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## A generic model for vocationally oriented public relations education in globalised contexts

### *ABSTRACT*

This article reports on a prescriptive generic Globalisation Model that was developed for vocationally oriented public relations education in globalised contexts. The model is based on a literature study that pointed out that the public relations profession is both affected by the forces of globalisation, and it has the potential to play a role in the management of globalisation towards a constructive outcome. The model consists of a recommended curriculum and recommendations pertaining to the functioning of public relations education departments in the context of globalisation. It is accompanied by an annexure indicating how the generic Globalisation Model should be adapted for application in South Africa.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation is largely an inevitable force in the modern age of digital communication technology, economic deregulation and increased international contact in virtually all spheres of life. All spheres of society will be affected and challenged by what Jeannot (2000:8) calls the “global imperative”. However, while globalisation is inevitable, its form and character are not (Soludo, 2001:50). The outcome of current globalising forces will be determined by how the global community responds to, and manages, the process. This challenge, in the words of McAuley (2001:242), will be “how to make it better for most people”.

Increased global connectedness is also emerging also in the field of public relations. This is evident in the existence of global and international public relations alliances and professional associations as well as the creation of cross-border and global consultancy networks to practise public relations outside the borders of a specific country (White & Mazur, 1995:50).

Several authors recognise the potential role of public relations in contributing to the management of globalisation towards a constructive outcome, or “to make it better for most people”. According to Verwey (2000:52), the value of the contribution of public relations professionals to global integration emerges from the self-defined role of the public relations professional in building relations or integrating relationships between an organisation and its publics. With regard to such global integration, various authors refer to several potential contributions of public relations, such as initiating dialogue and enhancing corporate social responsibility to address the current backlash against globalisation (Howard, 2001:42; Vogl, 2001:21); raising awareness of the global environment and imbalances that have been created (Cole-Morgan, 1991:165); promoting corporate and global ethics (Vogl, 2001:22); fostering altruistic community support (Banks, 1995:20); valuing diversity (Verwey, 2000:54); facilitating the process of development in Third World countries (Mersham, Rensburg & Skinner, 1995:28-30); and acting as problem-solvers across borders (Wakefield, 2000:36).

The potential contribution of public relations to global societal evolution brings new demands as far as competencies are concerned. As the profession is redefining itself, professionals need to transform themselves and acquire new knowledge and skills to meet the challenges of globalisation. According to Verwey (2000:52), successful societal integration by communication professionals will depend on the range of leadership demonstrated from a macro-level of interaction with society, to a more micro-level of individual stakeholders. “As more and more corporations around the world begin to rely on public relations professionals to guide them through the complete issues they face

in an increasingly global marketplace, those professionals must have expertise in strategic and analytical skills as well as *tactical tools*.”

The shifting role of public relations calls for changes in public relations education to prepare students for the strategic skills and paradigm shift needed in a globalising context. Added to this are recent developments in information and communication technology, which demand new competencies. In order to provide public relations education that is future oriented and globally relevant, institutions offering such education need to base their curricula on the investigation of not only the local, but also the global environment, in order to keep abreast of international developments in the public relations fields. This implies that international benchmarking should be built into the curricula of public relations programmes.

The body that officially represents public relations at a global level is the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). IPRA, which aims to raise the level of public relations practice and education worldwide, represents 92 countries all over the globe, ranging from the First to the Third World, including the former Eastern Block (IPRA, 2001), giving it the biggest global focus of all international bodies in public relations. This body's education model serves as a guideline for public relations education all over the world, giving it a global focus. It is the only known public relations education model representing such a large number of countries. It therefore follows logically that the educational guidelines provided by this body should be consulted as a starting point for benchmarking to identify competencies required in globalised public relations vocational contexts.

IPRA regularly publishes documents, called Gold Papers, aimed at raising the standard of public relations practice and education worldwide. Past Gold Papers dealing specifically with education include Gold Paper No. 2 of 1976, Gold Paper No. 4 of 1982 and Gold Paper No. 7 of 1990. Gold Paper No. 7, the latest in this series, provides a general model for public relations education, in the form of a recommended broad curriculum, called the Wheel of Education, a recommended core curriculum, and a set of recommendations dealing with research, the role of faculties, practitioners, etc. This prescriptive model was produced with the assistance of the IPRA Education and Research Committee and the IPRA International Commission on Public Relations, including practitioners and educators from all corners of the globe, including Africa (IPRA, 1990:2). Although this model is now over a decade old, it is still officially prescribed by IPRA (Cochrane, 2001). IPRA has, however, published a later paper dealing with education, in the form of Gold Paper No. 12 of 1997 (Black & Graham, 1997). This paper does not propose a new model, but rather adds to the 1990 model by offering recommendations to facilitate globalisation in public relations practice and education.

However, globalisation is generally regarded as a phenomenon of the 1990s and the new millennium (McAuley, 2001:240). Given the fact that the latest education model prescribed by IPRA was formulated in the late 1980s, it can be expected that this model will be outdated in some respects, especially in terms of recent developments in information and communication technology, and the changing role of public relations in the context of globalisation. It can therefore be assumed that this model does not provide an up-to-date international benchmark for vocationally oriented public relations education in global contexts, and needs to be revised to address contemporary questions surrounding education in a globalising environment.

This article reports on a model, based on the original IPRA framework, developed by Ferreira (2003:267-297) to reflect the competencies required for the professional practice of public relations in globalised vocational contexts. An attempt was made to develop a model with generic value, which can be adapted to economic, cultural, political, educational and other requirements unique to the local context. It takes the form of a generic model for vocationally oriented public relations education in global contexts, henceforth referred to as the “generic Globalisation Model”, together with an annexure to indicate how the model should be adapted in the South African context.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The generic Globalisation Model was developed by means of a literature study. The IPRA model of 1990, together with the recommendations in Gold Paper No. 12 to facilitate globalisation in public relations practice and education, was used as a starting point for the development of a new model. The combination of the 1990 model and these recommendations will henceforth be referred to as the “IPRA Model”.

The development of the new model was based on (Ferreira, 2003:42-297):

- A literature study on the impact of globalisation on public relations practice and education, and the competencies required for professional public relations practice in global vocational contexts.
- A developmental and theoretical perspective, developed by means of a literature survey, to study public relations practice and education in the context of globalisation.
- An outline and a critical review of the IPRA Model in terms of relevant contemporary literature.
- A literature overview of the African and South African systems, in terms of characteristics that impact on educational requirements.

### 3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The generic Globalisation Model is based on the assumption that globalisation is an inevitable force, and that a global mindset needs to be adopted by tertiary institutions to remain competitive in the global arena.

The model is based on an approach to globalisation relating to that of the so-called Globalist-Global Sceptic, which, according to Banting (1995), represents a positive stance towards global integration, as opposed to the so-called Orthodox Keynesian and Traditional Left, who resist the process of globalisation.

The model is based on a holistic and normative conceptualisation of the concept of globalisation as reflected in the following definition formulated by Ferreira (2003:126) as a vision for the management of globalisation towards a constructive end:

Globalisation refers to a movement towards greater global integration in all spheres of society – political, economic, technological, socio-cultural, educational, spiritual and recreational – with the ultimate aim of uniting the world community in enhanced mutual understanding, cooperation and respect for diversity, facilitating effective communication and other transactions for the benefits of all.

This perspective implies that, rather than resisting its influence, tertiary institutions should implement proactive measures to integrate existing local systems globally, while simultaneously striving towards the preservation of local diversity and nation-building.

The model is based on the following assumptions with regard to globalisation and higher education:

- Each of the elements of the new context of globalisation – including a socially distributed knowledge production system and dynamic competition – influence higher education (Gibbons, 2001:6-7).
- A reciprocal influence exists between globalisation and higher education. While the latter is influenced by the forces of globalisation, it also plays a pivotal role in managing the process of globalisation and preparing society to adapt to it, by assisting in the evolution of global economic activity, knowledge distribution, democratisation of political systems and reflecting how the process affects society (Ferreira, 2003:42,99; Sadlak, 1998:104,107).
- Tertiary institutions need to implement change management and pursue entrepreneurship, form strategic alliances, keep up with technological changes, adopt a global mindset and renew education programmes to prepare the community for new global and technological demands (Ferreira, 2003:122-125).

In line with the Globalist-Global Sceptic perspective mentioned above, the model is based on the assumption that globalisation is characterised by both disintegrating (negative influences contributing to instability and environmental imbalances) and integrating (positive influences increasing global connectedness) forces. Examples of the former include: job losses, exploitation of workers and financial disparity; cultural imperialism; marginalisation and inequality in access to information; and social decline. Examples of the latter include: increased connectivity and information flow; empowerment of the individual; increased awareness and global understanding; increased democracy; development and alleviation of poverty; political cooperation and reform; and preservation of culture (Ferreira, 2003:84-94).

The model is based on a definition of public relations in its mature form, as represented by the symmetric model of Grunig and Hunt (1984:21-43), and a worldview of public relations as idealistic, critical and managerial (Grunig, 1992:10), emphasising relationship management as the primary tool of the profession (Hutton, 1999:208,211). This approach stresses the integration of both managerial and technician education at all levels of vocationally oriented public relations, in order to contribute to professionalisation of the field. This approach also stresses the potential role of public relations in contributing towards global harmony. This implies the following:

- An organisation's performance should conform to what is in the best interest of the entire society, including the global society (Ferreira, 2003:143; Kendall, 1992:15-16).
- Its social responsibility should be proactive rather than reactive (Kendall, 1992:15-16).
- Public relations should function as the ethical and moral consciousness of its organisation (Leonard & Ströh, 2000:42).
- It should strive towards building and maintaining healthy relationships towards harmony in the local and global society (Ferreira, 2003:141,144).
- It should include central consideration of cultural diversity (Banks, 1995:32).

The generic Globalisation Model is based on the assumption that public relations is influenced by, and needs to adapt to, influences of global forces such as the New Economy, the Communication Revolution and the Network Society. It also assumes that public relations, as a communication function, has the potential to assist:

- towards increased global unity and understanding – i.e. global consciousness;
- in the implementation of measures to counteract the disintegrating forces of globalisation. Examples of the former include: research followed by multilateral dialogue; a people-centred approach; global restructuring; global regulation

and ethics; effective government frameworks; improved regional strategies; emphasis on development; adopting appropriate managerial paradigms such as a holistic, global perspective, a global mindset in strategic communication, and making an appropriate choice between standardisation and adaptation in the implementation of global and international communication strategies; promoting multiculturalism; and fostering education (Ferreira, 2003:164-179).

The model approaches public relations education departments and programmes as dynamic, open systems and networks functioning within larger complex, dynamic, and sometimes chaotic systems. It is based on the assumption that public relations education departments should function as learning organisations to ensure constant adaptation to the larger systems within which they operate.

In addition, the model is based on the assumption that public relations education departments should adopt network thinking to facilitate sharing of information and integration with relevant local and global systems. In this regard, Van Dijk's interdisciplinary framework for the study of the Network Society (1999:26-27) is adopted for the purpose of the identification of local and national systems, which impact on curricula. This framework allows for focus on the economic, political, legal, socio-structural, cultural and psychological subsystems.

#### 4. THE GENERIC VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED GLOBALISATION MODEL DEVELOPED FOR THIS STUDY

##### 4.1 Introduction

It is not the purpose of the Globalisation Model to provide a public relations curriculum in terms of the modular and outcomes format required for the registration of courses with SAQA. Instead, the model should be regarded as a general framework within which courses can be planned to suit the format required by individual educational institutions.

It is accepted that variation is possible within this general framework, and that different institutions could adapt the recommended curriculum to the specific demands of their individual regions. The recommendations could also serve as a guideline for the planning of postgraduate specialised public relations programmes, and for structured master's degrees. Thus, the model should be viewed as a flexible model in the form of a dynamic system.



The model consists of the following sections:

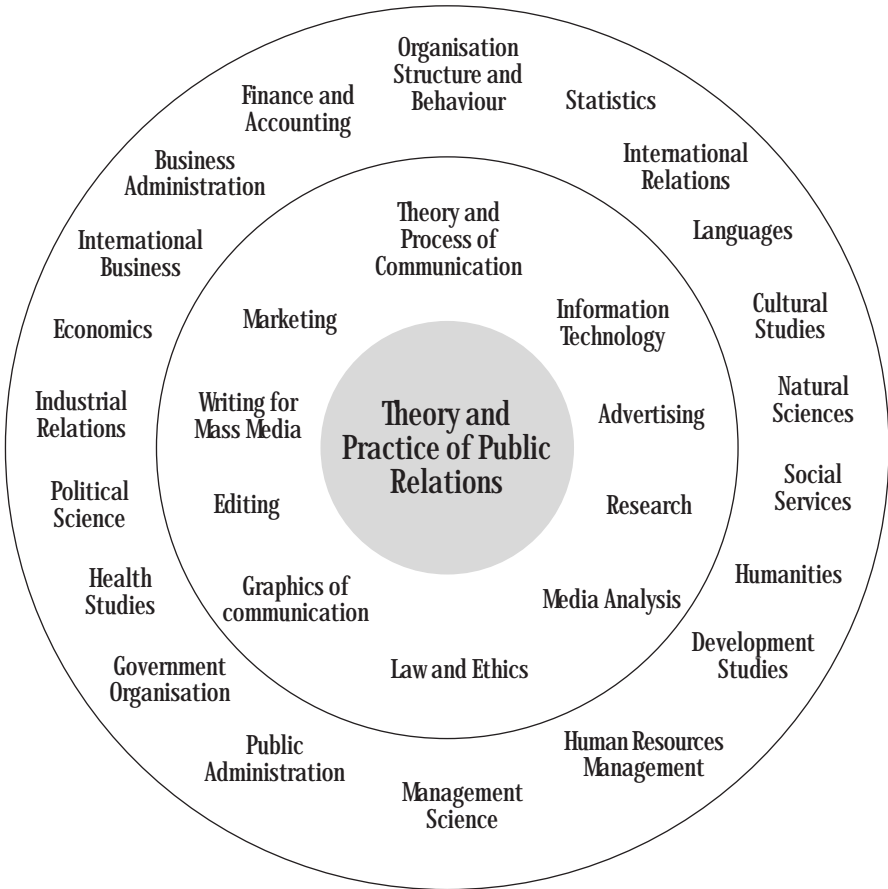
- An adapted Wheel of Education depicting the recommended public relations curriculum as a system consisting of subsystems. Like the IPRA Wheel of Education, this Wheel pictures the recommended curriculum as a series of three concentric circles. The smallest central circle encloses the topics/modules specifically concerned with public relations practice. The second, larger circle has the topics/module in the general fields of communication and media studies. The third and largest circle represents the general so-called liberal arts and humanities background, which could supplement the core curriculum. In the context of the adapted model, this circle should be viewed as disciplines/modules that are useful, some of which could be included as compulsory or elective modules. It is by no means suggested that all these disciplines are covered in a particular programme.
- A recommended curriculum to cover the central circle of the generic Wheel of Education.
- A set of general recommendations.

The generic Globalisation Model does not propose a rigid curriculum. Neither does it recommend that all the suggested areas should be covered in a first degree. Instead, the Globalisation Model represents the competencies that a fully-competent public relations practitioner should possess. Such a practitioner would possess the necessary professional attributes to operate at the highest level of professional public relations practice. This means that the practitioner would have the necessary competencies to practise reflexive public relations at a managerial level. In terms of education levels, the Globalisation Model as a whole, therefore, reflects the range of competencies which a public relations practitioner qualified at the highest level – i.e. a further research degree – would have attained. As far as depth is concerned, other than the latter specification, the Globalisation Model does not attempt to recommend which particular competencies should be mastered at which particular level of education.

#### 4.2 The generic Wheel of Education

Based on the literature review mentioned above, a number of topics have been added to the outer and middle circles of the original IPRA Wheel. The recommended generic Wheel of Education is illustrated in Figure 1:





**Figure 1**

It is recommended that the section on theory and process of communication in the middle circle of the generic Wheel of Education should cover intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, public and mass communication as well as specialised fields of communication such as political and government communication, pictorial communication and persuasive communication, in addition to fields of communication already covered in the core curriculum.

It is recommended that the section on law in the middle circle of the generic Wheel of Education would cover media law, labour law and other laws impacting on public relations, including international law.

### 4.3 Recommended core curriculum to cover the central circle

<p><i>Origins and principles of public relations</i>          Nature and role of public relations: definitions          Societal forces affecting public relations          History of public relations</p>	<p><i>Professional organisation/development in public relations</i>          Local public relations associations, including membership, services, accreditation and continuing professional development programmes, etc.          IPRA: membership, services, etc.          Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management          Public relations institutes worldwide</p>
<p><i>The public relations field</i>          Duties of public relations practitioners          The public relations department          The public relations counselling firm          Qualifications and education needed          Career-long professional development</p>	<p>Regional public relations federations such as the Confederation Europeenne de Relations Publiques (CERP), Inter-American Confederation of Public Relations Associations (FIARP), Pan-Pacific Public Relations Federation (PPPRF), Federation of African Public Relations Associations (FAPRA), Federation of Asian Public Relations Organisations and Asean          The International Association for Business Communicators (IABC)          Global public relations consultancy networks          The Council for Public Relations Networks</p>
<p><i>Public relations specialisations</i>          Publicity          Media relations          Community relations          Employee relations          Consumer relations          Financial/shareholder relations          Public affairs/lobbying          Fundraising/membership development</p>	<p><i>Public relations in different contexts</i>          Corporate/business (incl. insurance, retail, etc.)          Education          Entertainment          Government          Membership organisations          Social services          Culture          Finance          Health</p>
<p><i>Public relations performance evaluation/measurement</i>          Measuring programme effectiveness          Tools/methods of evaluation/measurement          Setting performance/success criteria          Measuring staff/public relations counsel effectiveness          Reporting on results of public relations efforts          Decision-making based on results (planning)</p>	<p>Tourism and hospitality industry          Charities and good cause          Community and social affairs          Multinational corporations          International government public relations          Environmental public relations</p>
<p><i>Public relations and entrepreneurship</i>          Characteristics of entrepreneurs          Competencies needed in entrepreneurship          Aspects of business practice such as management functions, marketing, financial management, human resources and law          Starting a consultancy          Writing a business plan</p>	

<p><i>Public relations research</i>  Public relations research/designs/  processes/techniques  Needs assessments  Public opinion polling/surveys  Fact-finding/applied research  Observation/performance measurement  Social audits/communication audits/employee  audits/readership surveys  Issues tracking/methods of environmental tracking  Focused interviews/focus groups/panels  Use of external research services/consultants  Content analysis/using clipping services  Historical research  Internet research  Readability formulas and testing  Benchmarking</p>	<p><i>Public relations planning and management</i>  Office management systems  Drawing up a media contact list  Strategic communication planning and  management: planning theory/techniques/models  Setting goals, objectives, strategies, tactics  Situation and audience analysis  Budgeting and financial management  Contingency/crisis/disaster planning  Timetables/calendaring and time management  Assigning authority/responsibility, supervising  Writing proposals  Account management  Relationships and relationship building  Working with opinion leaders  Issues management  Strategic environmental management  Interpreting and predicting trends  Diversity management  Problem-solving  Decision-making  Lateral thinking  Conflict management  Negotiation  Networking  Organisational background/philosophy/culture  Organisational change and development  Working with the Chief Executive Officer and top  management  Working with other organisational functions such  as legal, human resources, finance, manufacturing,  engineering, etc.  Working with outside suppliers, consultants,  advertising agencies and advertising sales  representatives  Counselling management and clients on practice  and policy  Transformational leadership</p>
<p><i>Public Relations ethics and law</i>  Ethics and codes of practice: public relations and  other professions  The International Code of Ethics for public relations  practitioners  The United Nations (UN) Charter  Credibility  Media law  Labour law  Other laws impacting on public relations  Regulatory agencies  Standards of excellence for public relations  practitioners</p>	<p><i>Public relations action/implementation</i>  Public relations programmes  AIDS prevention campaigns  Marketing communication and relationship  marketing  Sponsorships  Corporate advertising  Promotions  Exhibitions and trade fairs  Meetings, workshops, seminars, conventions, etc.  Other special events  Analysing typical case studies  Participating in real-life public relations  scenarios/community involvement</p>
<p><i>Public relations action/implementation</i>  Public relations programmes  AIDS prevention campaigns  Marketing communication and relationship  marketing  Sponsorships  Corporate advertising  Promotions  Exhibitions and trade fairs  Meetings, workshops, seminars, conventions, etc.  Other special events  Analysing typical case studies  Participating in real-life public relations  scenarios/community involvement</p>	<p><i>Public relations and development</i>  Participative development  Development support communication  Unconventional media, e.g. industrial theatre,  community radio, folk/oramedia, etc.  Managing communication for development</p>

<p><i>Public relations communication</i>          Business writing in English          Accurate typing at a reasonable speed          Basic computer skills, incl. Word, Excel, managing databases          Planning, writing, producing and delivering print communication to audiences          Planning, writing, producing and delivering audiovisual, electronic, videotape and multimedia communication to audiences          Employee/internal communication          Message strategy          Persuasion          Advertising vs publicity vs advertorial vs editorials          Communication theory/concepts/models          Layout/graphics/desktop publishing          Speech-writing/speech-making/speech bureaux          Feedback systems          Spokesperson training          Propaganda          Photography          Corporate/graphics identity          Conducting and handling interviews          Writing and delivering presentations          Video-, tele- and cyberconferencing          Formulating messages for illiterate communities</p>	<p><i>Public relations and social responsibility</i>          Societal responsibilities called for by the UN Secretary-General          Social investment          Public relations as a change agent in organisations          Promoting an understanding of democracy          Promoting goodwill and harmonising the private and public interest          Facilitating ethical business practices and relationships          Promoting a free flow of information          Promoting gender and cultural equality          Promoting altruistic community support          Working in partnership with government and NGOs in the implementation of corporate social investment programmes          Keeping management informed on shifting social needs          Tracking the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious groups, shareholder groups, organised labour and international agencies such as the UN, World Trade Organisation (WTO), etc. in defining global social responsibility          Developing an organisational code of ethics, training employees to understand the code of ethics</p>
<p><i>Public relations and personal presentation</i>          Personal presentation and grooming          Accuracy and punctuality          Etiquette and protocol          Personal development          Life skills management          Sensitive interpersonal communication:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diplomacy and tact</li> <li>• cross-gender/cross-cultural sensitivity</li> <li>• dealing with hospital patients, the bereaved, handling queries re. AIDS, etc.</li> <li>• handling complaints and difficult customers, etc.</li> </ul>         Participation in small groups/teambuilding          Assertiveness          Using a microphone, radio/studio training, exposure to a TV camera          Participating in the public relations community          Compiling a curriculum vitae and portfolio</p>	<p><i>Public relations and the home country</i>          Cultural, historical, ethnic and religious structures of the home country          Political, economic and government structures in the home country          Sources and databases of demographics and psychographics          Local language/s          Local mass media and technology          Consumer groups and other activists/pressure groups in the home country          Foreign relations of the home country          Issues of particular concern to the home country</p>

<p><i>Public relations and the Third World</i>  Worldview, values and culture in Third World countries  Socio-economic conditions and development needs in the Third World  Politics and government in Third World countries  Issues of particular concern to Third World Countries such as healthcare and the HIV-AIDS pandemic, poverty, debt, democracy, human rights, lack of technological infrastructure in rural areas, sustainable development, etc.  Mass media in the Third World  Social investment in the Third World  Balancing First World and Third World concerns in public relations</p>	<p><i>Public relations and intercultural communication</i>  Different value systems, norms of behaviour and assumptions about reality  Cultural factors influencing intercultural communication, e.g. written, oral and non-verbal communication patterns; business and social etiquette; negotiation strategies; aesthetics; material culture; family structure; language; social organisation; political structure; public and non-public institutions; religion; economic and technological environments, etc.  Barriers in intercultural communication e.g. ethnocentrism, prejudice, stereotyping, differing time perceptions, culture shock, etc.  International intercultural communication</p>
<p><i>International public relations</i>  Technology and culture affecting communication between multinational organisations and foreign governments  Avoiding danger of cultural imperialism  Issues management in cross-cultural situations  Public relations strategies in multinational environments  International agreements to establish effective copyright, patent and trademark protection, etc.  Foreign language studies  International area studies  Comparative legal, political and ethical dimensions of public relations practice at home and abroad  Major media with a global reach  Public relations aspects of major international political, diplomatic, cultural and socio-economic developments with special emphasis on superpower relations and regional bilateral cooperation  International organisations, associations and agencies that provide resources for public relations practitioners (e.g. Amnesty International, International Organisation of Journalists, International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers)  Building alliances and soliciting partnerships internationally  International sponsorships  International laws affecting public relations  International public relations case studies  Reading of foreign periodicals</p>	<p><i>Public relations and globalisation</i>  Economic globalisation  Globalisation as more than an economic process  A human-centred approach to globalisation  Interconnection of globalisation and localisation  Multiculturalism  Global ethics and responsibility  The changing role of public relations in a globalising environment  “Think global, act local” in communication strategy  Global and international communication  Cultivating respect for global diversity  Anti-globalisation movement, humanitarian and pressure groups in the global arena  Global structures pertaining to technology, politics, economy, mediation, etc.  Global issues pertaining to the environment; demographic changes; warfare; multilateral relations; science and technology; business and the economy; poverty; marginalisation and unequal access to information; human rights and labour; elimination of corruption and money laundering; supporting free-market systems; sustainable economic growth, etc.  The value of mutual understanding, harmony and unity in the global community  The role of public relations in counteracting disintegrating forces of globalisation</p>

<p><i>Public relations, the Internet and other new technology</i>          Public relations and the New Economy, Communication Revolution, Network Society          E-commerce          Using intranets for employee communication          Extranets          Managing the online image of an organisation          Online investor relations          Netiquette          Software products particularly relevant to public relations, e.g. PowerPoint, Vocus Public Relations, desktop publishing programmes          Establishing and managing an online newsroom          Knowledge of different file formats, e.g. .jpeg, .gif, .eps and .tif          Delivering information in downloadable and multimedia form, incl. streaming video and audio, corporate logos and graphics, financial spreadsheets, PowerPoint slide presentations and photography          Multimedia design          Writing for the Internet          Managing websites, incl. regularly updating, mentioning when last it was updated, consideration to privacy of visitors, interactive devices, survey and feedback section          Email news releases and media kits, incl. links, graphics and file attachments          Email interviews and online discussion groups          Online promotions          Online newsletters          Archiving documents online          Using the Internet during times of crisis          Dealing with online sabotage/anti-sites          Global and local online news services</p>	<p><i>Theoretical base for public relations</i>          Theories significant to public relations:          Stimulus response theory          Selective attention theory          Social learning theory          Yale attitude change model          Cognitive consistency theory          Diffusion of innovations          Inference theory          Uses and gratifications theory          Congruity theory          Source credibility theory          Inculcation theory</p> <p><i>Theories from related disciplines:</i>          Communication studies          Mass communication          Psychology          Sociology          Business          Commerce          Economics          Management studies</p> <p><i>Public relations theory:</i>          Situational theory          Grunig and Hunt's four models theory          Grunig's excellence theory          Grunig and Hunt's domino model of public relations effects          Broom and Dozier's coorientation model          Systems theory          Boundary spanning theory          Gender research          Socio-political theories          Organisational effectiveness and organisational theories          Balance theory          Social judgement theory          Strategic management theories</p>
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#### 4.4 General recommendations

1. Vocationally oriented public relations education programmes should provide students with a common global body of knowledge in public relations, adapted to local needs and conditions. Public relations should be taught with both academic and professional emphasis, and programmes should include experiential training, guest lecturers from practice, and monitoring the success of cooperative students and

graduates. Support material should include new texts and case studies of a high quality, with an appropriate balance between local and international information sources. Departments involved should teach the latest technology and produce cyberliterate graduates who are skilled in the application of multimedia and the management of online relationships.

2. Courses should be taught by individuals with substantial experience and a sound understanding of both the academic and professional aspects of the field. Those who teach public relations should ideally receive a doctorate or at least a master's degree in public relations. Specialists are also needed from other disciplines such as information technology, media studies, law, psychology, business economics, languages, etc.
3. The curriculum should be multidisciplinary, and the departments involved should encourage multi- and interdisciplinary thinking and education. Entrepreneurship and an attitude of life-long learning should be encouraged.
4. Vocationally oriented public relations education should be offered at first diploma/degree, postgraduate and doctoral levels. These degrees will equip successful students to fill positions in the profession at different levels. With regard to the two schools of thought about the purpose of a public relations education programme, one being that it is a technician-based communication skills programme, and the other suggesting that it prepares students for roles as managers, it is recommended that vocationally oriented public relations education programmes should integrate both approaches at all qualification levels. Students should be encouraged to complete a fourth year of study to prepare themselves better for the role of manager. At all levels of studies, however, students should be made aware of the need of practitioners to be able to develop solutions at a strategic level, and to be able to interpret and resolve global problems pertaining to the environment, in line with IPRA's view. Tertiary institutions should also consider introducing post-diploma/degree courses in specialised occupational education opportunities for public relations practitioners.
5. As an emerging global language, English should be a compulsory subject, and tertiary institutions should provide remedial training in English for those who need it. In the case of multilingual countries, preference should be given to national languages and those languages spoken most widely in the area in which the particular tertiary institution is located. As far as foreign languages are concerned, it is recommended that individual tertiary institutions consider the primary foreign language needs of their country and relevant multinationals. With education courses already stretched



to the limit, departments offering public relations education could consider these options: including a short conversational course at undergraduate level, including a foreign language/s as an elective choice subject/s and/or offering foreign language tuition at post-diploma/degree level.

6. In line with previous recommendations regarding social responsibility, it is recommended that students be involved in community work. This can be done by prescribing practical assignments involving real-life scenarios in community organisations, or encouraging students to participate as volunteers in community projects or as part of their cooperative education.
7. The education programme should be managed as a complex, dynamic system and network, and built-in mechanisms for growth, transition, modification and transformation should be created to deal with a chaotic environment. The latter should allow for the ongoing examination of current issues, based on environmental scanning. Lecturing staff, and particularly the head of department, should act as boundary spanners by maintaining links across the system, subsystems and the environment. A paradigm of self-learning and willingness to change should be encouraged among staff and the programme should be reviewed regularly. Teambuilding within the relevant department is essential as well as horizontal rather than hierarchical control.
8. In the fast-changing, turbulent and uncertain business and global environments, it is more crucial than ever that tertiary institutions function as learning organisations. This applies equally to departments and faculties that offer public relations education. This implies that tertiary institutions and individual departments should function as teams, promote the formation of networks and alliances, within the institution and outside, and apply critical thinking and holistic analysis.

Staff members should be encouraged to operate as members of learning organisations, continuously learning and updating their lectures in accordance with the development and changes occurring in the local and global environments. The relevant department should have measures in place to ensure easy access for staff to information on developments in the field. Furthermore, staff should think like entrepreneurs, seeking joint ventures and forming strategic alliances.

Students should be made aware of the value of continuing professional development after graduation. Tertiary institutions could offer such programmes themselves, or refer students to professional institutes for public relations. Students should also be familiar with the continuing professional development programmes offered by such institutes.

9. With regard to networks, education departments should strive towards centrality by participating in internal as well as inter-organisational networks, to establish interpersonal linkages. The goal of these networks should be to promote productive dialogue, cooperation and the sharing of information and ideas. Lecturers should work in partnership with colleagues in the government and the industry, to produce graduates who possess the new mental model needed for global competitiveness. Lecturers should also take advantage of structures for partnership agreements and the twinning of institutions – where these exist – and investigate the feasibility of forming partnerships with specific public relations departments abroad.

It is essential that lecturers join a local public relations institute and IPRA, so that they can share in local and global public relations networking. Students should be encouraged to join too. Contact among tertiary institutions that offer public relations education is also essential. Technology should exist to allow for email networking, and each relevant department should have a website – which allows for information sharing and networking – linked to the institution's main website. Practitioners should also be involved in dialogue with educators concerning curriculum development and research. Practitioners could encourage the development of education in a number of ways. They can assist by providing internship opportunities for students, serving on advisory boards of public relations departments, providing case studies and assisting in fundraising and development. Networking should also make provision for the regular interchange of information and ideas between local public relations educators and those in other countries.

With regard to network roles, lecturers should guard against being isolates (individuals to whom few are linked) and non-participants (individuals who perform their task within a network without communicating with the rest of the network). Ideally, all lecturing staff, but especially the head of department, should hold star roles (held by individuals who are linked to a large number of other individuals), bridge roles (held by individuals who have significant contact with at least one member of another formal group) and liaison roles (held by individuals who link clusters in the network together) (Eisenberg & Goodall, 1997:297-298; Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 1992:77; Monge, 1989:242). This will increase access to information and the department's likelihood of accepting new ideas and adapting to change, thus ensuring a well-connected and influential department.

Students should be made aware of the existence of regional and global public relations networks, and the value of networking in public relations in general, especially as far as community relations are concerned.

10. Lecturers and students alike should be encouraged to employ systems thinking. Interdependence of different aspects (subsystems) of the curriculum should be stressed. In this regard, a multidisciplinary approach is essential. Interdepartmental assignments should be prescribed. Mechanisms that allow for interaction and coordination between departments involved with public relations education should be in place.
11. Apart from environmental scanning, lecturers should also engage in output into the environment. Publications and participation in conferences, advisory bodies, professional institutes, etc. should be encouraged – both locally and internationally/globally. Efforts should also be made to encourage students to further their studies at master's and doctoral levels, and to publish their research widely to contribute to the body of knowledge of public relations. An increase in doctoral programmes could not only help to provide more guidance on the evaluation of problems, but would also help to extend and upgrade public relations education generally.
12. The education programme should make provision for the development of a global mindset. A holistic, global paradigm and a perspective of human-centredness and cooperation should be imparted, to encourage an appreciation for the value of harmony, unity and mutual understanding in the world community. An awareness should be created of global interdependence – the idea that the earth functions as a holistic entity, particularly as related to ecological and socio-political functions. A sense of global ethics and responsibility should be imparted. Awareness should be created of the responsibility of corporations to contribute to social, humanitarian, environmental and economic development. Knowledge about global issues and global structures should be imparted.

The appropriateness of standardisation vs adaptation in global and international communication strategies should be covered. Students should be encouraged to apply the adage “Think global, act local” and to adapt public relations practice to local needs and conditions where necessary.

Students should be made aware of IPRA and other global associations operating in the field of public relations. Students should also be made aware of possible international scholarships and exchange agreements with foreign tertiary institutions, opportunities abroad for experiential training, etc. The enrolment of foreign students should also be welcomed.

13. Education departments should be able to rely on the necessary managerial, productive, maintenance, supportive and adaptive subsystems in their institutions concerned to assist them. Tertiary institutions should provide for adequate technical and administrative support; a well-equipped computer laboratory and library; a system for internal communication; supportive management; and departments that assist with external liaison such as with employers, government bodies and foreign institutions. An educational institution should not attempt to begin teaching public relations unless it is prepared to provide sufficient financial resources for equipment, office space, and the travel needs of the faculty, etc. A department that offers public relations programmes should also utilise the support services of its institution's department of student development, to alleviate the pressure on the prescribed curriculum. Departments of student development could be involved with the offering of supportive education such as in life skills, personal development, etc.
14. It is recommended that each public relations education should design its own quality management system, following a systems approach. A quality management system should be based on a policy-defining purpose and the standards that the department wants to meet, and should include procedures to implement the policy. Policies and procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the department is actively improving its effectiveness.
5. **HOW THE GENERIC GLOBALISATION MODEL NEEDS TO BE ADAPTED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

It is essential for curricula to take into account local and national conditions. In line with the adoption of the systems approach, for application in South Africa, the generic Globalisation Model should be adapted to the larger African, the South African and the local tertiary systems. The following discussion includes the identification of aspects of the African and South African systems that need to be incorporated in education programmes, against the background of:

- The broad education requirements pertaining to the primary aim of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), namely to reconstruct education in South Africa around the core values of human dignity, liberty, justice, democracy, equality, redress and national development (Sparg & Winberg, 1999:27,32).
- The assumption that public relations education in this country should strive to contribute towards South Africa's global integration, global integration in Africa, globalisation of higher education in Africa and nation-building in South Africa.

In accordance with the adoption of Van Dijk's interdisciplinary framework, the generic Globalisation Model should be adapted to make provision for focus on the culture, socio-economic conditions, politics, government, technology, the media, law, psychology and values of Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

A comparison between the original IPRA Model and the South African body of knowledge of public relations (Krause, 1980:33-39) reveals that the following section, covering the socio-economic environment of South Africa, should be added to education programmes in South Africa: knowledge of the cultural, historical, ethnic and religious structure of the Southern African sub-continent, with specific reference to the identification of social groupings in sociometric terms, current political and economic structure, and development tendencies.

The above highlights the need to incorporate an African worldview and values in education programmes. In this regard, Steyn (1997:66) points out that intercultural scholars have paid scant attention to Africa, and suggests that empirical research should explore conceptions of competence influenced by this worldview. In addition, Mersham and Skinner (2001:117) note that in the past, in South Africa, African philosophical values have been largely ignored, whereas European culture has provided the norm by which other cultures were measured. Rhodes and Baker (1994:293) add that it is an indictment of the public relations industry in South Africa that practitioners have largely applied Western cultural norms to their communication strategy and tactics, even though, in many cases, the receivers were from African cultural groups. In South Africa, the Western model of public relations must be adapted to African conditions. Environmental concerns in Southern Africa, for example, are not so much issues like global warming, but issues of providing jobs, food, shelter and warmth for the rural poor, while conserving unspoiled wetlands and wildlife (Rhodes & Baker, 1994:289).

As far as issues management is concerned, provision needs to be made for those issues that are of particular concern to Africa and South Africa. Mersham et al. (1995:193-202), for example, identify the following issues impacting on public relations in Africa: education; social investment; investment in the informal sector; employment and affirmative action; trade, sport, tourism and cultural opportunities; Pan-Africanism; and skills development, training and career opportunities. They also identify the environment, eco-tourism and international government public relations as future directions influencing public relations (Mersham et al., 1995:215-226).

With regard to development needs in Third World countries, the generic Globalisation Model needs to be adapted to cover development needs of particular concern to the larger African system. Nowhere in the world is the need for development more acute

than in Africa, with 33 of the world's 48 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) located in Africa (Soludo, 2001:53-54).

The UN defines human development as “the process of enlarging people’s choices”. This organisation uses a Human Development Index (HDI) to measure the degree of development that a country has attained. The HDI is based on three elements regarded as essential to human life: decent living standards, longevity and knowledge. This is measured by real per capita income (adjusted for purchasing power), life expectancy and adult literacy (UNDP, 2001; Yedu, 1990:24). The Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released in 2001 (UNDP, 2001) places South Africa in 94<sup>th</sup> position among 162 countries listed in terms of HDI in declining order. With the exception of Mauritius, other African countries are all placed lower than South Africa, with sub-Saharan African countries filling the last 28 positions (UNDP, 2001). As far as living standards are concerned, the World Bank’s 2001 report on Africa (quoted by Mills, 2001:2) notes that per capita incomes for Africans have declined by 1% between 1998 and 1999, with 300 million of the continent’s total 800 million living on just 0,65 US dollars per day.

Although South Africa is a democracy, with advanced technology and an extensive mass media infrastructure relatively free from government control, the country is not free from development needs any more than its neighbours. It is very much a Third World country, with huge disparities between the rich and poor, and between urban and many rural areas, especially those in the former homeland areas. South Africa has a whole disadvantaged generation, and 10,5 million illiterate adults (Anon., 1999:24). In 1996, about 34% of the population aged 20 years or older had no schooling or only primary education. Only 22,6% of those aged 20 years or older had a grade 12 or higher education (Mills, 2001:5). The country is also characterised by high unemployment – up to 37% in 2000 (COSATU, 2000). In addition, many South African citizens live without proper homes, electricity, clean water, healthcare or telecommunication facilities (Burger & Dikeni, 2001/02:51). According to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), there is also a direct relationship between unemployment, poverty, crime, violence, and HIV/AIDS and other health hazards (COSATU, 2000).

In view of the above, education in development communication, social responsibility and social investment, becomes especially important in South Africa. According to Mersham *et al.* (1995:192), reconstruction and development do not lie only with the government, but with all business organisations. The South African community in general has a role to play in the upliftment, empowerment and development of the country. The role of public relations practitioners, as communication coordinators and facilitators in this process, is pivotal.



In spite of South Africa's development needs, the country also has several strengths, which place it in a position to contribute to human development in Africa, in areas such as democracy, human rights and sustainable development. South Africa is also in a position to offer a contribution to other African countries in the area of tertiary education, by expanding access, extending basic services and sharing information. The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) has already committed itself to greater contact with the public relations industry in the rest of Africa. Public relations educators can assist in this regard by making students aware of FAPRA and public relations societies and consultancies in the rest of Africa.

With regard to global issues that impact on international public relations, South African issues should be added to this list. A survey among CEOs by Perry & Associates (Anon., 1997:11) identifies the following as the most important issues pertaining to strategic global business in South Africa: identification and entering of new markets, world-class cost competitiveness, industrial relations/labour/human resources issues, information technology, improvement of skills, dealing with change, government policies, and service quality and focus. Other issues rated as important by at least 10% of the respondents include crime, improving productivity, world class quality competitiveness, local market changes, adjustment to/capitalisation on reconstruction and development, identification of future growth opportunities and sustaining growth.

It is also necessary that the model be adapted to the profound social and political changes that South Africa has seen in the past decade, after attaining democracy. This has culminated in a need for nation-building, reconstruction and development, as well as increased involvement in the rest of Africa through the African Renaissance project, the new African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). These changes are also reflected in the public relations profession, with changing audiences and strategies. Priorities have also changed. For example, a PRISA survey among public relations consultants (Anon., 2002:6-7) indicates that the perceived growth areas for the profession are issues management, employee relations, environmental public relations, community relations, international public relations and public affairs. This differs from a survey in the early 1990s, in which corporate and marketing public relations topped the list of issues perceived as most important at the time (Rhodes & Baker, 1994:286-287).

South Africa is a multicultural society with many different religious groupings and eleven official languages. Public relations programmes consequently need a strong emphasis on intercultural communication. Curricula on intercultural communication should include a study of different cultural groups in the country, and the application of the principles of intercultural communication in the South African environment.



The generic Globalisation Model should also be adapted to make provision for the study of at least a number of South African official languages, with English as a compulsory language. The Public Relations Industry Advisory Committee of Cape Technikon (PRIAC, 1998:1) recommends, based on a survey among alumni and cooperative employers, that Xhosa should be compulsory for students who do not know the language. The same survey (PRIAC, 1998:1) indicates a need for Afrikaans. As this survey was conducted in the Western Cape, where Afrikaans and Xhosa are widely spoken, it can be deduced that individual tertiary institutions should give preference to those languages spoken most widely in the region in which they are located.

As far as the recommendation regarding foreign languages in the generic Globalisation Model is concerned, it is recommended that public relations education departments consider the primary foreign language need of the multinationals operating in the region in which the particular tertiary institution is located.

Furthermore, strong emphasis on entrepreneurial skills is recommended, especially as it relates to public relations. As it is government policy to further entrepreneurship and job creation, it is also recommended that the curriculum include reference to the need for entrepreneurship in South Africa.

With an estimated one in ten South Africans infected by HIV (Anon., 2000:20), the inclusion in public relations courses of AIDS-prevention campaigns is recommended, specifically as they relate to South Africa.

Student participation in community projects is encouraged by PRISA (De Vos, 2002). The inclusion of assignments that involve students in community service projects in South Africa is therefore recommended.

Based on the above discussion, a list of prescriptions and recommendations is formulated next, to indicate the manner in which the generic Globalisation Model needs to be adapted for application to vocationally-oriented public relations education in South Africa. This takes the form of an annexure that should be added to the generic Globalisation Model to alter the latter for application in South Africa.

It is recommended that each tertiary institution draw up its own annexure, preparatory to the application of the generic Globalisation Model to its public relations programmes.

## 6. ANNEXURE TO BE ADDED TO THE GENERIC GLOBALISATION MODEL FOR APPLICATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

For application in South Africa, it is recommended that the generic Globalisation Model be adapted as follows:

1. Local public relations associations should include reference to PRISA, the Institute for Municipal Public Relations Officers (IMPRO), the Southern Africa Institute of Fundraising (SAIF), the Exhibition Association of South Africa (EXSA), University and Technikon Public Relations Officers (UNITECH), etc. In addition to FAPRA, public relations institutes and networks in Africa should also be covered. Ethics and codes of practice should include specific reference to PRISA.
2. Local online news services should include reference to news services such as News24.com, Channelafrica.com, News by Industry, 365Press.com, FutureCompany, Summit, the South African branch of PR Newswire, SAPressRelease.com, etc.
3. Public relations and development should include reference to reconstruction and development in South Africa, and South Africa's role in regional development.
4. Public relations in the Third World should include reference to Africa, and the role of the SADC, the African Renaissance, the African Union, NEPAD, etc. The item "mass media in Third World countries" should be adapted to make provision for the study of mass media in Africa. PRISA's involvement in Africa should be added as an additional item.
5. Public relations and the home country should read "Public relations and South Africa" and the items under this heading should be adjusted accordingly. The following two items should be added to this heading: nation-building, and social investment and reconstruction and development in South Africa. Assignments involving service to the community should be applied to the South African environment.

Development needs and issues specific to South Africa should be studied. Examples of these include: housing, electricity, clean water, sanitation, healthcare, adult basic education, job creation, alleviating poverty, access to information and technology in rural areas, etc.

Examples of issues of particular concern to South Africa include: entering of new markets, world-class competitiveness, violence and crime, improving

productivity, investment in the informal sector, employment and affirmative action, labour relations, trade, sport, tourism, Pan-Africanism, skills development, education, sustainable development, environmental concerns and eco-tourism.

6. Intercultural communication in South Africa should be added under the heading of “Public relations and intercultural communication”.
7. South Africa as an emerging global player should be added as an item under the heading of “Public relations and globalisation”.
8. The need for entrepreneurship in South Africa should be added under the heading of “Public relations and entrepreneurship”.
9. As far as quality management is concerned, it is recommended that public relations education departments design a quality management system that relates to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) legislation, the Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) regulations, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), and the quality management system and the management, culture and strategic plan of the individual tertiary institution concerned. In this regard, it is essential that lecturers acquaint themselves with the SAQA and ETQA framework, the standards generated by the Standards Generating Body (SGB) for Public Relations and Communication Management – once these are completed – and quality assurance prescriptions of the HEQC.
10. As the SGB for Public Relations and Communication Management is dissolved and re-registered every three years, it is recommended that the tertiary institutions review their public relations curricula every three years.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In its current form, the Globalisation Model reflects the width of the competencies that a fully qualified public relations practitioner should possess, but not the depth. SAQA legislation necessitates that outcomes registered on the NQF should relate to specific bands and levels. Tertiary education programmes relate to levels 5 to 8 on the NQF. The Globalisation Model reflects the competencies that a public relations practitioner qualified at the highest level would possess. In terms of the NQF, this relates to level 8. The Globalisation Model, however, does not specify which particular competencies should be mastered at each of the lower levels on the NQF. In this regard, it is recommended that research be undertaken to determine at which levels of education particular competencies should be mastered, to prepare students for entry into globalised public

relations contexts. Such research would enrich the adapted Globalisation Model, adding depth to it, by providing curriculum planners with a hierarchy of competencies to be mastered from entry level to senior levels of education, building on one another to form an integrated whole. Such a hierarchy of competencies might also assist lecturers in the development of structured master's degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in specialised occupational areas of public relations.

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