



20th International scientific conference

„Globalization and its socio-economic consequences 2020“

**How PR professionals react and adopt globalization
challenges: mapping of PR professional competencies
based on information from webpages of international
PR professional associations 2015-2020**

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Factors that impact raise of specific competencies for PR specialists

- The digital transformation environment raises the need for new employee competencies, however, as the labour market imposes new requirements on them (Goos et al., 2014), the gap between the requirements and the response to these requirements becomes apparent (OECD, 2016).
- New technologies lead to corresponding changes in communication activities, as well as the need for new competencies expected from PR specialists (Lwin et al., 2018; Macnamara et al., 2017/2018; Macnamara, 2018; Mykkanen, 2017; Moreno, 2018; Navaro et al., 2017; Tench et al., 2017; Tench et al., 2018; Zerfass et al., 2017, 2019; Adi, 2019).
- **Need to be able to adapt to a changing environment and the need for technological competencies.** Importance of technological, social, and cognitive skills, including analytics, knowledge of business priorities, leadership (MacCrory et al. 2014; Mangelsdorft, 2015; OECD, 2018; Smith, 2017).
- **Need for strategic competencies** to be able to link business and communication strategies (GCF, 2018). Value creation by communication, helping business to gain a competitive advantage (Likely and Watson, 2013; Volk, 2016).
- **Need for competencies to build and maintain trust** (GBOK, 2016). VUCA environment: role of PR specialist as the mediator between the organization and the society (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2018, Adi, 2019).



Methodology of the pilot study

The purpose of the research – to map the PR specialists' competences based on requirements due to the impact of changing environment and globalization processes and LLL provided by PR professional associations and to identify whether there is a gap between the need for development of competencies and the response to that need.

Objectives:

- to identify required competencies for the PR specialists and activities provided by PR professional associations to meet the need for relevant competences in search for matching competencies
- to identify timescale in activities between the competencies identified and the activities proposed to confer those competencies
- to identify and anticipate factors that may affect the discrepancy between the required desirable competencies and competencies conferred by PR professional associations by various activities applied.

Theoretical approach for the analysis of communication competencies

MAPA (Mission, Accomplishments, Performance and Abilities) theoretical frame (Hunt,1997)



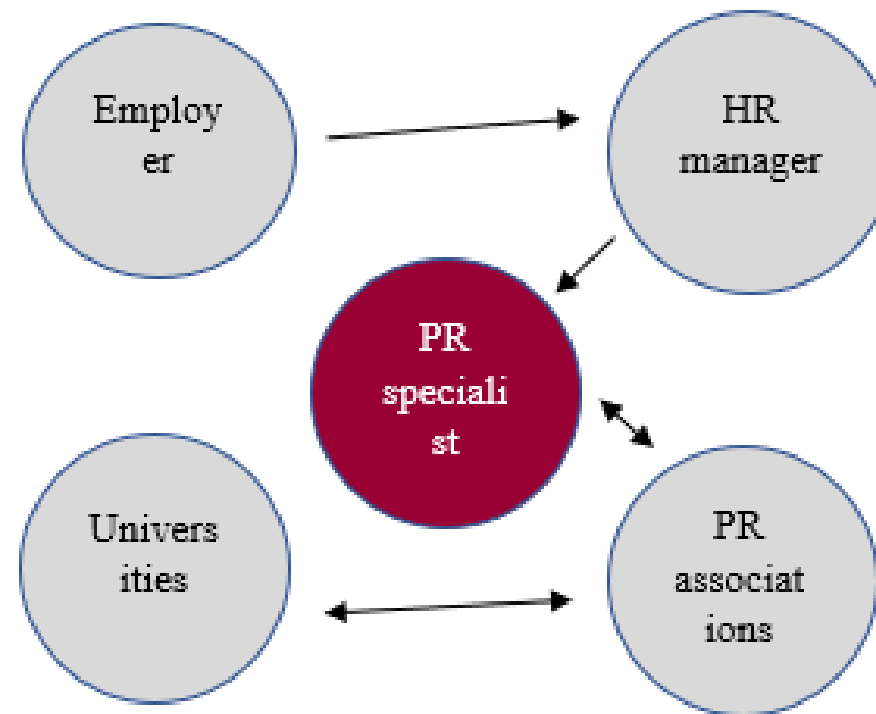
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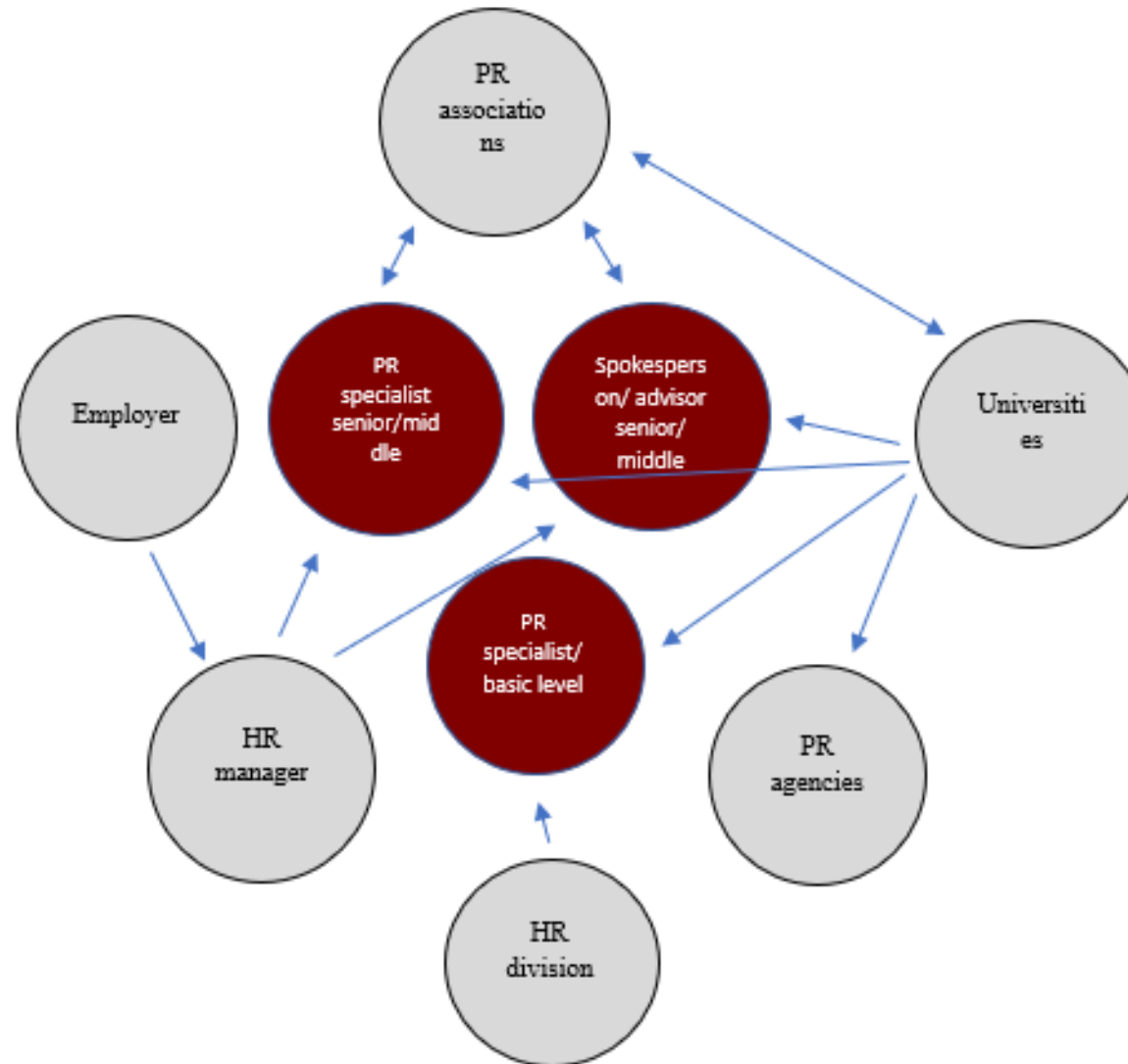
MAPA theoretical frame has been used in a wide range of contexts to identify competencies for professional practice and for curriculum design, including that of airline pilots (Hunt and Macfarlane, 2003); senior army officers (Pech, 2003); health professionals (Hunt and Kinross 1988); cabin crew (Hunt, 1998) and vocational teachers (Hunt, 1984).

Application of the system theory.

Participants of the system interacting in the construction of the requirements for the competencies of PR specialists



Interaction of the participants of the system during the process of construction the requirements for competencies





Methods applied for the pilot study „Time-gap of the need and the response“

Methods: Qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the webpages of selected international PR associations.

Content analysis sample: 428 texts in the period of 2015-2020 were selected based on the component of competencies indicated in the Global Body of Knowledge (GBOK, 2016) and the Global Capability Framework for Public Relations and Communication Management profession (GCF, 2018) (i.e. categories) determining the presence of these categories (semantic units: words, their compounds, concepts) in the analysed texts.

Results (1)

Time-gap is determined by the sequence of activities



One of the factors that affect the time-gap is the order of activities that provide the relevant competencies: first sharing of good practice and scientific-theoretical activities (educational articles, scholarly insights, conference presentations) are offered and in a few years appropriate trainings are provided.

| | | |
|--|---|---------------|
| 2015: (22 articles, 1 seminar, 5 conferences, 3 other) | ➡ | 1 training. |
| 2016: (19 articles, 2 seminars, 10 conferences, 1 other) | ➡ | 0 training. |
| 2017: (28 articles, 0 seminar, 7 conferences, 1 other) | ➡ | 1 training. |
| 2018: (23 articles, 3 seminars, 2 conferences, 2 other) | ➡ | 2 trainings. |
| 2019: (24 articles, 6 seminars, 28 conferences, 8 other) | ➡ | 8 trainings. |
| 2020: (97 articles, 63 seminars, 25 conferences, 14 other) | ➡ | 22 trainings. |

Results (2)

Identified need for TOP competencies during 2015-2020



| NEED 2015 | NEED 2016 | NEED 2017 | NEED 2018 | NEED 2019 | NEED 2020 |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>TOP 5 requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking business and communication strategies Coping with digital evolution and social web Building and maintaining trust Matching the need to address more audiences and channels with limited resources Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow. | <p>TOP 5 requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking business and communication strategies Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow Coping with the digital evolution and the social web Matching the need to address more audiences and channels with limited resources Strengthening the role of the communication function in supporting top-management decision making. | <p>TOP 5 requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coping with digital evolution and the social web Linking business and communication strategies Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow Matching the need to address more audiences and channels with limited resources Building and maintaining trust. | <p>TOP 5 requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and maintaining trust Linking business and communication strategies Coping with the digital evolution and the social web Matching the need to address more audiences and channels with limited resources Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow. | <p>TOP 5 requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and maintaining trust Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow Exploring new ways of creating and distributing content Matching the need to address more audiences and channels with limited resources Coping with the digital evolution and the social web. | <p>TOP 5 requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and maintaining trust Dealing with sustainable development and social responsibility Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow Strengthening the role of the communication function in supporting top-management decision making Using big data and/ or algorithms for communication. |

Results (3)

Interface with the traditional competencies of PR specialist



70 activities are dedicated for the development of TOP 5 competencies :

- Trainings: 11%
- Conferences: 42%
- Seminars: 6%
- Articles: 38%
- Other: 3%

88 activities are aimed for improving traditional competencies, the excess of which is distinguished by PR specialists:

- Trainings: 20%
- Conferences: 32%
- Seminars: 8%
- Articles: 34%
- Other: 6%

Results (4)

Time-gap between the expressed need for competencies and the supply (activities and topics)

| Linking business and communication strategies | RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| TOP 1 – 2015 | 2 articles, .2 presentations during conferences |
| TOP 1-2016 | 2 presentations during conferences |
| TOP 2-2017 | 1 article |
| TOP 2 -2018 | 0 activity |
| TOP 8 - 2019 | 0 activity |
| TOP 7 - 2020 | 3 trainings |

| Coping with digital evolution and social web | RESPONSE |
|--|--|
| TOP 2 - 2015 | 1 article, 2 presentations during conferences |
| TOP 3 - 2016 | 2 articles, 3 presentations during conferences |
| TOP 1 - 2017 | 2 articles, 3 presentations |
| TOP 3 - 2018 | 4 articles, 1 presentation during conference, 1 conference |
| TOP 5 - 2019 | 2 articles, 6 presentations during conferences 2 trainings |
| TOP 8 - 2020 | 6 articles, 5 presentations during conferences, 4 seminars, 3 trainings |

Conclusions

- Time - gap between the competencies expressed by PR specialists as important and missing, and the activities provided by PR professional associations. Exchange of good practice and scientific-theoretical activities (educational articles, insights, conference presentations) are offered primarily and after a few years appropriate trainings are provided.
- Gap between the needs and the supply. This correlates with the results of previous researches: thorough researches signal the need for constant improvement of competencies, especially of business development and technologies, however, the activities by PR associations are focused on development of traditional competencies than on those competencies, PR specialists express as needed and important due to the changing environment.
- Findings that provide a presumption regarding the existing gap lead to the need for further empirical research as there is a lack of research explaining the global map of PR competences and its correlation with activities provided to ensure LLL (lifelong learning) opportunities for PR professionals. Questions remain as to what are the determinants of the gap between the response and the need.



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Thank you for your attention!

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