six hotels in this research.

Besides that, due to **time constraint**, as the duration of conducting our research were considered as peak season for hotel industry in Malaysia, we were unable to collect data from our desired amount of sampling. We were also unable to interview all hotels across the nation because it required a great investment of time and money. The focus of our research had been narrowed to six hotels and we needed to collect and analyze the data within 14 weeks.

5.4 Recommendations

This research does not focus on accreditation of Public Relations as we are just studying the managerial perception of Public Relations. Hence, it is suggested that future research may study on the **importance of accreditation of Public Relations**, and how accreditation affects the employment of Public Relations different industries.

Moreover, future research may consider researching on the **managerial perspectives of Public Relations in different industries**, such as the Public Relations industry and the entertainment industry. Research like this will provide an insight of how Public Relations work in other industries to those who wish to become a Public Relations practitioner in other industries.

Furthermore, it is suggested that future research **select more samples**, so that more data can be collected and the results can be more generalizable in the Malaysian hotel industry. More sample result in more details and information on the managerial perception, hence it is easier to identify what is needed to improve the situation in Malaysian hotel industry.

Reference

- “Jobstreet: Unrealistic salary demands reason why fresh grads are unemployed”. (2016, December 22). *The malaymailonline*. Retrieved from <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/jobstreet-unrealistic-salary-demands-reason-why-fresh-grads-are-unemployed>
- Abdullah, Z. (2011). *Towards the professionalisation of public relations in Malaysia: perception management and strategy development*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Abdullah, Z., & Threadgold, T. (2008). Towards the professionalisation of public relations in Malaysia: perception management and strategy development. *Public Relations Review* 34(3), 285-287. DOI: 10.1026/j.pubrev.2008.04.003
- Ahmad, J. H. (2007). Re-engineering the undergraduate public relations education curriculum. Retrieved from <http://195.130.87.21:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/533/1/Reengineering%20the%20Undergraduate%20Public%20Relations%20Education%20Curriculum.pdf>
- Ahmad, Z. T. (2014). Malaysia. In Watson, T. (Eds) *Asian perspectives on development of public relations* (pp.78-90). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Albattata, A. R., & MatSom, A. P. (2004). Emergency planning and disaster recovery in Malaysian hospitality industry. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 144,45-53. Doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.272
- Arionesei, G., & Ivan, P. (2012). Marketing of tourism destinations from the public relations' perspective. *Revista de Turism - Studii Si Cercetari in Turism*, 14, 90-95.

- Ayish, M., & Kruckeberg, D. (1999). Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). In J. Turk & L. Scanlan (Eds.), *Fifteen case studies in international public relations: The evolution of public relations: case studies from countries in transition* (pp. 122-130). Gainesville, FL: Institute for Public Relations, University of Florida.
- Bach, S., & Pizam, A. (1996). Crimes in hotels. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 20(2), 59-75.
- Badran, B. A., Turk, J. V., & Walters, T. N. (2003). Sharing the transformation: Public and the UAE come of age. In, K. Sriramesh & D. Verčič (Eds.), *The global public relations handbook: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 68-85). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Banerjee, S., & Chua, A. Y. (2016). In search of patterns among travellers' hotel ratings in TripAdvisor. *Tourism Management*, 53, 125-131. DOI:10.1016/j.tourman.2015.09.020
- Bank Negara Malaysia. (2016, March 23). *2005 Annual Report*. Retrieved from http://www.bnm.gov.my/files/publication/ar/en/2015/ar2015_book.pdf
- Becker, L. (2007) *“There is nothing so practical as a good theory,” or is there? Public relations practitioners’ perspectives on public relations scholarship and its usefulness* (Master’s Thesis). University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.
- Benn, S., Todd, L. R., & Pendleton, J. (2010). Public relations leadership in corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 96, 403-423.
- Black, L. D., & Hartel, C. E. J. (2003). The five capabilities of socially responsible companies. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 4(2), 125-144.

- Bowen, S. A. (2009). All glamour, no substance? How public relations majors and potential majors in an exemplar program view the industry and function. *Public Relations Review*, 35(4), 402-410.
- Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). Conducting in-depth interview: a guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. *Pathfinder International Tool Series, Monitoring and Evaluation-2*. Retrieved from <http://compositionaweb.pbworks.com/f/conducting+in+depth+interviews.pdf>
- Broom, G. M. (2009). *Cutlip & Center's effective public relations* (10th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Callison, C. (2001). Do PR practitioners have a PR problem? The effect of associating a source with public relations and client-negative news on audience perception of credibility. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 13(3), 219-234.
- Callison, C. (2004). The good, the bad, and the ugly: Perceptions of public relations practitioners. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(4), 371-389.
- Cameron, G. T., Wilcox, D. L., Reber, B. H., & Shin, J. H. (2008). *Public relations today: Managing competition and conflict*. Boston, MA: Pearson Educations Inc.
- Chan, A. M. (2006). *The Chinese concepts of Guanxi, Mianzi, Renqing and Bao: Their interrelationships and implications for international business* [PDF]. Retrieved from http://www.anzmac.org/conference_archive/2006/documents/Chan_Alvin.pdf
- Cheng, W. Y. (2013). *PR personnel in Taiwanese hotels: preferences, policies, and hiring decisions: A case study in Taipei* (Master's thesis). School of Hospitality and Tourism.
- Chmielecki, M. (2012). Public relations in Asia. *Journal of Intercultural Management*, 4(4), 135– 142.

- Choi, Y., & Choi, J. (2007). *Dimensions of leadership in public relations: Exploring an organization wide perspective*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, TBA, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Retrieved from http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p229769_index.html
- Cooperrider, D., & Fry, R. (2010). Editorial: Can stakeholder engagement be generative? *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, 38, 3-6.
- Cornelissen, J. P. (2000). Toward an Understanding of the Use of Academic Theories in Public Relations Practice. *Public Relations Review*, 26(3), 315-326. Retrieved from http://engine.koduleht.net/templates/kajatampere/files/mdl_files.php/academic_theories_of_pr.pdf
- Culbertson, H. M., & Chen, N. (1996). Public relations education in the United States: Can it broaden international students' horizons? In H. Culbertson & N. Chen (Eds.), *International public relations: A comparative analysis* (pp. 397–415). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Daugherty, E. L. (2001). Public relations and social responsibility, in R. L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Relations* (pp. 389-402), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Davis, A. (2002). *Public relations democracy: Public relations, politics and the mass media in Britain*. Manchester, UK, Manchester University Press.
- Desanto, B. & Moss, D. (2005). Rediscovering what PR managers do: Rethinking the measurement of managerial behaviour in the public relations context. *Journal of Communication Management*, 9(2), 179–196.
- Dozier, D. M. (1992) Organizational roles of practitioners. In J. E. Grunig & D. M. Dozier (Eds.), *Excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 327-355). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Dozier, D. M., & Broom, G. M. (1995), Evolution of the manager role in public relations practice. *Journal of public relations research*, 7(1), 3-26.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1. DOI: 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11
- Fall, L. T. (2004). The increasing role of public relations as a crisis management function: an empirical examination of communication re-strategising efforts among destination organization managers in the wake of 11th September, 2001. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(3), 238-252.
- Freitag, A., & Stokes, A. Q. (2009). *Global public relations: Spanning borders, spanning cultures*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Grunig, J. (2011). Public relations and strategic management: institutionalizing organization public relationships in contemporary Society. *Central European Journal Of Communication*, 4(1), 11-31.
- Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Grunig, J. G. (2001, May 12). *The role of public relations in management and its contribution to organizational and societal effectiveness*. Speech presented in Taiwan, Taipei.
- Gupta, C., & Bartlett, J. (2009). Recruiting local public relations professionals for global public relations practice: A comparative analysis between Australian and Indian public relations recruitment advertisements. *Prism*, 6(2), Retrieved from http://praxis.massey.ac.nz/prism_on-line_journ.html

- Gupta, S. (2006). *Professionalism in Public Relations & Corporate Communications: An Empirical Analysis* (IIMB Working Paper No 247). Retrieved from https://www.iimb.ernet.in/research/sites/default/files/WP.IIMB_.247.pdf
- Ha, J. H., & Ferguson, M. A. (2015). Perception Discrepancy of Public Relations Functions and Conflict among Disciplines: South Korean Public Relations Versus Marketing Professionals. *Journal Of Public Relations Research*, 27(1), 1-21. doi:10.1080/1062726X.2014.924838
- Han, J. (2002). A typological study on the public relations practitioners' perception toward their job roles and functions. *Korea Society for Journalism and Communication Studies*, 46, 349–385.
- Hasan, N. A. M. (2013). *Towards achieving global standards - the role of public relations in processes and outcomes of corporate social responsibility initiatives in Malaysia* (Master's thesis). Massey University. Wellington, NZ.
- Hatzios, A. (2003). Perceptions of utility and importance of international public relations education among educators and practitioners. *Journalism & Mass Communication*, 63(3), 241-258.
- Heath, R. L. (Ed.). (2010). *The SAGE handbook of public relations*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Hornaman, L. (2000). *Public relations education and the public relations profession* (Master's thesis), University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.
- Hung-Baesecke, C. F., & Chen, Y. R. (2014). China. In T. Watson (Eds.), *Asian perspectives on the development of public relations: Other voices*. (pp. 20-33). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Ian Griggs. (2016, March 7). *PRWeek Career Survey 2016: Underpaid and overworked but loving their jobs*. Retrieved from <http://www.prweek.com/article/1386247/prweek-career-survey-2016-underpaid-overworked-loving-jobs>
- Ibrahim, A. M. (2012). Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 39-47.
- Idid, S. A. (1998). *Beauty, brain and brawn in public relations*. Bangi, Selangor: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Idid, S. A. (2004). Public Relations in Malaysia from its Colonial Past to Current Practice. In K.Sriramesh (Eds.), *Public Relation in Asia: An Anthology* (pp. 207-237). Singapore: Thomson.
- Idid, S. A., & Arandas, M. F. (2016). Professional Values, Ethics, and Professionalism of Public Relations Practitioners. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 32(1), 287-311.
- Idid, S., & Ahmad, Z. (2013). *Malaysia's "People First, Performance Now": Government public relations in multicultural, multi - religious Malaysia*. Paper presented in conference on PR and Strategic Communication in Divided Societies, Belfast, Ireland.
- Idid, S., & Arandas, M. (2016). Professional values, ethics, and professionalism of public relations practitioner. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 32(1), 287-311.
- Ilies, V.I. (2011). *Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility: Theory and Social Action* (Phd Thesis). "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca.
- Inoue, T. (2003). An overview of public relations in japan and the self-correction concept. In, K. Sriramesh & D. Verčič (Eds.), *The global public relations handbook: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 68-85). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Institute of Public Relations Malaysia. (2012). *IPRM Accreditation Programme*. Retrieved from iprm.org.my/download/accreditation-programme-2011.pdf
- Ismail, I., & Ahmad, Z. (2014). A study of the 1malaysia campaign promotion by information department and an exploratory survey on the public perception. *International Journal Of Social Science and Humanity*, 4(2), 83-87.
- Ismail, T., & Ahmad, J. (2015). Public relations vs. advertising. *Malaysian Journal Of Communication*, 31(2), 117-130.
- Jempson, M. (2005). Spinners or sinners? PR, journalists and public trust. *Journal of Communication Management*, 9 (3), 267-276.
- Jo, S. (2007). Exploratory study of public relations paradigm and roles. *Korea Journal of Public Relations Research*, 11(1), 77-106.
- Kaur, K., & Shaari, H. (2006). Perception on the relationships between public relations practitioners and journalists. *Kajian Malaysia*, 24(1&2), 9-32.
- Kaur, K., (1997). *The impact of privatization on public relations and the role of public relations management in the privatization process: A qualitative analysis of the Malaysian case* (Doctoral thesis). University of Maryland, College Park, Md.
- L'Etang, J. (1999). Public relations education in Britain: A historical review in the context of professionalisation. *Public Relations Review*, 25 (3), 261-289.
- Lattimore, D., Baskin, O., Heiman, S. T., & Toth, E. L. (2012). *Public relations: The profession & the practice* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill, New York, NY: Avenue of the Americas.
- LeCompte, M. D. & Preissle, J. (1994). Qualitative research: What it is, what it isn't, and how it's done. In B. Thompson (Eds.), *Advances in social science methodology*, 3, 141-163. Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

- Leifer, R., & Delbecq, A. (1978) Organizational/ environmental interchange: A model of boundary spanning activity. *Academy of Management Review*, 40-50.
- Lim, K., & Hussein, A. (2006). Professionalism and ethics: Is the tobacco industry damaging the health of the public relations profession? *Kajian Malaysia*, 24(1&2), 55-71.
- Lorenzo-Molo, M. C. (2007). Understanding the reputation and image of the Philippine public relations industry. *Public Relations Review*, 33(1), 58-67.
- Lwin, M. O., & Pang, A. (2014). Singapore. In T. Watson (Eds.), *Asian perspectives on the development of public relations: other voices*. (pp. 108-111). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maina, N., & Mberia, H. (2014). application of public relations theories in the practice of public relations in national government ministries. *International Journal of Education And Research*, 2(4),341-354.
- Margaret, A. (2015, September 30). *Trust You Study with AccorHotels Shows Effect of TripAdvisor Reviews on Bookings* [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.trustyou.com/press/trustyou-study-accorhotels-shows-effect-tripadvisor-reviews-bookings-2>
- Marks, D., & Yardley, L. (2004). *Research methods for clinical and health psychology*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Mayer, N. O. (2015). Online reputations: Why hotel reviews matter and how hotels respond. Retrieved from https://www.pwc.ch/de/publications/2016/pwc_global_hotels_report_2015_e.pdf
- Mehta, A. M., & Xavier, R. J. (2009). Public relations management in organizations. In J. Chia & G. Synnott (Eds.), *An introduction to public relations: From theory to practice* (pp. 190-221). Oxford University Press, Australia.

- Meng, J. (2012). strategic leadership in public relations: an integrated conceptual framework. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 336-338.
- Meng, J., Berger B. K., Gower K. K., & Heyman, W.C. (2012). A test of excellent leadership in public relations: Key qualities, valuable sources, and distinctive leadership perceptions. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(1), 18–36.
- Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia (2016, October 18). *Rated Tourist Accommodation Premises*. Retrieved from <http://www.motac.gov.my/en/check/hotel?h=&n=1&v=20>
- Mohsen, A. S. (2015, October 19). Tourism industry now 6th largest GDP contributor, says Najib. *The Sun Daily*. Retrieved from <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/1586311>
- Mokhtar, K., Reen, C., & Jamir Singh, P. (2013). The new economic policy (1970 – 1990) in Malaysia: The economic and political perspectives. *International Journal on Media Communications (JMC)*, 1(1), 12-17.
- Moss, D., & DeSanto, B. (2011). *Public relations: A managerial perspective*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Neuman, L. W. (2014). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.
- Onyiengo, S. (2014). The public relations as a management function and the challenges to effective internal public relations at the Kerio valley development authority in Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(24), 1-8.
- Palea, A. (2012). The role of professional associations in defining the public relations profession. The Romanian case. *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, 5(1-2), 17-24.

- Paramonovs, S., & Ijevleva, K. (2016). Expert In-depth interview on development and efficiency of 'RIGA international airport' reflecting factors. *Economics & Business*, 28,98-105. DOI:10.1515/eb-2016-0014
- Phillips, D. (2006). Towards relationship management: Public relations at the core of organisational development. *Journal of Communication Management*, 10(2), 211-226.
- Pieczka, M. (2002). Public relations expertise deconstructed. *Media, Culture & Society*, 24(3), 301–323.
- Public Relations Society of America. (2011, September). *Public Relations Professional in 2015*. Retrieved from <http://apps.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/Documents/PRProfessionalIn2015.pdf>
- Public Relations Society of America. (n.d.). Retrieved October 27, 2016, from <https://www.prsa.org/>
- Quelch, J. A., & Klein, L. R. (1996). The Internet and international marketing. *Sloan Management Review*, 60–75.
- Rawjee, V., Veerasamy, D., & Gqamane, Z. (2012). The practice of public relations within selected organisations in Durban, South Africa. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(26), 7745-7749.
- Reber, B.H., & Berger B.K. (2006). Finding influence: Examining the role of influence in public relations practice. *Journal of Communication Management*, 10(3), 235–249.
- Reeves, C. (2013). *Using public relations for corporate social responsibility: PR professional's complementary role in successful CSR programs* (Master's thesis), University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

- Richmond, L. B. (2002). Putting the public in public relations: The case of the Seattle Sheraton hotel and towers. In D. G. Rutherford (Eds.), *Hotel management and operations* (pp.372-377). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rittichainuwat, N. B., & Chakraborty, G. (2012). Perceptions of importance and what safety is enough. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(1), 42-50.
- Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive Perceptions of the Top 10 Soft Skills Needed in Today's Workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 75(4), 453-465.doi:10.1177/1080569912460400
- Ruler, B. V. (2000). Communication management in the Netherlands. *Public Relations Review*, 26(4), 403-423.
- Sallot, L.M. (2002). What the public thinks about public relations: An impression management experiment. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79(1), 150- 171.
- Shamsan, R. M., & Otieno, M. (2015). Effects of strategic public relations on organization performance: A case study of kenya red cross society. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 5(9), 1-12.
- Shin, H., & Yoon, H. (1992). Exploring the role and professionalism of public relations practitioners in Korea. *Korea Society for Journalism and Communication Studies*, 27, 283–308.
- Skinner, C., Essen, L. V., & Mersham, G. (2004). *Handbook of public relations* (7th ed.). Cape Town, Southern Africa: Oxford University Press.
- Sriramesh, K., & Verčič, D. (2003). *The global public relations handbook: Theory, research, and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Tench, R., & Yeomans, L. (2014). *Exploring public relations*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

- Theaker, A. (2012). *The public relations handbook*. (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Theaker, A., & Yaxley, H. (2013). *The public relations strategic toolkit: An essential guide to successful public relations practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tikolo, K. (2011). The practice of public relations in Kenya: Future growth prospects. *Public Relations Society of Kenya Draft Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.prsk.co.ke/index.php/publications/overview-of-pr-arena>
- Wernick, A., (1991). *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression*. London, Sage Publication Ltd.
- White, C. L. (2010). Public Perceptions of Public Relations. *Public Relations Review*, 36(4), 319-324. DOI: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.09.002.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2011). *Mass media research: an introduction*. Australia: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning.
- Wong, A. (2011). From the front lines: a qualitative study of anesthesiologists' work and professional values. *Canadian Journal of Anesthesia*, 58(1), 108-17.
- World Travel & Tourism Council. (2015). *Travel & tourism. economic impact of Malaysia 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/malaysia2015.pdf>
- Wu, M. Y. & Taylor, M. (2003). Public Relations in Taiwan: roles, professionalism, and relationship to marketing. *Public Relations Review*, 29(4), 473-483. doi: 10.1016/j.pubrev.2003.08.008
- Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. (2009). Unstructured interview. In B. Wildemuth (Ed.), *Applications of social research methods to questions in information and library science* (pp.222-231). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Appendices