

Measuring the Value of Public Relations: An International Investigation of how Communication Practitioners View the Challenge and Suggest Solutions

By Michael A. Cacciatore & Juan Meng[‡]*

This research is motivated to advance our understanding of measurement challenges in communication practice and coping strategies from a global perspective. To do so, we relied on data from a global online survey of communication practitioners in more than 20 countries, which result in five country clusters for final analysis and comparisons. Communication practitioners across investigated country clusters shared different strategies used to cope with measurement challenges. Our results also confirmed that certain leadership qualities (i.e., strategic decision-making, possessing communication knowledge) are particularly important in managing measurement challenges. Our findings provide solutions, leadership skills, and prioritization to improve the measurement of communication effectiveness.

Keywords: communication, public relations, measurement, coping strategies, global Survey

Introduction

Intensive discussions have taken place among communication practitioners and scholars on challenges related to how to demonstrate the value of public relations for businesses and organizations, how to measure the impact and effectiveness of communication, and how to evaluate the contribution of communication to organizations' business performance (e.g., Gregory and Watson, 2008; Macnamara, 1992, 2014; Meng and Berger, 2012; Van Ruler et al., 2008; Watson, 2012; Watson and Noble, 2014). Consequently, communication practitioners and scholars are constantly exploring effective measurement to validate the contribution of communication to improved organizational performance (e.g., Buhmann et al., 2019; Macnamara, 2015; Meng and Pan, 2012).

Although recent years have borne witness to a surge in efforts to demonstrate the value of public relations as one of the leading indicators—both financially and non-financially—for organizational performance (Meng and Berger, 2012; Stacks and Michaelson, 2014), the need to further establish professional standards for measurement and evaluation in public relations practice and enforce the application of such standards is still very much needed (Buhmann et al., 2019). And, despite 40 years of research and extensive industry discussion (Volk, 2016), practitioners are still concerned that public relations efforts lack adequate standards and the ability to demonstrate the value of public relations as a

* Associate Professor, University of Georgia, USA.

[‡] Associate Professor, University of Georgia, USA.

professional discipline that supports business excellence (Macnamara, 2014). In short, much remains to be known about how communication practitioners in the profession manage the issue of measurement and evaluation in public relations, including how the issue stacks up versus other challenges facing the profession, what strategic actions they have taken to manage this issue, and what measurement and evaluation standards they have applied to demonstrate the value of public relations practice.

Therefore, to better understand the measurement challenges facing communication practitioners, we focused our investigation on how practitioners have used different strategies to manage the measurement challenge of demonstrating the value of public relations. More importantly, this research investigated the measurement challenge from a global perspective. By surveying communication practitioners in multiple countries and different geographic locations, this research aims at identifying current trends and effective approaches in communication measurement across countries. In addition, we integrated the application of leadership skills in assessing the impact of top communication leaders' effectiveness on managing measurement challenge in public relations.

In pursuing this task, we analyzed the data collected from a global online survey of communication professionals. The contribution of this research is trifold: First, by analyzing the results from a global survey on the importance of measurement and evaluation—the latter of which has been referred to as among “the most common buzzwords in public relations” (McCoy and Hargie, 2003, p. 304)—we contribute a global view to a prominent issue in the field. Second, our research contributes to identifying applied standards and approaches in demonstrating the value of public relations through improved measurement across the globe. In grouping our international sample into five distinct geographic clusters: North America, Latin America, Europe (excluding German-speaking countries), Germanic Europe, and Asia, we identified overall high levels of concern about measurement and evaluation with a particularly high score across Latin American countries. Third, our research contributes to the broader measurement literature in communication management by applying leadership effectiveness to study top communication leaders' supporting role in demonstrating the value of public relations. The implications to practice and future research are also discussed.

Literature Review

Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation: The Challenges and the Evolution

How to effectively measure the value of public relations practice attracts increasing attention as the organization moves toward excellence and efficiency. As a crucial feature to the success of organizational sustainable development and financial performance, communication effectiveness has been a promising topic of investigation in the fields of organizational behaviors, business management, and

communication consulting in recent years (Rust et al., 2004a, b). Public relations measurement and evaluation has long been a major professional and research issue (Watson, 2012). Communication professionals have been exploring effective metrics and methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of organizations' communication initiatives, focusing specifically on how communication practices can be effectively linked to improved financial performance at the organizational level and positive organizational reputation in other, non-monetary, areas. The discussion of communication effectiveness and its linkage to organization's financial performance can be located in the wider communication management literature since the 1980s (e.g., Broom and Dozier, 1983, 1990; Dozier, 1984, 1990; Dozier and Ehling, 1992; Grunig et al., 2002; Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Meng and Berger, 2012; Stacks and Watson, 2007; Stacks and Michaelson, 2010; Watson, 2012).

The need for measurement and evaluation standards seems especially relevant today as the industry is becoming highly competitive and turbulent. The demanded skill sets for communication professionals to demonstrate communication excellence are constantly changing and expanding. When the situations in the industry itself move from being simple to complex, from stable to dynamic, it is crucial for communication professionals to accurately respond to changing situations in such a way that both organizations and stakeholders perceive communication efforts to better fit their needs and demonstrate the value (Lindenmann, 2003; Schultz, 2002; Taylor, 2010). Organizations with greater reliance on effective communications will thus be better able to achieve higher return on their efforts and improve their performance (e.g., Hurley and Hult, 1998; Narayanan et al., 2004; Rust et al., 2004b).

Previous research on measurement and evaluation in public relations has been rooted in Grunig's excellence theory by measuring public relations excellence within an organizational context and culture (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Thurlow et al., 2017). An evaluation of excellence reflects how to achieve public relations excellence in an ideal situation, which shall transform an organization from asymmetrical to symmetrical two-way communication (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Public relations scholars have endeavored to develop discipline-specific theories and insightful methods of evaluation related to public relations practice and linked to an organization's key goals, objectives, publics and communications (Lindenmann, 2003). Driven by excellence theory, previous research on measurement and evaluation in public relations has provided a case-by-case discussion of various situations in public relations practice, including the adoption of standards in motivating different stakeholders (Lueg et al., 2016), public relations value assessment in cross-cultural settings (Huang, 2012), using business metrics to assess the effectiveness of communication initiatives (Meng and Berger, 2012), advocating the use of mixed-methods (i.e., both qualitative and quantitative methods) to measure the success of investor relations in corporate communications (Ragas and Laskin, 2014), and the financial and non-financial aspects of communication value as underlying cultural expectations or social norms (Stacks and Michaelson, 2014).

Although scholars have widely recognized the multidimensional effects of public relations as well as the challenges in enforcing standards when applying measurement metrics in diverse situations (e.g., Huang, 2012), previous works have confirmed that communication effectiveness is one of the leading indicators of an organization's financial performance (Ehling et al., 1992; Leug et al., 2016). An improvement in communication effectiveness is associated with a higher level of employee engagement within the organizational context, which can lead to increased market value and business performance of the organization (Morris, 2010). In addition, communication effectiveness is instrumentally important in building trust and shaping the two-way communication model as addressed by the Excellence Theory (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Research done by Moorman et al. (1992) confirmed that timely communication fosters trust by informing key groups of stakeholders to appreciate the latest developments in the organization, assisting in resolving problems and misunderstanding, and aligning perceptions and expectations.

When analyzing measurement and evaluation standards in public relations, Stacks and Michaelson (2014) addressed the importance of understanding nonfinancial indicators (i.e., credibility, trust, reputation, relationships, and confidence) in measuring public relations value and how they relate to organizations' goals, objectives and performance. They suggested that these nonfinancial indicators, combined with the financial ones, can increase stockholders' expectations and lead to a high level of return on expectations (ROE) in communication. They further suggested organizations adopt standards to measure ROE as it can eventually affect return on investment (ROI) and other business principles. Thus, it is crucial for communication practitioners to conceptualize and formulate the relationships between the financial and nonfinancial indicators and establish how each variable relates to ROE and contributes to the final ROI (Watson, 2013).

As encouraged by the intensive discussions on public relations measurement and evaluation at numerous academic and industry conferences, the profession also witnesses a surge in efforts to develop standards for measurement and evaluation in public relations with a few benchmark initiatives being established. These initiatives include the Institute for Public Relations' Measurement Commission created in 1997, The Conclave Social Media Measurement Standards (2013) (Paine, 2012), the Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles in 2010 and 2015, and the most recent Barcelona Principles 3.0 released by the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC, 2020). Although such attempts at establishing standards in measurement and evaluation in public relations are particularly important, it further addresses the fact that public relations value shall be measured to validate the improved communication effectiveness in supporting organizational performance. If the majority of practitioners agree that standards for measurement and evaluation in public relations are necessary (Zerfass et al. 2017), what are the specific strategies and actions that have been undertaken by practitioners to address the measurement challenge? Therefore, to better understand the measurement challenge and some best practice principles of current practice, we propose the following questions to

guide our research when searching for effective standards and actions in public relations measurement:

- **RQ1:** What is the perception of communication practitioners concerning the importance of “improving the measurement of communication effectiveness to demonstrate value”?
- **RQ2:** Do importance ratings for “improving the measurement of communication effectiveness to demonstrate value” differ across country clusters?
- **RQ3:** What strategies are currently being employed by communication practitioners to deal with the measurement challenge? And, are the strategies the same across countries?

The Role of Excellent Leadership in Demonstrating Public Relations Value

In addition, research rooted in excellence theory in communication suggests that an organization with a culture encouraging two-way symmetrical communication will facilitate excellence in communication and enhances effective public relations practice (Thurlow et al., 2017). When being completely integrated into the organization they work for, excellent communication departments demonstrate stronger leadership in leveraging its strategic counseling function (Tench et al., 2017). Thus, effective leadership in communication is vital to communication departments and their organization’s success, image, and future.

Similar to the development of measurement and evaluation in public relations, research on leadership in public relations is embedded in excellence theory in public relations, managerial leadership research, and organizational communication studies (Berger and Meng, 2010). The concept of public relations leadership is implicit in several theoretical perspectives in the field as investigated by different groups of scholars, ranging from excellence and role theories (Grunig et al., 2002), power relations in leadership effectiveness (Berger and Reber, 2006), public relations leadership as an integrated process (Meng and Berger, 2013), ethical leadership in public relations practice (Bowen, 2008), as well as leadership styles and gender roles (Aldoory and Toth, 2004).

According to Meng and Berger (2013), public relations leadership is defined as “a dynamic process that encompasses a complex mix of individual skills and personal attributes, values and behaviors that consistently produce ethical and effective communication practice” (p. 143). Consequently, excellent public relations leadership “fuels and guides successful communication teams, helps organizations achieve their goals, and legitimizes organizations in society” (Meng and Berger, 2013, p. 143). As such, excellent leadership in public relations depicts various aspects of leadership functions and its role in supporting effective public relations practice as different sets of leadership skills and knowledge (i.e., strategic decision making, ethical counseling, role and identity development, and change management) are desired (Berger and Meng, 2010). So far, research on public relations leadership has confirmed that excellent communication leadership is crucial in supporting the communication team to leverage the strategic influence

and value of public relations within and beyond the organization (Meng and Berger, 2019).

Based on the research outlined above, we are particularly interested in testing the role of excellent leadership in public relations in supporting measurement effectiveness. Will communication leaders have a better understanding of the measurement challenge and solutions? Will certain leadership qualities be more important in helping communication practitioners adopt effective strategies and actions to solve measurement issues? How can excellent leadership in public relations be integrated into measurement efforts in searching for best practices? Thus, we believe there is a strong need for us to explore how leadership capabilities can help manage issues affiliated with measurement challenges in practice. Therefore, we proposed two more research questions to investigate such relationship:

- **RQ4:** What leadership qualities are rated as most and least important for dealing with the measurement issue? And, do different qualities emerge as more or less important across our country clusters?
- **RQ5:** What drives the importance ascribed to the different leadership qualities for dealing with the measurement issue?

Research Method

To answer the proposed research questions, we relied on data from a global online survey of public relations practitioners in more than 20 countries across the globe through the research partners in each country. A mixed sampling strategy was employed in order to achieve an overall satisfactory completion rate and the survey was administered using an online survey software program, which supported multiple languages. The original survey was created and pilot tested in English before being translated into the home language of each of the non-English speaking countries included in the project. Back translational procedures were employed for this process to ensure the meaning of terms, concepts and phrases were appropriately understood by communication practitioners in each investigated country (Brislin, 1970).

The research partners in each country were responsible for developing and recruiting their sample of participants. The global online survey was launched in different countries during a specific time frame for recruitment. On average, the online survey recruitment for all countries lasted approximately three months. The centralized online survey site was active for six months in total to support the recruitment progress in each individual country. Across all surveyed countries, the survey had a response rate of approximately 45%. Overall, we had 4,483 communication practitioners globally completed the survey. Specifically, to reflect the major focus of this research, the final sample size used for analysis in this paper is 548 as we deliberately included only those participants who indicated improving the measurement of communication effectiveness as their top priority

in practice. Detailed information about the sample's demographics are explained in the following sections.

Country Variable

In order to garner a more thorough understanding of practitioner attitudes across the globe, and to take advantage of the depth and breadth of our dataset, we wanted to include respondents from all across the globe in our analyses. However, running unique regressions for respondents in more than 20 countries proved problematic due to differences in sample size, while running a single regression on all respondents meant missing out on global differences and the nuance of our data. Therefore, we began our analysis by first organizing groups of countries based on geography and cultural similarities. First, we isolated our Germanic countries or German-speaking countries, which consisted of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Next, we grouped other European nations together, which consisted of respondents from Estonia, Latvia, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Our North American countries were Canada and the United States, while our Latin American grouping consisted of Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Finally, our Asian country grouping consisted of respondents from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and India. Of course, no grouping of countries is without flaws, given the diversity across countries and populations. Nevertheless, we made our groupings based on previous global research in the field (House et al., 2004).

Independent Variables

Gender, age, and education served as the demographic variables in our analysis. *Gender* was a dichotomous variable with female coded as "1" and male coded as "0" (51.7% female). *Age* was measured as an ordinal-level variable with six categories ranging from "under 25 years of age" (coded as '1') to "66 years or older" (coded as '6'). Given the overall small number of respondents falling in our two most extreme categories, we combined several categories to create an age variable that ranged from "under 36 years of age" (coded as '1') to "55 years or older" (coded as '4'). The median age category was '2,' which indicated "36 to 45 years of age." *Education* was measured as an ordinal variable with four categories anchored at "High school degree or equivalent" (coded as '1') and "Doctoral degree" (coded as '4'). The median value for our education variable was '3,' indicative of a "Master's degree."

Outside of the sheer number of years of education, we were interested in examining the impacts of a respondent's educational major. To do so we created a series of dummy variables based on the question: "If you earned a degree from a college or university, what was your major or primary area of study?" Our *Business background* variable included all those who indicated a business degree, including those who mentioned general business, business administration, or business management (12.5%). Our *Hard sciences background* variable included all those who indicated a degree from the hard sciences, including areas like

mathematics, chemistry, or physics, among others (13.5%). Our *Communications and Journalism background* variable included all those who indicated a degree in a communications or journalism field, but importantly, not those who explicitly mentioned either advertising or public relations as their major (24.2%). Our *Humanities background* variable included all those who indicated a degree in the humanities, including those with degrees in history, linguistics, and speech, among others (17.2%). Our *Social sciences background* variable included all those who indicated a social science degree, including areas like anthropology, psychology, sociology, and political science (9.6%). Our comparison group was all those respondents with a degree in either public relations or advertising (23%).

Our next set of variables took a more nuanced look at the work environment that a respondent worked in, as well as their role within that organization. *Unit size* was measured by asking respondents to report the approximate number of professionals working in their communication unit or function. The variable consisted of four categories that ranged from “Fewer than 5 professionals” (coded as ‘1’) to “More than 25 professionals” (coded as ‘4’) and had a median value of ‘2,’ indicating “5-15 professionals.” *Reporting hierarchy* was measured by asking respondents to report the number of levels between themselves and the highest ranked communication leader in the organization. We recoded the variable into three categories (‘1’ = “I am the top leader,” ‘2’ = “one level down from top leader,” and ‘3’ = “two or more levels down from top leader”). The median value was “one level down from top leader.” *Experience* was measured by asking respondents to report the total number of years of professional experience in communication management or public relations. The variable consisted of five categories that ranged from “Less than 5 years” (coded as ‘1’) to “More than 20 years” (coded as ‘5’) and had a median value of ‘3,’ which indicated “11-15 years” of experience.

Our final set of independent variables explored the prevalence of different strategies for dealing with the measurement and evaluation of public relations. Respondents were asked to report to what extent their communication team or unit is implementing each of the following five strategies to help deal with the issue of measurement: “Using business outcome metrics to measure effectiveness at the performance level” ($M = 4.8$; $SD = 1.9$), “Monitoring and analyzing media coverage of the organization and its competitors or clients” ($M = 5.5$; $SD = 1.5$), “Hiring external experts to provide measurement skills and develop metrics” ($M = 4.0$; $SD = 1.9$), “Attending workshops on measurement to learn and adopt best practices” ($M = 4.1$; $SD = 1.9$) and “Focusing more on nonfinancial performance indicators than financial measures” ($M = 4.6$; $SD = 1.8$). Response options for the above items ranged from “1” (indicating “a little bit”) to “7” (indicating “a great deal”).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables of interest in this study are measures of importance concerning a number of different leadership abilities for dealing with the measurement issue in public relations practice. Respondents were asked to report

to what extent they agree that each of the seven following conditions or leadership personal abilities or qualities is important in helping their communication leader deal successfully with the measurement issue: “Possessing communication knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans and messages” ($M = 6.1$; $SD = 1.1$), “Participating in your organization’s strategic decision-making regarding the issue” ($M = 6.3$; $SD = 1.0$), “Possessing a strong ethical orientation and set of values to guide actions” ($M = 5.6$; $SD = 1.4$), “Having the ability to build and manage professional work teams to address the issue” ($M = 5.9$; $SD = 1.1$), “Providing a compelling vision for how communication can help the organization” ($M = 6.0$; $SD = 1.1$), “Having the ability to develop coalitions in and outside the organization to deal with the issue” ($M = 5.7$; $SD = 1.3$), and “Working in an organization that supports 2-way communication and shared power” ($M = 5.6$; $SD = 1.4$). Response options for the above items ranged from “1” (indicating “a little bit”) to “7” (indicating “a great deal”).

Methodological Notes

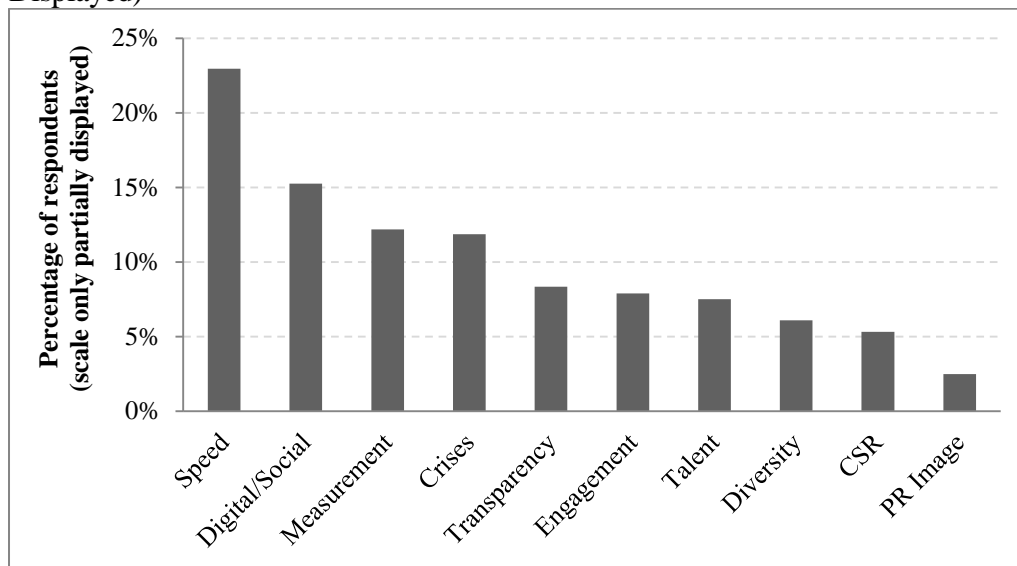
We answered our research questions using two statistical analysis techniques. First, we employed simple ANOVA to determine whether, and to what degree (a) the strategies being employed by communication leaders to deal with measurement issues in public relations and (b) perceptions of the most important leadership qualities for dealing with this same issue differed across our country clusters. Second, we ran hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models among all those respondents who selected measurement as the most important issue facing communication practitioners to determine which variables predicted which leadership qualities as important. The OLS regression approach allowed for an investigation of how multiple independent variables—tested in a single model— influenced the dependent variables of interest (Cohen et al. 2003). Independent variables were entered into the regression models based on their assumed causal order (demographics, followed by educational background, work environment, and current coping strategies) (Cohen et al., 2003).

Results

RQ1: The Perceived Importance of Measuring Communication Effectiveness to Demonstrate Value

As Figure 1 illustrates, the most important issue believed to be facing communication practitioners is “dealing with the speed and volume of information flow,” followed by concerns about “managing the digital revolution and rise of social media.” “Improving the measurement of communication effectiveness to demonstrate value,” the primary focus of this paper, emerged as the third most important issue facing communication practitioners, followed closely by concerns about “being prepared to deal effectively with crises that may arise.”

Figure 1. The Percentage of Respondents who Report Each Area as the Most Important Issue Facing their Communication Leader (Scale only Partially Displayed)



RQ2: Different Country Clusters and their Ratings for Measurement Challenges in Communication

Figure 2 illustrates the average importance rating for “Improving the measurement of communication effectiveness to demonstrate value” across our five country clusters. As the figure shows, Latin American respondents rated measurement as especially important, followed by Asian respondents, North American respondents, European respondents, and finally, Germanic European respondents. Figure 3 illustrates this information in a slightly different manner, showing the percentage of respondents in each country cluster who report “Improving the measurement of communication effectiveness to demonstrate value” as the most important issue facing their communication leader. Latin American respondents were most likely to report the measurement issue as most important (22.0%), followed by North American respondents (13.7%), Asian respondents (12.7%), European respondents (9.5%), and finally, Germanic European respondents (8.7%).

Figure 2. Importance Ratings by Mean Scores for “Improving the Measurement of Communication Effectiveness” based on Country Clusters

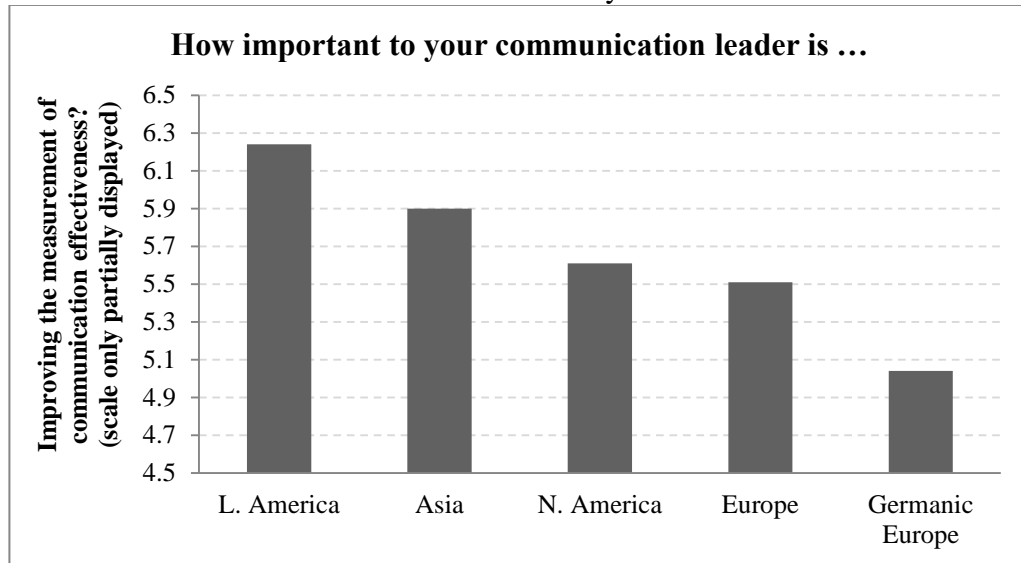
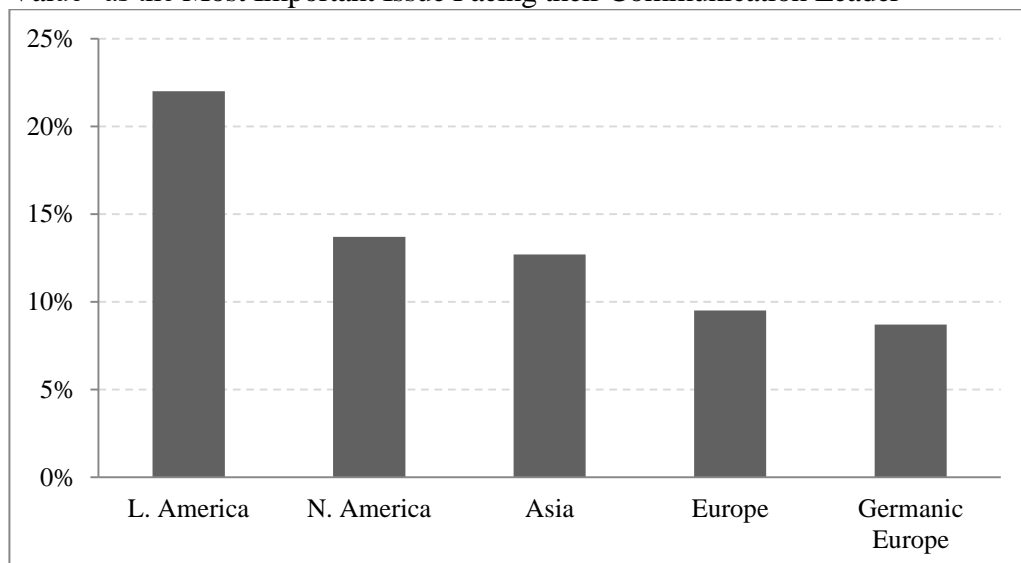


Figure 3. The Percentage of Respondents in Each Country Cluster who Report “Improving the Measurement of Communication Effectiveness to Demonstrate Value” as the Most Important Issue Facing their Communication Leader



RQ3: Country Clusters and their Strategies to Deal with Measurement Challenges in Communication

We conducted an ANOVA test across different country clusters in terms of the communication strategies being employed by communication practitioners to deal with measurement issues. The results of the ANOVA can be found in Table 1. A few clear patterns emerged from the data. First, respondents in Asia, and to a lesser extent, Latin America typically rated all strategies as more likely to be employed by their communication leaders, a point we will return to in our

Discussion section. Second, “monitoring and analyzing media coverage of the organization and its competitors or clients” emerged as the most common strategy across respondents regardless of country cluster, while “hiring external experts to provide measurement skills and develop metrics” was arguably the least common strategy being employed. In terms of the former, there were no significant differences across country clusters ($F [4, 543] = 1.750, p = 0.138$), with all of clusters showing a high propensity to rely on this tactic. There were, however, significant differences across clusters for the other strategy items.

Table 1. ANOVAs Assessing the Strategies being Employed by Communication Leaders to Deal with Measurement Issues in Public Relations based on Country Clusters

Issue	Country Clusters					p-value
	Germanic Europe	Europe	N. America	L. America	Asia	
1. Using business outcome metrics to measure effectiveness at the performance level	4.29	4.72	5.29	4.64	5.85	0.000
2. Monitoring and analyzing media coverage of the organization and its competitors or clients	5.52	5.21	5.37	5.49	5.85	0.138
3. Hiring external experts to provide measurement skills and develop metrics	3.68	3.74	3.91	4.26	4.61	0.004
4. Attending workshops on measurement to learn and adopt best practices	3.43	3.97	4.10	4.54	4.85	0.000
5. Focusing more on nonfinancial performance indicators than financial measures	4.52	4.21	4.73	4.59	5.37	0.003
<i>N</i>	<i>155</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>62</i>	

Notes: (1) ANOVA comparisons are made across countries with significance indicating that there are statistically significant differences in the strategies being employed by communication leaders to deal with the measurement issue across country clusters.

Table 2. ANOVAs Assessing Perceptions of the Most Important Leadership Qualities for Dealing with Measurement Issues in Public Relations based on Country Clusters

Issue	Country Clusters					p-value
	Germanic Europe	Europe	N. America	L. America	Asia	
1. Possessing comm. knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans & messages	6.07	6.30	6.25	6.59	6.47	0.000
2. Participating in your organization's strategic decision-making regarding the issue	6.36	6.42	6.55	6.54	6.05	0.003
3. Possessing a strong ethical orientation and set of values to guide actions	4.77	5.40	5.74	6.23	5.58	0.000
4. Having the ability to build and manage professional work teams to address the issue	5.57	5.82	5.87	6.12	5.65	0.001
5. Providing a compelling vision for how comm. can help the organization	6.01	6.15	6.32	6.61	6.23	0.000
6. Having the ability to develop coalitions in and outside the organization to deal with the issue	5.35	5.85	5.66	6.20	5.81	0.000
7. Working in an organization that supports two-way comm. and shared power	5.14	5.57	5.61	6.06	5.84	0.000
<i>N</i>	155	67	115	149	62	

Notes: (1) ANOVA comparisons are made across countries with significance indicating that there are statistically significant differences in the ratings ascribed to a given leadership quality across country clusters.

RQ4: Leadership Qualities and their Roles in Dealing with Measurement Challenges across Country Clusters

Having explored the current strategies being utilized to deal with measurement, we next turned attention toward how communication practitioners viewed leadership in this area. Specifically, we sought to understand the leadership qualities that practitioners viewed as particularly desirable or important for dealing with the measurement issue, and whether different attributes were more or less desirable across our country clusters. A few notable patterns emerged as listed in Table 2. First, the ANOVAs revealed significant differences in the importance

ascribed to each of the different leadership qualities across our country clusters. Part of this was driven by the responses of the Latin American respondents, who had average scores of '6' or better for each of the leadership qualities probed, indicative of a belief that all of the leadership qualities were of high importance. Second, Germanic Europeans, Europeans, and North Americans were particularly bullish on the need for participation from their communication leader concerning strategic decision-making, with that leadership quality having the highest average score among respondents from those countries. Having a strong ethical orientation to guide actions, however, was typically rated as much less important among respondents across all of the country clusters.

RQ5: The Importance Ascribed to the Different Leadership Qualities when Dealing with Measurement Challenges in Communication

Finally, we ran seven regression models to determine what predicts the importance ascribed to each of the seven leadership qualities we identified for dealing with the measurement issues. The results of the final models of the regressions can be found in Tables 3 and 4. To begin, we see that demographics played a very small role in predicting the importance of our various leadership qualities. In fact, demographics emerged as significant in only one of our regression models. Specifically, females and younger respondents were more likely to see greater value in an openness to two-way communication as a means of successfully addressing the measurement issue.

Educational background played a slightly larger predictive role in our regressions. For the regression predicting the importance of "Possessing communication knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans and messages," we found that those with a degree in the humanities viewed this leadership quality as less important than those who received a degree in either advertising or public relations. For the regression predicting "Possessing a strong ethical orientation and set of values to guide actions," those receiving a degree in both the humanities and the social sciences viewed this leadership quality as less important than those who received a degree in either advertising or public relations. For the regression predicting "Having the ability to develop coalitions in and outside the organization to deal with the issue," those who graduated from the social sciences were viewed this leadership quality as less important than those who received a degree in either advertising or public relations.

Unit size emerged as arguably the most important workplace environment variable impacting how respondents view the relative importance of the different leadership ability measures. Unit size was positively associated with rating "Having the ability to build and manage professional work teams to address the issue" as an important leadership attribute, meaning that those respondents who worked in larger communication units, with a greater number of communication professionals were more likely to rate this attribute as important. Conversely, unit size was negatively related to "Providing a compelling vision for how communication can help the organization" and "Working in an organization that supports 2-way communication and shared power," indicating that those in smaller

units, with fewer communication professionals were more likely to rate these leadership attributes as important.

Table 3. Final Regression Models (Part I) Predicting Most Important Leadership Qualities for Dealing with Measurement as a PR issue (N=492 for Each Regression)

	Possessing communication knowledge	Participating in strategic decision-making for org.	Possessing a strong ethical orientation	Building and managing work teams
<i>Block 1: Demographics</i>				
Gender (female coded)	0.07	-0.02	0.08	0.07
Age	-0.12	-0.04	-0.02	-0.06
Education	-0.03	0.01	-0.02	-0.02
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>1.6*</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>Block 2: Educational Background</i>				
Business	-0.08	-0.00	-0.08	-0.01
Hard sciences	-0.09	-0.02	-0.05	0.01
	-0.04	-0.02	-0.05	0.08
Humanities	-0.14**	-0.01	-0.13*	0.00
Social sciences	-0.06	-0.10	-0.12*	-0.09
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>2.5*</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>2.8*</i>	<i>1.7</i>
<i>Block 3: Work Environment</i>				
Unit size	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	0.11*
Reporting hierarchy organization	-0.03	-0.10*	0.00	-0.03
Work experience	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.06
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>2.6**</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>1.6</i>
<i>Block 4: Current coping strategies</i>				
Business outcomes to measure performance	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.04
Monitoring/analyzing media coverage	0.12**	0.11*	0.07	0.00
Hiring external experts	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.06
Attending workshops on measurement	0.09	0.06	0.11*	0.08
Implementing non-financial indicators	0.10*	0.10*	0.10*	0.11*
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>2.1</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>1.5</i>
<i>Total R² (%)</i>	<i>7.1</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>5.3</i>

Notes: (1) * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; (2) Cell entries for Blocks 1-3 are standardized regression coefficients, while cell entries for Block 4 are before-entry standardized regression coefficients due to issues of multicollinearity.

Table 4. Final Regression Models (Part II) Predicting Most Important Leadership Qualities for Dealing with Measurement as a PR Issue (N = 492 for Each Regression)

	Providing a compelling vision	Developing coalitions	Openness to two-way comm. in your org.
<i>Block 1: Demographics</i>			
Gender (female coded high)	0.04	0.01	0.10*
Age	-0.07	-0.03	-0.14*
Education	-0.04	-0.03	0.08
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>3.0**</i>
<i>Block 2: Educational Background</i>			
Business	-0.01	0.01	-0.08
Hard sciences	-0.07	-0.09	-0.07
Communication/Journalism	0.01	0.06	-0.01
Humanities	-0.06	-0.08	-0.08
Social sciences	-0.08	-0.13**	-0.08
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>3.3**</i>	<i>1.8</i>
<i>Block 3: Work Environment</i>			
Unit size	-0.11*	-0.08	-0.10*
Reporting hierarchy organization	0.08	-0.02	-0.07
Work experience	0.16*	0.01	0.12
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>1.6*</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>2.5**</i>
<i>Block 4: Coping strategies</i>			
Business outcomes to measure performance	0.07	0.06	0.06
Monitoring/analyzing media	0.09	0.03	0.09
Hiring external experts	0.04	0.06	0.10*
Attending workshops on measurement	0.09	0.05	0.11*
Implementing non-financial indicators	0.16***	0.16***	0.11*
<i>Inc. R² (%)</i>	<i>2.8*</i>	<i>2.6*</i>	<i>1.9</i>
<i>Total R² (%)</i>	<i>7.1</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>9.2</i>

Notes: (1) * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; (2) Cell entries for Blocks 1-3 are standardized regression coefficients, while cell entries for Block 4 are before-entry standardized regression coefficients due to issues of multicollinearity.

Reporting hierarchy was negatively related to ratings of “Participating in your organization’s strategic decision-making regarding the issue.” This indicates that the further a respondent is from the top communication leader in their organization the more likely they are to view this attribute as important. Work experience was positively related to ratings of “Providing a compelling vision for how communication can help the organization.” In other words, those with longer professional experience in the field of public relations were more likely to view this leadership quality as important in demonstrating the value of public relations by developing measurement and evaluation standards.

The final block of our regression looked at how the coping strategies currently being employed at a respondents' place of work to deal with the measurement issue impacted their perceptions of important leadership qualities for dealing with this same issue. Respondents at organizations that are relying more heavily on social media monitoring and analytics were more likely to rate "Possessing communication knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans and messages" and "Participating in your organization's strategic decision-making regarding the issue" as particularly important leadership qualities for dealing with the measurement issue.

Respondents who reported a greater frequency of attending workshops on measurement to learn best practices were more likely to rate "Possessing a strong ethical orientation and set of values to guide actions" and "Working in an organization that supports 2-way communication and shared power" as highly important leadership abilities for navigating the measurement issue. Those at organizations that are hiring external experts to develop measurement skills and metrics were also more likely to rate "Working in an organization that supports 2-way communication and shared power" as an important leadership quality.

Finally, working at an organization that is relying on non-financial performance indicators was associated positively with all seven of our leadership attribute items. This echoes previous research findings on measurement and evaluation in public relations that highlights the importance of integrating nonfinancial indicators when measuring the value of public relations and developing a strong linkage to organizations' goals, objectives and performance (Stacks and Michaelson, 2014). We will further elaborate on these results in the Discussion section.

Discussion

As revealed in previous research, intensive discussions have taken place among communication practitioners and scholars on how to demonstrate the value of communication for businesses and organizations and standardize the evaluation metrics to smooth measurement challenges in the field of public relations and communication management (Buhmann et al., 2019; Volk, 2016). Through more than three decades of debates and research, public relations practitioners and scholars have come together in acknowledging the critical roles of research, measurement, and evaluation as grounded evidence of successful public relations efforts (e.g., Stacks and Michaelson, 2014; Stacks and Watson, 2007; Watson, 2012). Yet, few studies have examined specific measurement challenges or the methods that have been adopted to overcome those challenges from a global perspective (e.g., Huang, 2012).

Therefore, the research presented here aimed to do just that by contributing to our understanding of how communication practitioners view measurement and evaluation problems and solutions in public relations, and by placing that understanding within an international context. Equally important, this research investigates the role of leadership skills in supporting communication practitioners

applying effective strategies to manage the measurement issue. Answers from communication practitioners in different country clusters reflect their workplace experiences in applying diverse strategies in managing measurement challenges in public relations practice. Such diversity in strategy implementation also echoes their different expectations on leadership skills that may help guide future practice and academic research.

Prior to elaborating on our findings, we first acknowledge some limitations of the present work. To begin, it is worth noting that our analysis is not based on a true probability sample of communication practitioners across the globe. This is, of course, hardly surprising as such a sample has never been convened in public relations and communication management scholarship due to the many logistic hurdles associated with building a full sampling frame or practitioners and administering a data collection across all countries with a public relations presence. Nevertheless, our sample was collected from more than 20 countries across the globe and in the home language of each country, with the solid 45% response rate providing further evidence of the validity of the data.

A second limitation concerns our focus on a single of the many important challenges facing communication practitioners—the issue of measurement. While this decision moved us away from other challenges facing communication practitioners in the space, it is undeniable that measurement is a paramount challenge facing public relations as a global industry (Almansa-Martinez and Fernandez-Souto, 2020; DiStaso et al., 2011). More importantly, we viewed garnering a more nuanced and in-depth look at that specific challenge as more valuable than having a broader, but ultimately more superficial look at a host of different challenges facing the industry.

Finally, there are a pair of measurement issues worth noting. First, our analyses relied heavily on single-item measures throughout, which of course make it impossible to identify or control for random measurement error in the regression models. Had we been able to employ multi-item dependent variables, the relationships observed here would likely have been even stronger. Second, given unbalanced sample size concerns in each individual country, we grouped respondents from different countries into broad regions based on geography and cultural similarities. Of course, even culturally similar countries are ultimately unique and likely to have their own sets of specific problems facing communication practitioners and the industry. Nevertheless, we were sure to base our groupings on previous scholarship (House et al., 2004).

Overall, based on our global results, “improving the measurement of communication effectiveness to demonstrate value” emerged as the third most important issue facing practitioners globally. Such consistency in the ratings across country clusters likely reflects the general global trend that has emerged—particularly during the last decade—to develop and implement effective metrics for assessing the value of public relations. A detailed breakdown of the ratings by investigated country clusters further indicated that practitioners in Latin America rated this issue particularly high, followed by practitioners in Asia, North America, Europe, and Germanic Europe.

Such a pattern was also reflected when we look into the actual coping strategies their communication leaders have employed to deal with measurement issues. Practitioners in Latin America, and especially Asia, rated all five coping strategies as more likely to be employed by their communication leaders. This might be indicative of a more aggressive and proactive approach to measurement problems in such countries. Across the global sample, the strategy of “monitoring and analyzing media coverage of the organization and its competitors or clients” is the most common one that has been widely adopted across all investigated country clusters. Not surprisingly, the strategy of “hiring external experts to provide measurement skills and develop metrics” is the least common one to be adopted, which further reflects the need to develop sufficient resources for metrics that can be used. The dearth of resources devoted to hiring experts to address measurement problems is thus a global problem, rather than one isolated within a handful of organizations or specific parts of the world, even within those countries that were more likely to report higher use of that coping strategy. This might reflect a reluctance to spend money on the problem or skepticism surrounding how those outside of public relations might be able to offer solutions to this specific type of communication problem.

In terms of leadership skills that have been viewed as desirable or effective in managing the measurement challenge, respondents across the investigated country clusters generally suggested that strategic decision-making and the knowledge basis for strategic decision-making were crucial for leadership facing such challenges, as was having a compelling vision for how communication can address problems. Conversely, having a strong ethical orientation to guide actions was rated the overall least important attribute for dealing with measurement challenges. This latter point is somewhat worrisome given the close ties between measurement, data, and privacy and the recent stories of data abuses by large companies in recent years (e.g., Facebook and Cambridge Analytica). Similar to the coping strategies noted earlier, respondents in Latin America believed that all seven leadership capabilities were of high importance, while Germanic European respondents tended to ascribe generally lower levels of importance across the board. The consistency of these patterns is interesting as it suggests that different countries are generally more or less pessimistic when it comes to dealing with measurement as a communication problem.

Further, our results indicated that certain demographics and workplace environment variables may play important roles in improving measurement efforts. For example, our regression models suggested that females and younger professionals believe that an open and two-way communication culture can be a great facilitator in addressing the measurement issue. The public relations profession itself is facing the challenge of increasing diversity. Even as more and more female practitioners, millennial professionals, as well as other practitioners with diverse backgrounds join the workforce, demand for an open and two-way communication culture will need to be endorsed by those in management positions as well as practitioners in different cultures and societies if it is to gain widespread adoption.

Respondents' place of work (i.e., type of organization) also reflected their expectations on the most valuable leadership qualities for dealing with the measurement issue. Those from larger organizations were more likely to view the management of professional work teams as important for addressing measurement issues in public relations and communication management, while at the same time, putting less weight on less tangible leadership qualities, such as having a compelling vision and embracing two-way communication as important for dealing with this problem. This might be reflective of their day-to-day observations that reveal the importance of carefully managed collaborations on campaign success and their lower levels of involvement with shaping things like company mission statements and policy.

Similarly, workplace experience and position, as well as the tactics already being employed to deal with measurement issues were also associated with attitudes toward desirable leadership qualities. Those who are further away from high-level decision-making viewed their involvement in such decision-making to be more rather than less important for addressing measurement issues in communication practice—perhaps because they feel they have little voice in such matters and are confident that they have other items on the agenda worthwhile to say.

Conversely, those who have been with an organization for a longer period of time believed more in the importance of having a compelling vision for dealing with such problems. It may be the case that longer time with an organization leads to more involvement with high-level factors like communicating company visions, and therefore, a greater appreciation for how these less tangible qualities shape organizational success. Respondents at organizations that are relying more heavily on social media monitoring and analytics were more likely to rate “Possessing communication knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans and messages” as important leadership qualities for dealing with issues of measurement. This may reflect that fact that such employees have seen the power of data in action and understand how the knowledge gleaned from such data can shape solutions to problems.

Overall, the results suggest that communication practitioners expect an effective communication leader who possesses sufficient communication knowledge to develop appropriate strategies, plans and messages will be able to adopt effective strategies, such as relying on social media monitoring and analytics, to solve measurement challenges. Our regression blocks suggest that it is possible to find a matching “leadership-measurement” continuum to deal with each specific issue while leveraging the leadership capability of the communication leader, although future research is needed to further investigate this possibility.

Conclusions and Implications

Most practitioners of PR would agree that measuring the value of public relations efforts is complex, particularly in terms of operationalization and

interpretations. Effective communication practice relies on solid leadership and team collaboration. In today's challenging economic climate, communication leaders across the globe are under increasing pressure to improve and maximize communications' returns on organizational value. As a result, communication leaders need to adjust their leadership capabilities and measurement strategies to assess different situations more accurately, which alternatively might add considerably more uncertainty about what metrics to use to gauge the effectiveness of communication programs.

Although the results of this study might indicate that each grouped country cluster may have different perceptions on the best coping strategies for dealing with measurement challenges, there are certain responsive strategies that are being universally applied (or not being applied) across different regions of the globe. Such results suggest that it is possible for communication leaders to create and develop a universal training program with tailored content to each specific market. In addition, such results also call for an urgent need to advance our knowledge of measurement globally, not just in terms of what strategies are being employed and what leadership qualities are perceived as most important, but in terms of how effective those strategies and leadership qualities actually are, including from the perspective of clients and other key stakeholders. Tapping into approach effectiveness—itsself an issue of measurement—is therefore a necessary next step in addressing the measurement challenge facing the industry.

Results obtained from this global survey have valuable implications for public relations communication management practice. First, it enables communication practitioners and leaders to ascertain the valence, importance, and heterogeneity of proposed solutions to the communication measurement problem. Second, it encourages communication practitioners to monitor stakeholders' communication actions from multiple digital platforms to increase effective feedback and two-way communication. Third, the present analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how measurement demands vary over geographic locations and demographic profiles. The ratings on the responsive strategies toward the measurement issue echoed the current challenges facing the public relations profession globally: the push for rapid growth towards a data-driven market without a fully-equipped and responsive evaluation system. The results also capture current coping strategies used by practitioners across the world. Such coping strategies can be used as a basis for developing a pool of more tailored, contextualized, brand-related, and content-driven messages.

In short, the measurement and evaluation of public relations presents many promising approaches for advancing not only public relations practice as a global industry, but also supports improving communication and business performance for organizations. While acknowledging the limitations of the present study, the findings highlight how communication practitioners view a major challenge in public relations, and perhaps more importantly, the leadership qualities they view as paramount for overcoming that challenge. Given the role that leadership is likely to play in overcoming measurement challenges, the leadership angle we bring to this work is particularly important. It is our hope that this research will inspire interdisciplinary discussions of not only the measurement issues facing

communication practitioners, but the major challenges facing the industry and field.

Acknowledgement

We would like to dedicate this article to the memory of Dr. Yorgo Pasadeos, Professor Emeritus at the University of Alabama. He is one of the founding editors of Athens Journal of Mass Media & Communications.

References

- Aldoory, L., Toth, E. (2004). Leadership and gender in public relations: perceived effectiveness of transformational and transactional leadership styles. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16, 157–183.
- Almansa-Martinez, A., Fernandez-Souto, A. B. (2020). Professional public relations trends and challenges. *Profesional de la Informacion*, 29(3), e290303.
- AMEC (2020). *Barcelona principles 3.0*. Retrieved from: <https://amecorg.com/2020/07/barcelona-principles-3-0/>. [Accessed 15 September 2020].
- Berger, B. K., Reber, B. H. (2006). *Gaining influence in public relations: The role of resistance in practice*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA Publishers.
- Berger, B. K., Meng, J. (2010). Public relations practitioners and the leadership challenge. In R. Heath (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Public Relations* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 421-434). Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Bowen, S. A. (2008). A state of neglect: public relations as ‘corporate conscience’ or ethics counsel. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20, 271–296.
- Brislin, R. W. (1970). Back translation of cross-cultural research. *Journal of Cross-Culture Psychology*, 1, 185–216.
- Broom, G. M., Dozier, D. M. (1983). An overview: evaluation research in public relations. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 28(3), 5–8.
- Broom, G. M., Dozier, D. M. (1990), *Using research in public relations: applications to program management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Buhmann, A., Macnamara, J., Zerfass, A. (2019). Reviewing the ‘march to standards’ in public relations: a comparative analysis of four seminal measurement and evaluation initiatives. *Public Relations Review*, 45(4).
- Cohen, J. P., Cohen, P., West, S. G., Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (3rd Ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- DiStaso, M. W., McCorkindale, T., Wright, D. K. (2011). How public relations executives perceive and measure the impact of social media in their organizations. *Public Relations Review*, 37(3), 325–328.
- Dozier, D. M. (1984). Program evaluation and roles of practitioners. *Public Relations Review*, 10(2), 13-21.
- Dozier, D. M. (1990). The innovation of research in public relations practice: review of a program of studies. *Public Relations Research Annual*, 2(1), 3–28.
- Dozier, D. M., Ehling, W. P. (1992). Evaluation of public relations programs: what the literature tells us about their effects. In J. E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence in Public*

- Relations and Communication Management* (pp. 159–184). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ehling, W. P., White, J., Grunig, J. E. (1992). Public relations and marketing practices. In J. E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management* (pp. 357–394). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gregory, A., Watson, T. (2008). Defining the gap between research and practice in public relations programme evaluation—towards a new research agenda. *Journal of marketing communications*, 14(5), 337–350.
- Grunig, J. E., Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehard & Winston.
- Grunig, L. A., Grunig, J. E., Dozier, D. M. (2002). *Excellent public relations and effective organizations: a study of communication management in three countries*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- House, R.J., Hanges, R.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. Gupta, V. (2004). *GLOBE, cultures, leadership, and organizations: GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.
- Huang, Y. H. C. (2012). Gauging an integrated model of public relations value assessment (PRVA): scale development and cross-cultural studies. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(3), 243–265.
- Hurley, R. F., Hult, T. M. (1998). Innovation, market orientation, and organizational learning: an integration and empirical examination. *Journal of Marketing*, 62(3), 42–54.
- Lindenmann, W. K. (2003). *Guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of PR programs and activities*. The Institute for Public Relations.
- Lueg, K., Leug, R., Andersen, K., Dancianu, V. (2016). Integrated reporting with CSR practices: a pragmatic constructivist case study in a Danish cultural setting. *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*, 21(1), 20–35.
- Macnamara, J. (1992). Evaluation: the Achilles heel of the public relations profession. *International Public Relations Review*, 15(4), 17–31.
- Macnamara, J. (2014). Emerging international standards for measurement and evaluation of public relations: a critical analysis. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 3(1), 7–29.
- Macnamara, J. (2015). Breaking the measurement and evaluation deadlock: a new approach and model. *Journal of Communication Management*, 19(4), 371–387.
- McCoy, M., Hargie, O. (2003). Implications of mass communication theory for asymmetric public relations evaluation. *Journal of Communication Management*, 7(4), 304–316.
- Meng, J., Berger, B. K. (2012). Measuring return on investment of organizations' internal communication efforts. *Journal of Communication Management*, 16(4), 332–354.
- Meng, J., Berger, B. K. (2013). An integrated model of excellent leadership in public relations: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 25(2), 141–167.
- Meng, J., Berger, B. K. (2019). The impact of organizational culture and leadership performance on PR professionals' job satisfaction: testing the joint mediating effects of engagement and trust. *Public Relations Review*, 45(1), 64–75.
- Meng, J., Pan, P. (2012). Using a balanced set of measures to focus on long-term competency in internal communication. *Public Relations Review*, 38(3), 484–490.
- Moorman, C., Deshpande, R., Zaltman, G. (1992). Relationships between providers and users of market research: the dynamics of trust within and between organizations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29, 314–325.

- Morris, E. (2010). Dell goes mobile to bolster its employee engagement. *PRWeek*, 13(2), 14–15.
- Narayanan, S., Desiraju, R., Chintagunta, P. K. (2004). Return on investment implications for pharmaceutical promotional expenditures: the role of marketing-mix interactions. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(4), 90–105.
- Paine, K. (2012, August 22). *Social media measurement standards—everything you need to know*. Institute for Public Relations. Blog post available at <https://instituteforpr.org/social-media-measurement-standards-everything-you-need-to-know/>.
- Ragas, M. W., Laskin, A. V. (2014). Mixed-methods: measurement and evaluation among investor relations officers. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 19(2), 166–181.
- Rust, R. T., Lemon, K. N., Zeithaml, V. A. (2004a). Return on marketing: using customer equity to focus marketing strategy. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), 109–127.
- Rust, R. T., Ambler, T., Carpenter, G. S., Kumar, V., Srivastava, R. K. (2004b). Measuring marketing productivity: current knowledge and future directions. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(4), 76–89.
- Schultz, D. E. (2002). Measuring return on brand communication. *International Journal of Medical Marketing*, 2, 349–358.
- Stacks, D. W., Michaelson, D. (2010). *A practitioner's guide to public relations research, measurement, and evaluation*. New York: Business Experts Press.
- Stacks, D. W., Michaelson, D. (2014). *A practitioner's guide to public relations research, measurement, and evaluation* (2nd Ed.). New York: Business Expert.
- Stacks, D. W., Watson, M. L. (2007). Two-way communication based on quantitative research and measurement. In E. L. Toth (Ed.), *The Future of Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management: Challenges for the Next Generation* (pp. 67–84). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Taylor, C. R. (2010). Measuring return on investment from advertising: 'Holy grail' or necessary tool? *International Journal of Advertising*, 29, 345–348.
- Tench, R., Verčič, D., Zerfass, A., Moreno, A., & Verhoeven, P. (2017). *Communication excellence: how to develop, manage and lead exceptional communications*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- The Conclave Social Media Measurement Standards (2013). Available at <https://paine-publishing.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Complete-standards-document.pdf>
- Thurlow, A., Kushniryk, A., Yue, A. R., Blanchette, K., Murchland, P., Simon, A. (2017). Evaluating excellence: a model of evaluation for public relations practice in organizational culture and context. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 71–79.
- Van Ruler, B., Tkalac Verčič, A., Verčič, D. (2008). Public relations metrics: measurement and evaluation--An overview. In B. Van Ruler, A. Tkalac Verčič, D. Verčič (Eds.), *Public Relations Metrics: Research and Evaluation* (pp. 1–18). New York: Routledge.
- Volk, S. C. (2016). A systematic review of 40 years of public relations evaluation and measurement research: looking into the past, the present, and future. *Public Relations Review*, 42(5), 962–977.
- Watson, T. (2012). The evolution of public relations measurement and evaluation. *Public Relations Review*, 38(3), 390–398.
- Watson, T. (2013). Advertising value equivalence—PR's orphan metric. *Public Relations Review*, 39(2), 139–146.
- Watson, T. Noble, P. (2014). *Evaluating public relations* (3rd Ed.). London: Kogan Page.
- Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., Volk, S. C. (2017). Communication evaluation and measurement: skills, practices and utilization in European organizations. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 22(1), 2–18.