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**THE ROLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN ORGANIZATIONS IN MONTENEGRO**

**ABSTRACT**

The public relations field in Montenegro is in its transitional period, moving from dominantly publicity-oriented towards higher professionalization. Academically, the field of public relations is still insufficiently researched in Montenegro, which makes it difficult to follow current trends, changes and challenges.

On the other side, public relations practice exists in most Montenegrin organizations. According to available evidence of the existing practice, it is dominantly understood as mainly media relations function, which should contribute to greater publicity and visibility of the organization, as well as to dissemination of information to the public.

To contribute to a deeper understanding of the current public relations practice and trends in the field, as well as to try to enrich the insufficient empirical data, this paper attempts to examine the function of public relations in Montenegrin organizations. One possible approach to such research goal refers to the roles public relations practitioners perform in organizations. The existing practice in Montenegro suggests that professionals mostly perform technician roles, rather than managerial ones.

Public relations practitioners who work in both public institutions and private companies in Montenegro were included in the research. The study relies on quantitative analysis, which was used to collect and analyse data.

**Keywords:**organizational roles, public relations practitioners, technical roles, managerial roles

**Introduction**

Public relations field has been seen both as a professional practice and academic discipline, dedicated to the management of communication between organizations and their publics. It is a management function which helps organization interact with its environment, through mutually beneficial relationships which are managed strategically. During the decades, researchers have identified success factors and best practices in public relations, which are most likely to make organizations more effective.

The main goal of this research is to examine the dominant traits of public relations practice in Montenegro, through organizational roles of public relations practitioners. It seems as if the field in this country is in a transitional period, moving from dominantly publicity-oriented towards professionalization. However, there is no enough empirical research and data to support that assumption, because, in the academic sense, the field of public relations is still relatively new and under-researched in Montenegro. The body of knowledge and academic research of the field is still at the beginning in this country, without enough systematic and reliable data which would enable the following current trends, changes and challenges.

On the other side, public relations is practiced in the majority of Montenegrin organizations. According to available evidence of the existing practice, it is dominantly understood as mainly media relations function, which should contribute to greater publicity and visibility of the organization and dissemination of information to the public. The existing practice suggests that professionals mostly perform technician roles, rather than managerial ones. This assumption comes from the dominant media relations aspect of the function, which is evident in the current practice in Montenegro. This paper attempts to examine whether those assumptions can be empirically proven.

The paper is based on quantitative research, conducted through analysis of survey data.

This research provides a closer insight into current public relations practice in Montenegro, using the concept of organizational roles, and identifies possible trends in development towards more professional function in organizations.

**Relevance and Context**

# Fourteen years after gaining its independence, Montenegro is going through economic and political transition and it is in the middle of the European integration process. As the process advances, societal and cultural context is changing, as a result of the country’s opening towards democratization and economic and structural reforms. As an ex-communist country, Montenegro is moving from one political and socio-economic system to another. Some scholars have investigated the role of public relations in such processes, as well as the transition from dominantly U.S. and Western European traits of public relations practice towards a more country-specific approach (Lawniczak, 2016).

# Public relations profession in Montenegro started its faster development after the country’s independence. However, although the majority of organizations in Montenegro, both state institutions and private organizations, employ a public relations practitioner, the experience shows that communication practice is not usually performed in well–organized, excellent communication departments. It is still dominantly perceived as a function-oriented towards maintaining media relations and serving to gain publicity and positive media image of organizations.

# Montenegrin public relations practitioners are not organized into an active professional association. The lack of formal higher education offer in the field of public relations attempts to build a stronger base of professionals even harder. The academic background of professionals varies from the broad social sciences arena, while higher education in journalism exists slightly more than a decade.

# As stated in the introductory part, it is expected that practitioners in Montenegro would enact mainly technician or media relations role, and manager role enactment would be an exception. Due to the transition period in the development of the field and dominant perceptions and expectations by organizations, media relations seem to be the dominant feature of the existing practice. Another research question which seems relevant for the dominant role identification refers to potential differences between state institutions and private organizations. The answer to this question will help in identifying potential different trends, depending on the type of the organization. This question aims to realize whether the practice is unified in development, or some types of organizations seem to have advantages over the others in terms of professional public relations practice.

# Organizational Roles in Public Relations

The concept of organizational roles in public relations has been an object of research for more than two decades and it represents one of the most frequently addressed topics in public relations literature. The roles that public relations practitioners enact are "at the nexus of a network of concepts affecting professional achievements of practitioners, structures and processes of the function in organizations, and organizational capacities to dominate or cooperate with their environments" (Dozier 1992). Holtzhausen, Petersen, and Tindall (2003) defined roles as repetitive actions that are performed to set forth a system of practice, or a model. Individual practitioner roles would, therefore, facilitate models of public relations practice. Public relations roles are the key to understanding the function of public relations (Dozier 1992), and practitioner roles play a central role in the overall excellence of communication departments and organizations (Grunig and Dozier 2002).

Research of public relations practitioners’ roles in organizations began by Broom and Smith (1979), and their explanatory study of practitioner job tasks. They found that much of the public relations practice could be described by four roles: the expert prescriber, problem - solving process facilitator, communication process facilitator, and communication technician.

Broom (1982) later found that three roles were highly intercorrelated at the operational level. The expert prescriber, the communication facilitator, and the problem - solving process facilitator are enacted simultaneously in practice, but they are not correlated with the communication technician role. High correlations among these three roles suggest that they go together to form a single, complex role that is distinct from a communication technician role (Cutlip et al., 2000). Broom’s findings led Dozier (1983) to conduct research from three practitioners’ surveys data, from which he derived a communications manager role. The communication manager enacts aspects of the expert prescriber, problem - solving process facilitator, and communication facilitator roles.

The manager – technician dichotomy was highly accepted in communicator roles research. Those enacting manager roles make communication policy decisions and are held accountable for the success or failure of communication programs. The communication manager role involves the dominant coalition in a systematic planning process and serves as a catalyst for decision making. Such practitioners also facilitate communication between the dominant coalition and public by informing management of public reactions to organizational policies, procedures, or actions - or all three (Grunig et al., 2002). Public relations managers act as part of organizational management. This role includes research skills, strategic thinking and a tendency to think in terms of the outcomes or impact of public relations activities. Practitioners in these roles do not limit their tactics to communications. They use environmental scanning and organizational intelligence, negotiation and coalition building, issues management, program evaluation, and management counselling as public relations tools (Cutlip et. al., 2000).

Communication technicians mostly focus on communications and other activities in the process and they are not typically part of the management inner circle. Their role enactment includes a traditional core of public relations work – writing news releases and other mediated communications and doing media relations. These practitioners, as research has shown, exhibit little involvement in strategic planning and research (Cutlip et.al., 2000). In this role, the practitioner acts as a technical services provider, generating the collateral materials needed to implement a communication or public relations program planned through another communication role. The communication technician was conceptualized as implementing communication programs planned by others in the organization (Broom 1982). They write and edit employee newsletters, write press releases and feature stories, develop website content and deal with media contacts (Cutlip et.al., 2000). Practitioners in this role usually are not present when management defines problems and selects solutions. They are brought later to produce the communications and implement the program, sometimes without full knowledge of either the original motivation or the intended results (Cutlip et al., 2000).

Apart from manager and technician roles, other minor roles have been the subject of research. One of such roles is one of the communication liaison, a role characterized to be similar as a managerial role in terms of linking communication between management and the public but excluded from the organizational authority to make policy decisions. Communication liaison role focuses on delivering the views of key publics to top management and employees (Choi 2007). Grunig and Hunt (1984) stressed out the importance of this kind of role for two way symmetric model of communication, which represents a normative model for the public relations profession.

A role of media relations specialist, as identified by Dozier (1983) was a variation on the communication technician role, specializing in external or public media rather than internal communication, excluded from the decision-making processes. The media relations role enactment describes a work of practitioners who use their journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy in their organizations (Grunig et al., 2002). Other features of media relations role include keeping others in the organization informed about what media report about the organization, keeping media contacts and placing news releases.

These roles have proved relatively unstable across surveys, whereas the manager and technician roles have remained stable in various survey and research (Grunig et al., 2002).

Many public relations scholars emphasized the fact that public relations practitioners perform both technical and managerial roles in their everyday work, but the one role can be considered as dominant in their performing of public relations function in the organization. Although managers – technician dichotomy is largely accepted division of role dominantly enacted by public relations professionals, there are some other roles identified through the literature, but they are not presented in this paper.

 As the field evolves, new roles for public relations practitioners emerge. With online media relations, as well as social media usage, public relations practitioners may enact the role of social media technician, social listening and analytics, policymaker and other social media related roles (Neill & Lee, 2016).

# Research design and method

# A web survey was distributed to public relations practitioners from both state institutions and private companies. Organizations with public relations departments were included in the sample. There is no database of public relations practitioners in Montenegro, therefore previous research on organizations which have public relations department was conducted. According to that initial research, it was concluded that the total number of public relations practitioners employed in Montenegrin organizations, both state institutions and private companies, does not exceed 80. The survey was distributed to public relations practitioners employed in ministries in Montenegrin government, University of Montenegro, Clinical Centre of Montenegro, Supreme State Prosecutor’s Office, Employment Agency of Montenegro, Red Cross, public relations offices in municipalities, banks, insurance companies, hotels, telecommunications companies, tourist companies, etc.

# *Sample*

 Web surveys were sent via e-mails and total of 34 responses were received. Most of the respondents were female (79,4%). The majority of respondents (52,9 %) were aged between 26 and 35 years.

Regarding education, 70,6 % of respondents reported a higher education degree, and the rest stated to hold master’s degree. Finally, 58,8 % of respondents work in state institutions, while the rest of the sample was employed in business sector.

*Practitioners’ roles measures*

Twelve items were derived from the Excellence study (Dozier, Grunig and Grunig, 1995) and used to operationalize three distinct roles of public relations practitioners. These roles included: manager role, media relations role and technician role; all of them were measured with 4 items scale. Those three distinct roles were measured according to actual enactment and involvement in specific activities by public relations professionals in organizations. The respondents were asked to indicate on the 4 – point scale (from “not at all” to “to a great extent”) how well the items described most of their work activities in the organization they work for.

The *manager role* enactment item that public relations practitioners reported best described their work was being the expert at solving public relations problems. This item was followed by taking responsibility for the success or failure of public relations programs, being held accountable by others in the organization for the success or failure of the public relations program and making communication policy decisions.

 The *media relations* role was first identified by Dozier (1983) as closely connected to technician role, because practitioners engaged in media relations and those who perform mostly technician roles were both excluded from policymaking. The media relations enactment measure that best described the work of practitioners was using their journalistic skills to find out what the media will consider newsworthy about their organizations. This item was followed by keeping others in the organization informed of what the media report about their organization, maintaining media contacts, and placing news releases.

Derived from the original Broom’s (1982) conceptualization of roles typology, the *technician role* enactment was measured by respondents indicating how well the following items described their everyday practice: editing grammar and spelling in writing of others; writing communication materials; producing brochures, pamphlets and other material, and taking photos and graphics for public relations materials.

The types of roles used in other studies, including the Excellence study, such as *senior advisor role*, were not included into this research. The same items used in the Excellence study for measuring media relations, manager and technician roles were used in this research, they were not changed nor adjusted.

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# Findings

To respond to a research question – which dominant role public relations practitioners play in Montenegrin organizations, three types of practitioners’ roles were measured: manager, technician and media relations role.

As it can be seen from the Table 1.1, the item which respondents chose as describing their everyday work best, is “maintaining media contacts for the organization” (mean=3, 91), which belongs to media relations role scale.

Table 1.1: *Level of manager, technician and media relations role enactment*

|  |
| --- |
| Descriptive Statistics |
|   | **Mean** |
| I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization’s communication or public relations programs | 2,59 |
| I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues | 3,65 |
| I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization | 3,79 |
| I edit or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by other in organization | 3,35 |
| Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization’s expert in solving communication or public relations problems | 3,15 |
| I am the person who writes communication materials | 3,74 |
| I maintain media relations for my organization | 3,91 |
| I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication or public relations programs | 3,65 |
| I am responsible for placing news releases | 3,85 |
| I produce brochures, pamphlets, and other publications | 3,50 |
| I make communication policy decisions | 3,03 |
| I do photography and graphics for communication or public relation materials | 3,18 |

The results show that work of public relations practitioners is best described by activities which mean dominant enactment of media relations role. The manager role was, according to their perception of the actual practice, the least applicable to everyday activities of the practitioners, and the lowest scores prove that trend. They did, however, report that they perceive others hold them accountable for public relations programs. It could be assumed that this kind of perception could be result of the fact that public relations departments in Montenegrin organizations are usually consisted of small number of practitioners; therefore, they are those who are considered accountable for public relations. The respondents reported that they are less responsible for success or failure of communication or public relations programs. This result may indicate the existing practice in Montenegrin organizations – practitioners are held accountable and reliable for public relations programs, but they do not make strategic decisions which would make them responsible for communication and programs in general. The lower results are also found with making policy decisions item, and the practitioners being considered the experts in solving public relations programs, due to their knowledge and experience.

When it comes to technician role enactment, the items show higher values than that measuring manager role. The respondents reported that they deal with producing brochures and other publications, edit grammar or do photography, but they are mostly responsible for placing news releases, which is the item with the very high value on the whole scale.

Taking these results into consideration, the assumption that the dominant role public relations practitioners play in Montenegrin organizations is that of media relations. The second most applicable role in everyday practice is that of a technician. The results indicate that public relations practitioners play the manager role the least, which was the initial assumption. The overall mean for role scales confirms such indications:

Table 1.2: *Mean scores for three types of roles*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | Mean |
| Manager | 3,10 |
| Media relations | 3,80 |
| Technician | 3,44 |

This result is in accordance with the assumed practice in Montenegrin organizations, suggesting that public relations is mostly considered as media relations and technical function, rather than managerial and strategic one.

*Comparison between state institutions and private companies*

One of the aims of this paper is to examine whether there are differences between roles public relations practitioners occupy in different types of organizations. Both state institutions and private companies of various kinds were included in the sample. The comparison between each role item in two types of organizations is shown below, together with chi-square tests used to determine whether there were a statistically significant differences among categories.

*Manager role*

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.3: *Manager role item No.1 in two types of organizations* |
|  | I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization’s communication or public relations programs |
| To a great extent | To some extent  | To a small extent  | Not at all  |
| I work for: | Private company | 7,1% | 42,9% | 42,9% | 7,1% |
| State institution | 20,0% | 30,0% | 45,0% | 5,0% |
| Total | 14,7% | 35,3% | 44,1% | 5,9% |
|

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.4: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.1 (Manager role)* |
|  | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1,384a | 3 | ,709 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 1,467 | 3 | ,690 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | ,275 | 1 | ,600 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.5: *Manager role item No.2 in two types of organizations* |
|  | Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization’s expert in solving communication or public relations problems |
| To a great extent | To some extent  | To a small extent  | Not at all  |
| I work for: | Private company | 42,9% | 42,9% | 14,3% |  |
| State institution | 25,0% | 60,0% | 10,0% | 5,0% |
| Total | 32,4% | 52,9% | 11,8% | 2,9% |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.6: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.2 (Manager role)* |
|  | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 2,097a | 3 | ,552 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 2,452 | 3 | ,484 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | ,827 | 1 | ,363 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.7: *Manager role item No.3 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of communication or public relations programs | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent | To a small extent  |
| I work for: | Private company | 78,6% | 7,1% | 14,3% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 75,0% | 15,0% | 10,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 76,5% | 11,8% | 11,8% | 100,0% |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.8: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.3 (Manager role)* |
|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | ,574a | 2 | ,750 |
| Likelihood Ratio | ,600 | 2 | ,741 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | ,001 | 1 | ,976 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.9: *Manager role item No.4 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | I make communication policy decisions |
| To a great extent | To some extent  | To a small extent  | Not at all  |
| I work for: | Private company | 35,7% | 28,6% | 35,7% |  |
| State institution | 25,0% | 60,0% | 10,0% | 5,0% |
| Total | 29,4% | 47,1% | 20,6% | 2,9% |
| Table 1.10: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.4 (Manager role)* |
|  | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5,395a | 3 | ,145 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 5,836 | 3 | ,120 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | ,032 | 1 | ,857 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

As it can be seen from the results, no statistically significant difference was found among items measuring the manager role in private companies and state institutions.

*Media relations role*

Table 1.11: *Media relations role item No.1 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 85,7% | 14,3% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 75,0% | 25,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 79,4% | 20,6% | 100,0% |

Table 1.12: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.1 (Media relations role)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | ,578a | 1 | ,447 |
| Continuity Correctionb | ,109 | 1 | ,742 |
| Likelihood Ratio | ,598 | 1 | ,439 |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | ,561 | 1 | ,454 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |
| Table 1.13: *Media relations role item No.2 in two types of organizations* |
|  | I keep others in the organization informed of what the media report about our organization and important issues | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 85,7% | 14,3% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 50,0% | 50,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 64,7% | 35,3% | 100,0% |

Table 1.14: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.2 (Media relations role)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 4,600a | 1 | ,032 |
| Continuity Correctionb | 3,169 | 1 | ,075 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 4,940 | 1 | ,026 |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4,464 | 1 | ,035 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Practitioners from the private companies reported that this item describes their everyday work to a great extent (85, 7%), while practitioners in state institutions reported that this item somewhat describes their duties (50%). The analysis showed that the difference between practitioners from the two types of organizations was statistically significant in this case.

Table 1.15: *Media relations role item No.3 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I maintain media relations for my organization | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 100,0% |  | 100,0% |
| State institution | 85,0% | 15,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 91,2% | 8,8% | 100,0% |

Table 1.16: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.3 (Media relations role)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 2,303a | 1 | ,129 |
| Continuity Correctionb | ,816 | 1 | ,366 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 3,385 | 1 | ,066 |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2,235 | 1 | ,135 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.17: *Media relations role item No.4 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I am responsible for placing news releases | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 92,9% | 7,1% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 80,0% | 20,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 85,3% | 14,7% | 100,0% |

Table 1.18: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.4 (Media relations role)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1,085a | 1 | ,298 |
| Continuity Correctionb | ,302 | 1 | ,582 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 1,174 | 1 | ,279 |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1,053 | 1 | ,305 |

Except for the single item, no statistically significant difference was found in measuring media relations role in two types of organizations.

*Technician role*

Table 1.19: *Technician role item No.1 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | I edit or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by other in organization |
| To a great extent | To some extent | To a small extent | Not at ll |
| I work for: | Private company | 50,0% | 50,0% |  |  |
| State institution | 40,0% | 50,0% | 5,0% | 5,0% |
| Total | 44,1% | 50,0% | 2,9% | 2,9% |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.20: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.1 (Technician role)* |
|  | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1,587a | 3 | ,662 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 2,307 | 3 | ,511 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1,077 | 1 | ,299 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.21: *Technician role item No.2 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I am the person who writes communication materials | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 85,7% | 14,3% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 65,0% | 35,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 73,5% | 26,5% | 100,0% |

Table 1.22: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.2 (Technician role)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1,815a | 1 | ,178 |
| Continuity Correctionb | ,907 | 1 | ,341 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 1,918 | 1 | ,166 |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1,762 | 1 | ,184 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.23: *Technician role item No.3 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I produce brochures, pamphlets, and other publications | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent | To a small extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 57,1% | 28,6% | 14,3% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 70,0% | 15,0% | 15,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 64,7% | 20,6% | 14,7% | 100,0% |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.24: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.3 (Technician role)* |
|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | ,950a | 2 | ,622 |
| Likelihood Ratio | ,938 | 2 | ,626 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | ,217 | 1 | ,642 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

Table 1.25: *Technician role item No.4 in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | I do photography and graphics for communication or public relation materials | Total |
| To a great extent | To some extent | To a small extent |
| I work for: | Private company | 21,4% | 35,7% | 42,9% | 100,0% |
| State institution | 55,0% | 35,0% | 10,0% | 100,0% |
| Total | 41,2% | 35,3% | 23,5% | 100,0% |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 1.26: *Chi-Square Tests for item No.4 (Technician role)* |
|  | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square | 6,034a | 2 | ,049 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6,223 | 2 | ,045 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 5,727 | 1 | ,017 |
| N of Valid Cases | 34 |  |  |

This is the second item which showed statistically significant value belongs to the technician role scale. Practitioners in private companies reported that the item describes their regular duties to a very small extent, while their colleagues in state institutions reported that this item describes their everyday tasks to a great extent.

The results further show that in both types of organizations public relations practitioners occupy dominantly media relations role. This technician role is the second with the highest score, whereas the managerial role enactment is the least occupied in both types of organizations.

Table 1.27: *Level of roles enactment in two types of organizations*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| I work for: | Manager | Media relations | Technician |
| Private company | 3,11 | 3,91 | 3,39 |
| State institution | 3,10 | 3,73 | 3,48 |
| Total | 3,10 | 3,80 | 3,44 |

It is evident that all scores are nearly of the same value, therefore it can be concluded that in both types of organizations public relations practitioners engage in similar activities and thus enact the same type of role. That leads to a conclusion that everyday tasks and activities of both groups are very similar, representing media relations dominance in everyday practice.

# Conclusion

# The results showed that the public relations practitioners perform media relations role dominantly. This finding is probably the result of the fact that public relations in Montenegro still needs to evolve into more strategic function, which will be practiced strategically, in accordance with the maturing of the field.

The Excellence study showed differences between roles enacted in corporations, governments, NGOs, associations and corporations. Public relations practitioners in corporations enacted manager role dominantly, while in NGOs practitioners occupied both roles, due to the size of the department. In associations, practitioners enacted technician and media relations role dominantly. The same pattern is found in government organizations, where technician and media relations role are more frequent than in other types of organizations, especially corporations (Grunig et al. 2002). The results of this research showed that both state institutions and corporate organizations have the same pattern of enactment dominantly media relations role by the practitioners, since there were no statistically significant differences among roles in two types of organizations. This finding proves that the overall level of development of public relations profession in Montenegro is at the same level, regardless of the type of organization. It also confirms the initial assumption that the practice is dominantly perceived and practiced as media relations and not the managerial and strategic one.

What may emerge as limitations of this study is the lack of previous research to provide additional data which may be useful for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. There is no single database of public relations practitioners, nor enough scientific research for comparing the results. In addition, number of respondents may be limiting for choice of quantitative analysis methods.

The most important aspect of further research would be the relationship between public relations practitioners and policy makers in the organization, as well as the correlation between roles practitioners enact and public relations models they perform in organizations. The relatively short history of public relations in Montenegro affected the dominant perception of the field as limited to media relations and technical support of communication processes. Dominant coalition’s perception about public relations as strategic management function is crucial for professionalization and development of the existing practice. Regardless of the relatively short period of public relations practice in Montenegro, the roles public relations play in organizations is basically determined by senior management. If they act dominantly as technicians, they will probably be regarded as such. If they show the ability of strategic leadership, they will eventually be recognized as strategically relevant function for the organization (Gregory, 2016).

Public relations function in Montenegrin organizations still needs to prove its value to policy makers. Therefore, more research about dominant coalitions’ perspective is necessary in order to identify key challenges and space for improvement towards more strategic and more managerial basis of public relations.

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