

Two managerial public relations roles in the South African context: findings of stage 3 of an international comparative study

ABSTRACT

This article reports the findings of Stage 3 of an international collaborative research programme, its point of departure being that public relations (PR) roles researchers have largely ignored research in the management domain in their conceptualisation of the PR *manager* role. (The first qualitative stage was conducted in the US and UK, and the second, quantitative stage in the UK). In the third stage, the UK study was replicated in South Africa (SA) to map and compare the main elements of management performed by PR *managers* working globally in a range of organisational settings and in different cultural contexts (with a view to reconceptualising the PR *manager* role). While the UK research found five empirical PR roles, the final parsimonious 2-factor solution accepted in the SA study was labelled the *strategic public relations manager* (a strategic role at the macro or societal level), and the *operational public relations manager* (a functional role at the middle-management level).

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INTRODUCTION

Research on public relations (PR) roles was pioneered by Glen Broom (Broom, 1982; Broom & Smith, 1979) and David Dozier (Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1984). For the next two decades, the US dominated roles research (Creedon, 1991; Culbertson, 1991; Dozier, in Grunig, 1992; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Lauzen, 1992, 1993; Lauzen & Dozier, 1992; Leichty & Springston, 1993;; Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig, 1998; Wright, 1995).

In South Africa (SA), the first roles research was the study by Steyn (2000a), followed by Holtzhausen, Petersen and Tindall (2002), and then by Steyn and Bütschi (2003). With the international community becoming increasingly aware/taking note of theoretical developments in roles research in SA, Danny Moss (well-known British roles researcher) invited the authors of this article to participate in the third stage of an international comparative study to define the core elements of management in public relations in SA.

The first stage of the international study was conducted by DeSanto and Moss (2004), who undertook qualitative research into the work patterns of PR practitioners operating at *managerial* levels in UK and US organisations. In the second stage, Moss, Newman and DeSanto (2004) conceptualised and quantitatively measured eight roles for PR *managers* amongst 1 000 members of the Institute of Public Relations in Britain – realising 218 responses. The eight roles operationalised were *counselling/advisory responsibilities; issues management; policy and strategy making; trouble shooting and problem solving; administrative; monitoring and evaluation; negotiation; and technical responsibilities*. The final factor solution comprised five PR roles namely the *monitor & evaluator; key policy & strategy advisor; issue management expert; trouble-shooter/problem-solver; and the communications technician*.

The aim of the third stage of the international collaborative programme was to map and compare the main elements of management performed by PR *managers* working *globally* in a range of organisational settings and in different cultural contexts. Participation in the international study (through the empirical research of a Master's dissertation) provided an opportunity firstly, to spotlight the studies on PR *managerial* role playing already conducted in South Africa; secondly, to compare findings with previous national studies; and thirdly, to compare findings with international studies.

This article reports the findings of Everett's (2006) dissertation on the *managerial* dimensions of the work performed by 128 PR *managers* in SA, in a replication of the UK study by Moss et al. (2004).

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem addressed in this article is multifaceted:

- Firstly, the theoretical problem of the reconceptualisation (and empirical verification) of the historical PR 'manager' role - the core problem of the UK study by Moss et al.

(2004) and therefore also of the replication study in SA (Everett, 2006). This remains an important issue in the field, since practitioner roles are key to understanding the PR function. According to Dozier (in Grunig, 1992: 327), "PR roles are at the nexus of a network of concepts affecting professional achievements of practitioners, structures and processes of the function in organisations, and organisational capacities to dominate or co-operate with their environments".

- Secondly, to investigate whether different cultural and national/global contexts (SA in this case) will produce different findings from those obtained in the original study (in the UK) when using the same measuring instrument.

The background with regard to the first (theoretical) problem is the following: based on Steele's typology of basic role models (in Hogg & Doolan, 1999), Broom and Smith (1979) conceptualised four PR roles, namely the *expert prescriber*, the *communication facilitator*, the *problem solving process facilitator*, and the *communication technician*. In subsequent empirical research, the PR *technician* emerged as conceptualised (providing communication and journalistic skills to implement PR programmes), but the first three roles were found to be interchangeable, conceptual components of the PR *manager* role (Broom, 1982; Dozier, 1984). Practitioners in the *manager* role make communication policy decisions, are involved in PR decision making, frequently use research to plan or evaluate their work and to counsel management (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), are held accountable for PR programme outcomes, facilitate communication between management and publics, and, conceptualise and direct PR programmes (Grunig, in Grunig, 1992: 19).

During the 1980s and 1990s, the *manager* and *technician* roles were the cornerstones of PR research, teaching and practice. However, this role dichotomy is increasingly criticised as being inadequate in changing organisational environments:

- Significant information can be lost in the manager/technician categorisation (Leichty & Springston, 1993).
- The dual role has been oversimplified and does not consider the differing patterns of work performed by PR practitioners in the manager role. Insufficient attention has been paid to examining the nature of "managerial work" in the PR context (Moss & Green, 2001: 112).
- Roles studies have offered little insight into the nature of management processes (what PR managers actually do) and not much thought has been given to the nature and practice of management found within the management literature (Moss, Warnaby & Newman, 2000).
- There is a strong case for re-examining how the PR manager's role should be conceptualised and the adequacy of the role measures that have consistently been used for more than two decades -for possibly even reinventing them (Moss et al., 2004; Moss & Green, 2001: 123; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Moss et al. (2004) are of the opinion that it might be useful to compare the approaches taken by *management* scholars in defining the essential dimensions of *managerial* work. These sentiments are echoed in other parts of the world where new conceptual roles for PR emerged around the

end of the 20th century, possibly because of changed environments or an interest in finding own cultural or national identities. These were inter alia the *reflective* and *expressive* role/dimension in Denmark (Holmström, 1996; 1997); and the *sales manager* and *intermediary* in the Netherlands (Van Ruler, 1997). The European Body of Knowledge (EBOK) project identified two PR roles or dimensions in Europe in addition to the *manager* and *technician* namely the *reflective* and the *educationist* roles (Van Ruler, Verčič, Flodin & Bütschi, 2001). Also in the US, Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig (1998) discovered an *agency* role (in addition to the historical *manager* and *technician* roles) in their study on trend data on the roles of national Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) members, conducted in 1995. (In 1990, only the *manager* and *technician* roles were found).

In SA, the new political dispensation after 1994 caused major upheavals in all spectrums of life. In a study to identify the impact of political change on PR practice in South Africa, US academics Holtzhausen et al. (2002) found the most important changes to be management recognition of the PR function, increased professionalism, a shift away from perceiving PR as publicity and events management, and, the inclusion of diverse publics. They identified four generic PR roles in the SA context, reportedly performed by all the respondents: *cultural interpreter*, *media relations*, *liaison*, and *personal influencer*.

Unknown to Danny Moss at the time of starting his international comparative roles study, the changing managerial roles of PR practitioners had also been noticed in South Africa. The first traces were noted by Steyn (2000b) in her master's dissertation. In a strategic approach to PR, she conceptualised a third PR role namely the *strategist* (a strategic role at the top management or societal level), redefined the historic *manager* role as a middle-management role at the functional level, and, redefined the *technician* as an implementation role at the operational level.

The findings of a subsequent empirical study by Steyn (2000a; 2003a) to measure the three roles amongst chief executives (CEOs) indicated that the latter expected the PR *strategist* role from their most senior communication practitioner to assist them in understanding and adjusting to the changing stakeholder and societal environment. Sixteen of the 103 chief executives who participated in the quantitative research indicated that they were neither trained nor equipped to handle the communication with their organisation's strategic and societal stakeholders, or to lead the PR function to "communication excellence".

Steyn and Bütschi (2003) pointed out the similarities between the PR *strategist*, *manager* and *technician* roles in SA and (three of) the four EBOK roles identified by Van Ruler et al. (2001). Two of these four European roles - the *reflective* and the *educationist* roles - were new and conceptually underdeveloped.

Based on the similarities between Steyn's *strategist* and EBOK's *reflective* roles (analysed in Steyn & Bütschi, 2003) and conceptualising the *educationist* role, Steyn and Green (2006) operationalised, measured and verified the four EBOK roles in a SA corporate case study.

Based on the Steyn (2000a; 2000b), Steyn and Bütschi (2003), and Green questionnaire (reported in Steyn & Green, 2006), Van Heerden (2004) measured the *strategist* (expanded by adding a reflective dimension), *manager* and *technician* roles in South and East Africa. Her findings indicated two roles: the *strategist* (expanded by adding a reflective dimension) and a combined *technician/manager* role. According to Van Heerden (2004: 244), “it seems as though the role of the *manager* as conceptualised in theory does not exist in the African context”.

It is against this background that the authors decided to replicate the UK international comparative study in SA. The stream of strategic roles research in SA referred to previously was mostly based on Steyn’s questionnaire (2000b) and subsequent adaptations that added items to the *strategist* role index to provide it with a European “reflective” dimension (Steyn & Bütschi, 2003; Steyn & Green, 2006; Van Heerden, 2004). In view of the above, it became necessary to measure *strategic/managerial* roles in SA by means of another questionnaire.

The primary research objective of this study can be summarised as that of addressing the theoretical problem of the reconceptualisation of the PR *manager* role, through the following secondary objectives:

- i To define the core elements of management in the SA public relations context through participation in the international comparative research, based on the UK questionnaire of Moss et al. (2004);
- ii To compare the findings of the UK study (Moss et al., 2004) with its replication study in a different cultural and global context, namely SA (Everett, 2006), with regard to empirical roles and role indices;
- iii To anchor the *managerial* roles found in the SA replication study theoretically (Everett, 2006).

2. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

The research approach and methodology of the SA study are summarised in Table 1.

Research approach	Quantitative (Cooper & Emory, 1995)
Research design	Descriptive, formal (Cooper & Emory, 1995)
Research method	Survey, formal, cross-sectional (Cooper & Emory, 1995)
Population	PR/communication managers belonging to PRISA or IABC in SA
Sampling frame	PRISA and IABC membership lists
Sample size	610 PRISA members and 200 IABC members. (On the PRISA database, PR managers were differentiated from technicians by identifying the title “Manager” in members’ CV/from address list).
Element (Smith, 1988).	<i>Role</i> of the PR manager, i.e. behavioural patterns - what do they do?
Data collection tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-administered, electronic questionnaire • As an international comparative study, the same measuring instrument was used - measuring the 8 roles conceptualised for the UK study by means of 40 items (operationalised as PR activities to be measured). • Language was edited to be comprehensible to SA respondents. • A final question was added to inquire from the respondent how many people report to him/her. This was necessary as a screening procedure to ascertain managerial status. • The questionnaire employed a seven-point Likert scale, common in studies of this kind (McDougall & Fry, 1974). • Respondents were assured that the information obtained would be treated as confidential.
Data analysis method	<p>Descriptive and inferential statistics were used, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cronbach’s Alpha to test the reliability of the questionnaire and the respective factor structures (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) • Principal component analysis (PCA), followed by common factor analysis. The latter initially employed an orthogonal extraction (using Varimax rotation), followed by an oblique rotation (considered necessary for improved interpretability of the factor solutions).

More detail with regard to the data analysis is provided in the discussion of the findings.

Table 1: Research strategy, design and methodology

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUALISATION

In the original study, Moss et al. (2004) used Mintzberg's management roles (1973) as conceptual framework. The original UK questionnaire operationalised eight roles (see shaded areas in Table 2).

Domain	Public relations	Management
Grand theories	Excellence in PR and communication management (Grunig, 1992): PR practised at macro level PR practised at meso level PR practised at micro level	Strategic management decisions made at the: Enterprise level Corporate level Business-unit level Functional level
Theoretical framework	Roles theory	
	Strategic PR roles (Steyn, 2000a): PR strategist PR manager PR technician	Management roles (Mintzberg, 1973): Interpersonal Informational Decisional
Concept measured	PR <i>manager</i> role (Moss et al., 2004)	
Constructs measured	i. Counselling/advisory responsibilities	Each construct was measured by 5 items.
	ii. Issues management	
	iii. Policy and strategy making	
	iv. Trouble shooting and problem solving	
	v. Administrative	
	vi. Monitoring and evaluation	
	vii. Negotiation	
	viii. Technical responsibilities	

Source: own conceptualisation, based on Steyn's framework (2000b:12)

Table 2: Theoretical framework and conceptualisation

Since the SA research was a *replication* study, it used the UK foundation study. In doing so, it "inherited" the theoretical framework and conceptualisation upon which the UK questionnaire was based "by default".

The findings of **two managerial** PR roles in the SA study (third stage of the international collaborative research programme) therefore had no meta-theoretical or theoretical foundation in the original UK study. It must be noted that the excellence and strategic management grand theories (as meta-theoretical framework) and strategic roles theory (as theoretical framework)

presented in Table 2, were of necessity added *after* the findings of the empirical study in SA became available in order theoretically to anchor the findings. The concepts in **boldface** in Table 2 provide the foundation for the two managerial roles found in the SA study (and will be placed in context when discussing the theories).

Both the meta-theoretical framework and the conceptual framework of the SA study are summarised in Table 2 and its application to the study subsequently discussed (in the order presented in the left-hand vertical column of Table 2).

3.1 Domain

This study is positioned in both the management and PR domains in that it addresses the problem of the reconceptualisation of the PR *manager* role.

3.1.1 Management domain

A manager is an individual appointed to manage a facility, programme or other form of organisation. This individual is also responsible for the control and evaluation of administrative activities throughout the department/division, and for the co-ordination of substantial capital and operating budgets (Anon, 2005).

The French industrialist, Fayol, first described the functions of management as being planning, resourcing, organising, directing, and controlling work within an area of responsibility (Puth, 2002). Mintzberg (1973) contested Fayol's traditional view of management and found that managers spent a large part of their day communicating. This latter finding supports the views of Chester Barnard (in Puth, 2002: 5) who contended, as far back as 1938, that communication is a central function of management.

3.1.2 Public relations domain

Historically, PR has been viewed as a mass communication discipline (Brody, 1992: 349). Grunig and Hunt (1984), while supporting the view that PR has its roots in the social sciences, nevertheless believe that behavioural science concepts are also relevant. Grunig (1990: 3) regards PR as closely related to behavioural theories of management, organisational sociology and psychology.

Recent debates have focused on the PR shift to the management sciences (Argenti, 1996: 73; McGovern, 1993; Prepon, 1993). Since PR is a functional terrain similar to marketing, finance, production and human resources, Argenti (1996: 74) opines that the management sciences are its natural home. Hatfield (1994: 192) reasons that a broad management background enables PR practitioners the better to understand the business world and the "language it speaks". This view is supported by Warnaby and Moss (in Kitchen, 1997: 6), who regard PR as a management discipline.

The authors support Long and Hazelton's view (1987: 6) that adaptation to the environment is a core purpose of PR. The latter authors define the field as "a communication function

of management through which organisations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organisational goals". PR/corporate communication is "managed communication" with the aim of increasing organisational effectiveness by creating and maintaining relationships with stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000: 5). For the purposes of this research, PR is equated with corporate communication/communication management, in agreement with Grunig (1992: 4).

3.2 Grand theories

The meta-theoretical framework for this study rests on two pillars: (i) strategic management theory, and (ii) excellence theory, since each makes provision for two managerial roles.

Both are regarded as general or grand theories. The generality of a theory refers to its scope. To be regarded as a general theory, its explanation "must be sufficiently general to cover a range of events beyond a single observation" (Littlejohn, 1992).

4.2.1 Strategic management

A wide variety of mid-range theories is positioned under the umbrella of *strategic management* as a general theory. The theory on strategic decision-making levels is considered relevant to this study in that the two PR roles found in SA are managerial in nature and require decision-making on various organisational levels:

- **Enterprise level:** decisions regarding the organisation's role in society, its position in respect of stakeholders and the achievement of its non-financial goals (Ansoff, 1979; Freeman, 1984);
- **Corporate level:** decisions regarding the organisation's financial strategy, goals and performance (Pearce & Robinson, 1997);
- **Business unit level:** decisions regarding the organisation's competitive position (Pearce & Robinson, 1997);
- **Functional level:** decisions by organisational functions regarding the support and implementation of the organisation's strategic plans, within their unique disciplinary identity (Pearce & Robinson, 1997).

The concepts highlighted in Table 2 under the management domain indicate that the two managerial roles for PR found in SA are conceptualised as contributing to decision making at both the **enterprise** and the **functional** levels of (strategic) management.

4.2.2 A general theory of effectiveness and excellence in public relations and communication management

Grunig (1993: 171) describes the general theory of excellence in PR as a *grand theory* rarely found in communication. In order to contribute most to organisational effectiveness (and to the organisation's bottom line), PR must be practised at three levels (Grunig, in Grunig, 1992: 3):

- **Macro** level, where decisions are taken with regard to the societal environment, communication approach to stakeholders, and identification of strategic stakeholders;
- **Meso** level, reflecting the organisation/structure of excellent PR departments, e.g. separate function from marketing, a direct reporting relationship to top management, knowledge of two-way communication and the Head of the Department performing the PR manager role;
- **Micro** or programme level, the level of individual PR programmes where the communication interface with stakeholders resides.

Since the **macro** level (also known as strategic/societal/**enterprise** level) is considered the most important in contributing towards organisational effectiveness, new conceptualisations of the PR *manager* role should include a strategic component. In conceptualising two managerial roles for PR, it is suggested that one is practised at the **macro** (strategic/**enterprise**) organisational level, and the other at the **meso** (**functional** or middle management) level.

3.3 Theoretical framework: role theory

Contemporary role theory has principally been developed in the field of social psychology (Hogg & Doolan, 1999). It is concerned with cues that guide and direct individual behaviour in a social setting (Hogg & Doolan, 1999), and refers to the study of behavioural patterns characteristic of persons or contexts (Biddle, 1979). Role can be defined as a person's patterns of behaviour or every day activities (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Members of an organisation occupy different positions or ranks, each requiring a different role (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

3.3.1 Strategic roles theory (from the PR/corporate communication domain)

In her Master's dissertation, Steyn (2000b) theorised that there are three roles in PR: the *technician* and two strategic roles, namely the *strategist* and the (redefined) *manager*. She conceptualised (and empirically verified) these three roles as follows in a study amongst CEOs (Steyn, 2000a; 2003a):

- A PR **strategist** operates at the top-management or **macro** level, performing the "mirror" function of PR. This consists of scanning and monitoring relevant environmental developments/issues and anticipating their consequences in respect of the organisation's policies and strategies, especially with regard to the stakeholder and societal environment.
- A PR **manager** operates at the **functional** or middle-management level, performing part of the "window" function of PR. This includes activities such as developing PR policy and strategy, the latter two resulting in messages portraying all facets of the organisation, and drawing up a strategic PR plan for media/employee/shareholder/community communication, etc.
- A PR *technician* operates at the micro or implementation level, performing part of the "window" function of PR. This, inter alia, includes writing press releases, editing

employee newsletters, writing speeches, arranging functions and developing web pages.

With regard to the concepts highlighted in Table 2 under the PR domain, the two managerial roles for PR found in this study are conceptualised as being similar in nature to the role of the PR **strategist** (contributing to decision making at the **enterprise** level) and the other to the PR **manager** (contributing to decision making at the **functional** level) of management.

3.3.2 Management roles theory (from the management domain)

To meet the demands of performing their functions in times of change, *managers* assume multiple roles. Mintzberg (1973) identified 10 management roles, divided into three groups:

Interpersonal role (ensuring that information is provided)

- *Figurehead*: a social and inspirational role where the *manager* is perceived as a status symbol being required to fulfil legal and ceremonial duties;
- *Liaison*: being an information/communication centre, building vital and necessary networks;
- *Leader*: defining the structures and environments within which subordinates work and are motivated; overseeing and questioning activities to keep them alert; selecting, encouraging, promoting and disciplining; balancing subordinate and organisational needs for efficient operations;

Informational role (linking all *managerial* work)

- *Monitor*: monitoring internal operations, external events, ideas, trends; analysing pressures of the environment; building and using intelligence gathered;
- *Disseminator*: bringing external views into the organisation and facilitating internal information flows between subordinates and other departments;
- *Spokesperson*: informing and lobbying with external parties on behalf of the organisation; keeping key influencers and stakeholders abreast of performances, plans and policies; assisting with the strategy-making system, generating and linking important decisions; having the authority, information and capacity for control and integration over important decisions.

Decisional role (making significant use of information)

- *Improver/changer*: designing and initiating much of the controlled change in the organisation, identifying gaps and defining the improvement programmes subsequently to be implemented;
- *Disturbance handler*: taking charge when the organisation enters troubled times and this involves crisis management;
- *Resource allocator*: overseeing allocation of resources, which primarily involves scheduling of own time, scheduling of work and the authorising of actions taken by subordinates;

- *Negotiator*: assuming the role of negotiating activities, either with other organisations or inter-departmentally.

These managerial roles can be played at different times by the same manager and in varying degrees, depending on the level and function of management in the specific organisation. Moss et al. (2004) regard these roles as the generic activities of managers and have based their conceptualisation of eight roles for the PR *manager* on that of Mintzberg (1973). Since this is the theory that has been operationalised in the UK measuring instrument (also used in the replication study), it will figure prominently in the conducting and the interpreting of the factor analysis.

3.4 Concept and constructs measured

This research, being a replication of the research conducted by Moss et al. (2004), measured the same concept, i.e. *PR manager role* – operationalised by the following eight constructs (roles): (i) *counselling and advisory responsibilities*; (ii) *issues management*; (iii) *policy and strategy making*; (iv) *troubleshooting and problem solving*; (v) *administrative*; (vi) *monitoring and evaluation*; (vii) *negotiation*; (viii) *technical responsibilities*.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REPLICATION STUDY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Defining the role dimensions of the PR *manager* in SA was one of the primary objectives of the UK/SA collaborative research undertaken by Everett (2006). An item was therefore added to the SA survey instrument to increase the validity of the study by screening those respondents who did not qualify as managers. Altogether 36 questionnaires were rejected on these grounds, bringing the number of usable questionnaires in the study to 128.

With a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.96, the survey instrument was found to be reliable. KMO and Bartlett tests determined that the data were suitable for factor analysis, with the KMO value being $0.8 > 0.5$. This indicated that correlation patterns were relatively compact and that factor analysis ought to yield distinct and reliable factors.

4.1 Several rounds of factor analysis

Various rounds of factor analysis were performed: First, a principle components analysis (PCA) on the 40 items in the questionnaire for the purpose of data reduction (using the statistical software package SPSS), followed by common factor analysis (CFA). This approach has been widely used in roles research and is exemplified in studies such as those of Kelleher (2001) and Dozier and Broom (1995). The CFA initially employed an orthogonal extraction (using Varimax rotation), but later changed to an oblique rotation (considered necessary for improved interpretability of the factor solutions). As in the UK study, factor loadings of less than 0.40 and variable loadings higher than 0.35 were suppressed on factors other than the main ones.

An 8-factor solution was first extracted as indicated by the Scree test (Cattell, 1966), which corresponded with the number of conceptualised roles in the UK study. This was followed by

a 7- and 6-factor solution, but these were also discarded since none of the three solutions were theoretically interpretable.

Close attention was paid to the 5-factor structure subsequently extracted since it corresponded with the final number of factors accepted by Moss et al. (2004). Although it roughly resembled the international researchers' final model, it was, after deliberation, also discarded based on the low scores for Factor 5. (The latter contained only 3 items and the factor loading of one item was low at 0.46. The factor was theoretically unacceptable, while the Cronbach Alpha was also low at 0.5).

The 5-factor solution did however provide indications of a more efficient solution, which led to 4-, 3- and 2-factor extractions, of which only the last appeared promising. There was theoretical support for two managerial roles in the literature review, specifically Steyn's findings (2000a) regarding the *strategist* and (redefined) *manager* roles in SA, as well as Van Heerden's findings (2004) regarding two roles in South and East Africa - one being fully managerial (the *strategist* with its reflective dimension) and the other a combined *technician/manager* role. Statistical support for the 2-factor solution was sought through a 6-phase approach, as can be seen in Table 3.

	NO OF ITEMS	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS
Phase 1	40 items in initial 8-factor solution	Cronbach Alpha scores on original 40 items revisited.	Items 24 and 36 were discarded because of low scores.
Phase 2	38 items	Two factors were extracted using Varimax rotation. In order to arrive at a 'cleaner' factor solution, stricter decision rules (.5) were applied.	Nine items with factor loadings < .5 were discarded: Items 11, 13, 21 22, 25, 35, 37, 38, 40
Phase 3	29 items	Varimax rotation done on remaining 29 items, applying decision rule of .5.	Four items loading strongly on both factors were deleted: Items 16, 26, 30, 34.
Phase 4	25 items	New rotation method used on 25 items, i.e. Promax Oblique, providing 'cleaner' factor solution.	Three items loaded strongly on both factors and were below the decision rule of 0.5. The following items were discarded: items 14, 32, and 33.
Phase 5	22 items	A final round of extraction was undertaken using Promax Oblique. A reliability test using Cronbach Alpha was conducted on the 22 remaining items in the two factors.	All 22 items were accepted in the final 2- factor solution.
Phase 6	22 items	The final two factors were labelled according to the items they represented.	Factor 1 = <i>strategic public relations manager</i> Factor 2 = <i>operational public relations manager</i>

Table 3: Phased approach to final 2-factor solution

The 2-factor solution was the final solution accepted, containing 22 items. Both factors were reliable with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.96 for Factor 1 and 0.76 for Factor 2.

4.2 Labelling of the final 2-factor solution

Based on the research of Steyn (2000a), Moss et al. (2004) and Mintzberg (1973), Factor 1 was labelled the *strategic public relations manager* and Factor 2 the *operational public relations manager* (Everett, 2006). While five empirical roles were found in the UK study (Moss et al., 2004), only two empirical *managerial* roles emerged in the replication study in SA. The role indices (the activities performed by a *manager* in each of these two roles) are indicated in Column 3 in Table 4 (Everett, 2006).

Factor Name	Item No.	Activities - Moss et al. (2004)	Roles - Moss et al. (2004)
Strategic public relations manager role	7	I collect external intelligence relevant to my organisation.	Issues management
	1	I advise top management on a regular basis about relevant business/communication issues or challenges.	Counselling and advisory responsibilities
	6	I continually monitor external trends that might affect my organisation.	Issues management
	4	I advise senior management on how major strategic decisions will be viewed by the media.	Counselling and advisory responsibilities
	9	I am responsible for managing the programmes to address identified issues.	Issues management
	5	I advise top management on a variety of important stakeholder issues.	Counselling and advisory responsibilities
	2	I contribute regularly to top management policy making.	Counselling and advisory responsibilities
	23	I am responsible for ensuring that the organisation's information/communication reporting systems are working effectively.	Administrative
	3	I advise senior management on how best to present their policies.	Counselling and advisory responsibilities
	28	I have to ensure that the public relations function operates within the agreed budgets.	Monitoring and evaluation
	15	I work closely with the CEO/other executives to ensure that the PR/communication implications of any strategic decisions are understood.	Policy and strategy making
	39	I engage regularly in contacts with the media.	Technical responsibility
	8	I recommend how the organisation should respond to the threat from major trends/issues.	Issues management
	27	I work with senior management to determine the appropriate targets/benchmarks for the PR function.	Monitoring and evaluation
	19	I am recognised as an expert in dealing with major/minor crises affecting the organisation.	Troubleshooting and problem solving

	12	I collaborate with other members of top management when formulating our PR strategy.	Policy and strategy making
	10	I help the organisation to manage issues arising from conflicts with external stakeholder groups.	Issues management
Operational public relations manager role	20	One of my key responsibilities is to help resolve problems caused by others within the organisation.	Troubleshooting and problem solving
	18	My job often involves dealing with day-to-day demands for PR support from others within the organisation.	Troubleshooting and problem solving
	17	My job often involves 'fire-fighting' a range of internal/external challenges.	Troubleshooting and problem solving
	31	A central part of my job is to negotiate with other managers about resources of the workload of the PR department/function.	Negotiation
	29	I am responsible for commissioning external agencies to evaluate communication strategies.	Monitoring and evaluation

Table 4: Comparison of the *strategic public relations manager* role and the *operational public relations manager* role with the five empirical roles found in the UK (Everett, 2006).

This finding achieves **secondary objective (i)**: to define the core elements of management in the SA public relations context, through participation in the international comparative research based on the UK questionnaire of Moss et al. (2004).

Column 4 in Table 4 indicates the corresponding empirical role found in the UK study as it emerged in the final 5-factor solution of Moss et al. (2004). To summarise: the 40 items in Column 3 operationalised eight conceptual roles, used in the international comparative study to identify *managerial* dimensions in PR. In the UK study, these measurement items resulted in five empirical roles: *troubleshooter & problem solver*; *key policy & strategy advisor*; *issues management expert*; *monitor & evaluator*; and *communications technician*). In the SA study, the 40 measurement items resulted in two empirical *managerial* PR roles: *strategic public relations manager* and *operational public relations manager*.

This finding achieves **secondary objective (ii)**: to compare the findings of the original UK study (Moss et al., 2004) with its replication study in a different cultural and global context, namely SA (Everett, 2006), with regard to empirical roles and role indices.

4.3 Anchoring Everett's strategic public relations manager and operational public relations manager' roles (2006) theoretically

The two managerial roles premised by Everett's (2006) are positioned in both the management and PR domains. They provide evidence of (i) Grunig's statement (1990: 3) that PR is closely related to behavioural theories of management; (ii) Argenti's view (1996: 74) that the

management sciences seem to be PR's natural home; and (iii) Hatfield's position (1994: 192) that a broad management background enables PR practitioners to better understand the business world and the "language it speaks".

Steyn and Puth (2000: 5) describe PR as "managed communication". This management takes place through the *strategic public relations manager* and the *operational public relations manager* roles. PR practitioners performing these two roles operate at different organisational levels and manage communication at these different levels as part of the "communication function of management through which organisations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organisational goals" (Long & Hazelton, 1987: 6).

The two managerial PR roles identified in the SA study can successfully be anchored in both strategic management theory and the general theory of excellence in public relations and communication management, as suggested in the metatheoretical framework. The relevant mid-range theory that fits under the umbrella of strategic management (Pearce & Robinson, 1997) refers to the levels of strategic decision-making:

- The *strategic public relations manager* operates at the **enterprise** level and is involved in strategic decisions with regard to the organisation's role in society, its position towards stakeholders and the achievement of its non-financial goals (Ansoff, 1979; Freeman, 1984).
- The *operational public relations manager* operates at the **functional** level, manages PR strategies, programmes and plans in support of the organisation's strategic plans. A *manager* in this role takes decisions with regard to the control and evaluation of administrative activities throughout the department, as well as the co-ordination of substantial capital and operating budgets (Anon, 2005). The *operational public relations manager* is largely responsible for defining the structures and environments within which practitioners are motivated and work, and balances practitioner and organisational needs for efficient operations.

With regard to excellence in PR and communication management as a grand theory (Grunig, in Grunig, 1992), the relevant mid-range theory states that communication excellence is achieved when PR practitioners function on three levels namely the **macro**, the **meso** and the micro levels. The first two levels relevant to the two roles found in this study are:

- The *strategic public relations manager* operates at the **macro** organisational level, where decisions are taken with regard to the identification and management of stakeholders and issues in the societal environment, and the communication approach to be followed with strategic stakeholders. Further decisions involve what stakeholders should receive priority, i.e. are strategic to the organisation. This is the level where PR contributes most to organisational effectiveness (and therefore to the organisation's bottom line) in assisting top management to adapt organisational strategies and policies, and also management's behaviour to the environment.

- The *operational public relations manager* functions at the **meso** organisational level, where the characteristics of excellent PR departments are reflected in the way the function is organised, i.e. being a separate function from marketing; having a direct reporting relationship to top management; having knowledge of two-way communication; and performing the PR *manager* role.

The above discussion satisfies **secondary objective (iii)**: to anchor the managerial roles found by the SA replication study theoretically (Everett, 2006).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For a country as culturally rich and diverse as SA, it is recommended that, in addition to using international survey instruments, SA researchers develop their own instruments. A few concepts relevant in the SA context that might have been operationalised and measured in this research are for instance *corporate social responsibility*, *reputation management*, *brand management* and *change management*.

It is suggested that, for further conceptual and metatheoretical development of the Strategic public relations manager and the Operational public relations manager roles, the assumptions of the reflective PR paradigm (Holmström, 1996; 1997) be explored. Elements of the “reflective” task of PR could be applied to the *strategic public relations manager* role to develop its societal adaptation dimension. The “expressive” task of PR could be considered in the development of the *operational public relations manager*. Likewise, there could be an exploration of theoretical developments since the time when the PR *strategist* and (redefined) *manager* roles were empirically verified by Steyn (2000a) (e.g. Steyn, 2002; 2003a; 2003b and Steyn, in Toth, 2007). The similarities between Steyn’s research in SA and the European reflective paradigm could further provide direction, as pointed out in the comparative analysis by Steyn and Bütschi (2003).

There is a need to develop theory on strategic PR management and the strategic roles of the PR function with a view to providing educators with a means of teaching new roles, activities and perspectives to students and practitioners. Bütschi and Steyn (2006) provide a research agenda for the former, while Steyn (in press), in arguing that the strategic role of PR is strategic reflection, attempts to provide new direction.

With regard to further development and refinement of the role indices used in this study, the addition of a reflective dimension to the PR *strategist* role index by Green, as reported in Steyn and Green (2006) and Steyn (in press), as well as in Van Heerden’s adaptations to the role indices (2004), could be of interest. These researchers have verified the *reflective strategist* role in the South and East African context and their indices thus decidedly merit attention.

Because of the insight provided by this present study, it is recommended that further international comparative studies be conducted in order to introduce unique cultural and national perspectives from all over the world.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The international collaborative research programme (of which this study was part), indicates that significant roles research is being conducted outside the US - inter alia in the UK and in SA. As indicated by the findings of the SA study, the traditional two-role typology of *manager-technician* (Dozier & Broom, 1995) no longer describes the varied activities required of - and indeed performed by - (some) PR *managers* in different settings and at different organisational levels. The changing role of business in society with its triple bottom line and inclusive stakeholder approach is reverberating worldwide. The new interconnected world is also playing a role - a world in which the importance of stakeholder communication is widely acknowledged and the management of relationships with strategic stakeholders has become inseparable from the strategic management of organisations.

In South Africa specifically, political changes during the past decade have had major implications for organisations needing to be managed at the strategic level - changes with regard to organisational relationships, the communication approaches used, who the strategic stakeholders are, and what their needs, values and expectations are. However, as Steyn (2000a) pointed out, some members of top management do not feel equipped to manage these complex communication relationships with their varied stakeholder groups and thus need guidance from senior PR managers and strategists on how to lead communication to excellence within their organisations.

The reconceptualisation of the traditional *manager* role - having received considerable attention as the focus of an international comparative study - is therefore an important issue in the field of PR. Having used the same measuring instrument, Moss et al. (2004) found five empirical roles for PR managers in the UK, while Everett (2006) found two managerial PR roles in SA. The importance of the latter study is that it provides evidence of both the influence of different cultural and national/global contexts on PR research. The findings of these two comparative studies have made a significant contribution towards advancing the conceptualisation and measurement of managerial roles in PR.

Moss et al. (2000) pointed out that relatively few roles studies have differentiated between the roles and responsibilities of practitioners operating at different levels within organisations, i.e. between the work performed by senior and middle or more junior PR/communication managers or practitioners. The significance of Everett's findings (2006) regarding PR managers in SA is that the historical PR *manager* role has been split into two *managerial* roles being performed at different organisational levels, namely the following:

- A *strategic public relations manager* role that is strategic in nature, is performed at the **macro** or societal level of the organisation,; and, deals with a range of external matters.
- An *operational public relations manager* role that deals with operational issues at the **functional** or middle-management (departmental) level.

This finding is even more significant if it is taken into consideration that the SA research replicated the UK study and thus also its conceptualisation (based on eight roles). Although a technician role was operationalised in the UK measuring instrument, this role did not emerge in Everett's model (2006), thus indicating that the two SA roles are truly managerial in nature. The fact that Everett selected only those respondents from the sampling frame who could be identified as *managers* could have played a role here. Furthermore, a screening question added to the SA measuring instrument to identify those respondents who did not qualify as *managers*, resulted in 36 unusable questionnaires (which further contributed to the validity of the research).

Based on the 17 items that represented the *strategic public relations manager* role, the core elements of PR at the **strategic** organisational level can be summarised as follows:

- *Environmental scanning*: constantly monitoring the internal and external environments to identify possible issues and threats and reporting these to top management;
- *Boundary spanning*: building necessary networks (internally and externally) and "spanning boundaries", thereby minimising issues by creating enabling linkages for strengthened relationships;
- *Issues management*: identifying possible issues and gaps, developing and managing programmes to address the identified issues;
- *Reputation risk management*: advising management regarding the consequences of their behaviour on key organisational and societal stakeholders and on how the media will view these consequences;
- *Relationship management (external)*: lobbying on behalf of external stakeholders and presenting their views to top management.
- *Strategic media relations*: engaging with the media, particularly when dealing with sensitive issues;
- *Strategic internal communication*: facilitating internal communication flows, and thereby reducing uncertainty within the organisation; and
- *Positioning of the PR department*: defining the PR structure, policies, strategies and budgets.

Based on the five items representing the *operational public relations manager* role, the core elements of PR at the **functional** organisational level can be summarised as follows:

- *Functional responsibility*: assuming responsibility for the success/failure of the PR strategy and implementation of PR programmes, as well as for commissioning external agencies and monitoring the performance of subordinates;
- *Relationship management (internal)*: negotiating with other *managers* about resources and day-to-day demands for PR support; and
- *Internal troubleshooting*: resolving problems caused by others.

That there are only two main dimensions of management in PR by no means limits the scope of activities to be performed within these broad roles; rather this provides a guideline for the different

contributions and decisions to be made by practitioners performing these two roles in different organisational settings. It provides indications of the activities that are currently being performed and the levels at which they are being performed. Without such a definition of *managerial* roles in the field of PR, the profession will continue to lose ground against other organisational functions -- such as marketing and human resources -- whose practitioners have traditionally been further advanced and whose fields of study are further developed theoretically so as to enable them to make a contribution to strategic decision making and strategy formulation (Moss & Green, 2001).

It has also been pointed out that the *managerial* roles found by the SA component of the collaborative study (Everett, 2006) can, in terms of theory, be anchored in the levels of management decision making, a theory residing under the umbrella of strategic management (Pearce & Robinson, 1997). Likewise, the general theory of excellence in PR and communication management - specifically the levels at which excellent communication are performed - could serve as a framework.

In view of the above, it is concluded that the international comparative study has unlocked cultural and national perspectives in roles research beyond the USA. Besides the research in the UK, it has drawn attention to roles research on the African continent, where conceptual and quantitative findings on new/adapted *managerial* roles are available - notably the studies of Steyn (2000a); Steyn and Green (2006); Van Heerden (2004) and Everett (2006).

The discovery of a strategic managerial role by Everett (2006) is important in that it supports Steyn's findings on the role of a PR *strategist* (2000a). As such, it is an indication of the increasing strategic importance, in SA, of the role played by the PR function and its institutionalisation. The focus of organisational strategy needs to become much broader and managers should ideally consider a complex array of factors, of which the social context in which an organisation operates - the stakeholders and the societal issues in its environment - is an integral part.

The nature of the management challenge has become greatly transformed (Von Tunzelmann, 1997: 9). The authors of this article contend that PR practitioners in the role of the PR *strategist/strategic public relations manager* can bring this broader societal perspective to the boardroom table.

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