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Stephen W. Marshall, Chair

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ABSTRACT

Current PR Status in China

by

Fang Meng

This study is to explore the status of public relations in China. It examines if J. Grunig and

Hunt's (1994) four models of public relations—press agentry, public information, two-way

asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical—are practiced by Chinese public relations

practitioners and if there are additional patterns of practicing public relations in China. It is a

qualitative study. Long interviews with 10 participants were conducted to learn about the

phenomenon of public relations in China. The interviews were based on one-to-one chat via

the Microsoft Messenger software online. The data were collected using open-end questions

that allowed the participants to provide in-depth reflections about their experiences and

opinions. This research can provide western public relations firms with useful information

and guidance to make strategic business plans and implement them in China effectively.

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CONTENTS

Chapter

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Due to political changes and the fast growing economy of China, the promising market of public relations industry will offer a great number of opportunities to the foreign public relations firms that are interested in doing business in China. This study is to explore the status of public relations and examine the four western public relations models proposed by Grunig (1984) in China. This research will provide western public relations firms with useful information and guidance to make strategic business plans and implement them in China effectively.

China's Political and Economical Changes

To examine the four western public relations models in China, it is important to discuss the political and economical changes of China in the past years. China now plays a major role in the world economy. It is no wonder it has become more important according to its fast economical developing speed. However, approximately 20 years ago, China was isolated and far behind a lot of countries. According to the Institute of International Economics (2007), prior to the late 1970s, China barely participated in the world capital market. In 1977, the sum of its import and exports was less than $15 billion, and it was only the 30th largest exporting country in the world. But by the early 1990s, China's role in the international economy had been totally transformed. By 1993, China's total trade exceeded $196 billion, accounting for 2.5 % of the world trade. So how could such great changes happen in China? There are many elements to explain this miracle. One of the most important aspects to look at

this question could be the political communication and economical corporation between

Chinese government and western countries. The content can be separated into three periods:

1.China's international relationships with western countries since Mao Ze Dong and its role

in world trade (1949-1976); 2. China's international relationships with western countries

since Deng Xiao Ping and its role in world trade (1977-1990); 3. China's international

relationships with western countries because Jiang Ze Min and Hu Jin Tao in recent years and

its role in world trade (1990-present); The following paragraphs will not only illustrate a brief

history of the international relationships between China and western countries but also

China's world trade development.

China International Trade Relationships 1949-1976

According to Ma (2000), in the period from 1949-1976, under the leadership of

Chairman Mao, who is the founder and the first chairman of the People Republic of China,

China was kind of isolated from the developed countries, especially during the decade of the

culture revolution. The relationships between the Chinese government and most western

developed countries were tense, because China had very close relationship with the Soviet

Union due to the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance of

February 14, 1950. The treaty reflected the preferred ideology of Chinese government in the

early time. Also, the Sino-Soviet treaty influenced the relationship between China and the

United States greatly during this period because the United States and Soviet Union were

against each other severely at that time. Although China split with the Soviet Union in 1960,

China's relationships with western developed countries did not change much. Generally, in

this period, the Chinese government focused its international relationships on the Soviet Union and other developing countries. There were great ideological and economical gap between the Chinese government and the world of western developed countries. As a socialist country, the Chinese government philosophy held that, "they should not join the international division of labor that was dominated by the capitalist world." (Ma, p.118).

Regarding world trade, in the 1950s China was only linked tightly in its trade with the Soviet Union and to a lesser degree the states of Eastern Europe, which accounted for two-thirds of China's exports. After the Chinese government split with Soviet Union in 1960, China decided to reset its pattern of trade, but the result were not apparent at all because of its low rate of foreign trade. On the contrary, due to the split, the foreign trade with Soviet Union and other Eastern Countries declined dramatically. According to Camilleri (1980), in 1962, China's share of world trade decreased from 1.9 % to 0.9 %. The only exception was the trade with Romania, which was done deliberately by the Chinese government to increase tension between the Soviet Union and Romania.

China's International Trade Relationships 1977-1990

From 1977 to 1990, China became active in international relationships with western developed countries. Probably the biggest event after Deng became the chairman was setting up relationships with the United States. Deng is a key role in implementing reform and open policies in China. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China (2006), on December 15, 1978, Peking and Washington made a declaration that official relations between two countries would start from Jan. 1st, 1979. Additionally, according to

Yahuda (1983), from October 15 to Nov. 6, 1979, a delegation of Chinese government

officials visited France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Britain, and Italy and established

official relations with these countries. Still, China kept its relationships with other third

developing counties.

China benefited in the world trade during this period due to its open foreign policy. For

instance, "in 1980s the United States granted the most favored nation status to China. In 1983

the U.S. administration went on further and liberalized restrictions on exports of sophisticated

technology to China by placing her under the friendly non-aligned countries." (Drifte, 1985,

p.17). According to National Bureau of Statistics of China (2006), the U.S. share rose

dramatically from a few % of total Chinese exports in 1978 to 30 % by 1992. In absolute

terms, U.S. imports from China rose from around $300 million to almost $26 billion. As for

the trade with the European community, exports were growing there rapidly as well,

particularly exports of electrical equipment whose share expanded from 2 % in 1985 to 11 %

in 1990. Furthermore, Shen (2000) pointed out that from 1979 to 1987, the Chinese

government approved 10,529 foreign investment projects, which averaged 1,170 a year. The

total investment was $23.12 billion.

China's International Trade Relationships 1990-present

From 1990s to present, under the leadership of Jiang and current chairman Hu, China

has been involved more and more in the globalization of the world. The most important event

during this period was China's entry to World Trade Organization (WTO), whose members

are mostly from developed countries. In November 1999, China and the United States signed

an agreement on China's entry of WTO. Finally, China entered WTO in 2001, which was not only important for national pride but also paved the way for China to have greater power status. (Saich, 2001). Also, entry into the WTO means that China "will integrated itself into the world economy"(Saich, p.272), that is, is ready for free competition from abroad.

The world trade of China from 1990 to present has grown at a high speed. For example, according to Ma (2000), Guangdong, a province in the south of China, saw its exports grow at an annual average rate of 23 % from 1978 to 1996. "In 1996, exports from Guangdong reached U.S.$60 billion. Also, the investments from foreign countries have also seen a strong growth. By the end of 1996, there were 174,014 equity joint ventures in China. Their combined contracted capital amounted to $137.9 billion." (Ma, p.127).

All in all, as China now is more open to the western developed countries, she not only has made tremendous improvement and progress for her economy but also provided western firms with many opportunities of doing and extending their business in China. Public relations is one of the most promising industries that offer great business expansion in China. The goals of the study are to see how the public relations agencies plan and conduct programs in China and examine if the four western public relations models can be applied and how to be applied in China. If not applied, this research is to explore if there is any additional model that specially fits China's situations.

<u>Development of Public Relations Industry in China</u>

As China's political policies improved through years, public relations agencies have many more opportunities for development. From the first chairman, Mao, to the current

chairman, Hu, there have been many changes in the political systems. The foreign policies

have become more open to other countries and there are more corporations with many

international organizations. Therefore, public relations agencies will have a freer environment

to conduct their own business. And in an economy controlled by the state, government

relations and diplomacy are essential elements of public relations. According to Pintak (1992),

"Tiananmen did not change China's commitment to reform,"(p.8) said Sam Lam, managing

director of Burson-Marsteller China, a joint venture with the Xuihua News Agency.

"Tiananmen changed the West's perception of China."(p.8) Now there are more opportunities

for sponsorship, receptivity to contests and games, openness of the media, and good

government access in China. Compared with the past political system, the new one is more

democratic. People in China now have much more freedom and rights to express their

thoughts and opinions. The government control has also decreased in the mass media, letting

the media channels that public relations practitioners can make use of become more various

and energetic now. (Wu, 2002).

Western public relations were introduced to China in the early 1980s. The PR industry

has developed very fast in the past 20 years in China. According to the 2005 and 2006 PR

annual report, there have been more than 2000 PR agencies now in China and the number is

still growing. In 2006, the billing of PR industry was estimated up to 8 billion Chinese dollars.

(China PR, 2007). A lot of big foreign PR corporations now have their own chain firms in

China. For example, Ogilvy&Mather, Burson-Marsteller, Fleishman-Hillard, etc, now have

PR offices in China. The clients of China's global public relations agencies also tend to be

international, such as Coca-cola, IBM, Apple, General Motors, and other famous international

companies (Richey, 2000). Meanwhile, many public relations publications are available now in China, which include academic journals, magazines, books, and newsletters. Additionally, public relations education is currently advocated and offered in some colleges and universities in China (Chen & Culbertson, 1992).

PR Challenges in China

It is essential for foreign public relations firms to know the Chinese cultures. According to Hackly and Dong (2001), "One of the most challenging of these barriers facing American public relations firms is dealing with China's Guanxi." (p.1). "Guanxi" is a Chinese word that refers to the networks of personal relationships in the social life. It is rooted in the dominant philosophy Confucianism for thousands of years in China (Wu, 2005), which emphasizes the good reputation and morality of a person. Many political relationships, business relationships, as well as people's social lives are mainly created upon the personal level of relationship "Guanxi." Without the understandings of how "Guanxi" works in people's life and work in China, foreign public relations firms could find it hard to carry out business. Furthermore, according to Strenski and Yue (1998), the PR industry in China now faces three big challenges: First, the professional standards should be improved to satisfy the needs of society and the market economy better; Second, public relations professionals should strengthen the corporation with international public relations firms and become a true bridge to the entire business information industry; Third, they need to set up relationships with China domestic enterprises.

<u>The China International Public Relations Association</u>

China International Public Relations Association (2007), founded in April 1991, is headquartered in Beijing. The current president is China's former ambassador to the United States, Li Daoyu. The goals of the association are to combine theory and practice of public relations and to explore and develop China's public relations industry development strategies; to raise the social status of the public relations industry and its employees; to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of employees in public relations; to regulate public relations practitioners and provide various forms and rich content services to the members; to set up close links with related organizations at home and abroad; to promote professional, standard, and international public relations industry in China; to improve governmental diplomatic relations and make high-level contact through multiple channels; to create many forms of international exchanges and cooperation with domestic and foreign organizations to provide advice to China's reform and opening up and economic construction. Zhu Chuanxian, executive vice president of the China International Public Relations Association, was very optimistic about the Chinese local market. "Zhu Chuanxian predicted investor relations and crisis management would grow into important specialties as capitalism takes root. For multinational companies, building corporate image is the key to success in China." (Pintak, 1992).

China International Public Relations Association conducted a survey of PR companies in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou in 1999. According to Chen Xiangyang, director of the Development Department in the association, in an interview, China's PR industry has

overcome various adverse factors and the business continue to show rapid growth. The

survey revealed that the income of the domestic PR market in 1999 (not including Hong

Kong, Macao, and Taiwan regions) was estimated at nearly one billion yuan. There were

more than 3,000 public relations practitioners in those three big cities. Nearly 50 foreign and

local PR companies have their own fixed customer base in China. About 15 famous foreign

companies entered China's market and half of the top 20 world companies came to China.

Foreign public relations firms continue to maintain the average annual growth rate of more

than 15 %. The numbers of foreign-funded PR firms in China increased from 10 to 15,

including Encore, Puzer, Hoffman, and other world-renowned public relations companies that

have a foothold in China. They provide the management of public affairs, dissemination of

the information industry, and other professional advisory services. To meet the needs of

business in China, some foreign companies restructured into joint venture companies.

Currently, the number of employees in foreign companies is around 20 to 30 people.

Chinese-funded public relations firms continue to grow at high speed, too. The numbers of

Chinese-funded companies and their sizes have a larger increase. The surveys indicate that

more than 10 companies have more than 50 member staffs. The number of companies from

the previous 10 increased to more than 30. The annual income of some local companies is

more than 30 million yuan with an annual average growth rate of over 30 %. Currently, more

than 90 % of the professional public relations companies are located in Beijing, Shanghai,

and Guangzhou. The most active market is Beijing, which is also the headquarters of the

majority of public relations firms. Its market share is estimated 80 % of the whole country.

Chinese-funded companies and foreign companies all try to strengthen and build a national

network of business. Apart from consolidating Beijing as their headquarter, they consolidate their business in Shanghai and Guangzhou market. They also try to set up offices or joint venture in Chengdu, Kunming, Xi'an, and Daliane. Such network building is bringing about a national public relations industry. (Sina Finance, 2000)

PR Services in China

In 1999, Chen Xiangyang also pointed out public relations companies are still dominated by traditional services, which include media campaigns, news press, and release promotion. PR services to traditional manufacturing and consumer durables continue to develop steadily. PR services to IT industry and the health care industry have become the most important public relations services. More than 90 % of the public relations firms provide IT communication services. The finance, insurance, real estate, as well as the cultural and sports services become the potential market for PR services. (Sina Finance, 2000)

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) and the use of Network Marketing have become a bright trend in the future. Foreign companies focus on brand management tools and the Chinese local companies emphasize advertising tools. Public relations companies are still involved in all the three main areas: media relations, consumer relations, and government relations. At present, most foreign companies are still comprehensive public relations advisory services with their services involved in a number of industries like traditional manufacturing, consumer durables IT, and health care, etc. But, there are also some PR companies that are especially in charge of management of public affairs and IT

communication services. Although the Global Public Relations Company and other small

number of PR companies continue to provide comprehensive services, many Chinese-funded

companies in China are IT-based public relations firms, which have become the backbone of

Chinese local PR companies. The relationships between Chinese and foreign public relations

firms are more cooperative than competitive because of the sharing of the information. (Sina

Finance, 2000)

According to the 2006 PR Annual Report, the public relations services market in China

(not including Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan regions) continues to maintain a good growth

rate. According to the annual average income growth of the main PR companies, the national

professional organizations, and the PR business development in China, it is estimated that the

income of public relations services market in China for 2006 is more than eight billion yuan.

Compared with 6 billion yuan over the previous year, two billion yuan are increased with an

annual growth rate of 33.33 %. Consumer durables (cars, home appliances, etc.) has 26 %

market share, IT (computer hardware and software and peripherals) has 20 %, daily consumer

goods has 18 % market share, communications (mobile phones and other communications

products) has 10 %, and health care services has 6 % market share. Those five fields continue

to dominate the public relations services market in 2006. International public relations

companies have a bigger share of the IT services while the local companies have better

performance in consumer durables. It is revealed that the cultural, sports, health care,

government and non-profit organizations, and financial and real estate services industry have

the most potential in the field of public relations. The public relations industry is beginning to

receive widespread attention. Investigation shows that Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and

Chengdu still have the highest concentration of public relations companies. (Chen, 2007).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The previously discussion of PR status in China exhibits why understanding PR in

China is important. Grunig (1996) presents models of PR in Western counties. In order to

investigate the practice of PR in China, these models will be used as a framework to examine

how PR us currently practiced in China.

Grunig's Four PR Models

History of Four Models

Grunig researched on the public relations behaviors of organizations. Later, Grunig and

Hunt (1984) conducted a discussion on the historical development of public relations and

then proposed four models of public relations: press agentry, public information, two-way

asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), the first

model "press agentry" has existed since the mid-19th century. The goal of press agentry is

propaganda. The second model "public information" began in the early 20th century as a

result of the public attacks of journalists on corporations and government. Those

organizations inform the publics about the their activities by using public relations

practitioners as journalists. The information delivered to the public is usually from the

positive aspects. Both the "press agentry" and "public information" models are one-way

models. The third model of public relations "two- way asymmetrical" came out during World

War I. The purpose of this model was to learn about the attitudes and behaviors of the public,

thus those organizations are able to work out a way that the public can be manipulated their

wills. The fourth model is the "two-way symmetrical." The purpose of it is to improve and clarify the understandings between the organization and its publics. Grunig (1992) proposed that the two-way symmetrical model is the most ethical model, which can improve the organizational effectiveness.

Grunig (1984) identified two variables: direction and purpose. Direction differentiates between one-way and two-way models. By using the one-way model, practitioners deliver information from the organization to its publics. There is no feedback from the public for the one-way models while practitioners who use the two-way models need the exchange of information between the organization and its publics. Purpose decides if communication is symmetrical or asymmetrical. The goal of symmetrical models is communication between the organization and its publics. The goal of asymmetrical models is more like persuasion.

Additionally, three other variables might also influence the practitioners' choice of models, which include organization culture, potential of public relations department, and the schema of the public relations. Organizational culture can influence organizational decision-making. Grunig (1992) pointed out how the closed and open-system styles of management could influence the organizational culture. The open-system style of management encouraged symmetrical communication within the organization while organizations with authoritarian cultures tend to use asymmetrical communication. The second variable, potential of the public relations department refers to the public relations practitioners' knowledge about the two-way model. If public relations practitioners, especially the practitioners in high position, have professional knowledge and training in public relations, these practitioners have a greater potential to practice the two-way

symmetrical model than practitioners without knowledge and training. The third variable is a schema for public relations. Grunig proposed that public relations practitioners with knowledge and training in public relations tend to use the two-way symmetrical model of public relations more.

Last, except the four main models of public relations, additional models like personal influence, cultural interpreter, and mix motives were also proposed. The personal influence model is used by practitioners to reach those people who play big roles in media and politics to get attention for their organizations. The cultural interpreter model in fact can be acted as a part of symmetrical model. Basically, PR practitioners use it to learn and deliver what is attractive to the public (Grunig et al., 1995). Mixed motives model is a mixture of asymmetrical and symmetric model, which purpose is to integrate the interest of the organization and the public together.

The following will further explain the one-way and two-way models as well as illustrate how they could be applied in research and public relations practices separately.

One-Way Models and Their Application

Both the press agentry and the public information are one-way models. "Press agentry" refers to "propagandistic public relations that seek media attention in almost any way possible." (Grunig et al., 1995, p.169). The "public information" model delivers the accurate information about certain companies or organizations, but the information is often more positive than negative. Both of these models are one-way models. Practitioners who use these two models are focused on giving information about the companies or organizations to

publics but do not seek feedback from publics.

Referring to the "press agentry," Adam (1995) pointed out that media are important for the public affairs planning and crucial to program success of organizations because they can influence public attitudes. Therefore, to build up good relations with media is a significant part of public campaign, especially for public affairs.

Shin and Cameron (2005) examined another aspect of the press agentry. Their focus was on the relationship between public relations practitioners and the media. They compared public relations practitioners with journalists especially from the angle of conflict and strategy. Their research shows that both of those two professions view the other profession as moderate or intensive. Each profession thinks the other more conflictual and tends to believe the other causes the conflict. Public relations practitioners are thought as the strategic managers who build the relationships with journalists in the interest of their organizations, while journalists are acted as the defendant of the public interests.

Concerning with the importance of "press agentry", Tewksbury, Jones, Peske, Raymond, and Vig (2000) explained that journalists could manipulate the audiences' perception of local issues by framing the news. They conducted experimental research in which the same issues with different advocate frame emphasis were developed into stories and given to readers. The results showed that the advocate frames of the news do influence and change audiences' perception of the issue; however, the changes of attitudes do not persist.

The other one-way model of the public relations "public information" is usually used by government agencies and in press releases of organizations. Martinelli (2006) theorized the public information model is really important in today's Integrated Marketing Communication

(IMC) environment. She used the data from Ohio's general public survey about the state transportation based upon the articles from the news media and a government research agency. Data showed that more than 90 % respondents thought the research was important to solve transportation problem, but 8 % even didn't know the existence of the government research program and wanted to learn about it. Meanwhile, about 55 % of news coverage was negative towards the government research agency. Thus, the government agency should pay much more attention to the public information. It will be better for the government agency to develop a year-long strategic communication plan with the public and outline key benefits points that will resonate with the audiences. The government should also identify those potential interesting points to the public and release them through the media.

The public information model is also applied to organizations. They not only need to assess their organization culture and structure but also train their management. It is also helpful for organizations to establish the credibility of their sources and relevant background information. Importantly, they should manage people's accessibility and visibility to the public. (Adam, 1995).

Two-way Models and Their Application

The two-way models are more complicated. They emphasize not only giving information to the public but also getting information from the public. The main difference between asymmetrical and the symmetrical models are the effects of benefits by using them. The former one will benefit the companies or organizations only while the latter will benefit both the companies or organizations and the public.

The "two-way asymmetric" public relations model generally employs social science methods to develop more persuasive communication and focuses on achieving short-term attitude change. It also incorporates lots of feedback from target audiences and publics. The asymmetric model is used by an organization primarily interested in having its publics come around to its way of thinking rather changing the organization, its policies, or its views. The "two-way symmetric" public relations model relies on honest and open two-way communication and mutual give-and-take rather than one-way persuasion. It focuses on mutual respect and efforts to achieve mutual understanding and emphasizes negotiation and a willingness to adapt and make compromises. The "two-way symmetric" model requires organizations engaging in public relations to be willing to make significant adjustments in how they operate in order to accommodate their publics. It seems to be used more by non-profit organizations, government agencies, and heavily regulated businesses such as public utilities than by competitive, profit-driven companies. (Grunig et al., 1995)

According to Sallot (2002), the public has a better evaluation of using two-way models than the one-way models by public relations practitioners. The public usually view public relations practitioners using one-way communication models as having stronger advocacy role. On the contrary, using two-way communication models make the organization seem less interested in the public. A very strong two-way communication model might even act like a third party on the related issues.

Different cultures may have different preferences of the two-way models. According to Guiniven (2002), the greater preference and application of two-way symmetrical communication in Canada than in the United States results from the traditional value of

compromise embedded in Canadian culture. In other words, public relations practitioners seem to be more willing in Canada to use two-way symmetrical public relations on a public issue dispute to search for a compromise first rather than to escalate the confrontation. While Grunig (1992) has noted the opposite appears to be the case in the United States.

From the aspect of general communication, Culbertson and Chen (1997) showed how symmetry model supports communication in a community. What they theorized could be categorized into five points: 1. Behaviors usually depend largely on their positive contribution to commitment and quality of relationships. 2. A community requires interconnectedness and social cohesion. 3. Commitment to the core values and beliefs are important to a community. 4. Those people who claim their rights should also understand their own responsibilities. 5. All members of a community should be involved in making and carrying out decisions.

Four Models as a Whole and Their Application

There are also significant researches on the four public relations models as a whole. Harrison (1999) found that the four models should be chosen carefully and appropriately for the government. He took the case of Citizen's Charter as an example and found that central government chose the wrong communication model when they intended to get mutual understanding. The Citizen's Charter was proposed by the UK Prime Minister John Major in 1991 to improve public services. The central government should have used the two-way symmetric communication model. However, it eventually chose the press agentry and public information models whose purposes are propaganda and information dissemination separately.

The four public relations models cannot only be used in PR industry but also can be applied in other fields. Ryan (1995) pointed out that public relations models could help writers produce publishable releases. Public relations practitioners usually write for different target reader groups because of the requirements of the four public relations models. They may write for news media, CEO, government officials, consumers, etc. Thus, they are more creative in writing style by following the four models. Sometimes, in their writings, they may use two or more writing styles to fit the functions and purposes of models. Those advantages of public relations writings following by the four public relations models could be useful references for the writers who are seeking the opportunity of publication.

Opposition to the Four Models

Most of these critics have focused on Grunig's (1989) and Grunig (1992) proposal that the two-way symmetrical model is the most ethical and effective in most situations. Some scholars disagree with the idea that the symmetrical model is superior to the other models, for they believe that the other models are also acceptable public relations practice. Critical scholars thought that the symmetrical model conflicts with reality (Grunig, 2002).

Murphy (1991) pointed out that the symmetrical model of public relations is practically impossible. Similar ideas are also be stated by Leitch and Neilson (2001) and Van der Meiden (1993). Miller (1989) is the first scholar to argue that the two-way symmetrical model is unrealistic. This idea is supported by other authors like Leichty (1997) and Leichty and Springston (1993).

Karlberg (1996) believed that most of the current public relations research represents the

practice of public relations for the business and government organizations. However,

Karlberg also suggested that the public lacks the communication skills and resources to

realize the symmetry. Karlberg also pointed out three obstacles that prevented the public from

reaching the symmetry model. First, it is the lack of knowledge of the operation of media and

access to it for the public. Second, it is the lack of resources to access the media. Third, it is

the public's worry about the ignorance of the media.

Application of Four Models in Other Countries

In Bulgaria, Karadjov, Kim, and Karavasilev (2000) found that practitioners rely upon the

"press agentry" and the "two-way asymmetrical" models. As for the public information and

two-way symmetric models, they did not use the right and appropriate strategies because of

the lack of formal public relations education. Although Karadjov et al. stated there were

better performances in applying the "press agentry" and "two-way asymmetric" models, they

found intensive use of those two models will limit the development of public relations

industry in Bulgaria. Additionally, some public relations practitioners making deals with the

press rouse serious ethical issue in this industry. To a certain degree, practitioners in Bulgaria

might have misunderstandings of professional public relations. Thus, it is no wonder that the

PR job satisfaction in Bulgaria is not very high.

Research on the application of these four models of public relations has also been

conducted in other countries. According to Petersone (2004), the press agentry model is used

most by practitioners in Greece. In Latvia, the application of press agentry model is greatly

influenced by the political and economic transformation and its small size. Practitioners in

Latvia lack professional PR knowledges, and PR practitioners and media people do not trust each other. While in Taiwan the use of PR models is changed from the press agentry then public information to two-way asymmetrical model because of the political changes of the government (Huang, 2004).

As a theory, Grunig's (1984) four models of PR are the basic descriptive categories of PR practice that are relevant to different types of organization public relationships and different relational stages. Additional descriptive works are necessary in adapting existing concepts and measures in the future.

This research examines how prevalent the four public relations models are in the Beijing, China. Beijing is a big city where public relations developed fast. This project explores if the four western public relations models can be applied to the Eastern culture.

Research Question 1: What are the backgrounds of Chinese public relations practitioners and what is their understanding of PR?

Research Question 2: What are the ways of conducting PR in China for practitioners?

Research Question 3: What are the ways of planning and researching PR in China?

Research Question 4: What are the most important publics in China?

Research Question 5: Do the press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical models apply public relations in China?

Research Question 6: What are the PR model changes? Are there additional patterns of practicing public relations in China?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 experienced Chinese public relations practitioners in Beijing. Interviews are based on the first part of the questionnaire of the PR research in Latvia conducted by Petersone (2004). All the practitioners have at least 3 years working experience in PR field.

The interviews with participants were conducted online via Microsoft Messenger. The content of the chatting was recorded automatically through the software. The interviews were cut into two parts for participants on different days because of the time consumed in answering these questions. Every participant was estimated to spend ninety minutes in completing the interview. 10 participants were interviewed. Snowball sampling was used in selecting and contacting prospective participants. The existing participants recommended next participants from their acquaintance by their experience of responding those questions and select the person who might have qualified responses. All of their data in this research is anonymous and personal information will not be disclosed.

Online interviews were chosen due to time and geographical restraints. Compared with the face-to-face (FTF) methods, the computer-mediated communication (CMC) has some obvious advantages in conducting qualitative researches. According to Mann and Steward (2002), first, the CMC makes it possible for the researchers to cross the time and space barriers via computer and Internet. Second, the use of CMC can save the time and reduce the cost of research tremendously, especially the time and the cost of travel. Third, it is much

easier to handle the data. The electronic software can automatically save data like the conversation record. Thus, the errors occurring in managing the final transcript decrease. Fourth, it is more convenient and flexible for the participants. They can choose the time and the place that they feel comfortable to participate in the research. Also, other researchers implemented similar method in their qualitative research; for example, Petersone (2004) conducted online interview with 10 public relations practitioners in Latvia in her research. Chou (2001) used the online interview as his qualitative research method to study heavy use of the Internet and addiction among Taiwanese college students.

Still, there are some discussions on the use of the CMC as a method in qualitative research, which generally include asynchrony of the CMC, distractions during the interview, and different time zones of participants (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The interview time was scheduled at the participants' convenience. Questions were cut into parts and sent to the participants in different sessions of interviews. Background information of this research was available for participants' reference. The interview instrument is available in Appendix C.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Because the 10 Chinese public relations practitioners are from different companies, their diversified working experiences and personal backgrounds offer valuable information for this qualitative research. Among the 10 PR practitioners in China, 8 of them are female and 2 are male. Their ages are from 27 to 45. Three of them are senior account executives, five of them are senior account managers, and two of them are account directors.

RQ 1: What are the backgrounds of Chinese public relations practitioners and what is their understanding of PR?

Among the 10 public relations practitioners in Beijing, capital city of China, six of them have business education background, which includes the major of business management, economics, and finance. Two of them were English majors. Two of them have both journalism and business education background.

All of the 10 practitioners have at least 3 years' working experience in public relation firms in China. Eight of them work in branch companies of foreign firms, which are mostly based in the United States. Two of respondents work for the local Chinese public relations companies. Two of respondents had worked as journalists before they entered the public relations field. One respondent had worked in the marketing department of a company for 2 years prior to working in PR field.

Although there are some public relations courses in the universities, public relations as a major in universities is not available now. However, the major of journalism developed very

fast in China, so that is probably the reason why some practitioners in China have the journalism educational and professional background. Also, it seems the public relations companies in China prefer business management and English majors, especially the foreign public relation firms, because the routine working language is English in the office.

For the understandings of public relations, the 10 respondents have different statements. Four practitioners thought of public relations as a marketing tool; two practitioners thought public relations is a bridge between public and organization; three practitioners thought public relations is a tool to help the company with building and maintaining its brand image through various of relevant activities; one practitioner thought public relations is more like an attitude in the way the company communicates with their stakeholders. According to their understandings, public relations include such activities: press material development and distribution, press event design and execution, media relation maintaining, crisis management, branding building, government relationship, making the public learn more about the company and the business, and seeking opportunities for drive the sales.

The different understandings of public relations could be rooted from three aspects: first, the differences of educational and professional background among those 10 practitioners may shape their views of public relations differently. Six of the respondents have a business education background, and four of them thought that PR is more like a marketing tool. Yet, one related PR to the investments of the stakeholders. Second, their position in the companies influences their involvement in public relations activities. Among the 10 practitioners, some are senior account executives; some are account managers; and some are account directors. Third, the clients that they are working for also influence their views. Different clients may

have different focuses and business concept, thus the requirements for the public relations

companies are different.

RQ 2: What are the ways of conducting PR in China for practitioners?

The 10 public relations practitioners (listed as A. B.C. D. E. F…) provided valuable and

detailed information on how they conducted PR programs in China. Results can be sorted

into three kinds of programs: 1. The general PR programs 2. New product or activity launch 3.

Relation establishment with government the local people. 4. The Long-term PR program.

General programs are viewed from the overall services for the clients, which include

three roles: media relation maintenance, regular news release, and planning activities by the

clients' requirements. Respondent H and J pointed out the purpose of media relation

maintenance is to keep daily public exposure for the clients. Regular news release is often

about what activities or exhibitions are held or participated or supported by the clients.

Planning activities by the clients' requirements could be various, which depends on the

different purposes and situations. All in all, the goals of these programs are to make the

clients' products or brands visible and convincing. According to respondent A, if the target

audiences are the public, it is important to expand the scope of the visibility. If the target

audiences are the niche market, it is more important to build up a convincing and in-depth

image.

New product launch is the key program for 9 of the 10 practitioners in China. Usually it

can be separated to three periods: 1. Warming up. 2. Announcement. 3. Follow-up. The first

step is warming up. During this period, some product-testing program should be prepared.

Also, some interview or discussion with industry analysts or other third parties about the new

technology could be arranged. The purpose of it is to arouse the public's attention. The second step is announcement. In this period, a press conference is needed to deliver the new product. Some analyst or someone from academic or professional institute could be invited to give some comments in the press conference. Meanwhile, the press release, fact sheet, and features need to be distributed to the media. Some marketing promotion activities are also planned. The third step is follow-up. The goal of public relations companies is the need to sustain the audiences' attention for the products in this period. 2 to 3 months are the most typical sustained period of the time. This is a more comprehensive product promotion stage. Respondent I thought the goal of these programs is to raise public awareness and establish a positive public understanding to the products. The programs are important because the PR goal tightly links with the business goals, and the program results will usually affect the product sales.

According to 9 of the 10 participants in the interviews, a new activity launch is also very common in their services. For example, As Beijing will be the host of the 2008 Olympic games in China Beijing, it's a golden opportunity to promote the related program. One of the programs is a drawing competition for children aged 10 to 14. They are inspired to draw their imagination for Olympic games. This program is designed to enable children to participate in Olympics games. Actually this program goes every other year globally and this year the sponsor plans to enter China and it needs a public relations agency to help promoting this activity.

Relation establishment with government is rare for 8 of the 10 practitioners, but 2 of them need to set up the relations with the government, which depends on their particular

clients. For example, an integrated industry group entered China in 1990s. Its business

includes production of pulp and paper, power plant, fiber, and palm oil, which are normally

regarded the industries that could cause pollution. So a key objective was to let the local

people and government know that it is an advanced and responsible enterprise. Thus the

public relations agency helped the corporation invite the local community to visit its factory

in China and also invited related government officials and media to its base of operators in

Indonesia, which are successfully managed. These activities have good effect regarding

helping people learn about the corporation. The goal of those activities is to inform the local

people and government that this corporation takes the most advanced environmental

protection establishment and engages the experts working on finding the best way to solve

the environment issue, which eventually helped its project in China gain approvement by the

government and getting the support from the local people. If there are no such public

relations works, the local people normally think that the project can cause pollution and

appeal to the government for help to hold back the development of the business.

According to the 10 practitioners, llong-term programs are used to influence

independent third parties to become the influencers of the organization. The third parties are

usually famous industry analysts, who have high reputation and professional capacities in

certain fields. The third parties could also be popular celebrities. Respondent B believed the

public trusts and relies on them more than other resources when they make the purchase

decisions. In other words, the public trusts the comments of third parties and can be easily

influenced. Respondent I pointed out the public relations agencies could invite the third

parties to join the enterprise report releases and panel discussion. Long-term programs with

the third parties can be time consuming because PR professionals need to introduce the company operation, products, and performance to the third parties. The next step is to get trust and support of the analysts, which will take a much longer time. However, if the companies can be accepted and appreciated by the industry analysts, it is much easier for them to approach the public.

RQ3: What are the ways of planning and researching PR in China?

As for the topic of planning and researching, all 10 practitioners thought they are very important for the success of the programs. Although different agencies have different clients, their planning and researching process are very similar. The differences also exist that are usually decided by the internal structure of management, purposes of the programs, and personal ways of implementing tasks.

Planning inside has many dimensions. It is necessary to know the background of this incident, a clear purpose, strategy, and methods. Then, it is necessary to formulate a detailed agenda, preferably also including the budget. In the dissemination of information, maintaining the continuity and unity is important. People involved in the planning process could include PR professionals, outside consultants responsible for the company's products. Generally, the public relations activities would follow the clients' business plans. The clients and their PR agencies have meetings to discuss the campaign themes, procedures, and expected implementation effects. To be detailed, clients brief PR agencies on their recent program, the background information, and their initial thinking on this program. The PR agencies help planning the details like design, rundown, media list, media questions, and all the logistic items. The planning processes usually involve the persons in charge from the

client communications department, and the core team members of the PR agencies. Respondent C pointed out if there is a market communication activity, marketing people will also be involved. Respondent D pointed out if the brand is the case, including CXO (like CEO, CFO)-level people as well as the marketing people will be involved. The eternal objective of the marketing and PR should be the same. Often, resources from the both can be shared. PR can also do activities for marketing purposes; the dissemination of information for PR people is often related to the plans of marketing development.

According to the 10 practitioners in China, research is needed before starting a program. Also, it is necessary to continue the research during the program and make a review of the progress. Before the program, it is important to know the current status of the company and outside business environment. The current status of the company means the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat). The main goals of public relations research are to understand the market, government policies, and public opinions and they will adjust the organizational development direction and help to solve public relations issues. As a significant part of strategic public relations work, respondent B thought it contains desk research and analysis, which mostly refer to support on pitch document, project proposal or other paper work items as background. For example, the contact information of main websites (like specific field, bbs), newspapers, and magazines.

For the non-profit program, the research content is different. For instance, one PR agency helps its clients to set up corporations with China's Poverty Alleviation Foundation and the University of Agriculture. Before building the networks, the PR agency wanted to understand the needs of enterprise awareness first, and then they conducted a community

survey including the landless peasants living status and difficulties. The purposes of the program are not only to help local farmers but also to raise awareness of the residents on the enterprise.

RQ4: What are the most important publics in China?

Among the 10 practitioners in China, media are the most important public for nearly all of them. The second most important publics are the local people and the government in China. Besides those publics mentioned above, the industry analysts, stakeholders, resellers, employees, and all the other people and organizations having the business relations with the companies are also very important.

Media are the most important publics to the clients. The 10 practitioners communicate with media people frequently, usually weekly, some even almost on daily basis. They help their clients to distribute the press articles to the media, answer media inquiries, arrange media interviews, and invite media to the client press conferences. The 10 PR respondents help clients maintain a fair and close relationship with media through the various media events. According to the responses from the 10 participants, media are the key to PR firms. They are the carrier of the companies' messages. They help the PR people to deliver those messages to the general public or target audience and set up good image and reputation by their propaganda. To maintain the relationship with the media, regular press releases, press events, and media gathering are necessary. In addition, business lunches and dinners, gifts on holidays, and media trips are also parts of the relation maintenance.

The local people and the government are very significant publics for two practitioners. On one hand, they need keep good relationship with the government for approval of the

clients' projects; on the other hand, they need get the support from the local people to make

sure the project can move smoothly.

RQ5: Do the press agentry, public information; two-way asymmetrical, and two-way

symmetrical models apply regarding public relations in China?

Concerning with the Grunig's (1984) four PR models, the first model " press agentry"

and the third model " two-way asymmetrical model" are the most often used in China

according to the 10 interviewees (listed as A. B.C. D. E. F…). The " public information" is

also used, but it is not as often as the first and the third model. The " two-way symmetrical

model" is seldom used in current situations in China. However, most of the respondents

thought the mutual communication between the company and the public is very important.

The 10 respondents thought that the development of China's PR is still in the early

stages. The "press agentry" model is mostly applied. According to respondent A, "The root of

this phenomenon is that domestic PR is usually separated from the event." Most of the time,

Respondent B said, "the domestic PR release is just for the corporate propaganda purpose.

How the media truly considers it is not important." As long as public relations companies

have good media resources to deliver the news release, that's enough for the PR services. The

"two-way asymmetrical" model is also applied widely by the 10 practitioners. They did have

certain activities or investigations to understand the public, the media, and even the

government needs, Respondent D wrote, "we did those things more for the sake of showing

the positive sides of the clients." Thus it will be much easier for them to get the support from

the public. Currently, according to respondent G, online media is the most popular channel for

PR people because Internet media space is unlimited. Comparatively, the paper media and

television are hard to access and limited.

Additionally, some PR departments and agencies working for foreign enterprises are starting to use the "two-way symmetrical" model in China. For example, respondent C said, "the models the PR agencies mostly practice are between the two-way asymmetrical model and two-way symmetrical model. One of our clients is a global engineering and construction company who is providing water treatment services to the China market. The PR agency helped them by conducting comprehensive research to the Chinese water market, the relevant government policies, and public opinions to the water issues." Respondent C pointed out that during communications with the media and third parties, " the clients not only expressed their commitment to the market, but also listen carefully to the media point of views." But many respondents thought it would still be pretty hard to achieve the two-way symmetrical model completely. Respondent E believed, "the reason is that China is on the way of opening its mind and practicing symmetrical communications between organizations and public". Yet, respondent F said, "The media environment is not mature enough to make the two-way symmetrical model come true."

RQ 6: What are the PR model changes? Are there additional patterns of practicing public relations in China?

All respondents agree PR has developed very fast in China. The changes in PR services are gradually transitioning from one-way models to two-way models, which is closely related to the change of the media. However, there is still a long way to go. Respondents did not suggest additional models. In addition, respondents thought the development of China's public relations should not be separated from the political, economical, and social

environment.

Still, according to the interviewees, China's public relations industry is faced with many problems. First, current public relations agents are more short-term interest oriented, while build-up of the brand and corporate reputation are long-term tasks. Second, the public has a lack of correct understandings of public relations.

They do not really understand what the PR people are doing. Instead, the Chinese translation words, "Gong Guan" for public relations have negative meanings in certain context, which could refer to unethical relations setting-up implicitly, like bribery. Third, the overall professional capacities of public relations respondents in China need to be improved. Fourth, the media environment is not mature enough because the speech rights are still limited in some issues. Also, many media people are not professional enough and their professional ethics are often questioned. Bribery for news release is currently very common in the media industry.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Based on the online interviews, similar results that appeared in other previous studies are found in this research. Additionally, this study constitutes some new findings about the status of China's public relations. The discussion of the results mainly focuses on two parts: the services of public relations in China and the application of the four western PR models in China.

<u>The services of Public Relations in China</u>

All of the 10 participants in this research mentioned relations with the media, government, and local people are very important, which could be referred to the Chinese words "Guanxi" (Wu, 2005). In many situations, the relations with the media, government, and local people are mainly created upon the personal level of relationship "Guanxi." Knowing the right people and having certain sound networks is very important for respondents in China. Otherwise, it will be pretty hard to do the business.

According to all the respondents, PR services to the information technology (IT) industry are the most important public relations services. Media campaigns, news press, and release promotion are still the main services that all the public relations business provides. Additionally, integrated marketing communications and the use of network marketing have been mentioned by most of the 10 respondents. Many Chinese-funded companies in China are IT-based public relations firms, which become the backbone of Chinese local PR companies. Those findings can also be referred in a survey of PR companies in Beijing,

Shanghai, and Guangzhou in 1999 conducted by China International Public Relations

Association (Sina Finance, 2000).

The Application of Western PR Four Models in China

In China, " press agentry" model is the model used most used by respondents. They all

believed that media is important for the public affairs planning and crucial to program

success because it can influence public attitudes. (Adam, 1995). Yet, there are conflicts

between the practitioner and the media people in China because public relations respondents

are thought as the strategic managers who build the relationships with journalists in the

interest of their organizations, while journalists are acted as the defenders of public interests

(Shin & Cameron, 2005).

According to the results, respondents rely upon the "press agentry" and the "two-way

asymmetrical" models in China, which was also found among PR respondents in Bulgaria

(Karadjov, et al., 2000). Similarly, as in Bulgaria and Latvia (Petersone, 2004), the reason

could be the lack of professional education and correct understanding of the public relations.

Many of the 10 public relations practitioners had not heard of the four models before. The

interviewees' education backgrounds of the practitioners are mostly business, English, and

journalism. In addition, practitioners in China thought the application of PR models is greatly

influenced by the political and economic environment, which was similar with the research

conducted by Petersone (2004) in Latvia. Just like in Bulgaria, some public relations

practitioners make side deals with the press in China. Similarly, as in Taiwan (Huang, 2004),

the move from one-way models to two-way models is becoming a trend in China. The public

has a better evaluation of using two-way models than the one-way models by public relations

practitioners. One-way communication models have stronger advocacy role while using

two-way communication models make the organization seem less interested in the public.

(Sallot, 2002). It appears that both the media environment and the practitioners need some

time to become mature. So far, our findings conclude there is no additional PR model in

China, but there might be possibilities that new models will be borne in the local business in

the future.

During the interview, some of the respondents thought the two-way symmetrical models

are unrealistic. They thought this model is idealized, just like some critical scholars thought

that the symmetrical model conflicts with reality (Grunig, 2002). Some of the respondents

believe it is hard for the media to tell the truth, so it will be impossible to reach the symmetry

between the organization and the public. In addition, the respondents pointed out the public

lacks the knowledge of media operations and the resources to access it, which could be one of

the reasons why they thought two-way symmetrical models is unrealistic. The similar ideas

were proposed by Karlberg (1996)**.**

CHAPTER 6

LIMITATIONS

This research is based on the PR research in Latvia conducted by Petersone (2004).

Although the research in Latvia provides valuable guidance for this research, the situation in

China is still different from that in Latvia. So, the exploration on the PR status in China is

kind of limited due to the qualitative nature of this research. Also, as this study is a qualitative

research, it is hard to generate large number of samples. The findings presented here are

reflections and experiences of a small number of PR practitioners in Beijing of China. And it

did not go in-depth to explore the political, economical, and social influences of these

findings. There are two reasons for that. First, the PR people in China are comparatively

young; they don't know much about how China was transforming through political,

economical, and social change in the past years. Second, concerning the time restraint and

consumption, it is hard to include that in the interview. It will be hard to get answers of good

quality at this point. Yet, due to the high position and business commitment, some PR

practitioners were hesitant to disclose the specific examples of their clients and programs,

which could be valuable resources for this research.

CHAPTER 7

FUTURE RESEARCH

The study provides suggestions for future public relations research in China. First, the

PR research in China is in its early stage, thus there are still many areas needed to be

explored. This research could act as an overall research on the PR practitioners' practice in

China. Second, this study discovers some characteristics of PR practitioners in China

including their educational, professional background, and their views on PR. This research

did investigate the roots of these characteristics, which could be further explored in the future

study. Third, this study reveals the participants tend to use "press agentry" and "public

information" models most in China. The reasons of choosing these models could be

investigated in the future and it is important to understand the development of PR in China.

Fourth, the distrust between public relations practitioners and the media was showed during

the interviews and it is heavily influenced by the general media environment in China. This is

also another significant element to investigate the development of PR industry in China. Last,

this research is based on the interviews with 10 PR practitioners in Beijing. PR development

in other cities and regions could be different, which could be another interesting area for the

future research.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This research is to learn about the current PR status and to examine the application of western PR models in China. According to results of the online interviews, public relations has becomes a very promising industry in China. The Chinese practitioners have formed a comparatively professional process of doing their business. Currently, the "press agentry" model and the "two-way asymmetrical" model are practiced mostly by PR practitioners in China. The transition from one-way models to two-way models is still on its way. However, public relations industry in China is still facing many problems. The lack of correct understanding of public relations by the public and the lack of standard education and professional training for the practitioners have influenced the development of PR industry in China. In addition, the media environment also needs to be improved by including free voices.

As public relations also develops very fast in other big cities in China, there could be different responses concerning with the questions in this interview in other cities. Yet, this research did get into the political, economical, and social background of China, but it didn't go in-depth to study their influences on the development of PR industry in China. Also, the roots of practitioners' characteristics, like their educational, professional background, and views of PR, which could be further investigated in the future research. Still, why PR practitioners choose "press agentry" and "two-way asymmetrical" models other than other two models could be explored. Last, the distrust between public relations practitioners and the media is an important issue that needs to be paid much more attention to.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Document

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT (ICD)

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE:

The purposes of this research study is/are as follows:

The purpose of this study is to explore the status of public relations in China.
The goal is to examine if J. Grunig and Hunt's (1994) four models of public relations—press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical—are practiced by Chinese public relations practitioners. I also want to study if there are additional patterns of practicing public relations in China. It is a qualitative study. Long interviews with 10 participants were conducted to learn about the phenomenon of public relations in China. The interviews will be based on one to one chat via the Microsoft Messenger software online. The data were collected using open-end questions that allowed the participants to provide in-depth reflections about their experiences and opinions.

DURATION

The interviews with participants via Microsoft Messenger on line will be based on one to one chat. The interviews will be cut into two parts for participants on different days because of the time consumed in answering those questions. Every participant is estimated to spend 90 minutes in completing the interview. 10 participants will be interviewed.

PROCEDURES

Snowball sampling will be used in selecting and contacting prospective participants. The existing participants will recommend next participants from their acquaintance. The existing participants will recommend next participants by their experience of responding those questions and select the person who might have qualified responses. After consent is obtained from participants, I will schedule the time to have one to one chat via the Microsoft Messenger on line with them. Considering the length of time to answer questions and the

convenience of participants, every participant will have two chats with me in different days. All the questions are designed open-ended. They are not related to participants' personal and social life.

In addition, if there are anticipated circumstances under which the participant's participation will be terminated by the investigator without regard to the participant's consent, the consent process must disclose those anticipated circumstances.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS
There are no alternatives.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Currently there are no foreseeable risks in participating my research.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

The individual participant will receive no direct benefit.

FINANCIAL COSTS

There are no additional costs to participants that may result from participation in the research.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate and you can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling Fang Meng, whose phone number is 423-433-3474 or my E-mail meng@etsu.edu. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

In addition, if significant new findings during the course of the research which may relate to the participant's willingness to continue participation are likely, the consent process must disclose that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to the participant's willingness to continue participation will be provided to the participant.

In addition, if there might be adverse consequences (physical, social, economic, legal, or psychological) of a participant's decision to withdraw from the research, the consent process must disclose those consequences and procedures for orderly termination of participation by the participant.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call

Fang Meng at 423-433-3474, or Dr.Steve Marshall at 423-439-7575 or Marshals@etsu.edu. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.   If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in my personal computer hard drive for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject.   Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, ETSU IRB for non-medical research and personnel particular to this research Communication Department of ETSU have access to the study records. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you.   You will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document.   You have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator.   You freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

_____
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____
PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR   DATE

_____
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable)   DATE

Appendix B: Letter to Participants

[June 20, 2007]

Dear Participant:

My name is Fang Meng, and I am a graduate student at East Tennessee State University. I am working on my master's degree in Professional Communication. In order to finish my studies, I need to complete a research project. The name of my research study is Current PR Status in China.

The purpose of this study is to explore the status of public relations in China.
The goal is to examine if J. Grunig and Hunt's (1994) four models of public relations—
press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way
symmetrical—are practiced by Chinese public relations practitioners. I also want to
study if there are additional patterns of practicing public relations in China. I would like to conduct interviews with PR practitioners in China. It should only take about 90 minutes to complete. Interviews will be conducted via online private instant messenger at the participants' convenience. You will be asked questions about How Public Relations are practiced in China.

This method is completely confidential. In other words, there will be no way to connect your name with your responses. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU IRB for non-medical research and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records. They are Dr. Steve Marshall, Department of Communication, ETSU and Fang Meng, Department of Communication, ETSU.

If you do not want to do the interview, it will not affect you in any way. There are no alternative procedures except to choose not to participate in the study. You can skip any question at any time.

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. This study presents minimum risk to you.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me: Fang Meng, 423-433-3474. I'm working on this project together under the supervision of Dr.Steve Marshall. You may reach him at 423-439-7575. Also, the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board at East Tennessee State University is available at (423) 439-6055 if you have questions about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

Sincerely,

Fang Meng

1. Please describe your educational and professional background.
2. What does public relations mean to you?
Probe: From your experience, how would you define public relations?
Probe: From your experience, what kind of activities does the term "public relations" include?
3. Please describe the public relations programs that you work with.
Probe: What kind of public relations activities do these programs include?
Probe: What are the goals of these public relations programs?
Probe: Why are these programs important?
4. Based on the information that is available to you, please describe the public relations programs that other public relations practitioners in your organization work with.
Probe: What public relations activities do these programs include?
Probe: What are the goals of these public relations programs?
Probe: Why are these programs important?
5. How does your organization/your client organization plan public relations activities?
Probe: Please describe the process of planning.
Probe: What are the goals of the planning process?
Probe: Who is involved in the planning of public relations activities?
6. From your experience, what activities does public relations research include?
Probe: How does your organization/your client organization conduct research?
Probe: What are the goals of your research programs?
Probe: When do you conduct your research? Before you start a new program? Throughout the program? After you complete the program?
Probe: Why do you think research is needed/is not needed?
7. Who are your most important publics?
Probe: Why are these publics important?
Probe: How often do you communicate with these publics?
Probe: Please describe your organization's/your client organization's communication programs with these publics.
Probe: Please describe the relationship between your organization/your client organization and these publics.
Probe: How does your organization/your client organization maintain the relationship with these publics?
8. James Grunig identified four models of public relations. [*Give the interviewee the definition of each of the models*]. What models does your organization/your client organization practice most extensively?
Probe: From your experience, please give me a specific example in which the

most extensively used model was practiced.

9. Why do you think your organization/your client organization practices this model or these models most extensively?

10. Why do you think the four models of public relations are or are not applicable China's situation?

11. From your experience, how has the use of the public relations models changed during your career in public relations?

Probe: Please describe the changes.

Probe: Why do you think they occurred?

12. Can you think of any other models that would describe the practice of public relations in China?

Probe: What are these models? Please describe them.

Probe: Why do you think these models are suitable to China's situation?

Probe: Why do you think these models describe China's national peculiarities?

Probe: Why do you think these models are important?

Descriptions of James Grunig's Public Relations Models (Grunig, 1992)

Press agentry/publicity model: One way model. Information is disseminated from the organization to the public. The main public is media. Research is not conducted. Propaganda is used to achieve an outcome that is beneficial to the organization.

Public information model: One way model. Information is disseminated from the organization to the public. Public relations practitioners are viewed as journalists in residence; the information is "truthful and accurate" (p. 288). Media is the main public. Research is not conducted.

Two-way asymmetrical model: Two way model. Research is used to understand what motivates organization's publics and how to produce messages that will make the publics to change their attitudes and behaviors according to the organization's goals. Persuasion is the primary goal of the public relations programs. Communication between the organization and its publics is imbalanced.

Two-way symmetrical model: Two way model. Research is used to promote understanding and an exchange of information between the organization and its publics. Dialogue, not persuasion, is the goal of public relations programs. Communication is ethical and balanced.

VITA

FANG MENG

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Place of Birth: Zhengzhou, China
Marital Status: Single

Education: Exchange Student Certificate, Southern Polytechnic State
University, Marietta, Georgia, 2004 Fall semester
B.A. English, North China University of Technology, Beijing,
China, 2005
M.A. Professional Communication, East Tennessee State
University, 2007

Professional Experiences: Lecturer, East Tennessee State University, Foreign Language
Department, 2006
Research Assistant, East Tennessee State University, Department
of Communication, 2006-2007
Tutor for ESL students, East Tennessee State University, Writing
Communication Center, 2006-2007

Publications: Meng, Fang (2006). Orange Soap. Beijing: China Television
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Honors and Awards: 2nd place for New Concept English Speech Contest of NCUT,
2002
English Major Undergraduate 1st place academic Scholarship,
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2nd place for English short Play Contest of NCUT, 2003
(As Narrator and supporting Actress)
English major undergraduate 3rd place academic scholarship,
2003-2004
Undergraduate Social Activities Scholarship, 2003-2004
2nd place for English Short Play Contest of NCUT, 2004
(As Co-scriptwriter, Director)
1st place for English Writing Contest of NCUT, 2004
Awards for English Speech Contest of NCUT, 2004
Dean's List at SPSU, 2004 Fall semester

Tuition Scholarship of ETSU, 2006-2007