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Predicting Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations-generated news materials

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PREDICTING INDONESIAN JOURNALISTS' USES OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS-GENERATED NEWS MATERIALS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Mass Communication

in

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by
Simon T. Sinaga
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ABSTRACT

The news media are the main channel for public relations practitioners to get messages across to their publics. Getting their news or information materials used in the media is, therefore, a key professional responsibility for public relations practitioners. In an Asian country like Indonesia, this practice constitutes one of the more important parts of public relations practices. However, there has been little research conducted on predictive factors – especially as concerns taking into account different factors together – regarding Indonesian journalists’ uses of public relations news materials, since it is the largest nation in the Southeast Asian region, and no known academic public relations research of the subject has been done till now.

The literature related to this study primarily examines how journalists’ professional roles, news values, informal relations between journalists and public relations practitioners, and business pressures predict Indonesian journalists’ uses and acceptance of public relations news materials. This thesis then employed survey methods to obtain data from Indonesian journalists working for national newspapers and television broadcasts in the capital city of Jakarta.

The news value factor comes first in predicting Indonesian journalists’ uses and acceptance of public relations materials; the journalists also take their news organizations’ business interests seriously into their consideration. In addition, this study supports the suggestion that informal relations between practitioners and journalists could play a significant role in the use and acceptance of public relations news materials. The results do indicate that “envelope journalism,” or positive coverage provided by journalists in exchange for cash payment is embraced by public Indonesian relations practitioners and journalists. However, this study finds its influence is not as significant as the fundamental tenets in journalism.

The findings suggest that public relations activities in Indonesia comprise an important part of a set of complex media practices.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Public Relations and Media Practices in the United States

Getting positive coverage through the news media remains central for public relations practitioners even though public relations have grown much beyond the mere press agency or securing of publicity (Seitel, 2004). Public relations textbooks have generally defined public relations along the same lines established by the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education in 1975. The underlying idea of public relations has been that of two-way relationship: communication, understanding and cooperation between an organization and its publics (Harlow, 1976).

The field of public relations is also no longer dominated by former journalists. Still, for example, noted public relations scholars Wilcox, Ault, Agee and Cameron (2000) -- at the start of their book -- exemplify a public relations practitioner as someone who prepares a press release to be delivered to the news media. Put simply, as Seitel (2004, p. 211) underscored: "If you're in public relations, you must know how to deal with the press."

Why are the press or electronic media so important to public relations? Seitel (2004) argued it was important for public relations practitioners to get their organizations' points of views across to the public through the media because publication or use of their messages by the media lends credibility to the messages. Fortunato (2000) emphasized the agenda-setting power of the media in public relations activities. Agenda-setting research has shown the media's ability to transfer salient issues to the public agenda and influence how the public and policymakers think about those issues (Rogers, Dearing & Bregman, 1993). Fortunato (2000) also noted that

the news media were often the only or the most effective channel for an organization to reach the audience.

For those reasons, public relations practitioners regard getting their organization's point of view out to the news media as a key part of their responsibilities. Indeed, scanning the media to find out whether their news releases or other packaged news materials find their way into local newspapers or television newscast on a given day is something that public relations practitioners do eagerly (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000).

Studies of public relations news materials in the news media have unfortunately been focused almost exclusively on the United States. In addition, each of the studies focused primarily on a single set of variables or a certain factor, such as professionalism, news values, and business pressures on newsrooms, and none has considered these factors together. In one of the earlier specific studies in the use of public relations news materials, Carter (1958) focused on news values. Pincus, Rimmer, Rayfield and Cropp (1993) looked at how journalists and editors with different roles assess their acceptance of public relations materials. Curtin (1999) and Gandy (1982) gave special attention to business pressures on journalists' uses of public relations materials. In sum, studies concerning journalists' acceptance and rejection of public relations materials have examined the factors of business pressures, journalist professional role conceptions and news values, but only separately.

Public Relations and Media Practices in Indonesia

Giving a great deal of attention to use or non-use of news materials in the news media may well prove a valuable use of time by public relations practitioners in Asia, where Sriramesh, Kim and Takasaki (1999) found that media relations constitute the predominant public relations activity. Public relations and mass communication researchers, particularly those who come from

Asia, have recently begun more extensive examination on the relationship between public relations practitioners and journalists. However, despite the valuable contributions of Sriramesh, Kim and Takasaki, there has been little research conducted specifically on factors that predict the uses and acceptance of public relations-generated news materials by journalists in the region.

In addition to issues of business pressures, journalists professional role and news values, public relations studies in Asia have given substantial attention to personal influence in particular and informal relations in general (Sriramesh, Kim, & Takasaki, 1999; Shin & Cameron, 2003). The controversial practices in the spotlight have included making personal contacts to get favorable coverage and providing gifts and/or bribes to newspeople. The countries that have received more interest are South Korea, Japan, and India. The studies of these countries, however, have produced mixed results as to how informal relations influence uses of public relations materials by the media.

The 220-million-strong Indonesia, the largest country in Southeast Asia, has hardly been explored by public relations researchers and scholars. Now that more than 30 years of tight media control has come to an end (Sinaga, 1998), Indonesia presents a challenging setting for public relations studies in the face an explosive variety in journalism practices. With greater freedom, as Nieman fellow Bill Kovach's (2004) observed, in some quarters there was high interest in applying western journalism discipline to story verification and upholding journalism's obligation to the truth. Kovach (2004), however, also noted that there was the same penchant for using unconfirmed information among Indonesian journalists.

The enactment of a new law that enhances press freedom and the subsequent halting of the government's licensing system in 1999 ended the news media's fear of getting banned (Kitley, 2001). The print media, in particular, have become more outspoken by reporting

corruption cases and scandals involving businessmen and officials (Siregar, 2005). Freedom House's ratings show scores for Indonesia's political rights and civil liberties improved from 7 and 6 in the heyday of press bans in 1993 and 1994 to 3 and 4 in the years after 1999. Yet, Kovach noted that while the independent journalists organizations spread, Indonesian journalists continued to be plagued by pressures from officials, politicians and businesspeople, to be deprived of their freedoms, and to give way to "envelope journalism."

The "envelope journalism" -- the practices of giving bribes including money to win favorable media coverage -- has been embraced by many public relations practitioners (*The Jakarta Post*, March 21 2005). The persistence of this activity suggests that public relations practitioners in Indonesia find media outlets so crucial an aspect in their work that they may well resort to unscrupulous practices to achieve their goals. The fact that these practices have continued also suggests that Indonesian journalists do take advantage of envelope journalism (*The Jakarta Post*, March 21 2005). *The Jakarta Post*, an English-language newspaper, quoted public relations practitioners as saying that, in fact, many journalists would not come to events or press conferences unless they were to receive gifts or envelopes. The newspaper attributed the problem to rampant corruption practiced by both the government and private sectors.

In the meantime, the Asia-wide financial crisis hit news organizations hard for several years beginning in 1997 (Sinaga, 1998). The crisis forced news organizations to operate with a more advertiser-oriented approach due to stiffer competition in attracting advertising. Adding to the already cut-throat competition in the media market is the ending of the government licensing of the press that led to the opening of floodgates for existing media companies, individuals and other companies to launch new newspapers. Meanwhile, independent businesspeople and companies with little journalism experience but plenty of capital have made their way into

television industry. This has ushered in a more complex media environment for public relations practitioners who now have to deal with more kinds of news media and more varieties of journalists. Many were less experienced journalists who had to find their way amid the rapid changes in the political and media environment (Wisaksono, 2001).

For decades, the print media were the only medium with the power to set the Indonesian public agenda (Sen & Hill, 2000). Newspapers based in Jakarta, the nation's capital, were especially dominant, accounting for 67.2% of total print circulation in 1991 and 71.6% in 1996 (Sen & Hill, 2000). Since late 1980s, when the government first introduced media deregulation, television has been growing to become another dominant medium. More Indonesians are already watching televisions regularly than reading newspapers and listening to the radio (Sen & Hill, 2000). Based on this information, this study included journalists of both newspaper and television in the sample.

This study is an attempt to examine the various factors that might predict Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations-generated news materials in the new media environment. In particular, this inquiry was based on feedback from journalists working for national newspapers and television stations, which dominate the current media landscape. This study considers these possible predictors of public relations material uses and acceptance that have been found in the literature – the journalistic professional role, news values, business pressures, and informal relations.

Study Purpose

Although public relations in Indonesia relies a great deal on providing for materials to journalists, there has been no known scholarly research into what factors drive Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials. Indonesia is practically an unexplored territory

concerning this subject. This study, therefore, attempts to examine the predicting factors that work in the largest Southeast Asian country.

The primary goal, in other words, is to achieve a better and more comprehensive understanding of how Indonesian journalists treat public relations news materials as news sources. By exploring the factors that predict uses of public relations materials in the news media, this study also aims to contribute to the growing research into the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mass Media's Use of Public Relations News Materials

It is only truism to say the mass media rely on the use of informed, credible sources in their production of news content. Shoemaker and Reese (1996), who described sources as “external suppliers of raw material” (p. 127), underscored that sources provide journalists with information materials including public relations-generated information such as press releases, press conference, corporate and government reports and copies of speeches. Such news materials generated by public relations practitioners have been found to directly or indirectly contribute to journalists’ news production. Estimates are that 45 to 50% or more of content in daily newspapers originated from press releases although journalists have been hesitant to acknowledge their reliance on public relations (Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron, 2000). An earlier study found that about 80 percent of environmental reports originated from or were initiated by press releases and other public relations materials (Sachsman, 1976). Less is known is the extent to which public relations materials are included in television news. The video new releases, however, have increasingly become a standard tool in the practice of public relations (Seitel, 2004).

Turow (1989, p. 206) noted the “overwhelming importance” that public relations materials had for the news media. He contended that corporate and governmental entities had the ability to shape their agenda in the news. Gandy (1986) underscored the conceptual importance of public relations by suggesting that public relations materials serve as information subsidies for their users. The reasons public relations practitioners could either insert their agenda or their

ideas into news stories, Gandy pointed out, was that the media need subsidized news materials to reduce the labor and technological resources necessary to create them.

Turow (1989) argued public relations practitioners often make their best efforts to cultivate a symbiotic relationship with journalists. Because public relations practitioners are the ones with greater stakes in the relationship, according to Turow (1989), they could afford to depart from journalistic key norms criterion in their push for the use of any news material such as hiding the origins of sources to the detriment of a story's credibility. Turow (1989) suggested that it was a public relations practitioners' job to convince newspapers that their information originated from sources with no stake in the issue. Gandy (1981) stated that public relations practitioners could resort to a gamut of manipulative approaches in their efforts to target the media they expect to carry their messages.

Citing self-interest and other reasons, primarily a lack of trustworthiness and the perceived lower status of public relations profession, journalists themselves generally hold negative attitudes toward public relations practitioners (Aronoff, 1975; Ryan & Martinson, 1988). Journalists also tend to describe public relations in negative connotations when they use the term in their stories (Henderson, 1998). Henderson found that more than 80 percent of articles in *The New York Times* and 240 periodicals covering current events between January 1995 and December 1996 that have mentioned "public relations" in their articles carried the connotations of public relations being a corrupter of journalism, an attempt to direct attention away from the real issue, an effort by an organization to deal with a disaster, and other negative associations.

Shoemaker (1989) rejected an entirely negative view of public relations, urging researchers to examine the bad and the good. She argued that public relations did not only

involve persuasive communications but also informative communications. The pervasive perception that public relations involved only persuasive communication contributed significantly to negative attitudes toward public relations (Shoemaker, 1996). The fact that journalists have continued to make use of information materials generated by public relations staffs suggests that journalists may simply be hesitant to acknowledge their uses and acceptance. As Wilcox, Ault, Agee and Cameron (2000) said: "More than most readers realize, and many editors care to admit, newspapers depend upon information brought to them voluntarily" (p.242).

Factors and Variables in Journalists' Relationship with Public Relations Practitioners

As discussed earlier, journalists cited a self-serving motivation, lack of trustworthiness and ethics, and lower status of public relations professionals in their negative attitudes toward public relations.

Journalists' conceptions of professional roles generally lead them to considering themselves as having professional characteristics that include a full commitment to the profession, service to society and a high degree of autonomy and ethics (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Researchers (Johnstone, Slawski & Bowman, 1972; Wilhoit & Weaver, 1991) have outlined the types of roles they believe journalists have been playing in carrying out their work. Each type of role means different way of handling news sources or news materials.

In writing or producing news, journalists must winnow down a large volume of potential information from sources to a few before shaping them into news stories. Because journalists deal with this issue and face other limits within their organizations on day-to-day basis, they form news routines that become integral to their profession. Tuchman (1978) argued that journalists' ability to select questions, as well hard and soft stories, had become a significant part of their professionalism, one worth looking at in itself.

Following up on the work of Tuchman, Fishman (1980) discussed routine news work as the process of approaching what to include in news reports and distinguishing events from non-events. In their attempt to make their news gathering more efficient, Fishman noted, journalists make choices. They rely on authoritative points of view or those they can trust better. The news routine leads journalists to develop news judgment that provides the “yardsticks of newsworthiness and constitute an audience-oriented routine” (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p.111) because the work of the news media are an audience-oriented product. News judgment allows journalists to discern what an audience deems important and appealing, and empowers journalists to make consistent story selections. In the process, journalists use agreed-on news values as the basis to evaluate and make decision about stories.

Weave and Wilhoit (1991) underlined that organizational limitations could stand in the way of a journalist’s work. In carrying out their work journalists face time and resource constraints. This situation contributes to journalists’ use of information subsidies from sources (Gandy, 1986). Underwood (1993) found that journalists were often caught between their professional ideals and the fact that news organizations must always operate as profit generators for their corporate owners. McManus (1994) argued that economic rationalism could weigh more than journalistic norms as the reasoning underlying the media’s choices.

In studying the public relations-journalist relationship in Asian countries, mass communication scholars (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999) underlined the significance of taking the impact of culture into account. Shin and Cameron (2002) underscored the differences between the ways public relations were practiced in Asia and the United States. Although each Asian country, as with any other country, has its own cultural character, cultural studies scholars agree that informal relations are important across Asian societies (Shin & Cameron, 2002).

Hofstede (1980), for example, explained the prevalence of personal or informal influences as part of the legacy of Confucian thought in China. Informal relations have great importance to any analysis of the way public relations professionals and journalists interact in Asian region.

Other public relations studies, in the meantime, have suggested previous public relations course and journalism education were related to journalists' professional role assessment (Cline, 1982; Stegal & Sanders, 1986) and a journalist's particular news area was related news value assessment (Pincus, Rimmer, Rayfield, & Cropp, 1993). Cline (1982) discussed the negative image of public relations in journalism and mass communication books.

Stegal and Sanders (1986) found that journalists tended to assess public relations practitioners' role conception inaccurately. Pincus et al. (1993) examined how journalist from different news are varied in their evaluation of the value of information the received from public relation sources.

The result of this review of literature underscores the need to examine journalists' professional role conceptions, news values, business pressures and their part in informal relations with public relations professionals before making any determination of the factors predicting journalists' acceptance of public relations-generated news materials. The literature also suggests that matters regarding public relations and journalism education had influence on journalists' conception of professional role and that the particular news section in which the journalist works had influence on information value.

The following section will discuss those aspects in greater detail with regard to Indonesian journalists' consideration of public relations materials. Another section will look at what public relations news material means for this exploration.

Journalists' Professional Roles and Public Relations News Materials

While journalists generally viewed public relations practitioners as less ethical and less trustworthy, they took a more objective assessment of the news materials offered than they did at the people who offered them (Brody, 1984).

Indeed, Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman (1972) found that different journalists viewed their professional role differently. Some journalists believed they were neutrals, or simply channels of transmission. Others considered themselves participants, saying they needed to analyze information to develop the story. A study by Wilhoit and Weaver (1991) added the role of adversary to the role of neutral and the role of participant. They suggested some journalists believed they should serve as an adversary of government and business and that it was possible for those believing in the participant role to extend it to an adversarial one.

News Values and Public Relations News Materials

In one of the earlier studies of news values in the relationship between newspaper journalists and sources, Carter (1958) attempted to find ways to measure what journalists thought was most important: accuracy, interest to readers, usefulness to readers, promptness of publication, and completeness. Building on Carter's news values, Aronoff (1975) examined the news value orientations of journalists and public relations practitioners. Aronoff (1975) found that while journalists perceived public relation practitioners' news values negatively, the news values they held were strikingly similar to those to which public relations practitioners adhere. In a separate study of journalists with the *Austin American Statesman* in Texas, Aronoff (1976) suggested that newsworthiness was one of journalist's significant considerations in accepting or rejecting news releases.

A study of perceptions and cross-perceptions of news values by Sallot, Steinfatt, and Salwen (1998) found that journalists and public relations practitioners asserted similar news values. Journalists, though, perceived the news values of public relations practitioners inaccurately when compared with what the practitioners actually reported. The study, however, also showed that public relations practitioners perceived significantly greater influence of public relations on news content than journalists. Sallot et al. (1998) commented that “it is possible that journalists are reluctant to admit the power that public relations exert on news content” (p.373). Sallot et al. (1998) incorporated two more items -- grammatical accuracy and fairness to different sides -- to the list of news values in the public relations study.

Business Pressures and Public Relations News Materials

The American Journalist Survey 2003 (Indiana University, 2003) suggested that while journalists believed in the high importance of journalistic values, they noted that financial success was also similarly very important to their companies and the owners. Large percentages - - 77% to 89% -- of the 1,149 journalists surveyed felt the importance of “earning high, above average profits” in the operation of their news organizations. They also acknowledged that the most important value to their companies’ owners was keeping as large an audience as possible. About half of the surveyed journalists also agreed that their news resources had been shrinking.

McManus (1994) believed that commercial news production demands compromise between business consideration and journalism news values. Curtin’s study (1999) of journalists, editors and managing editors indicated that the newsrooms of newspapers that were part of large corporate structures felt greater effects of economic pressures on content than those of smaller newspapers. The study, however, did not find significant differences in terms of use rates of public relations news materials among newspapers with different organizational ownerships.

Newspapers' response to business pressures has included the creation of special editions that can attract audiences with higher disposable income and attract the support of advertisers (Curtin, 1999).

Still, Curtin (1999) suggested that the news media may end up using even more public relations news materials if the popularity of special sections increases because editors viewed such materials as potential copy for these sections. In media organizations targeting higher profits, Underwood (1993) argued that there was little clear-cut separation between newsroom and business departments. The underlying idea, Underwood (1993) noted, was that the media organizations pushed for advertiser and target audience-friendly content, particularly in their special sections. This attitude tended to result in the newspapers featuring fewer investigative reports and more use of information from sources to meet upscale readers' interests such as local business stories, coverage of investment trends and profiles of corporate and government leaders (Underwood, 1993).

This trend also applies to television. In dealing with tight budgets, Underwood observed (1993), television stations would look for free footage from public relations sources to fill out newscasts. These kinds of video production, known as video news release, could be ready-to-use tape of visual and voice materials or unedited video pictures called B-roll footage. Newscast journalists prefer the B-roll footage because they have more editorial control over the material. Although journalists maintain autonomy by not using a scripted package, a supplied video news release does influence producers' stories (Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron, 2000).

In their studies (McManus, 1994; Curtin, 1994), the main players judged most likely to place business pressures on journalists have been the news media's business units, advertisers and owners or shareholders. In media industries, the top management or executives increasingly

represent the interest of owners or shareholders for gaining customers and making profits (Underwood. 1993).

The business pressures have also translated into a tight manpower issue. Aronoff (1976) argued that the cost and time would be prohibitive for a newspaper if it had to have its own reporters gather information in place of what public relations practitioners can provide. Morton and Warren (1992) did find that the smaller the news staff or the larger the news hole to fill, the more likely journalists were to use public relations news materials. Sallot et al. (1998) estimated that economic restraints imposed on news operations such as cutbacks in staffs and travel budgets, which have been the current trend over the past several years in news media industry, could further exacerbate journalists' reliance on public relations-supplied materials.

Lacy and Blanchard (2003) found that pressures on profit levels were positively associated with smaller newsroom staffs, particularly in publicly-owned and higher-than-average profit-oriented dailies. Lacy and Blanchard estimated that newspapers with profit margins higher than 25% lost about one and a half newsroom staffers for every 5% increase in their profit margin.

Informal Relations and Public Relations News Materials

Aronoff (1975) discussed the substantial role of interpersonal relations in the communication between practitioners and journalists. However, he also noted that public relations practitioners in the United States preferred to disseminate their information primarily through official press releases than through personal or informal means. Today, web content, fax machines and email have been their primary vehicles. If anything, Aronoff's findings are truer today than they were in 1975.

Because literature regarding aspects of informal relations between journalists and public relations practitioners in Indonesia is scant, the analysis turned largely to studies that had been conducted in other Asian countries. As suggested earlier, each Asian country has its own cultural characteristics but the reliance on informal relations seems to prevail across the region (Sriramesh, 1992).

A study of public relations in three Asian countries -- India, South Korea and Japan (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999), noted the informal and personal influence in public relations practitioners' work. Practitioners in those countries, they found, built personal influence with media people and other key governmental individuals by doing favors in the expectation of soliciting favors in return.

With regard to the use of public relations news materials by journalists, Sriramesh et al. (1999) reported that public relations practitioners in those three countries were best able to place stories in the media by making phone calls to friendly journalists and editors rather than by writing press releases. Indeed, part of the public relations practitioners' job in soliciting such favors was entertaining the journalists by providing food and drinks or by giving gifts and bribes.

Shin and Cameron (2003) suggested that public relations practitioners and journalists in South Korea depended on informal relations for communicating and gathering news materials, though journalists expressed objections to a suggestion that informal relations had any effect on news content. In a survey of journalists and public relations practitioners, Shin and Cameron (2003) looked into informal practices by practitioners to entice journalists to use their information. These practices included unofficial calls, private meetings, press tours, bargaining

advertising for news coverage, exercising powers through managers and editors, giving perks including dinner/drinking, and gifts and money.

Public Relations/Journalism Education and News Section

Public Relations Courses and Journalism Education. The studies by Cline (1982), and Stegall and Sanders (1986) suggested that education or courses in public relations could improve journalists' attitudes toward public relations.

Cline (1982) found that most college students began to study public relations through journalism or mass communication courses and books that cast public relations in negative light. Cline's (1982) analysis of 12 introductory mass communication books showed that most of the books equated public relations with one-sided information and efforts to steer media content to serve certain interests. This kind of education, Cline (1982) suggested, served to perpetuate an adversarial attitude toward public relations on the part of students who had really had no public relations courses.

Stegal and Sanders (1986) suggested that journalists who have had a public relations class may be able to view the public relations process more impartially and communicate with its practitioners better. A public relations course may help journalists understand the principles and practices of public relations.

News Section. Pincus et al. (1993) found differences of attitudes toward public relations materials between editors charged with different areas of coverage. Of business, sports and news editors, business editors saw public relations-generated news materials in the most favorable light. Business editors said the supply of public relations-generated news materials was helpful in the coverage of business topics.

Public Relations News Materials

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) described external sources as suppliers of news releases, speeches, interviews, corporate reports or government hearings as raw materials that journalists need for producing news content. Wilcox et al. (2000) listed materials that public relations practitioners could produce for internal and external audiences including the news media. These materials are news releases, video news releases, fact sheets and media advisories, newsletters, company magazines, brochures and handbooks. Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) also cited reprints of speeches, position papers and backgrounders as important public relations materials. Public relations practitioners would usually send these materials to important parties and arbiters of opinion within all forms of the news media to respond to selective reporting.

Public relations practitioners are generally viewed as successful if materials they produce are published in some form (Morton & Warren, 1992). However, when publication is the only measurement for public relations practitioners' success in releasing such materials, public relations practitioners may be far from being successful. Journalists reported low use of public relations materials--as low as 3 to 5 percent of news releases they received--though actual use was much higher when they were asked about use in a number of ways beyond mere just use in the sense that the big part or the entirety of certain PR news materials get run (Baxter, 1979; Curtin, 1999). In more recent years, the ways PR can find its way into the public arena seem to have grown exponentially.

Curtin (1999) observed that while journalists denied a frequent use of public relations materials in news content, they acknowledged that such materials were an important source of story ideas. Journalists, she suggested, tended to say they did not run press releases although they used part of them for fillers. Curtin (1999) concluded that journalists viewed public relations

materials generously as potential copy for writing the content in special sections that aim to attract advertisement. Journalists, she noted, were not comfortable with using advertising copy generated by their own organizations and believed public relations materials more acceptable because at least they came from venues that were subject to editorial control.

Research Questions

The literature review discussed four kinds of constructs that may predict journalists' acceptance or rejection of public relations-generated information materials. The discussion of journalists' conceptions of their professional role suggests that such conceptions could affect an individual journalist's news selection and acceptance of public relations materials. Journalists, however, have a more accommodating attitude when the public relations materials come from public relations practitioners they have regular contact with. Journalists and editors handling business were found to be more likely than others to accept public relations materials. This study examined how journalists' own professional role conceptions predict their uses and acceptance of public relations news materials.

News values are important for journalists in accepting or rejecting public relations materials. Journalists, though, may perceive the news values held by public relations differently from their own, although the news values reported by both journalists and public relations practitioners appear to be noticeably similar. This study, therefore, examined how news values predict Indonesian journalists' uses and acceptance of public relations news materials.

Business pressures could affect journalists' acceptance of public relations materials through the pursuit of advertisers, the focus on audience-oriented content, and the reduction of news staff. Therefore, this study examined if a news organization's push for such business goals

predict the likelihood of Indonesian journalists' uses and acceptance of public relations news materials.

As demonstrated in previous studies, informal relations are a common feature in the relationships between journalists and public relations practitioners in Asian countries. Journalists and public relations practitioners seem to depend on such informal relationships even though journalists hesitate to admit it. This study, therefore, also examined if informal relations predict Indonesian journalists' uses and acceptance of news materials.

There is no known study that has probed how those constructs are related to Indonesian journalists' assessment of public relations let alone their acceptance or rejection of public relation materials. Therefore, this study proposed research questions rather than suggesting hypotheses. The research questions are:

RQ1: How do Indonesian journalists' conceptions of their own professional roles predict their uses of public relations materials?

RQ2: How do news values predict Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials?

RQ3: How do business pressures predict Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials?

RQ4: How do informal relations predict Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials?

RQ5: What is the importance of each factor compared to the others in predicting Indonesian journalists' acceptance of public relations materials?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Survey

This study surveyed Indonesian journalists in seven national daily newspapers and six television stations based in the country's capital, Jakarta. National newspapers and television stations are the predominant public agenda setters in the country.

National newspapers in this study are defined as newspapers that reach at least nine major cities in different islands of the country. National television stations are those that also broadcast to at least the nine cities (Indonesian Media Guide, 2004). This standard of nine cities is the same as the one that is employed by the Nielsen Media Research for their own Indonesian survey.

Under this criterion, there are seven Jakarta-based daily newspapers and six Jakarta-based television stations that qualify as national newspapers and television stations. These newspapers were: *Kompas*, the largest Indonesian-language newspaper in the country; *Media Indonesia*--the second largest Indonesian language newspaper; *Bisnis Indonesia*--the largest Indonesian-language business daily; *Harian Investor*--the second largest business daily; *Suara Pembaruan*,--the largest Indonesian-language afternoon daily, *The Jakarta Post*--the largest English-language newspaper and *Harian Tempo*, a fast-growing Indonesian-language newspaper (Indonesia Media Guide, 2004). The six television stations--in the or order of their share of audience—are *RCTI* (22%), *Indosiar* (21%), *SCTV* (16%), *TransTV* (11%), *TV7* (10%), *MetroTV* (5%) (Indonesia Media Guide, 2004). At least two news editors in each news organizations were asked about the availability of their newspapers or broadcast in the nine cities, and they confirmed this.

There are different views about what journalists do. Schudson (2003, p.11) defined journalism as the “business or practice of producing and disseminating information of

contemporary affairs of general public interest and importance.” Public relations scholars (Wilcox, et al., 2000) referred to reporters and editors as busy people who make decisions about what and how to run stories. In light of the varied definitions, this study made use of a broad definition of journalists, much like the one employed in the 1992 American Journalist Survey by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996): those who have the responsibility for preparation or transmission of news stories or other information. Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) included full-time reporters, writers, correspondents, columnists, photojournalists, and editors in their survey. Regarding television, they included all newsroom staffs involved in news gathering and news editing.

The survey questionnaires were distributed to a total of 841 journalists from all seven daily newspapers and six television stations. The lists of names of the journalists were obtained from editors with the news organizations. The process started with the author getting the list of names of each newspaper from the list that can be found in each newspaper. Indonesian newspapers customarily list the names of their editors and reporters in their editorial pages. To obtain similar name lists from television stations, the author contacted their news editors via email and telephone. As a former journalist in Jakarta, the author is fortunate enough to know personally most of these editors. One month prior to traveling to Jakarta and visiting each newsroom, the author submitted the lists of names to these editors again for confirmation. Shortly before distribution in Jakarta, the author also asked the same news editors to take a final look. In the process, very few names were either deleted or added to the lists.

The lists were as complete as the researcher could get from the editors. There is no Indonesian journalist directory available for comparison to the lists. There is also no discernible reason why an editor would leave a given journalist off a roster provided to a university student and former journalist doing research.

Each questionnaire was placed in an envelope with the respondent's name on it. The survey did not require respondents to give their names when filling out the questionnaires. Therefore, anonymity was achieved. The anonymity was necessary so that respondents would not be hesitant to participate.

The distribution was approved by these editors and also went through the editors to ensure all news staffs obtained questionnaires. It was necessary to go through the editors because access to newsrooms for outsiders was limited while editors in Indonesia have full access to their staffs. In addition, reporters' schedules are often irregular and it is often impossible to predict when they will be at their respective desks. Distribution through editors seemed to be the best way to ensure that questionnaires would be delivered to the desk of each news staffer.

Follow-ups included the following efforts: one-week after the questionnaires were delivered to the newsrooms, the principal investigator visited the editors in their newsrooms to get them to encourage their colleagues and staff reporters to respond to the survey. Two weeks after the questionnaires were distributed, with consent from the editors, reminder letters were delivered to newsroom coordinators to be posted on the general bulletin board or, better yet, sent by editors to news staffs via email. None of the media organizations agreed to provide email addresses of reporters or editors as doing so would require individual consent. The last attempt, after the third week, was to contact individuals in newsrooms that the investigator knew well to have them encourage other journalists to respond to the survey. The survey was conducted for a month starting in the middle of February, 2005. During the visit to editors in the second week and once a week in the remaining two weeks the researcher himself retrieved filled questionnaires from newsroom coordinators or administrative assistants assigned by editors to collect them.

All these efforts brought a total of 299 respondents whose responses are useful. A total of 302 questionnaires were returned, but three were discarded because these questionnaires were hardly filled out. About 15% of the editors and members of the newsroom staffs were on out-of-town assignment, largely to cover a number of areas hit by tsunamis in the country. This brought about 126 potential respondents who were classified as non-contact under AAPOR response rate guidelines. Using the AAPOR response rate calculator (see www.aapor.org), the survey had a 35.6% response rate and 41.8% cooperation rate.

Statistical Procedures

The literature posited eight variables for journalist's professional roles, seven variables for news value construction, 10 variables for informal relations and three variables for business pressures – all serve as independent variables. Journalists' professional roles refer to the ways journalists regard the types of function they should play in disseminating, treating and assessing news sources. News values concern journalists' assessment of whether public relations news materials meet journalistic values. Informal relations involve public relations practices outside official or formal contexts that may be carried out in an effort to win journalists' favor. Business pressures are internal and external pressures that journalists deal with in handling news materials or stories.

Because this study aims to examine how these constructs predict the dependent variables -- journalists' uses and acceptance of public relations news materials, extracting factors from original variables is necessary. The purpose in using factor analysis is to summarize the interrelationships among variables to aid in their conceptualization (Gorsuch, 1983). Factor analysis makes the prediction model more succinct and understandable by including the maximum amount of variance from original variables.

This study employed principal component analysis (PCA) for the factor extracting process because PCA is a mode of factor analysis that has the specific goal of condensing a matrix of correlations (Kline, 1994). Therefore, PCA helps provide a regression equation for an underlying process (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Varimax is the rotation technique employed for this factor analysis. Varimax simplifies factors by maximizing the variance of the loading within factors, making the interpretation of a factor easier because it becomes obvious which variables correlate with each one (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). A consensus now regards factor loadings as significant if they are greater than 0.6 (Kline, 1984). The construal of a derived factor is, therefore, based on variables or items that loaded greater than 0.6 (Stevens, 1986). This study uses this standard to interpret the derived factors.

Reliability analysis was first conducted to ensure that the variables of each of the four main constructs under analysis measures each consistently. A widely accepted Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 is employed to indicate the minimum acceptable reliability coefficient. When the alpha is 0.7 the standard error of measurement will be over half a standard deviation (Garson, 2005). This means that a lower cut-off indicates the set of items or variables employed to measure a certain construct are not appropriate for the population under study. On the other hand, Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggested that the measurement error would improve little beyond an alpha of 0.7 especially for a predictive research.

The Cronbach's alpha for the sets of variables for journalist professional role, news value and informal relation constructs are above 0.7 -- 0.703, 0.884 and 0.893 respectively. The Cronbach's alpha for business pressures was below 0.7 when all four variables were included. It stood at 0.793 when the variable of staff size was excluded. The PCA of the business pressures, therefore, excluded the variable of manpower in the media organization. Garson (2005) noted

that if the Cronbach's alpha is higher when an item is deleted, the item is not tapping the same construct as all of the other items. Garson's point of view appears to make sense for this particular study because individual journalists are not necessarily able to accurately appraise their manpower sufficiency relative to work volume.

Because this study also intends to examine factors that predict overall acceptance or the composite of the uses of public relations materials, the five types of uses were also factored. Reliability analysis showed that the Cronbach's alpha for these five types of uses stood at 0.84.

Once the factors were obtained and saved as regression factors, regression analysis was conducted. This study used ordinary-least-squares regression model to examine each of the five types of uses and the composite of uses separately. The hierarchical regression analysis was conducted since it allows researchers to look at the variance caused by particular the factors before other variables were entered for control.

Independent Variables

Professional Role. The variables in this group are professional roles journalists believe they should assume. The three conceptions of professional role, established by Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) in their 1982 and 1992 surveys of American journalists, are those of disseminator, interpreter, and adversary. The dissemination function is measured by questions about how important they see getting information to the public quickly, concentrating on news that is of interest to the wide audience and staying away from unverified content. The interpretative function is defined according to how journalists discern providing analysis and interpretation, investigating claims and statements and discussing national policy as it is developed. The adversary function is measured by questions about how journalists determine the

importance of being skeptical toward public officials and business people. These variables were measured using a 0-10 scale.

News Values. The survey asked journalists to rate on a 0-10 scale the following news values: accuracy, usefulness to readers, promptness/timeliness, completeness, completeness, fairness to different sides and grammatical accuracy. Specifically, the survey asked respondents to assess how public relations materials they receive meet the aforementioned values.

Informal Relations. The variables in this group were derived from those employed by Shin & Cameron (2003). The variables are: (1) unofficial calls, (2) private meeting, (3) family relations, (4) press tour, (5) travel, (6) bargaining advertising, (7) exercising power through managers/editor, (8) dinner/drinking, (9) gifts and (10) bribes or money. The survey employed a 0-10 scale ranging from not influential to very influential.

Business Pressures. The variables in this category are journalists' assessments of business pressures on newsroom. The analysis of the data measured business pressures by looking to how often journalists think stories originated from business department, advertisers and top management on a 0-10 scale ranging from never to most frequently. The variable of staff size relative to newsroom load was excluded from the data analysis as a measure for the business pressures construct because it did not prove to have internal reliability after Cronbach's alpha test was applied to the data of the surveyed Indonesian journalists.

Public Relations/Journalism Education and News Section. The literature suggested that having had a previous public relations course may lessen journalists' antipathy toward relations with public relations process and people while general journalism or mass communication education would do otherwise (Stegall & Sanders, 1986). The adversary function is taken into account as part of the professional role factor. Therefore, the issues over whether or not

journalists had previous public relations and journalism education were employed as control variables to the professional role. Previous public relations courses and journalism education were measured dichotomously; each was recoded to 0 and 1.

Journalists from different news sections in a media organization regarded the value of the public relations materials differently (Pincus et al., 1993). This study also indicated that journalists' news section was related to their news value assessment. The news section was, therefore, employed as a control variable to the news value factor. The respondents were asked to name their news section in the questionnaire. The news areas they mentioned were classified into three broad categories: general news (all other news sections other than those related to sports and business), sports news and business news. As Pincus et al. (1993) showed that journalists who covered business and economy-related news viewed public relations materials more favorably than those who covered general and sports news, these classifications were recoded to 0 for non-business journalists and 1 for business journalists for regression analysis purposes.

Demographics. The socio-demographic variables include respondent age, gender, household income, years in journalism, job position, and the type of media they work for (newspaper or television). The questionnaire asked respondents to state age in number of years. In gender, male was recoded to 0 and female to 1. The questionnaire also asked respondents to state their journalism experience in number of years. For job position, respondents were asked to write their position in their news organizations. The job positions stated were recoded to 0 for editor-level journalists and 1 for reporter-level journalists. This is based on the idea that reporters in Indonesia are the ones who go out and gather news most, including getting news materials from public relations practitioners.

In newspapers, editor-level journalists are those who state their positions as sub-editors, editors, senior editors, managing editors and chief editors. Reporters and other writers were classified as reporters. In television broadcasts, editor-level journalists are those who state their positions as sub-editors, editors, producer, executive producers and those with higher editorial positions in news department. Reporters and cameramen were classified as reporters.

Dependent Variables

Uses of Public Relations Materials. The uses of public relations materials are not limited to publication of their content in news stories or programs. Journalists also rely on public relations materials to generate story ideas and use them in special sections/programs of their newspapers or TV broadcasts. The dependent variables were measured by inquiring respondents whether and to what extent they make use of the materials for the following uses: (1) story idea generation, (2) the story's background, (3) the minor part of a story that came from another source or from several sources (4) the main part of story content, and (5) supplement/special features in newspapers or special television programs that usually aim to attract specific audiences and advertisers. The survey measured these independent variables on a 0-10 scale, where zero means never and 10 most frequently.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

This analysis was based on the responses of 299 journalists from seven national newspapers and six national television broadcasts in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. The 13 media outlets were all represented. Table 1, however, shows that the majority of the respondents are newspaper journalists (73.9%). Although television has been growing rapidly over the past decade, news has not yet made a major part of their programs. Indonesia has not had television channels that produce only news programs such as CNN and FOX News in the United States.

Slightly more than half (51%) of the respondents are in the age category of 25 to 34 years, and another 36 % are in the category of 35 to 44 years old. The median age (33) of the surveyed respondents fall in the 25-34 category. There is no published information available about the age, race and gender breakdown of Indonesian journalists. Yet, the few figures we do have appear to correspond with an assessment that Indonesian journalists are mostly inexperienced (Wisaksono, 2001).

This median age of the surveyed Indonesian journalists is close to that of American journalists (36 years) in the 1992 American Journalist survey (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996) and were substantially younger than American journalists (41 years) in the 2002 American Journalist survey (Indiana University, 2003) (see Table 2).

Men (71.6%) make up the dominant majority of surveyed Indonesian journalists. Table 2 shows that gender composition of the surveyed Indonesian journalists is also only slightly different from that of American journalists in 2002, which does not seem to have shifted since 1992.

TABLE 1
Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	Frequency, n	%
Media type		
Newspaper	221	73.9
Television	78	26.1
Total	299	100
Age		
20-24	19	6.4
25-34	152	51.7
35-44	106	36.1
45-54	13	4.3
54-64	4	1.4
Total	294	100
Gender		
Male	214	71.6
Female	85	28.4
Total	299	100
Education		
Less than four-year college	13	4.4
Four-year College or more	284	95.6
Total	297	100
Years in journalism		
Less than 5	102	34.1
5 to less than 10	79	26.4
10 to less than 15	81	27.1
16 to less than 20	26	8.7
More than 20	11	3.7
Total	299	100
Job position		
Reporter	144	48.2
Editor/sub-editor	137	45.8
Senior/top editor	18	6.0
Total	299	100
Household income (monthly)		
Less than IDR 4 million (\$450)	132	44.7
IDR 4.1 to 7 million	82	27.8
IDR 7.1 to 10 million	43	14.6
More than IDR 10 million	38	12.9
Total	295	100

The average number of years of journalism experience is also lower among Indonesian women than their male counterparts -- 7.5 years for women and 9.5 years for men. The American

journalists in a 1992 survey had longer years of experience on average than Indonesian journalists. Like the Indonesian case, the American figures show that male journalists have more years of experience than their female counterparts do. The Indonesian and American figures appear to support the idea that women generally do not stay in journalism as long as long men do. The newsroom's demand for long hours has been cited as the main reason for Indonesians to leave journalism work (Siregar, 2005). This work demand has particularly taken its toll on women.

TABLE 2

Age, gender, years in journalism, and education between Indonesian and American journalists

	Surveyed Indonesian journalists	American journalists (1992 survey)	American journalists (2002 survey)
Age (median)	33	36	41
Gender			
Male (percent)	71.6	66	67
Female (percent)	26.1	34	33
Years in journalism			
Male (mean)	9.5	15	n.a.
Female (mean)	7.5	12	n.a.
Education			
No college degree (percent)	4.4	17.9	10.7
College degree (percent)	95.6	82.1	89.3

As the Table 1 demonstrates, Indonesian journalists are well-educated. The overwhelming majority (95.5%) of the respondents are college graduates. As is the case in the U.S., Indonesian news organizations have made a four-year college degree a requirement for hiring people to be journalists. The percentage of college graduates among American journalists in the 2002 survey was recorded at 89.3%. This 2002 American figure is a seven percentage point increase from 1992.

The household income of most of the surveyed Indonesian journalists (44%) is lower than four million rupiah (USD 450) per month. Only 12% of them reported making more than 10

million rupiah per month (USD 1,150). It is reasonable to assume that income level is lower in provinces outside Jakarta. Therefore, the income figure of the journalists surveyed in Jakarta may well not reflect that of the overall Indonesian journalist population. The income of the surveyed Indonesian journalists is relatively good when compared to the country's per capita income of slightly less than USD 1,000 a year (Tobing, 2005). While no data can be found regarding the average income of Indonesian journalists throughout the country, it is clear that Indonesian journalists' average income is much lower than that of their American counterparts, whose median stood at USD 43,588 per year in 2001. This is slightly higher than the U.S. median household income at USD 42,228 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Factors

This study aims to examine how journalists' conceptions of their professional roles, of the news values of their work, of business pressures, and of informal relations constructs predict journalists' uses and acceptance of public relations news materials. Therefore, it is necessary to factor each set of variables employed to measure each of the four constructs. Factor analysis also helps make a regression model more understandable. The principal component analysis (PCA) was employed to derive factors from the sets of variables because it is the factor analysis mode with the specific objective of reducing numerous variables down to a few factors. The factors yielded are then interpreted based on variables whose loadings are greater than 0.6.

The principal component analysis of the eight elements of journalist professional role construct showed two factors that each had an eigenvalue of more than 1. As Table 3 shows, the loadings higher than 0.6 variables of investigate statements, analysis, national policy discussion, and concentration on news of public interest. In essence, factor 1 has more to do with journalists' interpretative role. This factor is named interpretative function. The loadings higher than 0.6 in

factor 2 are variables about being skeptical of business and government officials. These variables reflect journalists' adversarial function. This factor is, therefore, named adversarial function.

TABLE 3
Professional role factors (Rotated component matrix)

	Factors	
	1	2
investigate statements by government	.767	.134
provide analysis	.723	.119
discuss national policy	.710	-.009
concentrate on news of public interest	.679	-.012
stay away from unverifiable stories	.548	.388
get the information quickly to public	.503	-.203
constantly skeptical of business	.055	.955
constantly skeptical of govt officials	.009	.937
eigenvalue	2.766	1.916
variance explained	34.572	23.953
	interpretative	adversarial

There were six news value elements or variables presented to journalists in the survey. The PCA of the six elements yielded one factor. All news value elements load above 0.6 to the factor. The factor logically retained its news values name. When only one component emerges, the solution cannot be rotated (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
News value factor (Component matrix)

	Factor
	1
Completeness	.869
interest to readers	.856
usefulness	.847
timeliness	.732
grammatical accuracy	.710
accuracy	.698
fairness to different sides	.689
eigenvalue	4.21
variance explained	60.12%
	news values

Ten variables were employed to assess how informal relation construct predict journalists' uses of public relations materials. The PCA of these elements resulted in two factors. As presented in Table 5, the variables that load above 0.6 in factor 1 are informal contact, private meeting press travel/tour, public relations influence through editors, and public relations influence through news media business manager. By inference, these variables advocate connection formation and build-up by public relations practitioners. This factor is interpreted in this study as networking. In factor 2, the variables that load greater than 0.6 are gift, money, and dining/drinking. Public relations practitioners in Asia can resort to offering both non-monetary and monetary enticement as incentives to get positive coverage in the news media (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999). Hence, this factor is named incentives.

TABLE 5
Informal relation factors (Rotated component matrix).

	Factors	
	1	2
Informal contact	.833	-.037
private meeting	.803	.114
travel/press tour	.748	.241
through editors	.611	.500
through business manager	.608	.556
family relations	.587	.381
advt potential	.498	.545
gift	.168	.897
money	-.011	.849
dining/drinking	.543	.601
eigenvalue	5.124	1.387
variance explained	51.240%	13.868
	networking	incentives

The PCA of the three variables that measure business pressures resulted in one factor. All these three variables, as Table 6 demonstrates, exceed 0.6 in their loading to the factor (see Table

6). This factor is business pressure. Because only one factor emerged, the solution cannot be rotated.

TABLE 6
Business pressure factor (Component matrix)

	Factor 1
stories originating from business dept	.788
stories originating from advertisers	.866
stories originating from top mgt	.866
eigenvalue	2.122
variance explained	70.720%
business pressure	

Predicting Factors

The first research question asks how the variables of professional role predict Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials. Because the principal component analysis of the variables resulted in interpretative and adversarial factors, the regression analysis that aimed to respond to RQ1 involved these two exact factors.

As the results of the regression analysis shows (see Table 7), the six factors account for much of the variance in each of the five regression models even after demographics and other variables were controlled for. The six factors accounted for 14.2 % of the total R^2 (19.1%) in the regression model for story idea, 16.6 % of the total R^2 (20.6 %) in the regression model for background, 18.1 % of the total R^2 (21.5 %) in the regression model for minor part, 25.9 % of the total R^2 (29.3%) in the regression model for main part, and 24.2% of the total R^2 (24.7%) in the regression model for supplement. The regression model for main part, therefore, emerges better than the other four.

The adversarial factor significantly predicts the non-use of public relations materials for background ($b = -.32$, $p < .05$) and a minor part ($b = -.28$, $p < .05$) of news stories. This factor,

however, significantly predicts the use of public relations materials for supplement pages or programs ($b = .38, p < .05$). The interpretative factor is not significant in predicting any type of public relations material use.

The research question 2 asks how news values predict Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials. The news value factor strongly predicts journalists' uses of public relations materials across the board: for generating story ideas ($b = .64, p < .01$), for story background ($b = .66, p < .01$), for minor part ($b = .59, p < .01$), for main part ($b = .90, p < .01$) and for use in supplement pages or programs ($b = .68, p < .01$).

In particular, news values stand out as the most significant predictor of journalists' use public relations materials as the main part of a news story. These findings indicate that Indonesian journalists regard news values as the fundamental issue in their consideration of public relations materials.

The research question 3 asks how business pressures predict the uses of public relations materials. The business pressure factor was highly significant for predicting four of the five types of public relations materials: for story background ($b = .58, p < .01$), for minor part ($b = .39, p < .01$), for main part ($b = .37, p < .01$), and for supplements ($b = .63, p < .01$).

The research question 4 asks how informal relations exercised by public relations practitioners predict journalists' uses of public relations materials. The two informal relation factors -- networking and incentives -- significantly predict some types of public relations material uses. The networking factor, meanwhile, is significant in predicting the uses of public relations materials for story idea ($b = .37, p < .05$) and minor part ($b = .36, p < .05$). The incentive factor is significant in predicting the use of PR materials in supplement pages or programs ($b = .48, p < .01$) but not for other types of uses.

TABLE 7
Predicting uses of public relations materials

PR materials for...	<u>story idea</u>		<u>background</u>		<u>minor part</u>		<u>main part</u>		<u>supplement</u>	
	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t	b	t
<u>factors</u>										
interpretative	.05	.36	.08	.61	.19	1.51	.11	.92	.001	.01
adversarial	.10	.71	-.32	-2.19*	-.28	-2.09*	-.16	-1.22	.38	2.40*
news values	.64	4.36**	.66	4.33**	.59	4.31**	.90	6.82**	.68	4.22**
networking	.37	2.49*	.08	.55	.36	2.63*	.11	.80	.28	1.69
incentives	-.01	-.08	-.06	-.44	-.03	-.19	.21	1.70	.48	3.12**
biz pressures	.25	1.70	.58	3.85**	.39	2.83**	.37	2.81**	.63	3.91*
Incremental R ² (%)	14.2		16.6		18.1		25.9		24.2	
<u>demo-</u> <u>graphics</u>										
age	-.10	-2.52*	.05	1.13	-.02	-.53	-.01	-.24	-.01	-.13
gender	.15	.48	.30	.93	.20	.67	-.24	-.81	.21	.61
education	-.44	-1.29	.05	.14	.14	.44	.58	1.90	.25	.67
jour years	.49	2.00*	-.03	-.11	-.004	-.02	.01	.02	-.05	-.18
h income	.01	.18	-.03	-.41	.13	1.99*	.05	.76	.02	.29
position (reporter)	.57	1.52	.89	2.34*	.82	2.37*	.52	1.59	.13	.31
<u>other</u> <u>controls</u>										
pr course	.38	1.25	.39	1.21	.48	1.65	.27	1.02	.03	.09
jour edu	-.17	-.60	-.37	-1.29	-.30	-1.15	-.06	-.22	-.13	-.43
news section (business)	-.004	-.01	.03	.95	-.43	-1.52	.49	1.83	.20	.60
Incremental R ² (%)	4.0		3.6		3.7		5.0		1.1	
Total R ² (%)	19.1		20.6		21.5		29.3		24.7	
F-value	4.26**		4.67**		4.94**		7.47**		5.90**	

* p<.05 ** p<.01

Age, education, household income and job position are demographics that yield significant conclusions in the regression models. Age significantly predicts Indonesian journalists' non-use of public relations materials for generating story ideas. Household income significantly predicts the use of public relations material for minor part.

Being a reporter significantly predicts journalists' uses of public relations materials for minor part and in a large proportion of their stories. The number of years in journalism is not significant in predicting story idea. On the other hand, this variable consistently comes out in reverse direction to public relations materials for the other four types of uses. This seems to suggest that the more experienced journalists are, the more likely they are not to use public relations materials other than for sources of story ideas.

TABLE 8
Predicting uses of public relations materials

	acceptance of PR materials	
	b	t
<u>Factors</u>		
interpretative	.05	.95
adversarial	-.04	-.79
news value	.36	6.48**
networking	.12	2.22*
incentives	.05	.97
business pressure	.23	4.04**
Incremental R ² (%)	28.7	
<u>demographics</u>		
age	-.01	-.64
gender (female)	.06	.51
education	.06	.46
years in journalism	.05	.50
household income	.02	.76
position (reporter)	.32	2.27*
<u>controls</u>		
pr course	.17	1.46
jour education	-.11	-1.02
news section	.03	.22
Incremental R ² (%)	2.9	
Total R ² (%)	31.3	
F-value	8.21**	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 8 presents the regression analysis of the composite uses of public relations. After a principal component analysis, the five types of uses emerge as one factor. It is interpreted as acceptance of public relations materials. In Table 9, this study presents the factors and other

variables listed in the order of their importance by using their standardized coefficients. Table 9 responds to research question 5 that asks the relative importance of one factor over the others.

Of the six factors, news values, business pressures and networking turn out to be significant predictors for acceptance of public relations news materials. News value factor ($B = .36, p < .01$) strongly predicts the acceptance of public relations news materials. Business pressure factor ($B = .32, p < .01$) is another highly significant predictor in the model. Networking ($B = .12, p < .05$) comes next. Among demographic and other control variables, only being a reporter ($b = .31, p < .05$) is significant. The standardized coefficients also rank news value factor in the first place ($B = .36, p < .01$) among the significant factors (see Table 9). Business pressure ($B = .22, p < .01$) trails second, and networking next ($B = .13, p < .05$).

TABLE 9
Rank of importance of significant factors and variables (bold)

Factors	Standardized coefficients	
	B	t
news value	.36	6.48**
business pressure	.22	4.04**
position (reporter)	.16	2.34*
networking	.13	2.22*
household income	.61	.76
pr course	.08	1.46
jour edu	-.05	-1.02
adversarial	-.04	-.79
incentives	.05	.97
interpretative	.05	.95
gender	.06	.51
education	.02	.46
age	-.07	-.64
years in journalism	.05	.50
news section (business)	.01	.22
R ² (%)	31.6	
F-value	7.76**	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results show that news values serve as the main criteria for Indonesian journalists' uses and acceptance of news materials generated by public relations practitioners. In other words, the surveyed Indonesian journalists consider news values as the most important aspect in journalism practices when assessing public relations materials. The news value factor is strongly significant across the five types of public relations material uses--for generating story ideas, for uses as a minor part, for background, for uses as the main part, and in supplement pages and/or special programs. The news value factor is also a significant predictor for the composite of uses or acceptance.

This study indicates that the adversarial function is a significant factor in explaining journalists' rejection of public relations news materials. The adversarial function emerged as a significant factor in the disregard of public relations for the background and minor part of the reporters' stories. This factor also proved counterintuitive in any attempt at predicting Indonesian journalists' use of public relations materials for the main part of their news stories. The results, however, also show that journalists who see themselves as adversarial to government officials and businesses would still accommodate the incorporation of public relations news materials into news stories for use in supplement pages or special programs, which are customarily geared toward attracting advertisers. These findings about adversarial function suggest that journalists in Indonesia may not treat public relations and its practitioners with as much contempt as journalists in the U.S. (Delorme & Fedler, 2003).

The study demonstrates that the business pressure factor is highly significant in predicting different uses and levels of acceptance of public relations materials. This finding

indicates that Indonesian journalists tend to accommodate or compromise with the business interests of their media organizations. Like other employees in the country, journalists live in a rough-and-tumble economic situation with an unemployment rate of over 9% and underemployment of over 30% (*The Economist*, 2004). Therefore, journalists may simply have to adapt to the bleak economic reality or face the risk of unemployment.

As demonstrated in the study findings, the informal relation factors significantly predict some types of uses of public relations materials. The incentive factor is significant in predicting Indonesian journalists' uses of public relations materials, particularly if they are placing them in newspaper pages or television programs that are intended to attract advertisers. Networking emerged as a significant predictor for Indonesia journalists' story ideas and minor use of public relations materials. For the composite of uses or acceptance of public relations materials, however, only networking turned out to be a significant factor.

This finding varies somewhat from the results of informal relations studied in South Korea (Shin & Cameron, 2003) that showed Korean journalists' dispute of the influence that informal relations played in their relationship with public relations practitioners. Shin and Cameron (2003) noted, however, it is possible that Korean journalists were simply reluctant to admit the influence of informal relations. In this regard, the finding regarding Indonesian journalists lends support to the idea that informal relations between public relations practitioners and journalists exerts influence on journalistic practices. The past studies may simply have failed to persuade journalists to admit it publicly. This study too cannot be certain if the surveyed Indonesian journalists made an honest assessment of the influence of informal relations including "envelope journalism."

As such, it is also plausible to suggest that the finding of incentive factor as a significant predictor of public relations material use in supplement pages or programs supports the idea of “envelope journalism.” It is one of the common practices in Indonesia, a way to get positive coverage for their organizations from journalists. As indicated in the *Jakarta Post* (2005, March 21), Indonesian journalists must fight an uphill battle to maintain their integrity amid rampant, widespread corrupt practices in Indonesian society. The extent to which how corrupt practices are common in Indonesia can be gauged by the Berlin-based Transparency International’s rating of Indonesia in its corruption perception index in 2004. This non-governmental organization gave Indonesia a score of 2 on an index that ranges from 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt) (Transparency International, 2004).

All these findings suggest that Indonesian public relations practitioners and journalists alike live in a complex, even hostile, environment. As the *Jakarta Post* (*Jakarta Post*, March 21, 2005) article suggested, it appears difficult for public relations firms to remain competitive in business if they do not provide journalists with incentives, including monetary bribes to cover their accommodations and their transportation to events. On the other hand, journalists charged that public relations officers or consultants with government agencies and domestic and foreign companies made themselves available when they intended to get certain stories published or retracted (*Jakarta Post*, March 21, 2005).

The finding, however, is more complex. The fact the news value is the most significant of all six factors in predicting all types of uses and overall acceptance of public relations materials also suggests that the influence of “envelope journalism” is not as significant as the fundamental journalism tenets.

As such, the findings of this study support the idea that an objective relationship between journalists and public relations people is important because hostility between the two groups can hurt the public (Kopenhayer, Martinson & Ryan, 1984). In an antagonistic relationship, journalists might avoid including important information from a public relations practitioner in their news stories just because they dislike or suspect public relations people and their information. On the other hand, a public relations practitioner might feel forced to resort to controversial or unethical means to get a certain message into the news media. This study shows that news values are what journalists truly rely upon when assessing public relations materials. That discovery provides grounds for the public to hope for more reliable journalism.

Age serves as a significant predictor for non-use of public relations news materials to generate story idea (see Table 7). This variable is also in negative direction to the other four types of uses although it is not statistically significant. This seems to suggest that the older journalists are the more likely they are to use their own sources to produce stories. Years in journalism serves as significant predictor for story idea, not the other four types of uses (Table7). This shows the more experienced journalists scan public relations materials largely to find any worthy preliminary information and pursue their own stories if there is any. Household income serves as a significant predictor for background, not the other four types of uses (Table7). This shows that much like the experienced journalists, those with higher income tend to use public relations materials to add to the background part of their stories. Future research should look in greater details how age, experience and income can influence journalists' treatment of public relations materials and relationship with the practitioners who produce them.

Other than being a reporter, none of the demographics were significant predictors of Indonesian journalists' acceptance of public relations materials (see Table 8). It is only

reasonable that reporters are more likely to use news materials than editors, because reporters are the ones who go out to news events and been exposed to public relations practitioners on a routine basis.

The demographic findings of this study show that the characteristics of the surveyed Indonesian journalists are not far different from U.S. journalists in terms of gender, age and level of education. By gender, males remain predominant. The surveyed Indonesian journalists are only slightly younger than their American counterparts. By level of education, the overwhelming majority of journalists in both countries are college graduates.

The first limitation of this study stems from the absence of relevant literature regarding Indonesia on this subject. The study employed variables generated from literature and past studies that centered on the U.S. and some other Asian countries. Therefore, it would be ideal for any future study to conduct an exploratory qualitative study before a quantitative one is carried out to identify certain variables that may or may not be relevant to the Indonesian context. Take the issue of newsroom staff size, for example. The literature and past studies done on the media in the United States suggest that staff size relative to amount of newsroom work was a predictor of the amount of business pressures applied at any one time. However, this does not seem to be the case with Indonesian news media organizations. The low labor costs and high unemployment and underemployment rates in Indonesia may help explain why manpower is not of major concern to the country's media industry. When asked in the survey whether their news organizations have sufficient news staffs when compared to amount of work, Indonesian journalists responded that it was sufficient ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 2.07$, on a 0–10 scale).

Another limitation of this study is that the survey focused on journalists working for the national media in Indonesia's capital of Jakarta. Therefore, the findings of this study may not

accurately represent the overall population of Indonesian journalists. It is technically and financially challenging to gather information from journalists throughout the archipelagic country. The absence of published information about the number and demographics of all of the Indonesian journalists has elevated the difficulty of making meaningful comparisons. Future studies would do well to sample journalists nationally if the results are meant to draw accurate conclusions about Indonesian journalists.

Given that the majority of the respondents come from newspapers, the results of this study may reflect the views of newspaper journalists more than television journalists. Future studies need to consider focusing on journalists from certain type of media and compare one to another.

Future studies should also consider comparing the similarities and differences between journalists from different cultures in their uses and acceptance of public relations news materials. There could well be as many similarities as differences between journalists from different countries regarding their likelihood of using public relations materials. The 2002 American Journalist Survey found that while journalists regarded news values as crucial to their work, they acknowledged that business concerns were at the forefront of their minds (Indiana University, 2003). This Indonesian study also found that news value and business pressure were both significant factors for Indonesian journalists' acceptance of public relations news materials.

More studies in different parts of the world might well confirm these discoveries and help produce global theories regarding the relationship between journalism and public relations.

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APPENDIX
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student at Louisiana State University. As part of my research, I am interested in your response to the following message. Your participation will take about 10 to 15 minutes and this survey is purely for academic research purposes.

Your participation is voluntary; all information provided will be kept completely confidential. No name will be used. Your answers will be combined with the other respondents' answers.

You are one of a small number of participants randomly chosen to participate in this study. Since your responses will also represent others who were not selected, I hope that you will complete the survey as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 21-8731205 or email ssinag1@lsu.edu.

Thanks for your participation

Simon T. Sinaga

In this survey, I will ask a number of questions about your media organization and journalism in general.

1. Do you work for? (Please choose one)

- 1] Television
- 2] Daily newspaper

2. What is your job title at your media organization?

3. How long have you worked in journalism?

4. How many times in the past month were you in contact with public relations practitioners?

- 0] 0
- 1] 1-2
- 2] 3-4
- 3] 5-6
- 4] 7-8
- 5] more than 8

5. How important do you think a number of tasks are that the news media do or try to do today? Please choose a number from zero to ten where one means not important at all and ten very important, for each of the following statements.

a. Getting information to the public quickly. Is that:

Not important at all Very important
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b. Providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems.

Not important at all Very important
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

c. Investigating claims and statements made by the government.

Not important at all Very important
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not important at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

Not important at all Very important

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not important at all Very important

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not important at all Very important
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not important at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very important

(These news materials include (not limited to) press releases, video news releases, reprints of speeches and interviews, corporate/government reports, fact sheet, media advisory newsletter and company publications, brochures and backgrounders).

Never 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most frequently

b. Using public relations materials for background info

Never
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most frequently

c. Using public relations materials for the main part of a news story

Never
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most frequently

d. Using public relations materials for a minor part of a news story

Never
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most frequently

e. Using public relations materials for supplement pages/special programs

Never
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Most frequently

7. Do the news materials you have received from public relations practitioners live up to each of the following standards? Please choose a number from zero to ten where zero means not at all and ten means very much.

a. Accuracy

Not at all
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very much

b. Interest to readers

Not at all
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very much

c. Usefulness to readers

Not at all
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very much

d. Timeliness

Not at all
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very much

Not at all Very much
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very much

Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very much

Not influential 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very influential

Not influential 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very influential

Not influential 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very influential

Not influential 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very influential

Not influential 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very influential

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g. Power that PR practitioners exercise through editors

h. Dinner/drinking

h. Gifts

i. money

9. For the following statements, choose a number from zero to ten that best explains how often you think the following happens. Zero means never and ten means most frequently.

b. Advertisers pressure your organization to provide favorable coverage.

c. The top management (publisher, president, general manager and others in top management position) of your newspaper/TV station asks for a special handling of a story.

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[illegible]

Male
Female

- 1] Less than high school
- 2] High school
- 3] Non-degree college
- 4] Degree college
- 5] Some post-graduate work
- 6] Master
- 7] Doctorate

1]Never
2] Yes

1. Less than 2 million rupiah
2. 2.1 – 3 million rupiah
3. 3.1 – 4 million rupiah
4. 4.1 – 5 million rupiah

- 5. 5.1 – 6 million rupiah
- 6. 6.1 – 7 million rupiah
- 7. 7.1 – 8 million rupiah
- 8. 8.1 – 9 million rupiah
- 9. 9.1 – 10 million rupiah
- 10 More than 10 million rupiah

Thank you very much for your participation in this study. If you are interested in reading a summary of the results of this study, please leave your email below.

VITA

Simon Sinaga was with copper and gold mining company P.T. Freeport Indonesia -- working in corporate public relations -- for four years before he went back to studies at the Manship School in August, 2003. Previously, Sinaga was a reporter and writer with national and international newspapers and news agencies in Jakarta, Indonesia, for 10 years. He graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in international politics from the University of Indonesia in 1993.