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MASTER'S THESIS

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A COMPARISON BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND SLOVENIA

Sarajevo, October 2014   DUNJA BOŠNJAK

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INTRODUCTION

In general terms, the public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services (Dube & Danescu, 2011, p. 3). The main task of the public sector is to create a good atmosphere for a better functioning of society. Decisions made by public institutions and other public sector organizations are in the majority of cases reflected on the everyday life of citizens in one society. Considering this complex task and a huge responsibility, the public sector is faced with many challenges. To fulfill its tasks, it has to understand the needs of the public and fulfill their expectations. This implies a continuous monitoring of trends, listening and commitment in improving public services and goods through a focus on different publics. The atmosphere that is created becomes also a foundation for the future development of a country.

Most public sector organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: B&H) are financed from the state budget so these organizations should have greater accountability to the public. According to the report of the World Bank (2012, p. 2) the level of public trust in the governments in B&H is low. The wider public sees the public sector as inefficient and irresponsible towards society. In order to achieve better results, it is necessary to implement a new approach to the management of public organizations in B&H. New public management (hereinafter: NPM) has become a practice all around the world as part of the public sector/public administration reforms. According to O'Flynn (2007, p. 353) NPM is a new paradigm for thinking about government and public sector activity, policy-making and service delivery. The NPM movement began to develop in the late 70s and the early 80s. The first movers were the United Kingdom, reformed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the communal governments in the United States which suffered heavily from recessive developments and tax revolts of their citizens. Later the national governments of other commonwealth countries joined and after the reform successes in these countries' administrative reforms got on the agendas of almost all countries of The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereinafter: OECD) and a lot of other countries in the world (Gruening, 1998, pp. 3-4). This reform is also happening in B&H.

New ways of communication and a specific role of Public Relations (hereinafter: PR) are also part of this reform in the public sector. PR is valuable to an organization because it helps balance the self-interest of the organization alongside with the interests of people who are affected by the organization or who have the power to affect the organization (Grunig, 2001, p. 3). Public sector organizations depend on the support of the public, so misunderstandings in communication should not be allowed to happen.

The First World Assembly of Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico City in 1978, defined public relations as "the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organization and the public interest" (Jefkins & Ugboajah, 1986, p. 5).

Because of its nature and the advantages that it can bring to organizations, public relations should have a crucial role in strategic planning and organizational management. Nowadays, communication has become a relevant domain in every organization and therefore many public institutions or organizations have public relations departments or at least a person in charge of the PR activities (Balaban & Iancu, 2009, p. 23). Public relations is one of the strongest channels, and it is often considered one of the most authentic and most credible by the public (Kotler & Lee, 2007, p. 152).

Creating communication plans that are complement to the overall strategic plan of the given organization is an important step in achieving organizational goals and in improving the performance of the organization. It is important that organizations recognize the potential of communication and use it in the right way.

The result of a bad public relations practice and of a lack of communication is the distrust of citizens. Better PR practices would prove transparency and accountability to the general public. Public organizations exist for the sake of citizens, and they need to listen to their requests, suggestions. The better the coordination and communication is established with the citizens, the easier will they jointly be able to achieve the goals of both sides. Openness of the public sector to society, in a way that would enable them to have impact on the public policy, would be one of the ways for achieving organizational and societal effectiveness.

With the development of public relations, this area is becoming increasingly important and influential. Some studies and research were conducted in B&H showing the state of the public relations profession in B&H. The project of reform of public administration included a research conducted on the tools of PR practitioners in B&H, but so far no one had a special study done on the role of public relations in public sector management and its influence on performance. The focus of this thesis is the importance of public relations in the public sector and its influence in organizations, especially in B&H but it will also include Slovenia.

The research will determine the perception of PR practitioners about their role in communication. It will also show the level of trust of leaders in the public sector in their PR department and whether they consult them in their decision making process. Also, the research will show the level of trust of the public in public organizations. It will give a view of PR contribution in achieving organizational goals, their evaluation practices and particular challenges in communication.

The purpose of the thesis is to understand the advantages and the importance of strategic communication for a better performance of the public sector. As the goal of B&H is to be part of European Union (hereinafter: EU), this thesis will try to compare European (Slovenian) and Bosnian practices, and see if they are similar.

The objectives of the thesis are:

- to determine the position of PR practitioners in the public sector,

- to identify PR factors that influence achieving organizational goals,
- to compare Slovenian practices with the practices of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- to capture the perception of PR practitioners employed in the public sector about their contribution and the contribution of public relations activities to organizational effectiveness,
- to find out the level of public trust in the public sector of B&H and Slovenia.

In order to get information, primary and secondary data sources will be used. Secondary data will be some publications of public organizations. Data about subjects from the internet search, e-books, bases like "Proquest", "EBSCO" and "Google Scholar" will also be used.

The research will be done by using qualitative and quantitative methodology and research instruments: interviews and online questionnaires. The participants of the research will be PR practitioners in the public sector of B&H, PR experts in Slovenia and people (randomly chosen) who live in B&H and Slovenia. The interview questions will be set in advance. Questions in the online questionnaire will be open-ended, questions of the check-list type, multiple choice questions and rank scale.

The **main thesis** of this master work is: »*Strategic public relations are the basis for organizational and societal effectiveness of public organizations*«. Consistently, the following hypotheses will be checked within research:

H_1: The general public believes that public sector is effective (achieving its goals).

H_2: PR professionals have an important influence in the strategic management of public sector organizations.

H_3: The general public' trust in public sector in Slovenia is higher than it is in B&H.

This thesis consists of four parts. The first part explores the theory of public sector management. The second part gives a look into public relations. The third part of thesis describes roles of public relations in the public sector. The fourth part describes the research objectives, presents the research questions and methodology. This part also includes empirical findings and results of the research conducted among PR practitioners in B&H, Slovenian PR experts and people who live in B&H and Slovenia. It draws a parallel between views on public sector of people and that of PR practitioners and PR experts. The results of the research are also discussed and interpreted in this chapter together with given limitations and future research suggestions.

1 MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Every society is divided and based on three sectors: the public, the private and the civil sector (non-governmental organizations). When it comes to the definition of the public sector, it is really debatable but almost every definition ties public sector as an economical part of society controlled by state or local governments and financed by tax money. In general terms, the public

sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services (Dube & Danescu, 2011, p. 3). The public sector consists of government organizations, education, healthcare, police, military, public roads/transport, cultural institutions etc. in most countries in the world. According to Lawton and Rose (1991, p. 17) public sector organizations are those organizations that are under the influence of political processes, responsible to the public, primarily bureaucratic organization and financed from the funds, directly or indirectly associated with the state decisions.

The main task of management in any organization is setting up and implementing tasks and activities in the right way in order to achieve the overall organizational goals. The public sector should be managed and organized to facilitate effective and efficient performance of its functions which will result in quality services to the public. Challenges faced by management in public organizations, on the one hand are the needs of the general public and on the other hand the nature and requirements of the government. Strategic planning is in many cases challenging, because it often has to be adapted to short-term interests of politicians. Poister and Streib (1999, p. 309) emphasized that a strong strategic management capability is essential for public sector organizations because it provides both a short term and a long-term sense of direction to its internal and external environments.

According to Dukakis and Portz (2010, p. 6) and their observers of the public sector in America, the critical need in the public sector is for more effective leadership and better management. Surely, this situation is not only such in America even more it is needed here in our region. The public sector needs leader-managers who demonstrate leadership as well as management skills. Those are individuals who can bring vision to their work as well as organize resources to effectively deliver services.

Given the overall economic situation that has overtaken Europe and the world in general, the public sector is faced with public distrust. The general public believes that the public sector is inefficient and that it acts irresponsibly towards society. A new issue and the main direction of change in the public sector should be to focus on increasing effectiveness, productivity and efficiency.

1.1 Effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector

Both the performance and the success of an organization, whether private or public, are reflected in its efficiency and effectiveness. The efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector is often in question. The public sector is seen as inefficient when compared to the private sector.

McCormick (1981, p. 299) defines these basic concepts and says that effectiveness is a measure of success in achieving a clearly stated objective. Effectiveness is defined as the level of results (Bermen, 2006, p. 5). The most common synonyms that describe term effectiveness are: success, productiveness, value and performance. Cost is the price which has to be paid in achieving an

objective. It can and should include subjective phenomena such as distress or discomfort. Efficiency is cost effectiveness. An efficient solution is one that is the most effective at a minimum cost (McCormick, 1981, p. 299).

Efficiency refers to an input-output ratio or comparison, whereas effectiveness refers to an absolute level of either input acquisition or outcome attainment (Goodman & Pennings, 1977, p. 147). These definitions are universal, but the efficiency of public organizations should not be observed and measured as the efficiency of private organizations because of their accountability to the public. Some services are needed regardless of whether or not they are profitable to produce them. In this regard Abedian and Biggs (1998, p. 481) refer to social efficiency, which is especially of importance in the public sector. The goal of the public sector should be to provide public goods and services, but it should always pay attention to social factors such as the contribution of a product/service to the community at large (Bester, 2007, p. 18). That is the reason why effectiveness is of paramount importance in the public sector, and often more important than efficiency.

When we speak of efficiency, most analysts refer to economic efficiency, taken from the private sector and subjected to analysis in the public sector, in order to illustrate the so-called inefficiency of the latter. Efficiency in the public sector must thus be seen as an amount between the economic efficiency and the social environmental efficiency. Also, the time horizon for measuring the efficiency obtained should be adjusted to the investment. The private sector usually seeks economic effectiveness on a short-term (annual) profit, while most public sector investments generate results over a longer period of time, these future flows of efficiency are often ignored in such analyses (Mihaiu, Operana, & Cristecu, 2010, p. 135).

There is no efficiency without effectiveness, because it is more important to do well what you have proposed (the effectiveness) than do well something else that was not necessarily concerned (Drucker, 2001, p. 147). To be effective and efficient, all the departments of an organization must be effective and efficient, so that synergetic action of individual departments can lead to the achievement of overall organizational goals. This work will provide examples of how a public relations department can contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization, and how these departments in public sector organizations are effective and efficient.

1.2 Measuring effectiveness of public organizations

Establishing a reference system that is equivalent to good results is very important for any type of organization including public organizations. Performance measurement in the private sector is the basis for the success of an organization and part of the daily activity. Usually, private organizations "live" a performance-based culture, so these measures are well known and simple. On the other hand, special characteristics of the public sector make performance measurement inappropriate or, at least, very difficult. However, new trends in the management of public sector organizations as well as more demanding users have influenced on putting performance measures of the public sector on a higher level. Measurement helps a public body to plan its

services better, to provide better services for users, to go on improving them and to increase its support from the public (Pidd, 2012, p. 5).

Kouzmin, Loffler, Klages and Korac-Kakabadse (1999, p. 122) emphasize three major trends in performance measurement, in the OECD countries in the 1990s:

- the development of measurement systems which enable comparisons of similar activities across a number of areas (benchmarking instruments, such as citizens charters and quality awards);
- efforts at measuring customer satisfaction (citizen surveys; output as indicators, such as the number of complaints; and throughput measures such as indirect proxies for measuring direct impact of programs on clients); and
- some lessening in the focus on the long-term impact of programs, particularly in evaluating such programs.

According to Kushner and Poole (1996, p. 172) the performance of an organization may be modelled along four components: resource acquisitions, efficiency, goal attainment (effectiveness) and client satisfaction. Effectiveness is just one of the relevant performance measures of public organizations. Effectiveness measures constitute the single most important category of performance measures because they represent the degree to which a program is producing its intended outcomes and achieving the desired results (Poister, 2003, p. 44). Understanding and assessment of organizational effectiveness vary depending on the work domain and the type of organization, but also in many cases on organizational stakeholders.

Increased attention to the measurement of results has given rise to a distinction between outputs and outcomes as measures of effectiveness: Outputs are defined as the immediate results of activities, and outcomes are measures of the extent to which organizations attain their goals (Berman, 2006, p. 6). Outputs represent what a program actually does, whereas outcomes are the results it produces (Poister, 2003, p. 38). Outcomes are the ultimate criteria for gauging program effectiveness, but as direct products of program activity, outputs are critical for achieving intended outcomes.

According to Cameron (1978, p. 604) organizational effectiveness may be typified as being mutable (composed of different criteria at different life stages), comprehensive (including a multiplicity of dimensions), divergent (relating to different constituencies), transpositive (altering relevant criteria when different levels of analysis are used), and complex (having no parsimonious relationships among dimensions).

Several models of organizational effectiveness are developed in theory, because only one is not applicable in all situations so different circumstances determine which model is the most appropriate. Table 1 explains these models.

Table 1. Commonly Used Models of Organizational Effectiveness

Model	Definition	When Useful
	An Organization is effective to the extent that...	The model is most preferred when...
Goal Model	It accomplishes its stated goals.	Goals are clear, consensual, time-bound, and measureable.
System Resource Model	It acquires needed resources.	A clear connection exists between inputs and performance.
Internal Processes Model	It has an absence of internal strain with smooth internal functioning.	A clear connection exists between organizational processes and performance.
Strategic Constituencies Model	All strategic constituencies are at least minimally satisfied.	Constituencies have powerful influence on the organization, and it has to respond to demands.
Competing Values Model	The emphasis on criteria in the four different quadrants meets constituency preferences.	The organization is unclear about its own criteria, or changes in criteria over time are of interest.
Legitimacy Model	It survives as a result of engaging in legitimate activity.	The survival or decline and demise among organizations is of interest.
Fault-Driven Model	It has an absence of faults or traits of ineffectiveness.	Criteria of effectiveness are unclear, or strategies for improvement are needed.
High Performing Systems Model	It is judged excellent relative to other similar organizations.	Comparisons among similar organizations are desired.

Source: K.S. Cameron, *The effectiveness of ineffectiveness*, 1984, p. 276.

None of these models give a complete picture of organizational effectiveness. Therefore, usually several models are applied simultaneously in practice. For public organizations most applicable are the following: Goal Model, Strategic Constituencies Model and Internal Processes Model.

To determine the level of organization effectiveness it is necessary to establish the measures of organizational effectiveness that can be applied to the public sector. Views on effectiveness in practice are different, so formulating the measures of effectiveness is quite a challenging task. According to Sproles (2000, p. 52) public sector measures of effectiveness evaluate external parameters that are indicative of how well an organization achieves its goals, so these measures are focused on stakeholders of a particular organization. A measure of effectiveness is a statement and not the figure obtained as a result of any measurement process (Sproles, 2002, p. 2).

1.3 New public management

New public management came into practice as a response to a low performance of public sector organizations around the world and became a global model for reforming and managing the public sector. In many countries, the public sector failed as a driver of national development, which was confirmed in many cases in B&H, so it has even become a barrier to development of

the country. As the private sector was believed to be more productive, more responsive, efficient and customer-oriented the need to implement some business (private sector) management principles into public sector arose. In a very real sense, the new public management is concerned with the commercialization, as far as this is possible, of the state's role in providing services to its citizens, and of the state's relationship with its citizens (Falconer, 1997, p. 67). This concept is incorporated in most definitions of NPM. Charih and Rouillard (1997, p. 27) concluded that NPM is thus constructed against such principles of bureaucracy as centralization, the politics-administration continuum, prudence and process accountability. The basis of NPM lay in lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector and shifting the emphasis from process accountability towards a greater element of accountability in terms of results (Hood, 1995, p. 94). In his previous work Hood (1991, pp. 4-5) summarized seven aspects of NPM that appear in most discussions, namely:

- the shift toward concept *'hands-on professional management'* in the public sector meaning that people on top management positions manage and make decisions based on their opinions and expertise, and not under the influence of a third party (for example a political party),
- the development of *explicit standards and measures* of performance, focusing on indicators that will be reference of success,
- attempts to put *greater emphasis on output controls,* what implies a focus on results rather than procedures which is not a rare case in public sector organizations which operate in a bureaucratic way,
- the *shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector*, as Hood (1991, p. 5) explains this: "Break up of formerly 'monolithic' units, unbundling of U-form management systems into corporatized units around products, operating on decentralized 'one-line' budgets and dealing with one another on an 'arms-length' basis",
- the *shift to greater competition*, what implies ensuring competition through sub-contractors and public tendering procedures,
- the development *of private-sector styles in public management practice*, what includes the introduction of private sector management tools with an emphasis on public relations (PR) techniques,
- the shift toward *greater discipline and parsimony in resource use,* what includes checking the real needs for resources in the public sector and performing more jobs with fewer resources.

The NPM movement began to develop in the late 70s and the early 80s. The first movers were the United Kingdom, reformed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the communal governments in the US which suffered heavily from recessive developments and tax revolts of their citizens. Later the national governments of other commonwealth countries joined and after the reform successes in these countries' administrative reforms got on the agendas of almost all OECD countries and a lot of other countries in the world (Gruening, 1998, pp. 3-4). But globalization of NPM has been reinforced by various international actors, for example: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union, the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development, etc. NPM also came to B&H and it is also current, mostly because of the European integration process. In the European context it means modernizing public institutions that will result in reduced costs and time of citizens. It is also about fostering dynamic partnerships with the civil society and the private sector, improving the quality of service delivery, enhancing social responsibilities and ensuring the broad participation of citizens in decision-making and providing feedback on public service performance (Penger & Tekavčič, 2008, p. 302). The changes and practices that have occurred in B&H in the context of the reform will be discussed below.

1.4 Public sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina

B&H has one of the largest public sectors in the region. The duplication and parallelism in the public sector institutions are a result of the complex nature of the country's basic political architecture. Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Srpska and District Brčko. Going further, the Federation has 10 cantons and each canton has its own government and then cantons are subdivided into municipalities (79 municipalities). Republic of Srpska is only divided into municipalities (62 municipalities). Figure 1 shows the administrative and fiscal structure of B&H.

Figure 1. Levels of government in B&H
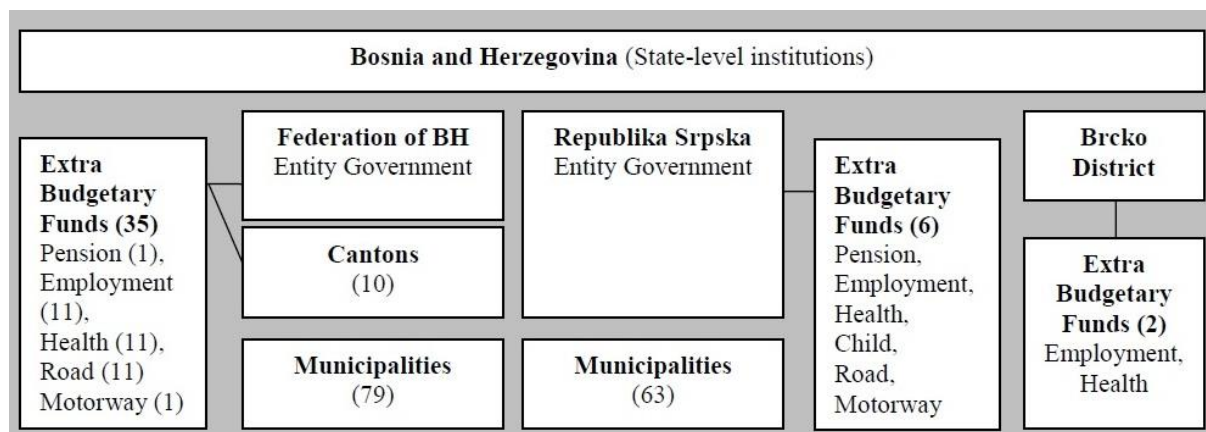
Source: World Bank*, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Challenges and Directions for Reform,* 2012, p. 2, Figure 1.1.

Such a large public sector and the current structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina are shown as expensive and inefficient, but it needs to be emphasized that no system of quality management is established in the public sector. According to the World Bank (2012, p. 9) in B&H the public sector wage bill as a share of GDP is not only one of the highest in the Western Balkans, it is also one of the highest in the entire Europe and Central Asia region and this is both a reflection of constitutional complexity and of unsuitable hiring practices.

Since B&H is in the process of European integration, it seems that what is mainly visible in the process is the weakness and the mismanagement of the public sector. As Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country in transition, the previous policy still has impact on today's structure,

organization and culture of the public sector. Therefore, on the path from socialism to democracy, the public sector of B&H must adopt new principles and learn to operate and communicate with the public in a different way according to democratic principles.

Apart from the fact that the public sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina is huge - it does not differ too much from other countries in terms of the content of the public sector. So the public sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of: production and supply of electricity, gas and water, public administration, defense, compulsory social security, education, health, social work and other community, social and personal service activities.

1.5 Public sector reform

The level of trust that citizens of B&H have in the public sector is low, while the general reputation of the sector is not a good one either. According to Shkaratan (2005) survey showed that only a very small fraction of the population in B&H believes in the honesty of the governments. Another thing is that most people just want to work in the public sector due to the reputation that little work results in regular and good salaries.

With the entry of Bosnia and Herzegovina into a contractual relationship with the European Union, obligations that Bosnia and Herzegovina must carry out also have been imposed which include public sector reform, precisely public administration reform. Heads of Governments accepted responsibility for the development and implementation of the Strategy for Public Administration Reform. In this Strategy (2006, p.7) the following is noted: "The Strategy is grounded in a firm vision to develop a public administration that is more effective, efficient, and accountable; that will serve the citizens better for less money; and that will operate with transparent and open procedures, while meeting all conditions set by European Integration, and thereby truly become a facilitator for continuous and sustainable social and economic development." Reform should not only affect public administrations but also the broader public sector.

Reform areas are available at the web site of Public Administration Reform Coordinator's office (PAR documents, 29.04.2013.) and cover: Policy Making and Coordination Capacities, Public Finance, Institutional Communication, Information Technologies, Administrative Procedure and Human Resources Management, equally and at the same time at all four administration levels (B&H, the FB&H, the RS and Brčko District of B&H). A review on area "Institutional Communication" will be found below. The public sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina will face a number of challenges on the way to achieve the overall progress. It has to be capable to respond to changing demands and expectations of the public in a manner that provides accountability and transparency of its work.

2 PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A MANAGERIAL FUNCTION

The term public relations (PR) will be defined and explained in this chapter, together with its roles in organizations, and with a focus on roles in public sector organizations.

2.1 Definition of Public Relations

Considering the diversity of the public relations field, from the very beginning until today various theorists and practitioners have tried to give a more comprehensive definition of public relations and in some way limit the scope of profession. All definitions show that the PR scope is really wide and that academics and practitioners have different views of PR. Given that the majority of literature authors that define and discuss public relations are from the United States, in the last 20 years European authors wanted to give their view and confront European conception of PR to U.S. perspective. In accordance with the profession development and the changes that are happening, the definition of PR is also evolving all the time.

Surely, PR existed already in the Greek and Roman times, but the basis for the form in which it exists today was given by Ivy Lee. Public relations means the actual relationship of the company to the people and that relationship involves more than talk. The company must act by performing good deeds (Litwin, 2000, p. 3). Another person who is responsible for the development of modern public relations is Edward Bernays, who bears the title "the father of public relations".

The last agreed definition of PR by the Public Relations Society of America (hereinafter: PRSA) says that "**Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics**" and can be seen at PRSA's website (PRSA, 2013). According to this the interests of both parties, on one hand organization and the other public, must be satisfied and protected. Public relations allow organizations to understand and get acquainted with the public, but also ensure that the public fully understand the reasons for their actions and gain their support.

Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006, p. 5) say that public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics upon whom its success depends. Belch and Belch (2003, p. 23) define PR as the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organization with public interest, and executes a program of action and communication to earn public understanding and acceptance. PR as part of an organization's activities has evolved over the years and become an increasingly important factor of success. So from a technical communication function that it had when it only covered the production and distribution of information as it was in the beginning, PR has become an indispensable part of the strategic management. An overview of PR management functions are listed at PRSA's web site (PRSA, 2013) as follows:

- anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization;
- counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities;
- researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing; financial; fund raising; employee, community or government relations; and other programs;
- planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy. Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.

In these functions lies the importance of enhancing the understanding of different stakeholders, the whole community, the environment of organization and their mutual impacts. Apart from understanding the world outside of the organization, one of core the values of PR is the understanding of the organization itself; it's inside world and its goals.

Bruning and Ledingham (2000, p. 87) said that the relational management perspective moves public relations practice away from "manipulating public opinion through communication messages" to a combination of "symbolic communication messages and organizational behaviors to initiate, nurture, and maintain mutually beneficial organization-public relationships". Managing all these activities PR also manage an organization's reputation. Oliver (2007, p. 12) states that public relations practice involves management of an organization's reputation by identifying perceptions which are held of the organization and working to inform all relevant audiences about the organizational performance.

Key elements of the definition of PR are contained in the definition of Kotler and Armstrong (2010, p. 472) who say that PR means building good relations with the company's various publics by obtaining favorable publicity, building up a good corporate image, and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors, stories and events.

As previously mentioned, the study that confronts meaning of PR from the United States and the European perspective has been done by Verčič, Ruler, Butschi and Flodin (2001). There are two easily identifiable differences of the European approach to public relations as compared to the United States approach: one is the lack of a conceptual dualism between communication and relationships and the other is demonstrated in various strategies adopted as a solution to the problem of a translation of the United States term "public relations" (Verčić et al., 2001, p. 380).

Verčič et al. (2001, p. 380) describe four dimensions of European public relations: managerial, operational, reflective and educational dimension. The managerial dimension is especially interesting for this thesis because it is connected to the organizational mission and strategy and it is aimed at commercial or other (internal and external) public groups. These four dimensions or

roles define the domain of public relations in Europe, with public relations definitions that highlight "communication management" or "relationship management" having no substantial distinction.

A multitude of definitions of PR exist in literature and it is not uncommon that academics disagree about PR definitions. As Moloney (2000, p. 6) says public relations is too multifaceted to be incorporated into a single definition. He suggests that public relations can be defined differently as a 'concept' (communication management by an organization with its publics), as a 'practice' (mostly dealing with the media) and in terms of its effects on society (a category of persuasive communication undertaken through the mass media or through private lobbying by groups to advance their material or ideological interests)(Tench & Yeomans, 2009, p. 6).

There are as many public relations definitions as there are people practicing and teaching it but taking into account all of these definitions can make one conclude that PR means managing a two-way communication, building relationships with the organization's key stakeholders and a mutual understanding, as well as building a reputation and caring about the publics.

2.2 Public Relations scope of work

The main factors that influence the way PR is focused, managed and implemented in a given organization are the type of organization, the sector in which it operates, its size, stage of development and its culture. PR strategies, tools and activities have to be adapted to its uniqueness, but the scope of work is quite similar in all organizations. Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) categorize work of PR departments and PR specialists on several fields: writing and editing, media relations and placement, research, management and administration, special events, speaking, production, training, contact and counseling (Table 2).

Table 2. Ten elements of PR work scope

Work scope	Description
Writing and editing	Print and broadcast news releases, feature stories, newsletters, correspondence, website/online media, shareholder/annual reports, speeches, brochures, AV scripts, advertisements, product and technical materials
Media relations and placement	Contacting news media, magazines, supplements, trade publications and freelancers to get them to publish material about the organization. Responding to media requests
Research	Gathering information about public opinion trends, issues, political climate, legislation, media coverage, special interest groups and other concerns relating to stakeholders. Online searches. Designing research, surveys and hiring research firms

(table continues)

Work scope	Description
Management and administration	Programming and planning with other managers, determining needs, prioritizing, defining publics, setting goals and objectives, developing strategy and tactics, administering personal budgets and managing programs
Special events	Arranging and managing news conferences, conventions, openings, ceremonies, anniversaries, fund-raising events, visiting dignitaries, contests, awards, facility visits
Speaking	Gaining speaking platforms, coaching others, speaking to groups
Production	Of multimedia, artwork, typography, photography, layout, DTP,AV, either personally or by other specialists
Training	Media training and public appearance, preparation for others, coaching others in writing and communication skills. Helping introduce change in culture, policy, structure and process
Contact	Liaising with media, community, internal and external groups. Listening, negotiating, managing conflict, mediating, meeting and entertaining guests and visitors
Counseling	Advising management on social, political and regulatory environments, crisis avoidance and management, working with others on issues management

Source: Cutlip et al., *Effective Public Relations*, 2000, pp. 36-37.

The field of public relations is multidisciplinary and requires a wide knowledge of different areas. To achieve the desired results, PR departments in organizations use specialist knowledge, experience and skills. Oliver (2007) stated that integrated communication tools and techniques can be broadly classified into eight strategic areas forming an integrated communication network (Figure 2). Public relations is an extremely broad field and it encompasses a number of areas, as shown in the Figure 2, so it is necessary for each of the areas to choose and act with an effective technique and with tools that will lead to the final objectives of communication.

With the development of the Internet and social networks a new dimension of public relations and a new space for adapting and customizing traditional public relations techniques and creating new ones was created. In addition to Oliver's (2007) eight strategic areas it is necessary to add one more area - strategic online communication.

Figure 2. PR strategy as an Integrated Communication
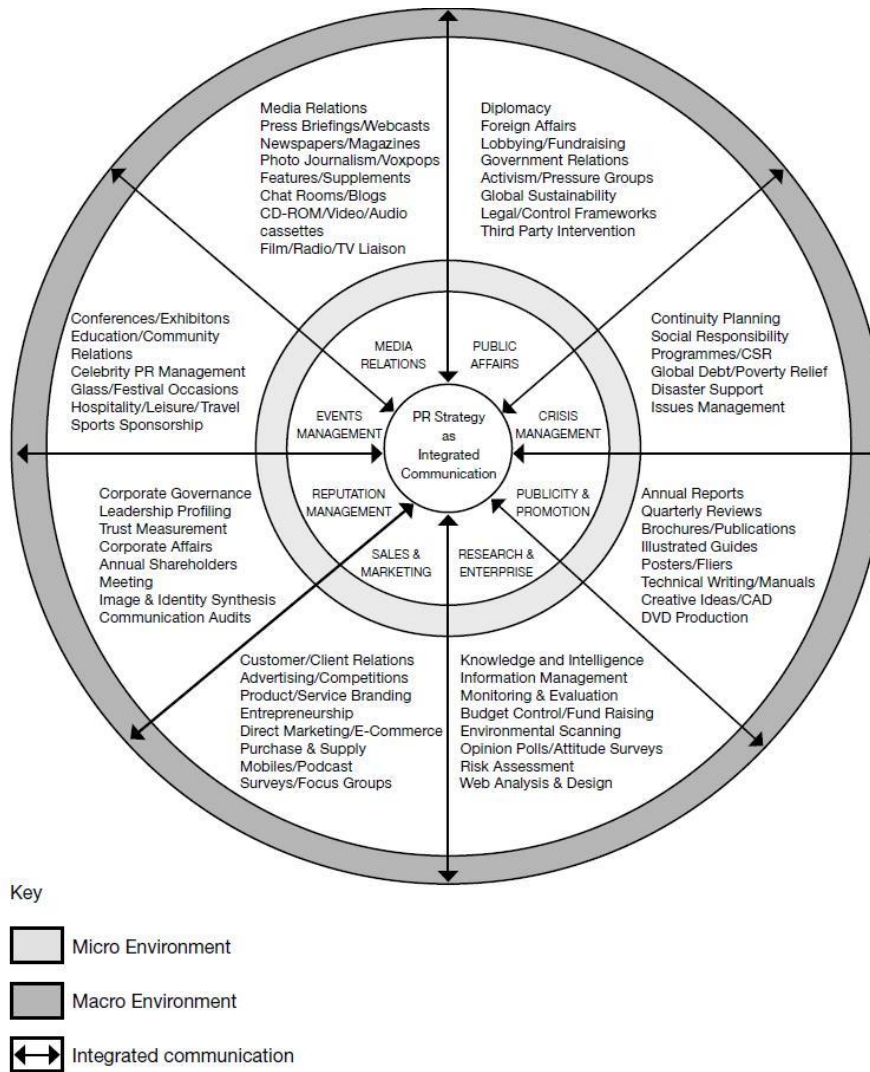
Source: S. Oliver, *Public Relations Strategy*, 2007, p.14, Figure 1.2.

Below is an explanation of the specific areas of PR which are combined to achieve effective programs and campaigns.

2.1.1 Media relations

Media relations are often a synonym for PR, because they are the most public and the most visible part of it. In particular, media relations are just one of the many PR tools to connect and communicate with various publics. In order to communicate messages, information and stories through media relations organizations interact with this specific public – journalists, reporters and editors from various types of media (online and print media, magazines, and radio and television stations).

As Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 223) say media relations are gatekeepers controlling the information that flows to other publics in a social system, so that is the reason for the existence

of a media bridge between an organization and other publics with whom an organization may have a relationship. The media are extremely influential in forming public opinion. Media theorists suggest that media power can range from discrediting political leaders to toppling governments and even to starting or stopping wars (Griffin, 2003). A huge number of large organizations employ agencies to monitor the media and to communicate with journalists, proprietors and other significant people in institutions who could be instrumental in the maintenance of an organization's corporate aims and objectives (Oliver, 2007, p. 93).

A common historical argument for using the media to communicate has been that editorials (anything written by a journalist) have more credibility with audiences than direct communication (such as advertising), because it is seen as coming from an independent third party (Tilley, 2005, p. 146). The press coverage achieved through media relations activity has the appearance of neutrality. That's why organizations practice media relations in their effort to maximize positive coverage in the mass media but not directly through advertising, so as to balance their organizational goals with the public opinion. Also, this method is cost effective which is very important for organizations in these times. Having an understanding of work conducted by the media implies that organizations are able to plan more effectively and implement successful communications. The public relations department in organizations has to know that different reporters and journalists cover different topics, so they have to spend some time finding out who covers the topic associated with the scope of their work and activities. An understanding of how the press and electronic media work and a good story (facts, figures, and analysis) distributed in good time to the right journalists are essential for effective media relations.

The most common media relations tools are: press releases, media alerts (invitations for the media), follow ups, press conferences, media kits, talk show appearances on radio and television, interviews, briefings, workshops, parties and tours for journalists. In addition to these classic tools personal contact is not negligible either.

2.1.2 Event management

Event management is the applied field of study and area of professional practice devoted to the design, production and management of planned events, encompassing festivals and other celebrations, entertainment, recreation, political and state, scientific, sport and arts events, those in the domain of business and corporate affairs (including meetings, conventions, fairs, and exhibitions), and those in the private domain (including rites of passage such as weddings and parties and social events for affinity groups) (Getz, 2008, p. 404). Regardless of the industry, all organizations use events as an opportunity to attract media attention, to get media coverage and economic benefits.

Events as a public relations tool are one of the most effective ways to communicate with stakeholders (media, partners, customers) creating a direct impact and collect immediate feedback. Successful events are usually based on a strong concept and purpose. Ideas for holding

events arise from a multitude of reasons for example to promote company/organization, to build partnerships, raise money, celebrate, mark important dates etc. (Christie & McAteer, 2006, p. 3). It is important to achieve that accurate information reaches the targeted publics. When creating events, organizations should take into account their overall vision and goals and use the opportunity to move the organization in that direction.

As any other communication activity every event has to be strategically planned with defined purposes and objectives. Organizations should care what people say, and their message to the public must be carefully crafted to reflect the character and strategy of the event (Hoyle, 2002, p.17).

2.1.3 Reputation management

By means of the interaction with its environment, but also just through its existence, every organization earns some reputation either good or bad. Reputation is nothing else but the environment's perception of that particular organization. Reputation is the way in which stakeholders, who know little about an organization's true intent, determine whether an organization is worthy of their trust (Stigler, 1962). For the success of the organization and for the achievement of its objectives it is important to place a continuous effort on developing, building and maintaining a good reputation. The key for effective public relations is a good corporate reputation.

The proliferation of media and information of the past two decades, the demands of investors for increased transparency, and the growing attention paid to social responsibility all speak for a greater focus on the part of organizations to build and maintain strong reputations (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2003, p. 2). According to Schultz and Werner (2005, p. 2) reputation consists of three elements:

1. Images — what stakeholders think of the company/organization,
2. Identity — what the company says it is, and
3. Personality — what the company is all about.

By managing the organization's reputation these three elements need to be harmonized so that the reputation can be sustained and protected. The elements to be noted are that the reputation is a 'collective representation' of images and perceptions, not a self-promoted message'. It involves relationships with all stakeholders ('constituencies') and it is gained, maintained and enhanced or detracted from over time (Kitchen and Watson, 2010, p. 2). It is the role of public relations to make sure that the organization is getting credit for the good it does. Great reputations are built on doing this consistently over a period of time in which a track record of delivering on promises and engendering trust is evident to everyone. All members of an organization have a contribution to make to building and sustaining reputation (Murray & White, 2004, p. 10).

Today organizations tend to have more awareness about the importance of building the culture of corporate social responsibility, so when we talk about reputation perhaps the most notable

activity of efforts to maintain and strengthen the reputation is corporate social responsibility (hereinafter: CSR). Organizations need to be aware that reputation management is not just a matter of the public relations department. Every member of the organization and department is also responsible for it.

2.1.4. Public affairs

It can often be found in literature that public affairs and public relations are synonyms. According to White and Mazur (1995, p. 200) public affairs is a specialized practice of public relations focused on relationships which have a bearing on the development of public policy. Public affairs can be conceptualized as the "voice" that lets organizations and groups (big and small, commercial and non-profit, public and private, religious and secular, conservative and radical, permanent and temporary, national and local) in a country or in a larger political union talk to each other and to the government – publicly and privately – about public policy at international, transnational, national, regional and local levels (Moloney, 2009, p. 442). Regulatory affairs, parliamentary liaison and lobbying – all these activities are part of public affairs.

2.1.5 Crisis management

One of the tasks of public relations, as already mentioned, is to care about the reputation of the given organization. Nothing else can threaten the reputation of an organization as seriously as a crisis situation.

A crisis is an event that disrupts normal operations of a company or organization and, if badly managed, can ruin hard-won reputations just in a few days and even, in some cases, destroy companies (Langford, 2010, p. 386). Usually crisis situations draw intense negative media coverage, which is certainly very bad for the image of the organization in question. But if that communicating about the crisis in good way could even support and increase the company's reputation. In a crisis situation each organization needs to provide information about the crisis, about its effects on various publics, and exactly what the organization plans to do to resolve it.

Crisis management does not only include communication during a crisis. It links pre crisis and post crisis communication. An organization that has strong pre crisis relationships with its relevant publics will suffer less damage than an organization with weak or nonexistent pre-crisis relationships. Successful crisis management is more than just damage control. More global approaches to understanding crises suggest planning and preparing for a crisis long before it happens. One critical feature of crisis planning entails managing the organization's complex communication relationships (Ulmer, 2001, p. 592). Organizations that cannot or do not provide information during crises can cause its publics to turn to other, often less credible, sources of information. These second or third-hand sources of information can usually only speculate about the details of a crisis and, as a result, often provide inaccurate information. Handling crisis situations by communicating is of vital importance for any type of organization.

2.1.6 Public opinion research

Any company, especially public sector organizations should be in the service of their consumers and the public. Given that public relations are based on mutual understanding of the organization and its public, it is necessary to have a tool that will give insight into the awareness, views, and current needs of public about important issues (e.g. public health, education, employment, economic growth, political situation etc.). Although such a research is something mostly carried out in the sphere of natural sciences, in today's world with the development of the social sciences social studies/surveys/researches have become an extremely important tool which allows for the achievement of an organization's objectives and helps them to be well managed and responsive to the needs of the public. Public opinion research is one of the most important and basic PR tools that uses reliable and systematic methods to collect opinions of a wide range of publics. The information that becomes obtained is used for a better understanding of public needs and expectations, but also for the development and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives. In this way organizations can measure its progress in improving service quality but also plan and evaluate communications, advertising and other activities.

2.1.7 Online communication

The Internet opened a set of new opportunities in many fields, including communication. The emergence of new technologies was the reason for using Internet in new way, in the case of communication, as a platform for social interaction and a new way of information sharing. Heinz (2007, p. 90) says that the Web evolved in a way that allows not only to promote a company, but also actively initiate and engage conversation with customers (and other related audiences/ stakeholders) in a way that generates interest, engenders credibility and loyalty. Context of online communications and public relations include tools like websites, blogs and social media networks. Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are changing the way people consume and share information.

Just as blogs and other social media allow organizations an effective environment through which to create dialogues and communicate directly with publics and stakeholders, so they allow users, clients, opponents and competitors to communicate freely with each other, with the potential to create a discourse that is significantly beyond the control of the subject (Philips & Young, 2009, p. 7). Many commercial companies are already using the new media to maintain relationships with their consumers. One of core elements that drive online public relations is transparency which is mostly expected from public sector organizations that should make information about their work available to the public. This is why there should be no difference between public sector organizations and commercial companies when it comes to online communication.

If no online channel is integrated in an organization's communication strategy or if the organization is not present on the Internet this will not ensure the organization to be protected from the influence of it. The internet gathers highly volatile groups of people driven by shared interests that can act locally as well as globally. Also, users of the blogosphere and social media

create news as much as they consume them. All this changed the classical rules of PR tools - rules of media relations, community relations and stakeholder communication.

2.3 PR strategies

For any organization, whether public or private, that wants to reach a particular goal and fulfill the mission of its existence, it is necessary to choose a particular strategy and a path to follow. As Bennett (1996) says, strategy is a direction that the organization chooses to follow in order to fulfill its mission. Communication with stakeholders in many organizations is one of the most important parts of the overall organization corporate strategy, so that communication strategy also became essential in strategic thinking and operations management.

A corporate communication strategy provides the focus and direction for an organization's communication with its stakeholders, i.e. it determines what should be communicated to assist in achieving organizational goals. It is a process of identifying the organization's key strategic issues, determining their impact on the organization's stakeholders, and deciding what should be communicated to solve the problem or capitalize on the opportunity (Steyn, 1999, p. 25). The communication strategy should be systematic and creative at the same time and represent a guiding principle for all coming steps in its implementation.

Hazleton (1992, p. 35) identified the taxonomy of seven public relations strategies that were most often used by organizations: informative, persuasive, facilitative, cooperative problem solving, promise and reward, threat and punishment, and bargaining. These strategies support the goals of public relations by influencing the meaning that audiences attribute to messages. There are many factors that influence what the communication strategy of an organization will look like and whether it will be effective. Perceived attributes of publics significantly influence public relations strategy use in organizations (Werder, 2005, p. 1). Communication depends on the intention and on specific target stakeholder groups.

Communication strategy also depends on the organizational culture which is affected by the larger societal culture and by the environment. It affects public relations in the long term by molding the world view of the public relations function and thus influences the choice of a model of public relations within an organization (Oliver, 2007. p. 5). When creating communication strategy Ind (1997, p. 35) says that it should always start from the need to have specifically and ideally quantifiable communication objectives. The over-arching goal should be to achieve a specific positioning that will transcend the objectives for different audiences. The positioning itself should be derived from analysis.

According to Botan (2006, p. 226) it is essential that strategic communication is built on three levels of planning: grand strategy, strategy and tactics. Grand strategy is a comprehensive central strategy of organization focused on long term goals and the vision of the organization. A strategy in public relations is a campaign-level decision making that involves mobilizing and arranging resources and arguments for implementing the company's grand strategy (Botan, 2006, p. 226).

Tactics are tools that help in the implementation of communication strategy. Organizational PR processes and communication strategy must start from organizational goals, because PR activities use communication to help achieve larger organizational goals (Grunig et al., 2002, p. 450). Communication to all stakeholders should be consistent, so it is the public relations department's (if it exists) role to ensure consistency. In addition to consistency, communication with the environment should be continuous because this is the only way for the organization to build a good foundation for long-term relationships.

2.4 PR tactics

Strategy is dictated by, and springs from, the issues arising from the analysis of the problem and it is the foundation on which tactics are built. Tactics are the "events, media and methods used to implement the strategy" (Cutlip et al., 2000, p. 378). Organizations use PR tactics to engage the media and local community in topics of interest to them, and in that way build awareness about their organizations and specific issues that concern them. Tactics are the actions that help an organization strive toward its highest values. For those reasons public relations rely on different tools and channels, and not just one.

Public relations have been an occupation defined more by its techniques than by its theory. Most public relations practitioners have been the masters of a number of techniques. They know how to secure media coverage, prepare press releases, write speeches, write and design brochures, produce video news releases, lobby representatives in governments, stage a special event, or prepare an annual report (Grunig, 2001, p. 13). With the help of Web based services, social networks and the Internet itself a new channel and space appeared for effective PR tactics. The most common PR tactics are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. PR tactics

PR activity	PR tactics
Media relations	Press conference; Press release; Articles and features; One-to-one briefings; Interviews; Background briefings/materials; Photography; Video news releases; Websites; Email
Advertising (PR led)	Corporate; Product
Direct mail (PR led)	Annual report; Brochures/leaflets; Customer reports; External newsletters; General literature (also multimedia material)
Exhibitions	Trade and public; Literature; Sampling; Demonstrations; Multimedia
Conferences	Multimedia; Literature; Hospitality
Community relations	Direct involvement; Gifts in kind; Sponsorship; Donations
Special events	AGMs; SGMs; Special occasions
Customer relations	Media relations; Direct mail; Advertising; Internet; Exhibitions; Retail outlets; Sponsorship; Product literature; Newsletter
Internal communication	Videos; Briefings; Newsletters; Quality guides; Compact disk interactive; Email; Intranet
Corporate identity	Design; Implementation

(table continues)

PR activity	PR tactics
Sponsorship	Sport; Arts; Worthy causes
Lobbying	One-to-one briefings; Background material; Videos; Literature; Group briefings; Hospitality; CDs; Audio cassettes
Research	Organizations; Public relations programs; Issues monitoring; Results monitoring
Crisis management	Planning; Implementation
Liaison	Internal (including counselling); External
Financial relations	Annual report; Briefing materials; One-to-one briefings; Media relations; Hospitality; Internet; Extranet

Source: R. Tench, & L. Yeomans, *Exploring Public Relations*, 2009, p. 189.

The tactics must be in line with the company's strategy and implemented in way that reaches target publics and has impact on them.

2.5 Evaluation and measurement of public relations effects

The establishment of a framework for measuring public relations effects and its regularly monitoring is very important for every organization. Evaluating PR activities is essential for many reasons, including accountability, assessment of program effectiveness and professionalism (Szondi & Theilmann, 2009, p. 213). Kazokiene and Stravinskiene (2011, p. 92) describe PR effectiveness as the value of PR decisions to the company, expressed through the effectiveness of PR programs (comparing the set target to the obtained result) as well as the progress of the company's relationships with strategic audiences. In the short-term, PR measurement and evaluation involves assessing the success or failure of specific PR programs, strategies, activities or tactics by measuring the outputs, outtakes and/or outcomes of those programs against a predetermined set of objectives.

In the long-term, PR measurement and evaluation involves assessing the success or failure of much broader PR efforts that have as their aim seeking to improve and enhance the relationships that organizations maintain with key constituents (Lindenmann, 2002, p. 2). According to Hon (1997, p. 3) there are four different levels at which public relations effectiveness can be assessed: of individual practitioners, programs, organization and society. Szondi and Theilmann (2009, p. 214) emphasize also the importance of the media in the field of evaluation and on the level of PR effectiveness. These orientations and levels of assessment are described in Table 4.

Table 4. Orientations of public relations evaluation

Orientation	Aim of evaluation	Levels
Media	Quantity and quality of coverage	Programme, societal
Publics	Effects on publics how they changed their knowledge and attitudes as a result of PR activities	Programme
Organization	To demonstrate how public relations can contribute to achieving organizational goals	Organizational
Persuasion	Demonstrates return on investment (ROI) to clients or management; value of public relations; accountability of public relations professionals or departments	Individual, programme
Relationship	Client/agency, organization/publics	Individual, organizational

Source: G. Szondi & R. Theilmann, *Public relations research and evaluation*, 2009. p. 214.

Organizations direct their activities by adapting them to each target group and stakeholder. That is also why measurement tools and metrics of public relations effects have to be adjusted to each stakeholder group as well. According to Paine (2007, p. 3) results of public relations effects can be categorized as: outputs, outtakes and outcomes.

PR outputs are identified with quickly-reachable results when publicizing communication messages (Kazokiene & Stravinskiene, 2011, p. 94). Outputs show short-term results. Measurement of outputs includes for example the total number of press release placements in the media, the number of people who participated in a given activity, the number of mentions by the media in a positive light, the number of visits to organizational web site etc.

Measuring PR outtakes means measuring the level of understanding and acceptance of messages by the publics. PR outtakes determining if the key target audience groups actually received the messages directed at them, paid attention to them, understood and/or comprehended the messages, and whether they retained the messages and can recall them in any shape or form (Lindenmann, 2002, p. 6). In practice for example: percent change in awareness, percent change in talking about key messages etc.

Measuring outcomes is measure of effect of the PR effort on attitudes, opinions and behaviors. According to Gregory (2000, p. 170) outcome is the degree to which PR activities changed the target public's knowledge, attitudes and behavior. Outcomes show the long term results and the long term relationships. Outcomes are correlated to organizational overall goals.

Hon and Grunig (1999, pp. 18-21) suggest six elements for measuring outcomes of an organizations relationship with key constituencies:

- **control mutuality**, meaning the level to which parties agrees on who has the rightful power to influence one another. Stable relationships require that organizations and publics have some control over one another.
- **trust**, meaning the level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party.

- **satisfaction**, the extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced.
- **commitment**, the extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote.
- **exchange relationship**, meaning that one party gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future.
- **communal relationship**, meaning that both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other, even when they get nothing in return. These types of relationships are very important to achieve.

To evaluate the success of public relations activities, PR practitioners similarly as in other social sciences use methods like surveys, focus groups, interviews and content analysis. These methods are actually research and require time and money. Some of the methods generally used by PR practitioners which are unique for their works are: press clippings, opportunities to see (hereinafter: OTS) and advertising value equivalents (hereinafter: AVE).

Press clippings are just first steps in measuring effectiveness of PR activities. OTS presents a number of times that the target audience is likely to see a post. AVE is the notional equivalent cost of press coverage if it were advertising space (or time). When measuring PR effectiveness it is important to consider and combine different evaluation methods.

3 PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The movers for public relations activities and the communication of public sector organizations differ from those in commercial organizations and companies. Communication with different publics is not a choice or goodwill for the public sector, it is a duty. This chapter shows the roles of public relations in public sector organizations, as well as why it is important and what good communication can bring to public sector organizations.

3.1 The role of public relations in the public sector

Public sector organizations owe accountability to all citizens as they are mostly funded through their money – public money. They have an overarching purpose which is to serve the common good. It is necessary to work in the service of the public, listen to their needs, improve the lives of the citizens, "lay down" their accounts to them and show how public money is spent. Communication of what a public organization does and how it does it is a crucial component of accountability and transparency (Neeley & Stewart, 2011, p. 229). Within a national democracy, central government departments (or ministries), local authorities, hospitals and other public sector organizations are legally and morally obliged to inform the population and the media about policy decisions and issues affecting everyone in the society (Yeomaus, 2009, p. 578). The establishment of laws on free access to information and freedom of the press in democratic societies around the world caused that public sector organizations to set up a culture of open public communication and transparency. Certainly, organizations and institutions that do not

observe transparency just as an obligation can get a real benefit to the institution itself and its policies.

In many parts of the developing world, public relations techniques have been adopted because of the urgent need to educate people about new public services, and in order to introduce new lifestyles (Baines, Egan & Jefkins, 2004, p.7). For example, issues like encouraging a healthier lifestyle, buckling a seatbelt, voting for a candidate, or some aspect of a public policy. Because of these objectives and benefits for the wider society, successful communication is a responsibility and one of the greatest challenges for these organizations. The lack of a theoretical linkage between publics and the messages directed at them by organizations result in a limited understanding of the public relations strategy use in organizations and the effectiveness of strategies in achieving organizational goals (Werder, 2005, p. 219). Various public relations, marketing communications and advertising activities of an organization, if made in a right and effective way, should have impact on changing consumer and opinion-leader awareness, understanding, retention, attitude and behavior levels.

Public relations in organizations focuses on the publics and identifies what it takes to work out relationships with them, and also help organizations to manage issues, such as national development, handling a crisis or communicating about risky situations. At the heart of issue management lies a belief that organizations and publics can engage each other in ways that allow for one or both parties to change (Taylor, Vasquez, & Doorley, 2003, p. 266). Public relations in the counsels and activities of organizations forms an important part of an organization's policy in defining the environmental factors which affect its activities. These include social stratification, social welfare and national policy, technology, and the political, legal and regulatory processes appropriate to a particular organization or the industry in which it operates. All these factors need understanding of attitudes and cultural norms that influence an organization's reputation and public acceptability (Oliver, 2007, p.13). The development of public relations is linked to the public sector, the government in particular. Government public relations officers play an important role because they contribute to the public understanding of government policies and raise awareness of the roles of decision makers and purview of public institutions, availability of social services, noteworthy trends, and risks to public health and safety (Édes, 2000, p. 459).

Grunig (2006, p. 158) theorizes that public relations adds value when it helps the organization identify stakeholders and segments different kinds of publics from stakeholder categories. If it builds good relationships with strategic publics, an organization is more likely to develop the goals desired by both the organization and its publics and is more likely to achieve these goals because it shares the goals and collaborates with publics (Grunig, 2006, p. 158). According to Thomlison (2000, p. 178) effectively managed strategic relationships by public relations function contributes to organizational effectiveness and success by:

- facilitating innovation;
- working towards mutual benefit for the organization and its stakeholders;
- contributing towards enlightened choice in decision-making; and

- providing a competitive advantage as an intangible asset to the organization.

Techniques and the scope of work that PR departments apply in the public sector do not differ much from those in the private sector. The role of PR in the public sector is very similar to its role in the private sector. The main role of public relations department in organizations is to communicate appropriate information to the public in a timely, authoritative, coherent, coordinated and proactive manner, while also to promptly respond to the public concerns, queries and criticism on a daily basis. The role of PR on a higher level is to contribute to the success of the organization and to the achievement of its goals, but also to promote its core mission.

3.2 Public campaigns

The goal of almost every public campaign is the public good, which is why they have such an important role in educating, informing and affecting change in society. Rice and Atkin (2009, p. 437) define public communication campaigns as purposive attempts to inform, persuade or motivate behavior changes in a relatively well-defined and large audience, generally for noncommercial benefits to the individuals and/or society at large, within a given time period, by means of organized communication activities involving mass and online/interactive media, and often complemented by interpersonal support.

Because of the noncommercial benefits such campaigns are usually related to domains such as environment, social welfare, health, education, law and order, transport etc. Public campaigns attempt to achieve changes in an individual's attitudes and knowledge, feelings and behavior about social issues (Yeomans, 2009, p. 579). To make that happen, the campaign issue needs to be defined and created in way that gets public support.

Effectiveness of public communication campaigns depends on the right strategic approach, a mix of communication channels but also the content of the message. Receivers do not react on messages that are offensive, disturbing, boring, stale, preachy, confusing, irritating, misleading, irrelevant, uninformative, useless, and unbelievable or not motivating (Atkin, 2001, p. 51). An optimal combination of different communication tools allows reaching broad audiences and promoting community development, empowerment and participation. Coffman (2002, p. 2) distinguishes two types of public campaigns:

- individual behavior change campaigns that try to change in individuals the behaviors that lead to social problems or promote behaviors that lead to improved individual or social well-being, and
- public will campaigns that attempt to mobilize public action for policy change.

A clearer view of these two types of campaigns is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Two types of campaigns

Campaign Type/Goal	Individual Behavior Change	Public Will
Objectives	Influence beliefs and knowledge about a behavior and its consequences Affect attitudes in support of behavior and persuade	Increase visibility of an issue and its importance Affect perceptions of social issues and who is seen as responsible
Objectives	Affect perceived social norms about the acceptability of a behavior among one's peers Affect intentions to perform the behavior Produce behavior change (if accompanied by supportive program components)	Increase knowledge about solutions based on who is seen as responsible Affect criteria used to judge policies and policymakers Help determine what is possible for service introduction and public funding Engage and mobilize constituencies to action
Target Audience	Segments of the population whose behavior needs to change	Segments of the general public to be mobilized and policymakers
Strategies	Social marketing	Media advocacy, community organizing, and mobilization
Media Vehicles	Public service/affairs programming: print, television, radio, electronic advertising	News media: print, television, radio, electronic advertising
Examples	Anti-smoking, condom usage, drunk driving, seat belt usage, parenting	Support for quality child care, after school programming, health care policy

Source: J. Coffman, *Public Communication Campaign Evaluation*, 2002, p. 6.

In designing and implementing successful campaigns it is important to set clear goals, to the define audience, create understandable messages and do a constant evaluation to make sure what effects are achieved. Public campaigns play an important role in developing societies and conflict-affected states, because they can erase prejudice. Disseminating information, creating a space for dialogue, providing answers to citizens generates a base and prepares the ground for progress.

3.3 PR contribution to effectiveness of public organizations

Maintaining communication integrity and having an effective communication with an organization's outside and inside audiences is crucial for the success of any organization. Organizations that communicate openly, timely and effectively have more success than those who do not. According to Grunig, Grunig and Ehling (1992, p. 86) the contribution of public relations to organizational effectiveness is seen in helping reconcile the organization's goals with the expectations of its strategic constituencies and also by building quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies. The quality of relationships with strategic publics is a key indicator of the long-term contribution that a public relations makes to organizational effectiveness (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002, p. 11). Public relations have impact on organizational success only if communication goals are connected to the overall organizational goals.

How to show economic value and return on investment (hereinafter: ROI) of the effects public relations has on organizational success is a frequent question. Return on investment is the relation between the overall expenditure on a communications activity and the benefits to the organization or one of its business units derived from the activity. Benefits can be expressed in many ways such as revenue generation, cost reduction, and cost-avoidance through risk reduction (Likely, Rockland & Weiner, 2006, p. 3). Weiner (2009, p. 12) gives an overview of factors that link PR performance to ROI:

- public relations' proven ability to drive revenue or attract investment,
- public relations' proven ability to drive greater efficiency by doing more with less,
- public relations' proven ability to circumvent catastrophic cost through crisis avoidance.

Although relationships are intangible assets it is not impossible to measure them. Good relationships with publics reduce costs and risks. Managers of commercial companies want to see ROI of PR as a direct monetary return, but for public sector organizations it is narrow because public organizations do not exist for the sake of profit, they exist for the sake of public good. Mutual understanding and good relationships are a core value for public organizations. As a result of good relationship between public organization and public, PR brings value to organization and to society at the same time. For example, a good relationship and mutual understanding will create no need for investing money in campaigns, regulation, legal disputes etc.

Taking into account the constant need for savings in the public sector, in many cases public relations is a very effective way of promotion at a very low cost comparing to other promotional efforts such as advertising. Given that PR is considered as a highly credible form of promotion, it is possible to achieve better results with less money.

Participation in strategic management provides the integrating link for public relations to enhance organizational effectiveness (Jerman, Vukovič & Završnik, 2008, p. 91). Public

relations have a great impact on the organizational effectiveness of public organizations only if it follows the organizational mission and if the communication strategy is in correlation with the overall organizational strategy. PR activities are powerful a tool for achieving goals if public organizations know how to use them and give them importance in strategic planning.

3.4 Public relations in the public sector of B&H

The public sector of Bosnia and Herzegovina has a heritage of socialist self-management, in which the dominant role was propaganda and a one-way communication. The democratic system introduced a need for two-way communication, so public relations in public institutions of B&H began to develop in the last 10 years. Bosnia and Herzegovina is undergoing a transitional economy. According to Lawniczak (2004, p. 225) public relations, its strategies and instruments can be applied to assist in the peaceful transition from one political-economic system to another.

With the development of laws of free access to public information (on the state and entity levels) each public sector organization has information officers and departments which are in charge of these questions. The Strategy for Public Administration Reform which includes Institutional communications has given a significant impetus for the development of public relations in the public sector of B&H. Insight into the situation in this Strategy showed that institutions do not practice strategic communications through larger public information campaigns. Public relations (PR) regulations, manuals or procedures are rarely available. Existing PR officers do not cooperate with each other, and some are not included in the decision-making processes of the institutions they work in. As a result, ordinary citizens have little knowledge about the work of the institutions, and public trust in the administration is very low (PAR Strategy, 2009, p. 44). Given the commitment of B&H towards the EU, the Strategy supports practices in accordance with European standards.

If we consider the size of the public sector in B&H, we may conclude that large number of public relations practitioners in B&H work in the public sector. They are usually known as spokespeople or communication officers, who are administrating different communication duties in their organizations.

Communication officers play an important role because they contribute to the public understanding of the administration's policies and raise awareness of the roles of decision makers and the purview of public institutions, the availability of social services, noteworthy trends, and risks to public health and safety (Édes, 2000).

4 THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR – EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This chapter is about the research that was implemented on the role and importance of public relations in organizations of the public sector of B&H. It begins with the definition of research

questions and then describes the purpose, objectives and research methodology. It ends with a description of data details and results.

4.1 The main hypothesis and research questions

To evaluate the extent of importance and the role of public relations practice in the public sector of B&H, this study asks the few research questions.

RQ1: To what extent are PR practitioners involved in the strategic management of the public organizations and do they manage their communication efforts strategically?

RQ2: Do PR practitioners use and, if so, what kinds of PR measurement and evaluation do they use?

RQ3: How important are communication activities to the successful achievement of goals of public sector organizations?

RQ4: What are the biggest challenges of PR practitioners in the public sector that affect PR activities and PR roles?

RQ5: Do people have trust in the public sector organizations in B&H and Slovenia?

The focus of this thesis is to show that public relations should have a more important role in achieving higher effectiveness levels of public sector organizations because of the characteristic value that they can bring both to organizations and to society. Accordingly, this research is built on main hypothesis that strategic public relations are a base for organizational and societal effectiveness of public organizations.

4.2 Methodology

The objective of this research work is to identify the importance of public relations departments in the strategic management of the public sector, their contribution to the effectiveness and performance of public sector organizations. The public sector of B&H is the main focus, but it also covers public relations practice in the Slovenian public sector.

The empirical research was made by means of the qualitative and the quantitative method. The qualitative method was used to explore the public relations status in Slovenia and quantitative method for practices in B&H. Also, quantitative method was used to explore public opinion about public sector and levels of public trust in public sector of both countries (B&H and Slovenia).

The key research instruments for the empirical research of the thesis are two online questionnaires which enabled a collection of responses from PR professionals in B&H and people randomly chosen in B&H and Slovenia. Responses from Slovenian PR experts were

gathered through online interviews which helped in creating parallels between B&H and Slovenia about PR practices. Different types of research were used for the public sector in B&H and different for the Slovenian public sector. Online interviews were chosen because responses helped in getting a bigger picture about the topic and an in-depth insight into research problems. Also, the interviews helped a lot in developing questionnaires used in the quantitative research. Questionnaires are a good way to obtain information from a large number of respondents. Getting as many as possible responses in B&H was a key fact for having a representative sample. Considering the nature of the public sector organizations in B&H, their fear that someone could find out top secrets about their organizations and their limited openness to speak face to face about these topics, the questionnaire enabled respondents to state their views privately without worrying about possible consequences.

The questionnaires were developed based on theory and secondary data obtained through literature reviews from journals, publications and books but also from in-depth information obtained from interviews. Most questions in the questionnaire were created as a Likert scale, so respondents were expected to indicate their agreement with the statements on a scale.

The questionnaires were placed on „Google Drive"- an online platform for forms. Cover letters with a first questionnaire link were sent via email to the PR practitioners of about 300 B&H public sector organizations. The other questionnaire for randomly chosen people from B&H and Slovenia was distributed through Facebook and email addresses of 300 people. Research streams about PR practices in B&H and Slovenia were conducted simultaneously. The survey with PR practitioners from B&H was conducted in March, 2014. The number of useful responses is 63. The collected empirical data were processed in Excel. Online interviews with Slovenian PR experts were done also in March, 2014. Invitations for an interview were sent to 5 people, and only 2 responded.

Surveys with people randomly chosen from B&H and Slovenia were conducted in May, 2014. The collected empirical data from these surveys were analyzed in Excel by descriptive statistics and correlation.

4.3 Data details

The research includes three different samples. The first sample comprises PR practitioners who work on information and communication activities for public organizations in B&H in communications departments, press offices or spokesperson's offices. The exact number of public relations practitioners working for the public sector in B&H is unknown. The data base has 300 email addresses of identified PR practitioners in the public sector. An invitation email asking for participation was sent to 300 PR practitioners and 69 responses were received. After the exclusion of 6 incomplete questionnaires, the sample size resulted in 63 respondents. The sample comprises 21% of the known population.

The following tables show the personal and professional background of the respondents of the first sample (PR practitioners from public sector of B&H).

Table 6. Type of organizations in which respondents work

Organization	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Public agency	7	11.1
Public enterprise	12	19.1
Government/Ministry	16	25.4
Other public sector organization	28	44.4

There is no unique position titling in similar public organizations. The top positions of respondents are: spokesperson (15.8%), head of PR/communication department (17. 5%), PR associate (15.8%), PR officer (7.9%) and PR manager (17.5%). The remaining 25.5% include other positions. Most respondents have between 5 to 10 years job experience in communication (PR). The following table shows the years of experience of the respondents (PR practitioners).

Table 7. Job experience in communications/public relations

Job experience	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
More than 10 years	24	38.1
5 to 10 years	32	50.8
Up to 5 years	7	11.1

When it comes to job experience of the public sector in communication and PR: 36.5% respondents have up to 5 years, 42.8% between 5 to 10 years, and 20.7% have more than 10 years job experience.

In this survey, the percentage of female respondents is higher than that of the male respondents. Considering the fact that the exact number of PR practitioners in the public sector is unknown, the degree of confidence in this sample in terms of representativeness of males and females cannot be evaluated and it is not possible to make any conclusion about gender distribution.

Table 8. Gender of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	26	41.3
Female	37	58.7

According to age most respondents are between 30 and 40 years old. The following table shows the age of the respondents (Table 9).

Table 9. Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 30	10	15.9
30 – 40	31	49.2
40 – 50	13	20.6
50+	9	14.3

The personal background of respondents shows that most of them hold a Master degree (Table 10).

Table 10. Academic educational qualification

Highest academic qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Doctorate (Ph.D., Dr.)	0	0.0
Master (M.A., M.Sc., Mag., M.B.A.)	31	49.2
Bachelor (B.A., B.Sc.)	26	41.3
No academic degree	6	9.5

The educational background of most of the respondents is in journalism (50.8%), in economy and business (17.5%) and in political sciences (12.7%). The remaining percentage includes communications, law and other social sciences.

The second sample comprises people randomly chosen in B&H. The sample size was 120 respondents. Figure 3 shows the characteristics of the sample by gender and age.

Figure 3. B&H sample characteristics by gender and age
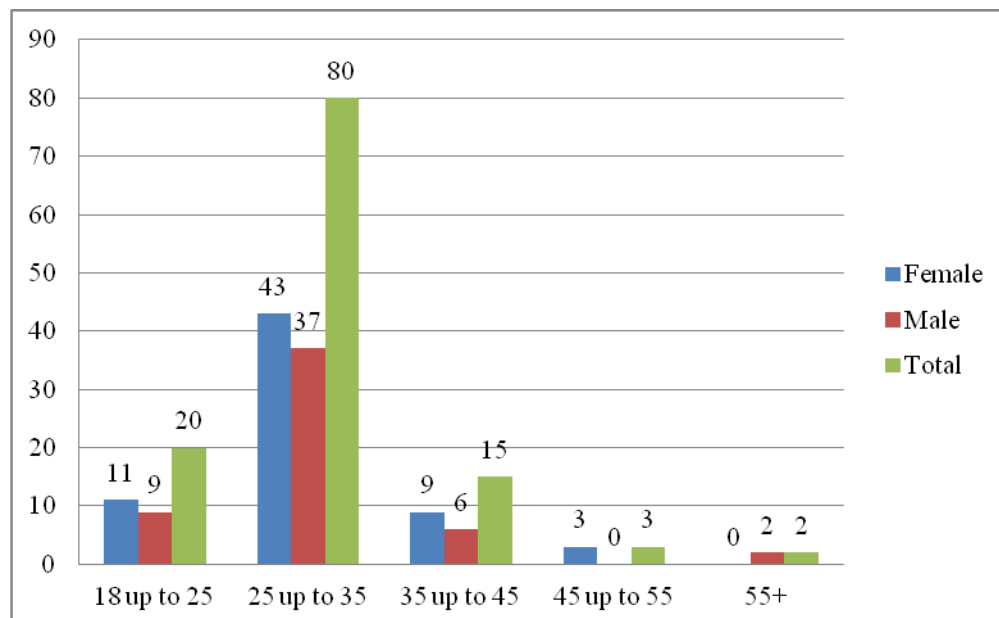
Figure 4. Location of the respondents from B&H in %
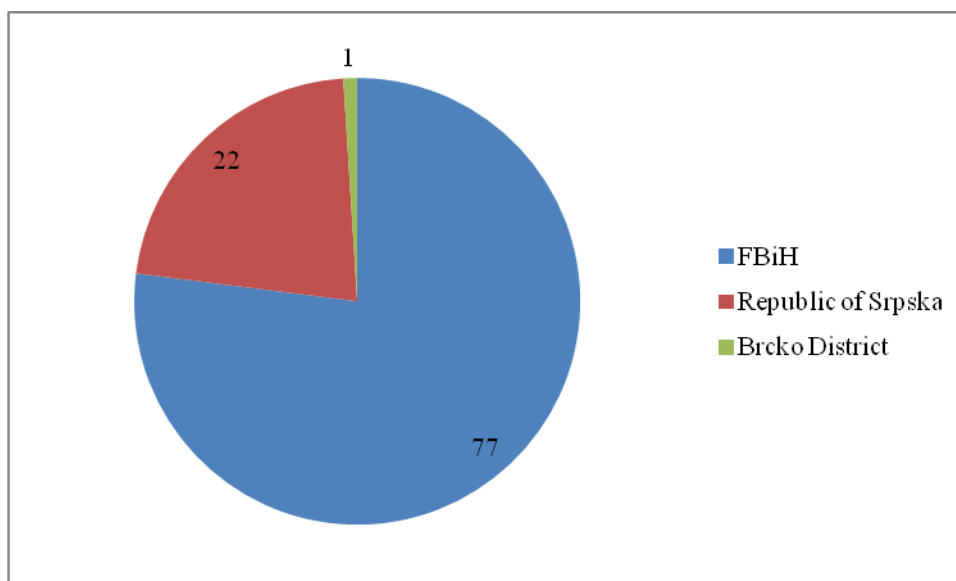
The third sample comprises people randomly chosen in Slovenia. The sample size was 50 respondents. Figure 5 shows the characteristics of the sample by gender and age.

Figure 5. Slovenian sample characteristics by gender and age
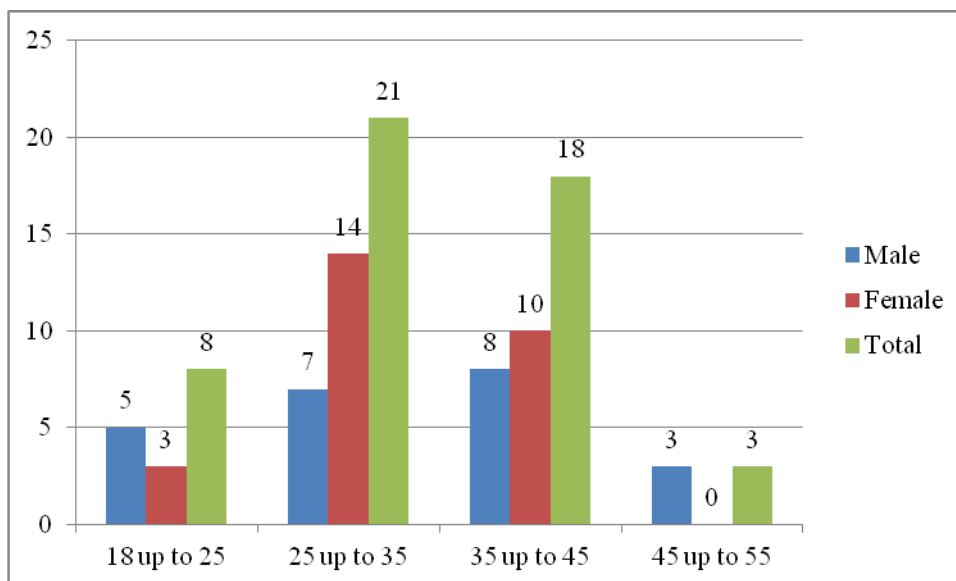
The sample included respondents from these locations: Ljubljana (35), Koper (4), Piran (4), Maribor (3), Ajdovščina (1), Izola (1), Portorož (1) and Postojna (1).

4.4 Data analysis and findings

The analysis of findings from questionnaires and the hypotheses tested will be presented below.

When asked to choose activities that mostly describe the scope of work of PR departments in the public sector, respondents had mostly similar ideas of what they are doing.

Figure 6. Respondents' scope of work in public organizations
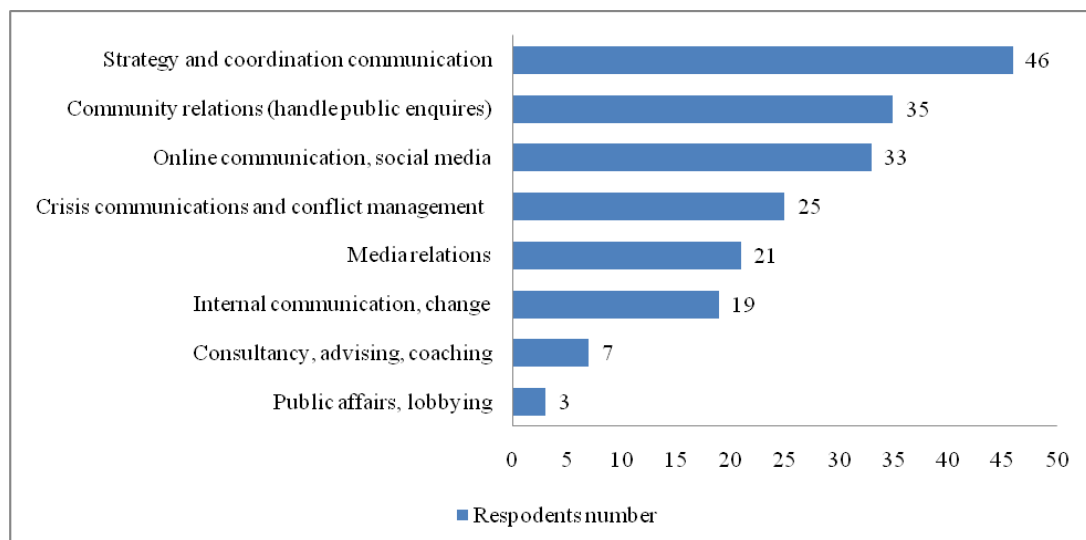
In most cases PR departments in the public sector deal with strategy and coordination of communication (24.3%). It is encouraging that community relations are on the second place (18. 5%) because the purpose of the public sector should be the satisfaction of the needs of the community which it represents. Considering the fact that online communications and social media is on the second place (17.5%), the public sector is adaptive to communicational and PR trends. Respondents also indicated activities like crisis communication (13.2%) and media relations (11, 1%). Internal communication, coaching and lobbying are activities that are the least represented in the job description of the respondents.

The respondents had similar answers when asked about the perception of communication, its influence and the financial investment for communicational activities. In many public organizations communication has become more important for their overall success. At the same time it is evident that communication professionals have more influence on their organizations but financial investments are not on a higher level regardless of the increasing importance of communication for overall success. For each statement about status, influence and budget, the average value (mean) and the standard deviation (hereinafter: SD) are calculated and presented in the following table (Table 11).

Table 11. Status, influence and budgets

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Communication has become more important for the overall success of organizations	1	0	4	16	42	4.5	0.75
The influence and status of my current role as a communication professional has increased	3	2	20	24	14	3.7	1.01
Budgets for communication have been increased above average, compared to other functions	24	22	13	3	1	1.9	0.96
Scale: 1 (less important, decreased, reduced) – 5 (more important, increased, increased)							

Taking into account that answers evaluated with 4-5 mean a rising importance of communication, evaluated with 3 mean no change and with 1-2 declining importance of communication it is evident that 92.1% of respondents stated that communication has a rising importance in public sector organizations. Also for 60.3% of the respondents their influence in the given organization has increased. The majority of respondents (73%) stated that budgets for communicational activities have been reduced in the last 12 months in their organization. This fact might relate to the overall bad financial situation in B&H and to the cuts in the public sector, rather than to the low importance of communication. Figure 7 shows status, influence and budget movements in public organizations.

Figure 7. Status, influence and budgets
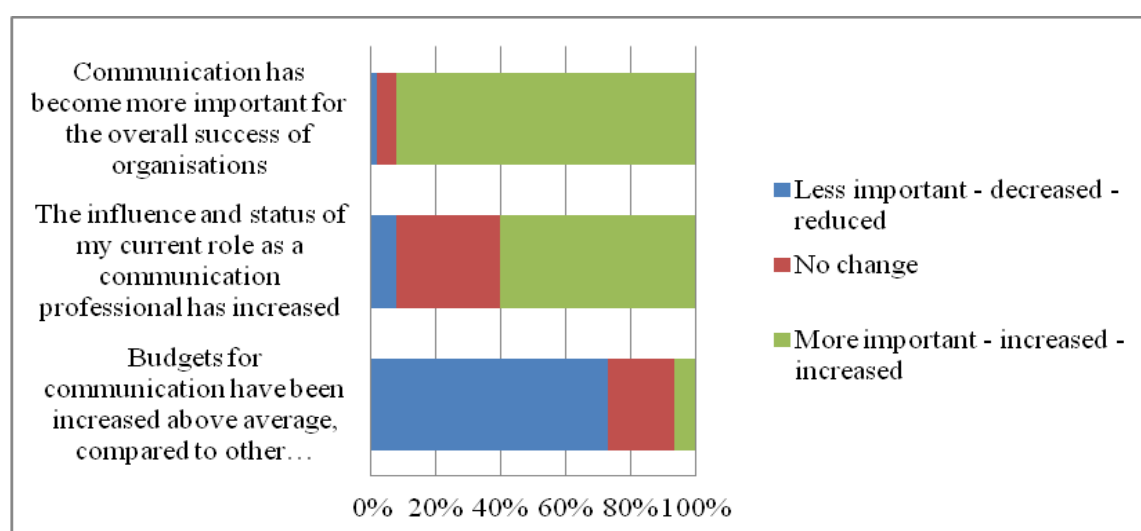
The level of public trust in public organizations shows the level of organizational success, effectiveness and effective efforts to communication outcomes. Using communication as a tool

for deepening the trust among different publics is an important step for the achievement of a performance that is above average. To show the interrelationship between communication and public opinion, the following answers from the questionnaire tend to support the first alternative hypothesis: H_1: The general public believes in the public sector and sees it as efficient. Taking into account this hypothesis, respondents (PR practitioners) were asked to rang their level of agreement with different statements which cover their communicational efforts, transparency, accountability, levels of familiarity of various publics with their work and at the end their opinion about the level of public trust in their organization. Table 12 shows the answers to these questions, the mean value and standard deviation to analyze them.

Table 12. Impact on public opinion

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
(Q1) Communication is critical to our organization's efforts to educate the public on issues we work on.	0	2	0	12	49	4.7	0.63
(Q2) Our organization uses communication to show transparency and accountability.	0	0	7	19	37	4.5	0.69
5-point Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neither agree nor disagree; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree.							

96% of the respondents agree that in their organization's communication is critical for their efforts to educate the public on issues that they work on. It is encouraging to see that 88, 8% respondents stated that they use communication to show transparency and accountability of their organizations when considering how important transparency and accountability is for public organizations. Although PR practitioners claim that communication is critical in educating people on important issues and although it plays an important role in showing transparency and accountability, responses of the public are not compatible to their statements. Table 13 shows the public views on transparency, accountability and on educating public of public organizations.

Table 13. Public views about transparency, accountability and educating public

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
(G1) Public organizations in B&H are transparent.	39	53	24	4	0	1.94	0.812
(G2) Public organizations in B&H are citizens oriented.	35	46	31	8	0	2.10	0.901
(G3) Public organizations in B&H are accountable to the public.	33	56	26	5	0	2.02	0.814
(G4) Public organizations in B&H educate the public about important societal issues.	27	53	30	9	1	2.20	0.903
(G5) Public organizations in B&H are open to the public.	31	54	26	9	0	2.10	0.877
(G6) Public organizations in B&H communicate in a good way with the public.	40	49	28	3	0	1.95	0.818
5-point Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neither agree nor disagree; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree.							

The public in B&H does not think that public organizations are transparent, accountable or open to the public. They also think that public organizations do not communicate in a good way with them.

From a perspective of PR practitioners most of organizational publics are familiar with organizational activities and are aware of their work. The media is the public that is most familiar with the work of public organizations, and this statement is supported by 80.9% respondents. 77.7% of the respondents stated that the internal community is aware of their work. A high degree of familiarity is also a characteristic of the existing donors/partners of organizations (76.1% respondents). Table 14 shows these results in detail.

Table 14. Levels of familiarity of different publics with issues and activities

Type of public	Not at all aware	Not aware	Undecided	Aware	Very aware	Mean	SD
Public/General community	0	6	16	30	11	3.7	0.86
Opinion leaders	0	3	16	30	14	3.8	0.81
International community	1	8	15	20	19	3.7	1.07
Existing donors/partners	1	1	13	22	26	4.1	0.90
Potential donors/partners	2	7	17	25	12	3.6	0.97
Media	0	1	11	22	29	4.2	0.80
Internal community	0	3	11	23	26	4.1	0.87
Local community	3	5	16	17	22	3.7	1.15

From a perspective of the respondents (PR practitioners) public trust in their organizations is generally limited. A descriptive analysis of PR practitioners' overviews of public trust is shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Overviews of public trust in organizations of the respondents

Question	N	M	SD
Level of trust from the perspective of PR practitioners	63	3.47	0.820
5-point scale: 1= No trust; 5= Complete trust			

19% of the respondents stated that there is public trust in their organization, 67% respondents stated that trust in their organization is limited and 14% of respondents believe that the public does not have trust in their organization. From a perspective of PR professionals, the results show that the highest levels of trust are recorded for respondents who work in the Government/Ministries.

25% of the respondents who work in governments/ministries stated that the public trusts them, as compared to the respondents from public agencies who did not give their voice for public trust in their organization. 16.7% respondents from public enterprises and 21.44% from other public organizations stated that the public trusts their organization.

Table 16. Perception of public trust by different public organizations

Type of organization	1	2	3	4	5	N	M
Public agency	0	2	4	1	0	7	2.85
Public enterprise	0	2	4	6	0	12	3.33
Government/Ministry	0	1	6	8	1	16	3.56
Other public sector organization	0	4	5	17	2	28	3.60
5-point Scale: 1 = no trust; 5 = complete trust						63	

To draw a line between the perception of public trust in public sectors and the real level of trust, citizens of B&H were asked to express their level of trust given to public organizations.

Table 17. The public's level of trust item summary

Type of organization	1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean	SD
Government/Ministries	49	44	23	3	1	120	1.85	0.872
Public agencies	30	50	34	4	2	120	2.15	0.894
Public enterprises	19	46	46	8	1	120	2.38	0.861
Public schools	6	24	53	32	5	120	3.05	0.915
Public hospitals	16	36	44	22	2	120	2.65	0.984
Cultural institutions	6	20	34	47	13	120	3.34	1.041
Police	13	38	45	20	4	120	2.70	0.983
5-point Scale: 1 = No trust; 5 = Complete trust								

The public's responses in B&H show that real public trust differs from the perception of PR practitioners of public trust. When comparing the public trust median value in the Government/Ministries, it is evident that the median value of PR practitioners (3.56) is a lot higher than the median value of the publics (1.85). The situation is the same for public enterprises, where the median value of PR practitioners (3.33) is higher than that of the publics (2.38). The median values for public agencies are closer to one another (PR practitioners = 2.85 and Publics = 2.15). Based on these results, it can be concluded that trust in public organizations is limited in general. To test this first alternative hypothesis, respondents were asked to express their opinion about effectiveness, reputation and their willingness to work in the public sector. Table 18 indicates these results.

Table 18. Public opinion about effectiveness, reputation and willingness to work in PS

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
(G7) In general, the public sector is efficient.	51	46	22	0	1	1.78	0.801
(G8) The public sector organizations in B&H have a good reputation.	48	52	18	1	1	1.79	0.787
(G9) If given a chance, I would be glad to work in the public sector.	26	19	41	23	11	2.78	1.244
5-point Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neither agree nor disagree; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree.							

The correlation analysis measured the relationship between variables G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8 and G9 from Table 13 and Table 18.

Table 19. The correlation matrix between variables (B&H)

	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9
G1	1								
G2	0.489556	1							
G3	0.560894	0.637251	1						
G4	0.485115	0.604125	0.655347	1					
G5	0.338959	0.326041	0.525447	0.512961	1				
G6	0.387269	0.519156	0.581882	0.536265	0.616228	1			
G7	0.432204	0.425688	0.472079	0.478203	0.440215	0.547327	1		
G8	0.348527	0.467365	0.558539	0.543152	0.483003	0.492248	0.660511	1	
G9	0.286470	0.214085	0.270667	0.285357	0.460313	0.368754	0.272775	0.279351	1

According to Table 19 the strongest relationship is between variables G7 (efficiency of public organizations) and G8 (good reputation of public organizations) indicated by a correlation coefficient r=0.66.

To identify if there is a relationship between good communication and efficiency of public organizations, variables G6 and G7 were put in correlation. The results show that for respondents, higher agreement scores about good communication of public organizations (variable G6) are correlated with higher scores about efficiency of public organizations (variable G7), r=0.54 which can be considered a large effect. The correlation between good communication and efficiency is positive. This means that as public sector has better communication its efficiency tends to increase.

The results presented in the previous tables and figures show that the first alternative hypothesis H$_1$ cannot be accepted. One of the focus questions in this research is the strategic role of public relations in the public sector and the influence in the decision making processes. One more alternative hypotheses arise from these questions: H$_2$: PR professionals have an important influence in the strategic management of public sector organizations.

These questions measure the degree to which respondents accept statements about their influence in an organization. The data reveal that most of the organizations in sample do have a communication plan and that this communication plan is incorporated into the overall strategic plan of their organization (67%). On the other hand, 6% of the respondents stated that their organization does not have a strategic plan and 13% respondents stated that their organization does not have a communication plan. A communication plan is not part of the overall strategic plan for 13% organizations in the sample.

Figure 8. Communication plan as part of a strategic plan in %
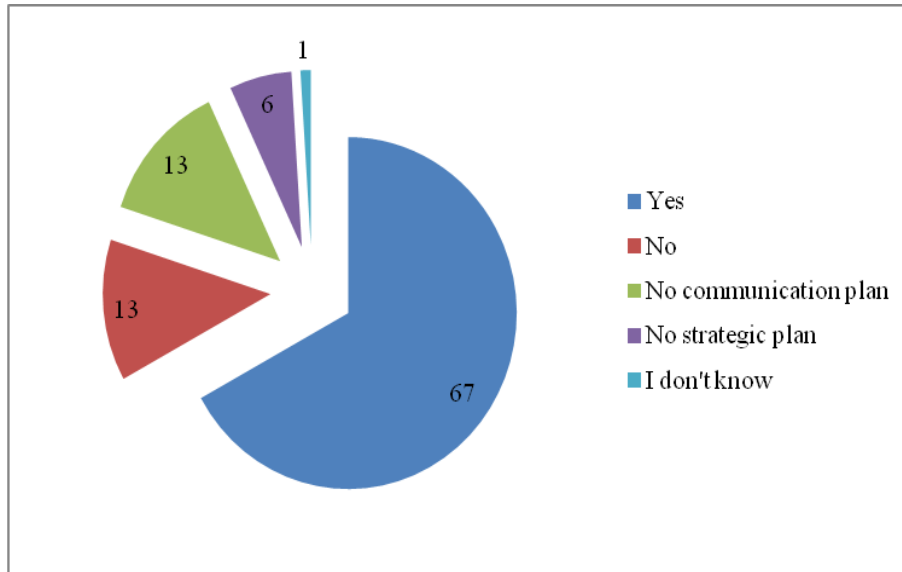
Considering the type of public organizations 85% of public agencies stated that a communication plan is incorporated to their overall strategic plan. 45% of respondents from public enterprises stated that a communication plan is part of their overall strategic plan. 75% of the respondents from government/ministry stated that a communication plan is part of their overall strategic plan. The results are presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Communication plan as part of a strategic plan in different organizations
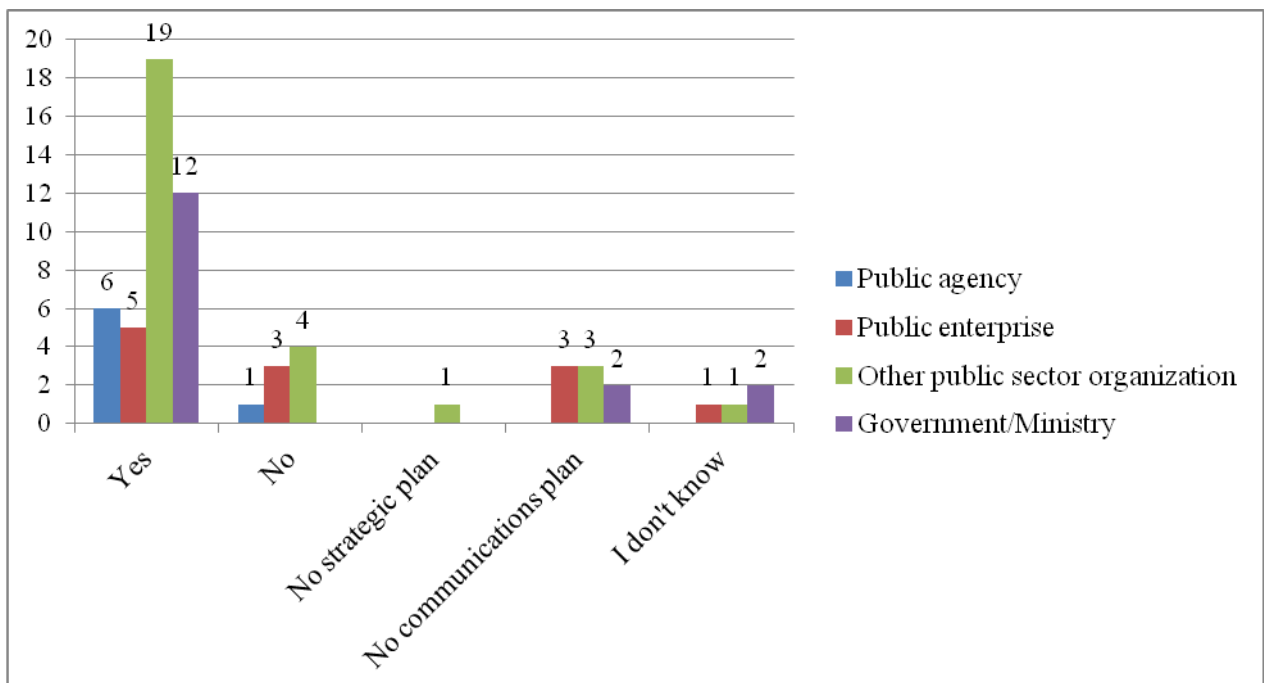
According to the level of agreement of PR practitioners in B&H(Table 20), the level of trust of senior managers in public relations practitioners is above average (Mean=5, 0 and SD=1.57).

Table 20. Adopting recommendations

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean	SD
How seriously do senior managers take the recommendations of the communication function?	2	3	5	11	15	15	12	5.0	1.57
Scale; 1 (not seriously) − 7 (very seriously)									

Taking into account the statements presented in Table 21 - one of the representatives of a public relations department is always invited to senior-level meetings (Mean= 3.5; SD= 1.52). Leaders (decision makers) understand the importance of communications to advancing the goals of an organization (Mean= 3.8; SD=1.16) and they believe that the top management supports their activities (Mean=3.5; SD=1.28).

Table 21. Management support to public relations activities

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
(Q1) Within our organization one representative of the PR department is always invited to senior-level meetings dealing with organizational strategic planning.	12	6	5	20	20	3.4	1.52
(Q2) Leaders (decision makers) in my organization understand the importance of communications to advancing our organization's goals.	3	6	12	19	23	3.8	1.16
(Q3) Our department gets the support we need within the organization to fully implement the communications activities required to advance our goals.	5	11	10	20	17	3.5	1.28
Scale: 1- Strongly disagree; 2-Disagree; 3- Neither agree nor disagree; 4-Agree, 5- Strongly agree							

Correlation matrix for variables Q1, Q2 and Q3 from Table 21 showed strongest correlation between variables Q2 and Q3 (r = 0.801). Value of r = 0.801 shows a strong uphill (positive) linear relationship between these two variables (Q2 and Q3). This means, support for communications activities within public organization increases as understanding of top management in public organization increases.

Looking at the mean and standard deviation and the level of agreement based on the scale points between 4 and 5, it is evident that communication/public relations has an important role in achieving these organizational goals: raising awareness of the organization, maintaining organizational reputation, building a true/positive view of the organization, demonstrating transparency and accountability, publicizing or advocating for an issue, managing a crisis and communicating the organization's value to internal public and constituents. In the public sector communication activities have the least impact in attracting staff. The responses from PR practitioners in BiH, the mean and standard deviation are shown in Table 22.

Table 22. The impact of communication on achieving organizational goals

Question	Not at all important	Not too important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important	Mean	SD
Raising awareness of the organization	0	2	7	26	28	4.2	0.78

(table continues)

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Question	Not at all important	Not too important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important	Mean	SD
Maintaining the organization's reputation	0	1	5	23	34	4.4	0.71
Building a true/positive view of the organization	0	0	6	22	35	4.4	0.66
Demonstrating transparency and accountability	0	1	3	21	38	4.5	0.61
Publicizing or advocating for an issue	0	0	11	36	16	4.1	0.65
Attracting staff	3	11	22	17	10	3.3	1.10
Raising money	2	10	17	20	14	3.5	1.10
Managing a crisis	0	1	11	19	32	4.3	0.81
Changing social norms and behaviors	0	4	13	27	19	3.9	0.87
Communicating the organization's value to members and constituents	0	3	13	28	19	4.0	0.84

Organizations use different PR and communication activities for the purpose of achieving their organizational goals. Data reveals that all of the offered communicational and PR activities are important in achieving organizational goals. With a mean value of 4.6 media coverage and media appearance have the most importance. The following in importance are speaking and participating in community events (Mean = 0.58; SD = 0.58). New communicational trends are also very important for achieving organizational goals, which is shown by the mean value of 4.3 for electronic communications (web, e-mail, blogs, e-newsletter). Table 23 shows the results of the importance of particular PR and communication tools.

Table 23. The appliance of PR tools for the achievement of goals

Question	Not at all important	Not too important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important	Mean	SD
Advertising	1	3	8	26	25	4.1	0.92
Speaking or participating in community events	0	0	3	21	39	4.5	0.58
Networking/ collaborating with peer organizations	0	1	2	35	25	4.3	0.61
Electronic communications (web, e-mail, blogs, e-newsletter)	0	0	8	24	31	4.3	0.70
Publishing reports and position papers	0	1	11	24	27	4.2	0.79
Seeking media coverage and media appearance	0	0	3	16	44	4.6	0.57

On the other hand, randomly chosen people from a sample were asked about their source of information about the public sector. Table 24 shows these results.

Table 24. Source of information about the public sector

Source	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD
Media (TV, radio, newspapers…)	3	11	44	39	23	3.56	0.985
News, internet portals	1	9	36	51	23	3.71	0.890
Web site of the particular public organization	15	21	44	30	10	2.99	1.126
Social media (Facebook, Twitter…)	20	22	44	27	7	2.82	1.135
Family and friends	6	23	59	29	3	3.00	0.859
Scale 1- Never; 2-Rarely; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always							

The importance of media coverage and media appearance for PR practitioners is reasonable if we take into account the responses from the public. Responses show that public often or always uses media (TV, radio, newspapers and news portals) as their information sources.

It can be concluded from previous answers that the way organizations communicate with their publics can have a significant influence on the achievement of the goals of an organization. Apart from the fact that organizations have to measure their overall success and effectiveness, they should also measure the effectiveness of their communication efforts. To find out whether public organizations measure the effectiveness of communication efforts, participants were asked about their measuring practices. The gathered responses are presented in Table 25.

Table 25. Measures of communication effectiveness

Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD
Public opinion research	9	12	28	11	3	2.7	1.06
Track your organization's or its issues presence in the media	0	0	3	12	48	4.7	0.55
Track the number of publications or other materials you disseminate	1	0	3	8	51	4.7	0.70
Collect feedback from your audiences on the usefulness of your communications	3	5	9	23	23	3.9	1.12
Track traffic or usage on your website or other electronic communications	4	2	4	20	33	4.2	1.12
Track blogs or social networking activity (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) about your organization	8	7	12	18	18	3.4	1.37

The most popular measures in PR are the monitoring of presence of the organization and its issues in media. Another popular monitoring measure is that of the traffic of the organization's website. The least popular is public opinion research.

To identify whether communicational and PR efforts really are effective, randomly chosen people from B&H were asked how useful the information provided by public organizations is to them. The results are shown in Table 26.

Table 26. Usefulness levels of public information

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Usefulness	6	19	64	24	7	3.05	0.891
Scale 1-not at all useful; 2-not useful; 3-somewhat useful; 4-useful; 5-very useful							

For most respondents the information provided by public organizations is somewhat useful. The theoretical part of the thesis shows that the need for proof of the value of PR efforts has never been greater. A specific question was asked to find out whether public relations practitioners in public organizations think that evaluation and measurement of PR activities are important for the overall success of an organization. Table 27 shows the responses to this question.

Table 27. Importance of evaluation

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	SD
Evaluation and measurement of public relations efforts is very important for the overall success of our organization.	6	6	10	24	17	3.6	1.23

The responses show that PR practitioners actually do not think that evaluation and measurement of PR efforts is important for the overall success of their organization (agreement based on scale points between 4 and 5) taking into account mean and standard deviation.

One of the questions in this survey explores what the measuring challenges for PR practitioners in public sector are. The theoretical part also showed that measuring impacts in this field is quite difficult. The results describe that the biggest challenges for respondents are: inadequate budget for evaluation (36%). Another challenge is that most activities are not easy to evaluate (28%). It is interesting that 16% of the respondents think that their expertise about evaluation is limited. The existing measurement challenges are presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Challenges in measuring PR effectiveness in %
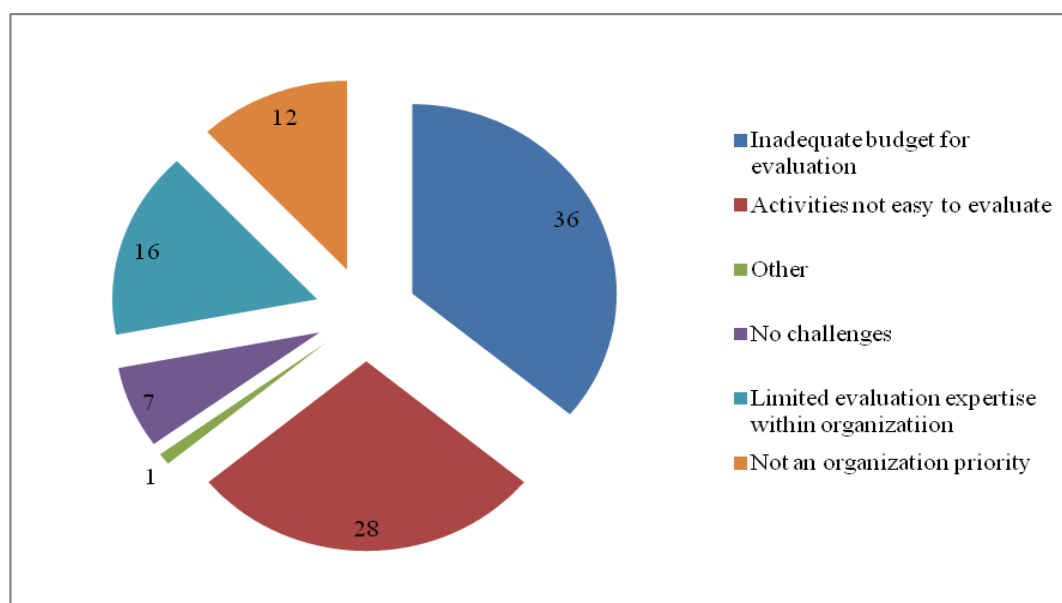
Taking into account the different nature of private and public organizations, it is not a surprise to note that these organizations also have different communication challenges. Different public organizations are trying to respond to communication trends. They are learning to use multiple channels and to become engaged accordingly. Unlike private organizations, public organizations have to respond to the needs of the community. To find out what the main PR challenges for the public sector are, responses were captured through respondents' ranking of a few proposed challenges. The ranks are tabulated in Table 28.

Table 28. Challenges of the public sector in PR

Challenge	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Politics	3	4	9	22	25	3.9	1.11
Legal frameworks	1	1	11	24	26	4.1	0.88
Media pressure	3	2	14	20	24	3.9	1.08
Poor public perception (public cynicism)	2	4	18	20	19	3.8	1.04
Limited professional development opportunities	0	6	17	19	21	3.8	0.99
Lack of management support for communication	5	3	14	16	25	3.8	1.23
Limited financial resources	2	1	11	20	29	4.1	0.98
Scale: 1-Never; 2-Occasionally; 3-Fairly Many Times; 4-Very Often; 5-Always							

Respondents concluded that the biggest challenges in the public sector are the limited financial resources and legal frameworks (for both statements M = 4.1). With M = 3.9 politics and media pressure are also highly ranked challenges. The results of a qualitative research in Slovenia give an overview of public opinions about the public sector in Slovenia. Research among Slovenians has shown that the trust levels are the highest for cultural institutions, public schools and public hospitals. Public trust in the Government is on the lowest level.

Table 29. Public's level of trust item summary - Slovenia

Type of organization	1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean	SD
Government/Ministries	10	24	14	2	0	50	2.16	0.791
Public agencies	1	24	21	4	0	50	2.56	0.674
Public enterprises	2	23	19	6	0	50	2.58	0.758
Public schools	0	2	7	38	3	50	3.85	0.584
Public hospitals	1	1	13	34	1	50	3.66	0.658
Cultural institutions	0	0	11	31	8	50	3.94	0.619
Police	0	5	22	18	5	50	3.46	0.813
5-point Scale: 1 = No trust; 5 = Complete trust								

Table 30 shows public views on transparency, accountability and educating the public of public organizations in Slovenia.

Table 30. Public opinion about the Slovenian public sector

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
(G1) Public organizations in Slovenia are transparent.	7	16	13	14	0	2.68	1.038
(G2) Public organizations in Slovenia are citizens-oriented.	5	21	17	7	0	2.52	0.862
(G3) Public organizations in Slovenia are accountable to the public.	7	23	16	4	0	2.34	0.823
(G4) Public organizations in Slovenia educate the public about important societal issues.	6	9	22	13	0	2.84	0.955
(G5) Public organizations in Slovenia are open to the public.	2	16	16	16	0	2.92	0.899
(G6) Public organizations in Slovenia communicate in a good way with the public.	5	18	21	6	0	2.56	0.836
(G7) The public sector is in general efficient.	15	17	15	3	0	2.12	0.917
(G8) Public sector organizations in Slovenia have a good reputation.	8	29	13	0	0	2.10	0.646
(G9) If had the chance, I would be glad to work in the public sector.	11	14	13	10	2	2.56	1.163
5-point Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neither agree nor disagree; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree.							

Relationship between variables G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8 and G9 from Table 30 was measured by correlation analysis.

Table 31. The correlation matrix between variables (Slovenia)

	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9
G1	1								
G2	0.758633	1							
G3	0.535399	0.521661	1						
G4	0.502579	0.523887	0.563520	1					
G5	0.626979	0.659196	0.367977	0.530805	1				
G6	0.445060	0.549408	0.488072	0.522764	0.521369	1			
G7	0.618989	0.769987	0.403982	0.464558	0.481319	0.335818	1		
G8	0.504180	0.599708	0.356374	0.620912	0.399707	0.573051	0.598139	1	
G9	0.353935	0.191921	0.500237	0.302611	0.336070	0.195353	0.146016	-0.2	1

From Table 31 is seen that the strongest correlation is between variables G2 (citizens-orientation) and G7 (efficiency) with $r = 0.76$. To identify if there is a relationship between good communication and efficiency, by correlation analysis was measured the relationship between variables G6 and G7 from Table 30. For those who responded to this survey, higher agreement levels of the respondents about good communication of public organizations are correlated with higher scores about efficiency of public organizations, $r = 0.33$ which can be considered a medium effect.

For the Slovenian public, News internet portals and the media (TV, radio, newspapers) are considered to be the first source of information about the public sector. (Table 32)

Table 32. Information sources about the public sector in Slovenia

Source	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Media (TV, radio, newspapers…)	0	7	6	27	10	3.80	0.925
News internet portals	0	5	5	27	13	3.96	0.879
Web site of a particular public organization	1	14	12	14	9	3.32	1.132
Social media (Facebook, Twitter…)	8	8	20	11	3	2.86	1.125
Family and friends	0	7	25	16	2	3.26	0.750
Scale 1- Never; 2-Rarely; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always							

Survey results shown in Table 33 saying that for most of the respondents, public information provided by the public sector is somewhat useful.

Table 33. Usefulness levels of public information in Slovenia

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Usefulness	0	0	27	22	1	3.48	0.543
Scale 1-not at all useful; 2-not useful; 3-somewhat useful; 4-useful; 5-very useful							

4.5 Public relations in the public sector in Slovenia – A Qualitative research

In order to find out the position of public relations and communication in the Slovenian public sector, open end questions were used and distributed via email to Slovenian PR experts. These

PR experts were chosen based on their reputation and experience. The match criteria was that they had academic written work related to public relations or that they worked in the public sector. Apart from that, the match criteria was that they participated in creating public campaigns or they are professors or lecturers on this theme. The experts who met the above specified criteria and to whom an interview invitation was sent are shown in Table 34.

Table 34. Slovenian PR experts

Expert	Experience description
Dejan Verčič, PhD	Professor, editor and co-editor of many books. Active consultant serving major Slovenian and international corporations, political and government agencies and international organizations.
Andrej Drapal	PR consultant, president of the first Association of lobbyists in Slovenia, lobbyists, business consultant, trainer of personal development and leader of the team that defined the brand "I feel Slovenia"
Peđa Ašanin Gole	Lecturer at DOBA Faculty of Applied Business and Social Studies Maribor, strategic advisor and director of development projects in the public and private sector. He has won several Slovenian, foreign and international awards for professional development.
Eldina Knez, MBA	She worked as an advisor of the Minister of Transport of Slovenia in the field of public relations and spokesman for the Lisbon Strategy for the European Union. Previous experience of acquiring a PR Si.mobil, the director of Socius Business Club and director of the MBA clubs at IEDC-Bled School of Management.
Miloš Čirič	A specialist in the field of lobbying, the introduction of changes and campaigning.

Only two experts accepted to give their answers (Peđa Ašanin Gole and Andrej Drapal).

Open ended questions aimed to explore:

- the extent to which the departments of Public Relations participate and play a role in strategic decisions in Slovenian public sector organizations
- what the level of openness of public organizations in Slovenia is and whether public sector organizations are transparent and accountable to the public
- to what extent the practice of measuring the results of communication activities in the public sector organizations is represented
- whether managers of public organizations take into account and accept the advices of public relations practitioners
- what the biggest challenge in the work of the department of public relations in the public sector organizations in Slovenia is.

Responses to these questions are shown below. According to the experience of the respondents, the **importance of the role of public relations in strategic management in Slovenian public sector** has decreased. As they say because of the nature of public organizations, public relations should be included in strategic management but that is not the case in practice.

The **Slovenian public is well acquainted with the work of most public organizations**. Openness differs from organization to organization, but organizations are mainly transparent.

Almost all public organizations do have their web site, all their basic documents and all of the Slovenian legislation are also available on the Internet, the majority of Slovenian public institution has a department for public relations (or at least one man), they publish the annual work programs and annual reports, they are required by the Law on free access to information, so that most of the information is public, etc.

When it comes to **communication measurement practices** they are not uniformed. It mostly depends on the skills and knowledge of the people who are in the given organizations dealing with communication. The experience of the respondents showed that most of their pieces of **advice were adopted by the public sector management**. Also, it is notable that external consultants have more influence. **Challenges of public relations in the public sector of Slovenia** are no different from the challenges in the private sector. The professionalization of the public relations function in the public sector is one of the key challenges for the public sector of Slovenia.

4.6 The comparison of research results in B&H and Slovenia

Slovenia was the first country in the region which made reform processes and became member of the EU. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia share a common history as both of them were part of the same country and social structure. Slovenia is now far ahead of B&H, and B&H has to pass the path that Slovenia already did. For this reason, as part of this Master's thesis, Slovenia has been chosen as a benchmark for the comparison of results from B&H about the perception of the public sector and public relations. Public relations in the public sector play an important role in coping with all the changes that are happening in society.

The views of citizens about the public sector in B&H and Slovenia were examined within this research. In order to get trust of the citizens, the public sector should show credibility, provide useful content of their messages and engage its public. Results of the surveys indicate a low level of public trust, both in B&H and Slovenia. However, in Slovenia, the citizens' trust in the public sector is on a higher level.

The government and public agencies are among the least trusted public organizations in both countries. In B&H, 77% of the respondents do not trust the governments, while 68% of the respondents from Slovenia do not trust in their Government.

In both countries cultural institutions are among the most trusted public organizations. 50% of the respondents in B&H trust cultural institutions and even 78% of respondents from Slovenia trust the cultural institutions in Slovenia. The biggest difference in the level of citizens' trust of these countries is the trust in public hospitals. In Slovenia, 70% of the respondents trust public hospitals, while in B&H, only 20% trust public hospitals in B&H.

Distrust in the public sector can also be seen in the attitudes of the respondents in terms of transparency and efficiency of the public sector. In B&H, 76.6% of the respondents do not think that public sector organizations are transparent. 46% of the respondents from Slovenia do not

think that the public sector is transparent. Also, 80.8% of the citizens in B&H do not think that the public sector is efficient. A somewhat smaller percentage, 64% of the respondents in Slovenia does not think that the public sector is efficient. The respondents in both countries describe the public sector as unaccountable to its citizens and as a sector with a bad reputation. Also, this bad reputation is in correlation with the interest for a job in public sector. Only 24% of the respondents from Slovenia would be glad to work in the public sector if they had an opportunity, while in B&H 28.3% respondents would do so.

Media such as TV and radio stations, press and news web portals are the most popular sources of information about the public sector in both countries. Also, web news portals are a preferred choice for news above other media. However, more respondents from Slovenia use web sites of particular institutions to obtain information (46%) than Bosnians do. In B&H, only 33% respondents use the web site of a particular organization as their information source. Social networks are rarely used as a source for obtaining information about the public sector in both countries. The percentage of people who use social networks to obtain information about the public sector is identical in both countries and amounts to 28%.

When it comes to the usefulness of information that citizens receive, we can see a significantly higher percentage of respondents in Slovenia consider the provided information as useful (46%), while in B&H only 25.8% respondents consider such information useful. Very similar results show that because of similar a heritage, citizens of both countries in a similar way observe the public sector. A higher level of trust in Slovenia says that Slovenia is a coherent country and a country in which the public sector is more functional than the public sector in B&H. The popularity of using internet as a primary source of information shows that citizens of both countries follow the trends when it comes to technology and communication.

On the other hand, PR departments in public organizations should be the ones that connect the public and the organization. PR practitioners should listen to the impulses of the public and balance this relationship. According to the opinion and experience of PR practitioners in B&H, communication is becoming increasingly important to the overall success of the public sector, but their influence in organizations is increased accordingly. In the opinion of PR experts in Slovenia, the situation is the same.

88% of the respondents emphasize that they use communication activities to demonstrate transparency and accountability to their citizens. It can, thus, be concluded that they believe they are transparent. PR experts in Slovenia also consider public organizations as transparent. Also, in their opinion it is not necessary to give all information to the public if it is not relevant to them.

On the other hand, PR practitioners believe that the public trusts them, but if we compare this belief with the answers received from the people that were interviewed it is notable that a gap exists. Research has shown that PR practitioners have the same problem with the measurement of results of PR activities. In both countries there is no unified measurement of PR efforts.

PR experts in Slovenia pointed out that the decision-makers in the public sector of Slovenia accept suggestions of the PR, while in B&H suggestions are only partially accepted. As a matter of fact, the awareness of decision makers about the importance of communication for the success of the entire organization is on higher level in Slovenia. In B&H it is still limited.

Challenges for the effective functioning of public relations that are highlighted by PR experts in Slovenia are not identical to those pointed out by PR practitioners in B&H. Specifically, PR experts argue that the biggest problem for PR practitioners in public sector in Slovenia is the professionalization of the profession, while PR practitioners in Bosnia argue that the biggest challenge for them is funding, legal frameworks, politics and media pressure.

Considering these two opposites, it can be concluded that due to the lack of knowledge and skills of PR practitioners it is harder for them to overcome these obstacles. Drawing a parallel between the results, it is clear that PR practitioners might be more concerned with themselves than the publics and as a result there is a gap. The results indicate that to some extent the situation in these two countries is similar.

4.7 Research limitations and future research proposal

There may be a concern that the sample in quantitative research is not reliable because the total number of public relations practitioners in public sector of B&H is not known. So it might seem that sample size (N=63) is small. Also, the reliability of data is questionable. It may be that responses were received only by those organizations that are open to the public and who do give attention to the function of public relations in their organization. Some of the organizations responded that they are not allowed to provide us with such information. Samples for Slovenia and B&H do not represent the whole population. Another limitation is that the pre-test of the questionnaire was not implemented, so that some observed failures were not upgraded.

The comparison of PR practices in the public sector of B&H to the PR practices in Slovenia is not reliable, because the survey that was conducted in the two areas was not identical. On the other hand, the qualitative method included only answers from two respondents so generalizing these results to a wider context is not possible. Also, the self-selecting nature of the interview respondents does not have to imply that they are suitable for this theme. Apart from that, results may have been different if the qualitative research included more answers. The absence of similar tested concepts in the literature was also a limitation.

Taking into account that this theme is up to date, this research could be a starting point for other research about the importance of public relations in the public sector. Future research should consider the development of more reliable measures for examining these theses.

This study did not examine perceptions of decision makers in the public sector about the importance of communication. Further study could also include qualitative research among decision makers from different public organizations and examine their opinions about the

importance of public relations. Awareness about the importance of communication and public relations among decision makers may be associated with a specific influence on effectiveness of the public sector, which was not evaluated in this study.

Future research may also compare the perception of the media (journalists) about the public sector. Whether it is difficult for them to get the information they seek and whether public organizations are open to them. Also, future research could examine the content of the messages that public organizations distribute. The survey should be extended to the Slovenian public sector, as well. Future research could also expand the number of public relations professionals and academicians, not only from Slovenia but also from B&H.

4.8 Recommendations for PR practitioners in public sector of B&H

Proposals for the improvement of the effectiveness of public relations in the public sector are a result of theory research and of the responses from PR practitioners, PR experts and people from B&H and Slovenia. Keeping in view all aspects of the findings, this chapter shows suggestions for certain improvements of PR function within the public sector of B&H.

The responses of practitioners indicate that one of the top issues for PR practitioners in the public sector of B&H is a lack of financial resources. It seems that the small budget is an excuse for the failure of their communicational efforts. Improving the strategy of public relations does not always have to include an extension of PR budgets. So PR practitioners in the public sector have to learn how to think out of the box and use other ways of support. For example, public activities always have public importance, so the media are almost always ready to give enough space to these messages. They need to have a clear vision of what they want to communicate and think about public relations as an ongoing process.

Most PR practitioners perceive that measurement of PR efforts is not in the focus of their organization. Also, they think that evaluation is not so important. This is why public organizations need to define a framework for measuring the performance of public relations efforts. They have to learn to set goals and make assessments of contribution to overall organizational goals. A performance measurement system should be focused on the development needs and on existing potentials. This model should be developed in consultation with the top management of the organization. Evident proof about public relations results would in turn also be a good argument for getting more financial support in organizations.

On the other hand, PR practitioners who work in the public sector of B&H could form their own professional body or association. That would enable them to exchange these specific experiences and share their knowledge. A serious promotion of their work would build up the level of their credibility. Given that public relations in B&H are still in the process of development, forthcoming changes for B&H already occurred in the neighboring countries. They should use the experience form PR practitioners in region and cooperate with them to take the most of it.

CONCLUSION

The public sector plays an important role in shaping society all over the world. In theory, the focus of their existence should be "public". The accountability and transparency of public organizations is an important issue in their management practice. In B&H, and probably in other countries, it is not an unusual situation for the public sector not to show understanding for the public, or for the public not to understand public organizations. The only way for overcoming these understanding gaps is a two way communication. In the private sector, a great number of corporations put effective communication with their publics in the center of their focus, so public relations become an important factor in achieving overall goals, performance improvements and effectiveness. With the new public management phenomenon, which has begun to spread globally, public relations are also becoming more and more important in the public sector. Public relations became a valuable contributor to the public good. Understanding the importance of public relations is crucial in order to accomplish mutual benefits for public sector organizations and for different publics.

Despite the importance of public relations for the overall performance of organizations, there is a lack of studies that deal with mutual relationship between effective PR and the effectiveness of organizations. This thesis presents a research that builds public relations theory and contributes to science by examining the public relations practice in the public sector and by suggesting ways to implement public relations in a more effective way. This research also contributes to science by correlating existing theory and empirical demonstration.

The purpose of this thesis was to find out how and why public relations are important for the public sector and whether the organizations of the public sector in B&H have given this importance of public relations in practice. In the theoretical part of the thesis public sector management, measurement of performance of public organizations were discussed as well as the nature of public relations, their value for organizations, and their strategic role together with the measurement of public relations effect. It can be concluded from the theoretical part that different organizations have different aims, so there is no universal formula how to measure their performance or how to measure the contribution of public relations in organizational effectiveness. According to Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002, p.11) the quality of relationships whit strategic publics is a key indicator of the long-term contribution that public relations make to organizational effectiveness. Therefore, giving importance to public relations in public organizations may result in better performance and, more importantly, contribute to the public good. So, through the function of public relations organizations should not only present them to the public, but also meet the publics and find out more about them.

With an aim to get a view about the status and influence of public relations practitioners in organizations of the public sector (public enterprises, public agencies, government/ministry and other public organizations), research as a part of this thesis was implemented for an assessment on PR practitioner's perception about their importance and strategic role in the given organization. The research investigated to what extent PR practitioners in public sector of B&H

agree or disagree about different statements about their current position. Their responses were used for testing the defined hypothesis.

By looking at whether communication plans are part of the overall strategic plans of organizations, this research found that public organizations mostly implement public relations based on a communicational plan which is also part of the overall strategic plan of their organizations. Planning their activities in advance seems to be an effective public relations practice. Moreover, this research shows that communication evidently has become more important for the overall success of organizations according to the experience of respondents in the last year. Having a communicational plan, shows that organizations in the public sector think about communication strategically. This approach to public relations shows a high potential for a strategic role of public relations in the future. A confirmation of the high potential for a strategic role is also the data about the scope of work of PR practitioners. Most of their time public relations practitioners deal with strategy and coordination of communication, which is also encouraging. Giving importance to a strategy public relations that is complement to the overall organizational strategy, strategic public relations are a base for organizational and societal effectiveness of public organizations which also confirms both the main hypothesis (H_0) and the alternative hypothesis (H_2).

From a perspective of the respondents, most organizational publics are familiar with organizational activities and aware of their work. Also, a very high percentage (96%) of respondents agrees that communication is crucial for their efforts to educate the public on issues they work on in their organization. Communication is the key for showing transparency and accountability of public organizations for 88.8% of the respondents. Investing adequately into communication efforts, results in public trust and support. Responses in this research reveal that most of the publics are aware of the public sector issues and activities. The first alternative hypothesis (H_1) that the general public believes in the public sector and sees it as efficient may not be accepted due to the gap that exist between the public's levels of trust in the public sector and their perception of the public sector. Results of the surveys indicate a low level of public trust, both in B&H and Slovenia. However, in Slovenia, the citizens' trust in the public sector is on a higher level. The findings show that leaders in public sector organizations mostly understand the importance of communications in advancing an organization's goals. 66% of the respondents agreed with this statement. Also, 58% of the respondents stated that their department gets support to fully implement the communication activities required to advance their goals. Understanding the importance of communication by the top management in the work setting is crucial for a functioning communication department.

Whereas the measuring of the communication effect is correlated with good public relations practice, PR practitioners evaluate the measurement of their activities as somewhat important for the overall success of their organization. The results describe that the biggest challenges for measuring PR effect are an inadequate budget for the evaluation (36%). Another challenge is that activities are not easy to evaluate (28%). It is interesting that 16% of respondents think that their expertise about evaluation is limited. Public sector communication faces somewhat different

challenges than private sector communication. These organizations have to communicate openly and accurately and thus improve public services. In this research respondents concluded that the biggest challenges for them are limited financial resources, legal frameworks, media pressure and politics.

Also, this thesis tested the attitudes regarding public relations in the public sector in Slovenia. It can be concluded that the Slovenian public is well acquainted with the work of most public organizations. Professionalization of the public relations function in the public sector is one of the key challenges in the public sector of Slovenia. When it comes to communication measurement practices they are not uniformed. It mostly depends on the skills and knowledge of people who are in such organizations that deal with communication.

The results indicate that to some extent the status of PR in B&H and Slovenia is similar. Finally, this thesis compared attitudes regarding trust in public sector of people who live in Slovenia and B&H. Citizens of both countries in a similar way observe the public sector. A higher level of trust in Slovenia says that Slovenia is a coherent country and a country in which the public sector is more functional than the public sector in B&H.

In conclusion, fact is that communication has a very significant impact on the societal changes that happen in societies. Public relations enable the public sector to hear all information and identify impulses from the environment which is more than an important resource for successful functioning today. If public organizations want to have a big picture and successfully manage most challenges, they have to develop mindset that focuses on best public relations practices.

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APPENDIXES

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for PR practitioners

Role of PR in the public sector

Dear Madam / Sir,

This questionnaire is created for the purpose of a survey that will be carried out by Dunja Bosnjak, student of the postgraduate program "ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR AND ENVIRONMENT" at the University of Sarajevo, School of Economics and Business and University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics as a part of the Master thesis "The Role of Public Relations in the Public sector: A comparison between Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina".

Your answers in the questionnaire will help gain a complete picture of the role and practices of the department for public relations in the public sector of B&H.

The questionnaire takes about 15 minutes. I would be grateful if you gave an answer to every question, but if you do not want to answer some of the questions, you can move on to the next one.

The information you provide in the questionnaire will be protected and will not be used for any other purpose other than this study. Replies will be analyzed collectively and will not be linked to the organization or individual person completing the questionnaire.

If you have any questions about the survey or are worried about confidentiality please contact me via email: dunjabosnjak@yahoo.com

Q1: What are the dominant areas of your department's work? *(Choose 3)*

- Strategy and coordination communication
- Consultancy, advising, coaching
- Media relations (Conducting research and evaluations, media training, press conferences, handle media enquires)
- Online communication, social media
- Internal communication, change
- Governmental relations, public affairs, lobbying
- Crisis communications and conflict management (Act as intermediaries between the organization and the public, persuade public to accept the organization's viewpoints)
- Community relations (handle public enquires)

Q2: Please rate these statements based on your experience within the last 12 months.

Scale 1 (less important, decreased, reduced) – 5 (more important, increased, increased)

Communication has become more important for the overall success of organizations	1	2	3	4	5
The influence and status of my current role as a communication professional has increased	1	2	3	4	5
Budgets for communication have been increased above average, compared to other functions	1	2	3	4	5

Q3: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about communications (public relations) and your organization.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Communication is critical to our organization's efforts to educate the public on issues we work on.					
Our organization uses communication to show transparency and accountability.					

Q4: How aware is each of the following audiences of your organization's purpose, activities, and services?

Scale 1 (not at all aware) – 5 (very aware)

Public/General community	1	2	3	4	5
Opinion leaders	1	2	3	4	5
International community	1	2	3	4	5
Partners and donors	1	2	3	4	5
Existing or potential donors/partners	1	2	3	4	5
Media	1	2	3	4	5

Q5: In your opinion, the level of public trust in your organization is?

Scale 1 (very low) – 5 (very high).

1	2	3	4	5

Q6: Is a PR (communication) plan part of the overall strategic plan of your organization?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) No answer
   d) No strategic plan/No communications plan

Q7: How important is communication in your organization for each of the following objectives?

	Not at all important	Not too important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important
Raising awareness of the organization					
Maintaining the organization's reputation					
Demonstrating transparency and accountability					
Publicizing or advocating for an issue					
Attracting staff					
Raising money					
Influencing government policy					
Managing a crisis					
Changing social norms and behaviors					
Communicating the organization's value to members and constituents					
Influencing corporate policy					

Q8: How important is each of the following to the successful achievement of your organization's goals?

	Not at all important	Not too important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Very important
Advertising					
Speaking or participating in community events					
Participating in conferences and special events					
Networking/collaborating with peer organizations					
Meeting directly with community, opinion or legislative leaders					
Electronic communications (web, e-mail, blogs, e-newsletter)					
Publishing reports and position papers					
Seeking media coverage					
Storytelling					

Q9: How frequently does your organization use each of the following communication assessment activities?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Conduct audience research					
Track your organization's or its issues presence in the media					
Track the number of publications or other materials you disseminate					
Collect feedback from your audiences on the usefulness of your communications					
Track traffic or usage on your website or other electronic communications					
Track blogs or social networking activity (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) about your organization					

Q10: What are the main challenges to evaluating your communication efforts? (*Please mark all that apply)*

- Inadequate budget for evaluation
- Not an organization priority
- Limited evaluation expertise within organization
- Activities not easy to evaluate
- Other
- No challenges

Q11: In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges of PR practitioners in the public sector communications that affect PR activities and PR roles? Scale: 1-Never; 2-Occasionally; 3-Fairly Many Times; 4-Very Often; 5-Always

Politics	1	2	3	4	5
Legal frameworks	1	2	3	4	5
Media pressure	1	2	3	4	5
Poor public perception (public cynicism)	1	2	3	4	5
Limited professional development opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of management support for communication	1	2	3	4	5
Devaluation of public sector communication's importance	1	2	3	4	5
Limited financial resources	1	2	3	4	5

Q12: In your organization, how seriously do senior managers take the recommendations of the communication function?

Scale 1 (not seriously) − 7 (very seriously).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q13: How likely is it, within your organization, that communication would be invited to senior-level meetings dealing with organizational strategic planning?

Scale 1 (never) − 7 (always).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q14: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about communication (public relations) and your organization.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Leaders (decision makers) in my organization understand the importance of communications to advancing our organization's goals.					
Our department get support we need within organization to fully implement the communications activities required to advance our goals.					
Evaluation and measurement of public relations efforts is very important for overall success of our organization.					

Q15: Where do you work (organization)?

- Public organization profit oriented
- Public agency
- Government/Ministry
- Other public sector organization

Q16: Size of PR department (employee number): _____

Q17: What is your position in the organization? _____

Q18: How many years of experience do you have in communications (PR)?

- More than 10 years
- 6 to 10 years
- Up to 5 years

Q19: How many years of experience do you have in communications (PR) of public sector?

_____ Years

Q20: What is your educational background?

- Journalism
- Communications
- Political science
- Economics
- Business and management
- Other: _____

Q21: Highest academic degree you hold?

- Doctorate (Ph.D., Dr.)
- Master (M.A. , M. Sc., Mag., M.B.A.), Diploma
- Bachelor (B.A., B. Sc.)
- No academic degree

Q22: What is your gender? (Male or female)

Q23: AGE: How old are you? _____

Thank you very much for your time and support!

Appendix 2: Open ended questions for Slovenian PR experts

How much attention is paid to public relations in the public sector organizations of Slovenia?

Are public organizations in Slovenia transparent and accountable to the public? To what extent is the public familiar with the work of public organizations?

Does the public have confidence in the public sector of Slovenia?

In your opinion, are departments of public relations in public organizations involved in strategic planning and how in general has a strategic role in the public sector of Slovenia?

Is there a practice of regular monitoring and measurement of results?

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for citizens of B&H/Slovenia about public sector

Dear Madam/Sir,
I would like to invite you to participate in the survey about the public sector in B&H/Slovenia by expressing your views about it. Your responses will help in finishing my Master thesis at the University of Sarajevo, School of Economics and Business.
Your responses are anonymous and will not be used for any other purpose other than this study. Responses will be analyzed collectively and will not be linked to you as an individual.
The questionnaire takes about 10 minutes. Your responses should reflect your previous experience whit public organizations.
I appreciate you taking time to give your views!
If you have any questions about the survey or are worried about confidentiality please contact me by email: dunjabosnjak@yahoo.com

Definition of the public sector:
In general terms, the public sector consists of the governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services. (Dube and Danescu, 2011, p. 3) the public sector in B&H includes government organizations (cantonal government and ministries, entity and state governments and ministries…) education(schools), healthcare(hospitals), police, military, public roads/transport, cultural institutions etc.

Q1: Please rate the level of your trust in the following public organizations:
(Scale 1 = No trust; 5=Complete trust)

Public organization	1	2	3	4	5
Governments/Ministries					
Public agencies					
Public enterprises					
Public schools					
Public hospitals					
Cultural institutions					
Police					

Q2: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Public organization	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Public organizations in B&H/Slovenia are transparent.					
2. Public organizations in B&H/Slovenia are citizens-oriented.					
3. Public organizations in B&H/Slovenia are accountable to the public.					
4. Public organizations in B&H/Slovenia educate the public about important societal issues.					
5. Public organizations in B&H/Slovenia are open to the public.					
6. Public organizations in B&H/Slovenia communicate in a good way with the public.					

7. The public sector in general is efficient.					
8. The public sector organizations in Slovenia have a good reputation					
9. If I had the chance, I would be glad to work in the public sector					
10. When a certain institution from the public sector is raising money by charity events, I usually donate, even a small amount of money.					

Q3: Where do you get information about public sector organizations?

Source	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Media (TV, radio, newspapers)					
Internet portals					
Web site of particular public organization					
Social media (Facebook pages, Twitter…)					
Family and friends					

Q4: How useful are the provided information to you?

(Scale 1= not at all useful; 5 =very useful)

1	2	3	4	5

Q5: What is your age?

a) 18 – 25; b) 26 – 35; c) 36-45; d) 46 – 55; e) 55+

Q6: You are:

a) Female; b) Male

Q7: In which city do you live? _____

Appendix 4: Correlation matrix

Table 1. Correlation matrix for variables Q1, Q2 and Q3 from Table 21.

	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*
Q1	1		
Q2	0,704728	1	
Q3	0,734708	0,801183	1