COORDINATION AND CONTROL OF GLOBAL PUBLIC RELATIONS IN
MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AFTER INTERNATIONAL MERGERS AND
ACQUISITIONS: A DELPHI PANEL INVESTIGATION

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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To my family, friends, and adviser

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The purpose of this study is to examine the coordination and control of global public

relations in multinational corporations (MNCs) following international mergers and acquisitions

(M&As). The exponential growth in international M&As presents unique challenges and

opportunities for the management in terms of integrating various facets of an organization's

operations, including public relations. Based on a multidisciplinary review of academic research,

this study constructs theoretical presuppositions about coordination and control of global public

relations; and conducts an empirical investigation of these presuppositions using a Delphi panel

composed of international public relations experts. Subsequently, a theoretical model indicating

factors affecting roles, responsibilities, integration, and configuration of public relations

department in the merged (or acquired) organization is developed. This novel study introduces

international business management theories of coordination and control to public relations, and

thus, sets path for future research to refine, enhance, and contribute to building a theory of

coordination and control of global public relations.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The rapid spread of the information age, especially in the area of strategic communications, is encompassing every corner of the world in a trend toward more homogeneous world market and away from the heterogeneous national and regional markets of the past (Etemad & Dulude, 1986). With over 40,000 multinational corporations (MNCs) in operation and the constantly changing global arena, there has never been a greater need for public relations professionals who understand the myriad differences in cultures, political and media systems, and other factors that affect these organizations (Wakefield, 1997).

Public relations practitioners working with MNCs are responsible for relationship management between the external, as well as, the internal organizational publics. Specifically, they are in charge of coordinating communication flow between headquarters and foreign subsidiaries, as well as among subsidiaries (Hubert & Brandt, 1980; Molleda, 2000). The complexity of global public relations is evident in the environment in which the business units of MNCs operate. The diverse forces that have an impact on organizations with overseas operations can be grouped into two asymmetric forces—pressures for global integration and pressures for local responsiveness (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2007). Therefore, the biggest challenge in front of global public relations personnel is to balance the benefits of global integration, such as economies of scale and core competencies, with the demands for local responsiveness (Daniels et al., 2007; Molleda & Laskin, 2007). These issues become especially crucial during international mergers and acquisitions (M&As) because of the differences in the external environments, market structure, and country-specific conditions in which the two partners operate (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995).

A merger happens when two companies agree to combine into a single entity and an acquisition occurs when a company takes over another in friendly or hostile manner (Ramani & Mrudula, 2007). Due to globalization and global integration of technology, international M&As have become a common activity in many industries (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995; Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, & Harrison, 1995; Warf, 2003). The global M&A deals amounted to U.S. $3.6 trillion in 2006, and during the first half of 2007, this figure reached to U.S. $2.5 trillion (Ramani & Mrudula, 2007).

The deregulation of several industries and the convergence of digital communication technologies have been inspiring MNCs to hunt for new grounds to expand their business and take advantage of economies of scale and scope (Warf, 2003).This consolidation poses unique challenges and opportunities for the management in terms of integrating various facets of organization's operation, including public relations. Scholars assert that M&As are among the most intensive organizational changes (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995), whose success primarily depends on the effective integration and communication process (Shrivastava, 1986). Previous research in the field shows that most M&As do not realize their full potential because the management fails to effectively handle the process of integration (Shrivastava, 1986).

Reflecting on current economic downturn, Silver (2009) commented, "In this turbulent global marketplace, communications is a key indicator for a successful merger and acquisition" (p. 6). M&A experts constantly reiterate the importance of effective public relations in M&As because the diverse organizational stakeholders including employees, investors, and customers, want to know what is happening (Silver, 2009).

Although the advertising and marketing literature is replete with studies focusing on strategic management during and after international M&As, scholars have mostly ignored their

impact on the integration and organization of the public relations function. While integration occurs at various levels, several scholars have emphasized the importance of communication at all levels of an M&A activity (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995; Gable, 2003; Gall, 1991; Galpin & Robinson, 1997; Golitsinski, 2000). According to a Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Counselors Academy survey in 2002, M&As constitute one of the five major public relations issues (Gable, 2003). Because a company is especially vulnerable to the judgment of stakeholders during M&As, communication is especially critical (Golitsinski, 2000).

In addition, because the merged (or acquired) organization can be subject to different operating environments, coordination and control of various elements in the business chain becomes extremely crucial (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995). According to James, "The assumption underlying the coordination approach is that the distinctive character of both acquirer and acquired can be maintained whilst managing relationships across the boundaries between the two organizations" (1997, p. 34).

Purpose of the Thesis: The purpose of this thesis is to examine the coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs after international M&As. This thesis examines how and what role and responsibilities are delegated to the public relations department in the merged (or acquired) organization after international M&As. This thesis aspires to fill the gap in public relations research about coordination and control mechanisms used by MNCs following international M&As by constructing theoretical presuppositions based on a multidisciplinary review of scholarly research and evaluating them by conducting a Delphi panel investigation of international public relations experts. Ultimately, this study develops a theoretical model to direct future practices of coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs within the context of international M&As. By constructing and testing the theoretical model, this study

introduces international business management theories of coordination and control to public relations and sets path for future research that could refine, enhance, and contribute to building a theory of coordination and control of global public relations.

The unit of analysis for this study is public relations practitioners employed with MNCs, which have experienced international M&As. In particular, the coordination and control mechanisms (within the context of the public relations department) utilized by the MNCs after international M&As, and the role of public relations or public affairs executives in this activity is examined. This study utilizes a Delphi panel composed of international public relations practitioners for an empirical investigation of the theoretical presuppositions.

The following research questions are examined:

RQ1: What factors does management consider while designating responsibility and authority to the public relations professionals within the merged (or acquired) organization after international M&As? Similarly, how management control is partitioned between public relations professionals within the collaborating partners?

RQ2: How are various public relations activities, such as investor relations, community relations, employee relations, and media relations integrated within the merged (or acquired) organization?

RQ3: What coordination and control mechanisms does the management, within the perspective of the public relations department, adopt after international M&A?

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CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of Global Public Relations in Multinational Corporations (MNCs)

The convergence of financial markets, communication, and information technologies has led to the emergence of multinational corporations (MNCs), which now dominate the world economy (Lim, 2009). The proliferation of MNCs and their influence on the world economy is evident from the fact that currently they account for 25 percent of the world production, as opposed to about 7 percent in the 1950s (Daniels et al., 2007).

In this global marketplace, where more and more businesses are becoming international, it has become important, more than ever, to practice effective public relations across geographical boundaries. According to Wakefield (2001), "as the world careens into the 21st century, public relations people are swept into a whole new global arena. Public relations no longer is just a domestic enterprise" (p. 639). Hulbert and Brandt (1980) point out that communications is an essential life-giving force of the modern multinational enterprise, where it serves several important roles including the transfer of information from one part of the company to another, either from the parent to its foreign subsidiaries or vice versa.

The environment of international business is subject to turbulence and increased scrutiny by transnational activist organizations and the government, which poses challenges and opportunities to public relations practitioners working with MNCs (Molleda & Connolly-Ahern, 2002; Molleda & Quinn, 2004). Anderson (1989) explains the role of public relations in MNCs:

> Public relations is the management function primarily responsible for shaping and implementing policies of mediation among social, political, and economic interests capable of influencing the growth and/or survival of an organization's basic franchise. To this end, the public relations function has responsibility also for identifying the forces and effects for change in the organization's environment so as to anticipate potential new needs for mediation and to inform all other anticipatory activity within the organization (p. 383).

The mediating role of public relations is complicated by the fact that MNCs operate in multiple, and often diverse, external, as well as, internal environments. Although, the basics of public relations are more or less universal, scholars argue that specific tactics change from country to country (Blumentritt & Nigh, 2002; Lim, 2009; Molleda, 2000; Ovaitt, 1988; Wakefield, 2001).

Since the onset of globalization, many MNCs have been increasingly opening up subsidiaries in several host countries (Bardhan & Patwardhan, 2004). While operations in some host nations are smooth, MNCs face considerable resistance in others. These resistances are a result of differences in the socio-economic and political environments in which local subsidiaries operate (Blumentritt & Nigh, 2002; Burk, 1994).

Similar to the international business management theory, the field of public relations has also debated the issue of global versus local approach of public relations (Lim, 2009). While some scholars argue that since public relations practitioners working with TNOs are responsible for managing relationships, not only within their organizations, but also, between headquarter and subsidiaries, and among subsidiaries (Molleda, 2000), it is essential to customize its practices to the local environment, local culture, and needs of local stakeholders (Blumentritt & Nigh, 2002; Burk, 1994; Lee, 2000). On the other hand, scholars who advocate global strategies argue that companies must learn to operate as if the world were one large market, ignoring superficial regional and national differences (Barlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Ghoshal, 1987; Levitt, 1983; Martinez & Jarillo, 1989).

These two models of public relations practice in MNCs are also known as the ethnocentric and polycentric models respectively (Botan, 1992). In the ethnocentric or the global model, home

country assumptions about public relations practice and its operations are fundamental. In

addition,

> activities at the overseas operations are directed by the international headquarters staff in
> the corporation's home country. Closely supervised by the corporate headquarters staff, an
> expatriate manager (home country national) directs host country public relations activities.
> Because decisions are made at headquarters and communicated to the subsidiaries
> throughout the world for implementation it is likely the PR response will be slow and that
> PR activities could be inappropriate for host country conditions because they reflect home
> country norms and audiences (Kinzer & Bohn, 1985, p. 4).

In the polycentric model of public relations, host country practitioners exercise a high

autonomy in planning programs and activities based on their experiences and contacts (Botan,

1992). The underlying assumption of the polycentric model is that local public relations

practitioners better know and understand host country environment.

These differences in the two models of public relations emerge from the two asymmetric

forces faced by companies that operate internationally: Pressures for global integration and

pressures for local responsiveness (Daniels et al., 2007).

**Challenges to Global Public Relations in Multinational Corporations (MNCs): Global
Integration versus Local Responsiveness**

According to Blumentritt and Nigh (2002), MNCs comprise of "differentiated subsidiaries

engaged in multi-faceted competitive activities within and between many host countries" (p. 58).

In MNCs, management requires to figure out mechanisms to coordinate and control[1] the discrete

activities of the subsidiaries, as elements of a larger system, which involves deciding where

decision-making powers should reside and how foreign subsidiaries should report to

headquarters (Daniels et al., 2007).

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[1] Here, coordination refers to mechanisms used to integrate various activities of MNCs' business value chain
(Daniels et al., 2007) and control refers to the process by which headquarter influences, to varying degrees, the
behavior and output of subsidiaries through the use of power, authority and a wide range of bureaucratic, cultural
and informal mechanisms (Geringer and Hebert, 1989). These terms are discussed in detail in the next section.

However, the biggest challenge is to balance the benefits of global integration with the demands for local responsiveness (Daniels et al., 2007; Molleda & Laskin, 2007). Achieving these goals in a global arena becomes much more complex due to the different cultural, socio-economic, regulatory and political, and media environments in which headquarter and foreign subsidiaries operate (Wakefield, 2001).

In the global market economy, MNCs face two asymmetrical forces: Standardization or the pressures for global integration and adaptation or the pressures for local responsiveness (Daniels et al., 2007; Lim, 2009; Wakefield, 2001). Over the past few years, the debate of global versus local has gained significant attention from professionals as well as scholars (Blumentritt & Nigh, 2002; Daniels et al., 2007; Ovaitt, 1988; Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003). Scholars provide arguments in support of these two asymmetrical forces that MNCs face in a global economy. These arguments are presented in Table 2-1.

As depicted in Table 2-1, several scholars have frequently advocated global integration as a key strategic requirement for global organizations (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Lim, 2009; Martinez & Jarillo, 1989, 1991; Ogrizek, 2002). According to Ogrizek (2002), in order to convey a unified brand identity in a globalized economy, MNCs should adopt global operating standards. Daniels et al. (2007) mention, "The convergence of national markets and quest for production efficiency push for global integration of value activities" (p. 892). Similarly, Ghoshal (1987) asserts that the need for global integration arises from benefits of economies of scale or from the potential of synergies or from sharing costs and resources across markets.

On the other hand, MNCs are required to think beyond global integration strategy due to the local pressures to adopt differentiation strategies (Daniels et al., 2007; Lim, 2009; Martinez & Jarillo, 1991). According to Blumentritt and Nigh (2002), even though MNCs might take a

Table 2-1. Global Integration versus Local Responsiveness

Demands for Global Integration		Demands for Local Responsiveness	
Dimension	Reference	Dimension	Reference
Need to maximize efficiency by exploiting global economies of scale and scope	Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989)	Need to maximize market sensitivity by addressing differences in language, cultural and socio-economic environment, and historical legacy	Blummentritt and Nigh (2002)
Convergence of national markets and need for production efficiency	Daniels et al. (2007) Lim (2009)		Daniels et al. (2007) Wakefield (1997)
Efficiency gains of standardization	Martinez and Jarillo (1989, 1991)	Need to address consumer divergence	Lee (2000)
Need to convey a coherent, global brand identity	Ogrizek (2002)	Need to respond to host-government policies	
Need to realize economies of scale in other value activities such as R&D (single product design) or advertising (universal message)			
Need to take advantage of innovation and technology across different markets			

particular global strategic position, host country contexts might put pressures to tailor their operations to local market conditions. These local market conditions include government influence on business, differences in consumer tastes, product standards, distribution channels, employee management strategies, and regional and economic forces (Daniels et al., 2007; Lim, 2009).

Recently, a new paradigm has emerged from these scholarly discussions, which states that instead of an "either/or" strategy, standardization versus customization should be viewed as a continuum, and MNCs should focus on taking a stand somewhere on this continuum depending

upon the situational factors (Ovaitt, 1988; Wakefiled, 2001). These scholar mention that neither complete standardization nor complete localization makes much sense; the practical question is what elements of MNCs' strategy can or should be standardized and to what degree. Wakefield (2001) points out that international organizations such as MNCs, must balance global functions with local strategies that address local demands.

Although the issue of standardization versus differentiation has been studied and debated in the business and marketing community, the notion is relatively new to the public relations scholars (Anderson, 1989; Lim, 2009). According Wakefield (2001), the role of global public relations practitioners is to aim for "a more comprehensive approach that creates thinking and acting at both local and global levels of the organization" (p. 641).

Lim (2009) mentions that MNCs can "employ integration or local responsiveness strategy of international public relations to optimize their organizational effectiveness" (p. 4), and must adopt coordination and control mechanisms to manage these strategies in a global context. The simultaneous demands from these two diverse forces—integration and differentiation— require that MNCs adopt effective coordination and control mechanisms in order to maximize the competitiveness of value chain (Martinez & Jarillo, 1989).

Coordination and Control of Global Public Relations in Multinational Corporations (MNCs)

Martinez and Jarillo (1989) define coordination as "any administrative tool for achieving integration among different units within an organization" (p. 490). According to John and Young (1995), there are two broad categories of coordination mechanisms: Formal/bureaucratic mechanisms, such as rules, procedures, and policies that regulate behavior and actions, and informal/cultural mechanisms, such as socialization activities, and team interaction, that influence decision framework and value processes.

Previous research on mechanisms of coordination can be grouped into three streams; while the first two concentrate on the formal mechanisms of coordination, the third stream of research is focused on more subtle and informal mechanisms of coordination (Barlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Daniels et al., 2007; Martinez & Jarillo, 1989). Martinez and Jarillo (1989), in their study reviewed the work of more than 80 scholars from 1953 to 1988 and found that research in this area has evolved from simple devices to devices that are more complex. The authors also reported an increase in the number of studies on informal mechanisms.

Table 2-2 outlines the most common mechanisms of coordination proposed by scholars.

Table 2-2. Approaches to achieve Coordination

Approach	Martinez and Jarillo (1989)	Barlett and Ghoshal (2002)	Daniels et al. (2007)
Formal Mechanisms			
Written Policies/Rules	Structural: Formalization and standardization using written policies, rules, job description, and standard procedures	Formalization: subject decision making to a set of policies independent of the interests and motives of either headquarters or subsidiaries	Coordination by plan: utilizes a set of universal rules and policies that apply to both headquarter and subsidiaries, thus enforcing consistency in performance of all the units
Decision making configuration	Centralization or decentralization of decision making through the hierarchy of formal authority	Centralization: coordination through a consensus decision-making process, by leveraging the organization and management resources already present at the headquarters	Coordination by standardization: involves common deadlines and objectives that are applicable to all the units in the value chain
Informal Mechanisms			
Informal communication /socialization	Informal and Subtle methods Lateral or cross-departmental relations Informal communication Socialization	Socialization: careful recruitment, training, and acculturation of managers, who become key decision makers at headquarter and the subsidiary levels	Coordination by mutual adjustment: requires communication and interaction between managers to ensure flexible coordination mechanisms

Table 2-2 shows that scholars have identified three ways to achieve coordination. According to Martinez and Jarillo (1989), structural and formal mechanisms of coordination encompass departmentalization of organizational units, centralization or decentralization of decision making authority, formalization and standardization using formal policies and procedures, and other similar strategies such as planning using strategic design, budgeting, scheduling etc.; output and behavior control using financial performance, technical reports, sales and marketing data, and direct supervision; departmentalization or grouping of organizational units. On the other hand, informal coordination mechanisms include lateral or cross-departmental relations, informal communication, such as personal contacts, meetings, and conferences, and socialization to establish shared strategic objectives and values.

Similarly, Barlett and Ghoshal (2002) define three distinctive coordination mechanisms: Centralization, formalization, and socialization. According to the authors, centralization achieves coordination through a consensus decision-making process, by leveraging the organization and management resources already present at the headquarters. Centralization is relatively easy to establish; however, as MNCs increase their global presence, centralization becomes costly to operate because the headquarters are swamped with request for information, guidance, support, and decisions, thus affecting the quality of decision-making. Formalization represents one way to reduce the relatively high costs of centralization. MNCs who adopt formalization to achieve coordination, mainly subject decision making to a set of policies independent of the interests and motives of either headquarters or subsidiaries, which in turn maximizes operating efficiency. However, this results in high costs of establishing systems, policies, and rules that remain effective and reliable in all situations. Finally, socialization achieves coordination by careful

recruitment, training, and acculturation of managers, who become key decision makers at headquarter and the subsidiary levels.

Likewise, Daniels et al. (2007) propose three ways to achieve coordination: Coordination by standardization (similar to centralization), coordination by plans (similar to formalization), and coordination by mutual adjustment (similar to socialization). According to Daniels et al., coordination by standardization utilizes a set of universal rules and policies that apply to both headquarter and subsidiaries, thus enforcing consistency in performance of all the units; coordination by plans involves common deadlines and objectives that are applicable to all the units in the value chain; coordination by mutual adjustment requires communication and interaction between managers to ensure flexible coordination mechanisms.

Molleda and Laskin (2007) provide examples of coordination mechanisms, such as forming global, virtual teams, facilitated by communication technology and the Internet, that allow team members from diverse geographic locations and functional areas to interact and work together; advisory personnel; management rotation; keeping international and domestic managers in closer proximity; facilitating inter-subsidiary communication; placing personnel from foreign subsidiary on the management board; developing a global reward system; and giving credits to subsidiaries for their achievements and contributions.

Control mechanisms are necessary to regulate the implementation of MNCs strategies and to monitor the activities of business units (Molleda & Laskin, 2007). "The purpose of control is to minimize idiosyncratic behavior and to hold individuals or groups to enunciated policy, thus making performance predictable" (Cray, 1984, p. 86). According to Daniels et al. (2007), there are three prevalent methods of control: Market control, bureaucratic control, and clan control. Market control utilizes external market mechanisms, such as price competition and relative

market share to control performance; bureaucratic control uses a centralized authority to implement an extensive set of rules and regulations to govern organization's activities; and finally clan control uses shared values and ideals to moderate behavior. Some examples of control mechanisms include visits to subsidiaries, management performance evaluation, comparing cost and operating performance of subsidiaries; evaluating management and subsidiaries on budget, profit, sales, and market-share; and information systems (Daniels et al., 2007; Jaussaud & Schaaper, 2006; Molleda & Laskin, 2007).

The integration of MNCs' subsidiaries into larger organization to ensure compliance with the overall policy comprises of two processes: Coordination and control (Cray, 1984). Cray states that coordination and control offer very different solutions to the problem of integration and are often negatively related, i.e., over a wide range of integration solutions one or the other process would dominate.

Since public relations plays a critical role within MNCs in preserving a consistent reputation and building relationships with its key stakeholders in a global context (Wakefield, 2001), it is important to explore its coordination and control in the international context. According to Molleda and Laskin (2007), "global public relations can be managed with this integration/localization principle in mind to become an efficient function that coordinates its activities with other functions within the local operations and with public relations functions in diverse locations as well" (p. 27). In addition, they stress that via integrative communication tactics such as corporate publications, public relations can act as a coordination mechanism by diffusing organizational values and objectives to transnational operations. Lim (2009) argues that as MNCs evolve into global networks, it becomes ever more significant to coordinate their subsidiaries' public relations programs, and that "the goal of an integrative public relations

strategy is to have a closely coordinated, and strategically controlled global public relations program that build an integrative communication network between headquarters and subsidiaries or among subsidiaries" in MNCs (p. 23). According to Hubert and Brandt (1980), communication practitioners play a critical role in MNC by helping to coordinate and integrate the diverse elements of the multinational firm.

Several factors mediate the interplay of coordination and control strategies in MNCs, such as size and capabilities of a subsidiary (Cray, 1984; Laroche, Kirpalani, Pons, & Zhou, 2001), different areas of strategic communication (Molleda, 2000), cultural, political, and socio-economic environments in which a subsidiary operates (Molleda & Laskin, 2007), trust and confidence in the professional capabilities of subsidiaries' managers (Laroche et al., 2001), and the level of informal relationships between managers at headquarters and foreign subsidiaries (Molleda, 2000). In this light, Molleda and Laskin (2007) propose the following set of nine presuppositions (pp. 28-30):

Presupposition 1: Public relations and public affairs executives working at large-size or strategic subsidiaries of TNOs will have greater power than small-size and ordinary branches to influence policy decision making and obtain relevant levels of autonomy for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations actions and operations within their regional or local market.

Presupposition 2: Different areas of communication activities will have different levels of integration.

Presupposition 3: Standardization of a public relations function as a strategy is more appropriate among countries with similar cultural, economic, or political environments and less appropriate among countries in which environments vary greatly from each other.

Presupposition 4: Overcentralization of most of the public relations or public affairs functions in the TNO's headquarters may limit regional or local managers because they cannot react timely and appropriately to incidents, delicate issues, rapid changes, and crises emerging in their domestic market.

Presupposition 5: The more confidence in host public relations or public affairs executives, the more delegation occurs to take charge of their domestic relationship building efforts.

Presupposition 6: Large TNOs will tend to have specialized staff at their home offices with global public relations expertise. Similarly, large operations in a given country are likely to have specialized public relations or public affairs staff to perform the function instead of staff from other operational areas, such as legal, human resources, or engineering departments.

Presupposition 7: Native public relations or public affairs executives trained at the TNO's headquarters are more likely to think and act like home office personnel.

Presupposition 8: A global public relations system of a TNO that relies on a combination of common planning, and measurement and evaluation devices or mechanisms is more reliable than one that does not.

Presupposition 9: Coordination and control of the public relations function in TNOs – during day-to-day operations and, most importantly, during a transnational crisis or cross-national conflict shift – demands talented professionals who enjoy the respect of their organizational peers and management. The influence and leadership of talented and respected global public relations professionals will be felt, impacting the coordination and control efforts. This will happen despite their geographic location and the level of importance of the subsidiary or sister company from which they work.

Coordination and Control of Global Public Relations in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) after International Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As)

The past two decades, starting from the 1990s, witnessed an enormous wave of M&As that dramatically reconfigured the global market structure of various industries, such as finance, petroleum, mass media, automobiles, and telecommunications (Warf, 2003). The intense M&A activity in the 1990s represented the fifth wave of M&As, with the previous one occurring in the 1980s (Gaughan, 2002; Gregoriou & Ranneboog, 2007). In 1992 alone, for example, more than 3,500 fairly large mergers occurred among the U.S. firms, valued together at over U.S. $125 billion ("M & A Profile," 1993). In 2006, the annual value of worldwide acquisitions exceeded U.S. $4 trillion, and cross-border acquisitions amounted for U.S. $1.3 trillion (Larsen, 2007). This trend continued in 2007, when the transaction value of global M&As in the first quarter itself reached a value of U.S. $1.13 trillion (Rottig, 2007).

Gaughan (2002) describes that M&As could be identified as horizontal deals, in which competitors are combined or as vertical transactions, in which suppliers merge with buyers or distributors. Organizations from completely different industries could collaborate in an M&A deal under conglomerate mergers. Scholars suggest that the primary reason for all types of M&As is to achieve growth and synergy between two partner organizations as business units to increase competitive advantage (Öberg & Holtström, 2006; Webber, 1996). The synergy between two organizations is seen as a medium to achieve efficiency gains through increased used of economies of scale or scope (Brakman, Garretsen, & Marrewijk, 2008).

However, scholars argue that M&A activity is among the most comprehensive, challenging organizational change experiences, and a time of great organizational upheaval resulting in about 50 to 85 percent of mergers failing to achieve acquirer's objectives (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995). The primary problem in effectively managing merged firms is integrating them into a

single cohesive unit (Shrivastava, 1986). Even though the M&A activities are based on the rationale of "mergers-for-efficiency," (Ki & Khang, 2007), scholars emphasize that most M&A do not realize their full potential because the management fails to effectively handle the process of integration (Shrivastava, 1986).

Cornett-DeVito and Friedman (1995) summarize the factors that influence the success of M&As into pre-merger (choice) and post-merger (implementation processes) variables. The choice variables include cultural-, organizational-, and strategic-fit, which describe how effectively the organizations complement each other in terms of cultures of employees, strategy, and management styles or corporate culture. Previous studies, according to Cornett-DeVito and Friedman (1995), found that out of these three choice variables, culture and management styles make a good measure to be assessed before choosing a M&A partner. Implementation processes, on the other hand, describe variables that affect M&A performance after the transition period. Every M&A usually begins with a vision of what merged organizations will achieve and how they will operate. Cornett-DeVito and Friedman (1995) emphasize that although scholars attribute the success of post-mergers implementation processes to communication, there has been no empirical research to identify the relationship between effective communication and M&A performance.

Strategic management issues and the integration processes during M&As have obtained remarkable attention in the advertising and marketing literature; however, research that examines their impact on the coordination and control of the public relations function is largely non-existent, as is evident from previous discussion. While integration occurs at various levels, several scholars have emphasized the importance of communication at all the levels of an M&A activity (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995; Gable, 2003; Galpin & Robinson, 1997; Golitsinski,

2000; Wall, 2005). According to a Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Counselors

Academy survey in 2002, M&As constitute one of the five major public relations issues (Gable,

2003). Because a company is especially vulnerable to the judgment of stakeholders during

merger, communications is especially critical (Golitsinski, 2000).

In addition, because the merged (or acquired) organization can be subject to different

operating environments, coordination and control of various elements in the business chain

becomes extremely crucial (Cornett-DeVito & Friedman, 1995). According to James, "The

assumption underlying the coordination approach is that the distinctive character of both acquirer

and acquired can be maintained whilst managing relationships across the boundaries between the

two organizations" (1997, p. 34).

Therefore, this thesis proposes and examines the following research questions, which draw

on the foundation laid by Molleda and Laskin (2007):

RQ1: What factors does the management consider while designating responsibility and

authority to the public relations professionals within the merged (or acquired) organization after

international M&As? Similarly, how management control is partitioned between public relations

professionals within the collaborating partners?

Presupposition 1: Public relations and/or public affairs executives working at large-size or

strategic merged (or acquired) organization will be offered greater power and autonomy in

decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations operations than

those working in ordinary merged (or acquired) organization.

Cray (1984) indicates that organizational variables such as size and complexity of

operations, technology variables, foreign commitment, financial performance, and nationality

moderate the relationship between the amount of control and coordination exercised by MNCs. According to Cray (1984),

A subsidiary which is large, technologically complex, located in a product division, and highly profitable will very likely be integrated through extensive coordination with other parts of the organization while retaining a good deal of control over its own affairs. A small subsidiary, located at a long administrative distance from the center of the organization, and sharing a simple technology with its parent, will be subject to higher levels of control and lower levels of coordination. (p. 96)

Likewise, Molleda and Laskin (2007) propose that the size and capabilities of the subsidiary positively affect the power and influence of public relations and/or public affairs executives working at the subsidiary.

Presupposition 2: Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor standardization of the public relations function.

According to Laroche et al. (2001), similarity of the market conditions and the competitive environment significantly influences the standardization of business units' operations. According to Molleda and Laskin (2007), standardization of a public relations function as a strategy is more appropriate among countries with similar cultural, economic, or political environments and less appropriate among countries in which environments vary greatly from each other. Weber (1996) in his research reports that managers' perception of cultural difference could significantly affect the extent of integration in M&A. Likewise, Griffith (2000) points out that culture may hinder

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the ability to effectively standardize the relationship management process between partners and may result in the detriment of trust, commitment, and satisfaction between them,

Presupposition 3: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise.

Laroche et al. (2001) report that skills or capabilities of the subsidiary positively affect the level of its independence from the headquarters. In addition, the authors found that the expertise of the subsidiary managers and their perceived decision-making capabilities are positively correlated with the amount of independence that these subsidiaries have, implying that more confidence management has in host public relations executives, the more delegation of their domestic relationship building efforts takes place (Molleda & Laskin, 2007).

Presupposition 4: Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance performing public relations tasks.

Molleda and Laskin (2007) propose that size and complexity of operation in a given country motivates MNCs to have specialized public relations or public affairs departments to monitor strategic communication functions.

Presupposition 5: International mergers following a split control arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations or public affairs departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management.

Within international mergers, management control can be partitioned between a MNC and local partners in four different ways – split control management, shared management, MNC-partner-dominant management, and local-partner-dominant management (Choi & Beamish, 2004). Under split control management, the partners agree to control distinct functional activities by following a division of labor between partners. Unlike split management, in shared management arrangement partners share control over all value-creation activities (Beamish, 1993) by mutual agreement. Finally, one-partner-dominant management resemble the global integration versus local responsiveness strategies, where either a global strategy developed by the MNC or a local adaptation developed by partner is executed. According to Choi and Beamish (2004), international mergers following split control management perform better than any other approach of management control because each partner takes control of those value-creation activities for which it has the skills or resources available.

RQ2: How are various public relations practices, such as investor relations, community relations, employee relations, and media relations integrated within the merged (or acquired) organization?

Presupposition 6: The level integration will vary across the strategic communication practices (e.g. investor relations, community relations, employee relations, media relations) within the merged (or acquired) organization.

In his research, Molleda (2000) reports that different strategic communication or public relations practices, such as investor relations, media relations, employee relations, and community relations, experience different levels of integration. He found that while community relations is the most decentralized public relations area, MNCs implement more centralized

investor and media relations policies. According to Molleda and Laskin (2007), different areas of strategic communication practices will have different levels of integration.

RQ3: What coordination and control mechanisms does the management within the perspective of a public relations department adopt after international M&A?

Presupposition 7: Organizations that utilize a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control will be more effective than those who do not.

The effectiveness of M&As has been defined by a wide range of positive outcomes that support M&A goals including enhanced competitive position, improved financial performance, better quality of products/services, efficient resource utilization, and enhanced end-user satisfaction (Robbins & Stylianou, 1999). In essence, it implies reaching the objectives that are set forth by management prior to M&A deal.

Studies supporting both the formal/structural methods, such as centralization and formalization, and the more subtle and informal methods, such as socialization, are abundant (Barlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Daniels et al., 2007; Martinez & Jarillo, 1989); however, Molleda and Laskin (2007) propose that a global public relations system of a MNC that relies on a combination of common planning, and measurement and evaluation devices or mechanisms is more reliable than that does not. In addition, Molleda (2000) reports that coordination via socialization in MNCs takes place by arranging for internships, training programs, and frequent visits of public relations executives from foreign subsidiaries to the headquarter or sister companies, which facilitates synergy between host and home country managers.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This study explores how the presuppositions developed in this thesis from the scholarly research in the field of coordination and control are evaluated by experienced public relations professionals who have worked with or are currently working with MNCs, which experienced international M&As in the past. This study aspires to bridge the gap between theory and practice, as well as paves path for future research and development of public relations' coordination and control science and practice. This study utilizes a Delphi panel to incorporate a broad range of responses from selected public relations practitioners in the given domain of international M&A. The method is explained below.

The Delphi Research Method

The Delphi methodology was developed by the Rand Corporation in the 1950s (Wakefield, 1997). Since then, many Delphi studies have been conducted in various fields, such as social policy planning and implementation (Buck, Gross, & Hakim, 1993), international business and trade forecasting (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 1997), interactive television and retailing (Dransfeld, Pemberton, & Jacobs, 2000), and e-commerce (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). The Delphi method combines qualitative and quantitative methods that harness the opinions of identified experts to develop theories and projections on a complex or ambiguous subject (Laskin, 2007; Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Rowe & Wright, 1999). The goal of this method is to reach a consensus among the participants by the end of a multiple-round questionnaire process administered over a period of time.

The Delphi panel was initially used mostly for forecasting trends and events (Wakefield, 1997); however, later, scholars expanded its usage to social science phenomenon, such as examining the value of investor relations, international public relations principles, and

forecasting the future of public relations (Laskin, 2007; Turk, 1986; Wakefield, 1997). According to Wakefield (1997), the Delphi technique is appropriate in a problem-identification situation where there is a lack of consensus or an incomplete knowledge about the problem and its possible solutions.

The uniqueness of Delphi lies in its reliability, given the variableness of human opinion, and in its ability to be administered remotely and without direct participant interaction (Linstone & Turoff, 2002). An important distinction between Delphi and survey research is that survey research is often conducted to obtain results that could be generalized to a larger population by using probability sampling; however, a Delphi study utilizes purposive sample techniques to constitute the panel (Laskin, 2007). Therefore, the Delphi methodology often makes use of the snowball sampling, where the recruited group members suggest or recommend their acquaintances for participation in the final panel.

Another important distinction between the Delphi and survey research is the presence of feedback from the panel members in the Delphi study. Unlike survey research, where respondents share their opinion only once, the consensus among the Delphi panel members is reached through multiple rounds of interaction, giving respondents a chance to review and revise their positions if desired, whereby increasing the validity of the results (Laskin, 2007; Linstone & Turoff, 2002).

The Delphi Process

Scholars mention that there is no universal operational definition of the Delphi technique (Linstone & Turoff, 1975, 2002; Wakefield, 1997). According to Linstone and Turoff (2002), the Delphi process usually consists of two or more iterations, or questionnaire rounds, where the results from each round form the basis of information for the next round. Riggs (1983) presented a 10-step model of the Delphi method (see Figure 3-1).

START

Problem Definition

Determine expertise
required

Select experts
(sample size)

Prepare questionnaire

Distribute questionnaire

Analyze questionnaire
responses

NO   Has consensus been
reached   YES

Provide requested
information and tabulate
responses

Prepare the next
questionnaire

Compile final responses
and disseminate results
(final report)
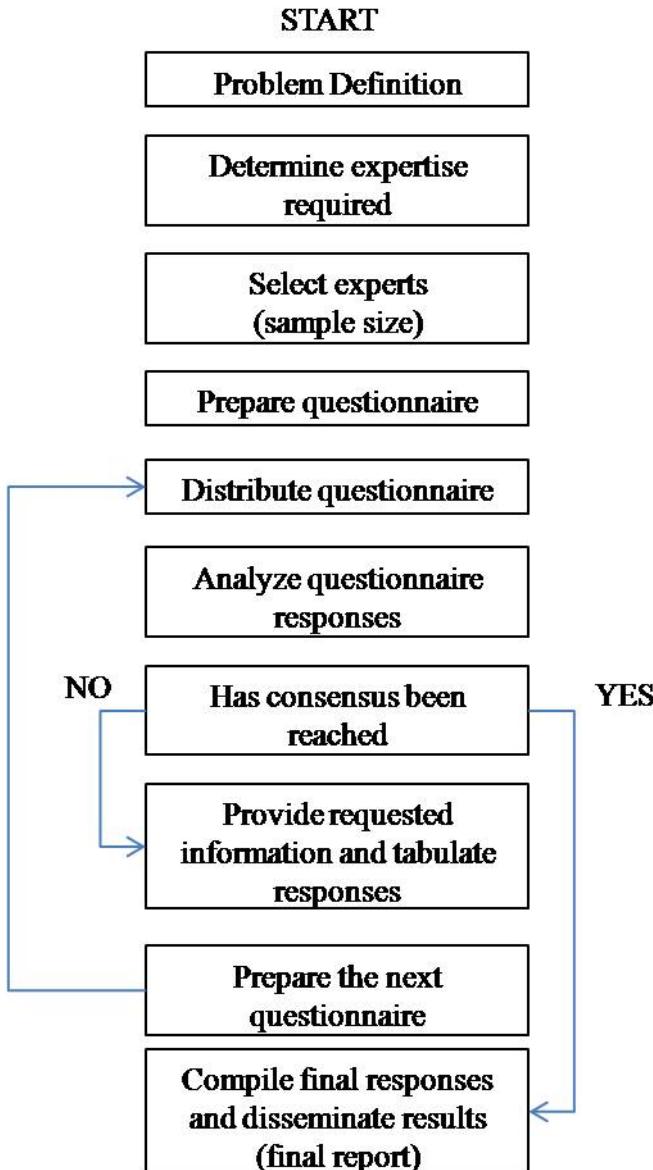
Figure 3-1. Steps of a typical Delphi process (Riggs, 1983, p.90)

These 10 steps essentially constitute the different phases of the Delphi study (Wakefield, 1997).

1. The first step towards implementing a Delphi process is to identify and analyze the problem, followed by the development of the initial Delphi questionnaire in a very specific and thorough manner.

2. In the next step, the researcher determines the sample size and identifies the experts for the Delphi panel, which is followed by contacting these identified experts.

3. Once the recruitment process is complete, the first round of Delphi study starts by administering precise questionnaires to the panel. The members are encouraged to draw upon their experiences, and use any historical data, research, or other available resources to help in answering the posed questions.

4. After evaluating the responses from the first round, the questionnaire is redistributed among the members. However, the second questionnaire has two major parts: First the questions and responses from the first questionnaire are presented in an orderly format, which the members rank order in the second round to establish priorities. The first part of the second round's questionnaire also allows the participants to analyze the responses from the other members of the panel and provide additional comments and feedbacks on them. In addition, it allows the participants to review their responses in the light of the opinion of the other members and change them if desired. The second part of the second round's questionnaire consists of new questions formulated by the researcher after evaluating the responses from the first round. Panel members return their responses to these new questions, along with any revisions to the previous responses. It is in this questionnaire that they are able to explain the reasoning behind their responses.

5. In the third round, the questionnaire consists of three elements: The answers to all previous questions, along with the statistical data so the members can compare their responses with the other members; the comments and reasoning of the members in support of their answers; and finally, an opportunity to the members to review and revise their responses to the previous questions. This process continues until a consensus is reached by the group.

Usually a consensus is reached after two or three iterations or Delphi rounds (Wakefield, 1997). A key characteristic of Delphi panel is the provision for anonymity of the panel members. Because no member knows the identity of the other panel members, a true consensus can be reached, thus eliminating many problems that arise from bias and peer influence among the participants (Linstone & Turoff, 2002).

E-mail as a Medium for Delphi Studies

Traditionally, Delphi questionnaires were sent out using standard mail; however, in recent years, e-mail has become an increasingly popular medium of communication and process mediation for Delphi (Chou, 2002; Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2007). According to Chou (2002),

> This is a less labor-intensive system than the traditional method, and is not paper-reliant; it retains the essence of traditional methods, but speeds up the execution process. This and other developing technologies will continue to offer Delphi project leaders and panel experts the benefit of Web-based research tools (p. 236).

Limitations of the Delphi Study

Scholars have identified some limitations to the Delphi study (Laskin, 2007; Wakefield, 1997). The first concern with the Delphi methodology is the proper selection of experts in the field being examined. The difficulty arises from the potential bias in identifying who can be considered an expert. In addition, since the method involves multiple iterations, mortality of panelists could pose a concern. Another drawback to the Delphi study identified by scholars is inappropriate configuration of the first round questionnaire, which could contaminate the results in the further rounds.

As discussed earlier, there is a lack of studies that examine coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs after international M&As. In addition, the existing research about coordination and control of global public relations by Molleda and Laskin (2007) has mainly examined the issue from a theoretical perspective, leaving a gap between theory and

practice. For these reasons, a Delphi panel research may be an appropriate tool to conduct an initial analysis of the theoretical presuppositions developed in this thesis.

Criterion for Evaluating a Delphi Study

As mentioned previously, this is an exploratory research. According to Wakefield (1997), research that explores a new field is essentially an ongoing dialogue; the theoretical framework keeps evolving through discussion among scholars. This is how body of knowledge expands in a new and dynamic field.

Because the research process of an exploratory study is different from the well-established and operationalized quantitative research methods, the criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of an exploratory research are different from the criterion for evaluating quantitative research. Quantitative research is evaluated using the criterion of "reliability" and "validity". Reliability refers to the extent to which results are consistent over time i.e., the extent to which results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Babbie, 2003; Broom & Dozier, 1990).

Because the Delphi study calls on the opinions of a selected/limited number of experts, it is probably more valid than reliable; however, it attempts to address both concerns. This study, for example, solicits the expertise of public relations practitioners from MNCs that have experienced international M&As in the past. The results of their combined expertise should be highly useful for future practice. If the study instrument were designed properly, the number of respondents should contribute to the reliability of the exploration.

Since a Delphi study is a qualitative study with a quantitative component, in addition to the criterion of reliability and validity, criterion of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability need to be evaluated (Wakefield, 1997). Credibility measures the extent to which

the subject of the investigation is accurately identified and explained (Wakefield, 1997). This construct is similar to the criterion of internal validity in quantitative research. According to Wakefield (1997), if the researcher has accurately and comprehensively depicted the theoretical framework and is consistent in his or her interpretations of what the respondents really meant, the Delphi panel examination will be valid.

Transferability refers to the extent to which results could be extrapolated to other situations or groups (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and is similar to the construct of generalizability in quantitative studies. Scholars suggest that qualitative studies usually lack generalizability. However, it could be enhanced by maintaining theoretical parameters of the data or by using triangulation of sources of data by bringing multiple sources on a single point (Wakefield, 1997).

Dependability is similar to the construct of reliability in quantitative research. Within the context of qualitative study, adapting to the research situations ensures that the research reflects the perspectives of the respondents, rather than the researcher (Wakefield, 1997). However, researcher should bear in mind that all changes need to be documented so that reviewers can understand those adjustments during subsequent interpretations of the research (Wakefield, 1997).

Finally, confirmability refers to whether results of the study can be confirmed by other researchers for being free of any biases of the researcher (Wakefield, 1997). A Delphi panel investigation, according to Wakefield (1997), should satisfy all the above four criterion, if conducted carefully and thoroughly.

In this study, we attempted to satisfy the criterion of credibility by conducting an exhaustive conceptualization. The theoretical framework is built using a comprehensive review

of the pertinent literature from several domains, including business strategy, global public relations, and comparative management.

The burden of transferability, as suggested by Wakefiled (1997), rests largely on researchers who would follow this examination with additional results. The criterion of dependability is ensured by maintaining copies of all instruments, emails, and original responses. The same measures will also ensure confirmability of results by future researchers.

<div align="center">**Procedures Used in this Study**</div>

The preceding section outlined the Delphi process and discussed the criterion for evaluating a Delphi study. This section presents specific procedures used in this study including selection and recruitment of Delphi participants for this study and the challenges faced during the process; the first and second round instruments and data collection method used in these two rounds; and how responses were analyzed and interpreted in the two rounds. This extensive process took about three and a half months to complete.

Selection of Delphi Participants and Sample Size

As mentioned previously, the success of a Delphi study depends on the proper selection of experts in the field being examined. For this study, we initially defined our population of interest as public relations experts who have worked with or are currently employed with U.S. based telecommunication organizations that were involved in international M&As in the past. For this purpose, a list of U.S.-based telecommunication firms, which experienced international M&A activity over the past 27 years (from 1990 to 2007) was complied to build the initial contact list from which the expert-participants for this study will be recruited. This list was developed using SDC Platinum Mergers & Acquisitions, a database with comprehensive details on all announced deals, whether completed or uncompleted. The database covers U.S. targets 1979 to present and Non U.S. targets 1985 to present.

From this list, an initial contact list was compiled by visiting companies' official Web sites. This initial list contained 100 names of public relations experts working in diverse departments such as corporate communications, global communications, global media relations, regulatory/governments communications, community relations, and investor relations, within these organizations.

However, despite three reminder emails and three weeks of waiting time, no response was received. Therefore, a participation request was sent to the members of the Advisory Council in the Department of Public Relations, College of Journalism and Communication of a large Southeastern university, in which the principal investigator was enrolled. The 26 members of the advisory council are qualified experts with several years of valuable professional experience in public relations and are employed with large state, national, or multinational organizations. Some of these members have worked with or are currently working with U.S.-based telecommunication organizations. After the first email, two members expressed their willingness to participate in the study. However, several members expressed their concerns about the way we defined our population of interest and brought to our notice a serious limitation of our population selection criterion. The members mentioned that the current sample was very limited and hard to recruit for participation in a Delphi-panel investigation because of the extensive nature of the study methodology.

Following feedback from these experts in the field, we decided to expand the population of interest to all public relations experts who have worked with or are currently employed with MNCs that have experienced international M&As in the past (including, but not limited to, telecommunication). We also expanded our population of interest to include public relations experts working internationally, again including, but not limited to, the United States.

The scholars who have conducted Delphi studies suggest that effective Delphi panels consist of participants who have command on the subject being examined, feel personal involvement with it, and are motivated enough to dedicate time for participation (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975; Tersine & Riggs, 1976; Wakefield, 1997). Therefore, this study included panelists who have the experience and interest in the topic being investigated to intelligently discuss the coordination and control of global public relations after international M&As.

There is no consensus on the optimum size of a Delphi panel. Linstone and Turoff (2002) indicate that size of Delphi panel is not as important as its expertise. According to Witkin and Altschuld (1995), the approximate size of a Delphi panel is generally under 50; however, more have been employed. Other scholars indicate that Delphi panel could consist of approximately seven to several hundred members (Delbecq et al, 1975; Linstone & Turoff , 2002; Tersine & Riggs, 1976). The size of the panel is ultimately determined by the needs and budget of those administering the process. In sum, the size of Delphi subjects is variable (Delbecq, et al., 1975). However, if the panel size of a Delphi study is too small, participants may not be considered as having provided a representative pooling of judgments regarding the target issue. If the panel size is too large, the drawbacks inherent within the Delphi technique such as potentially low response rates and the obligation of large blocks of time by the respondents and the researcher(s) can be the result. Therefore, for this study, we attempted to obtain between 10-20 participants.

As mentioned previously, it is not unusual to constitute Delphi panels using snowball sampling, where participants, initially recruited for the study, provide reference for other experts who they think are suitable for the study. In order to recruit experts for this study, I worked with my thesis adviser, the members of the Advisory Council, faculty members in the department, and

personal acquaintances. With the help of my adviser, two experts were recruited. Both of these experts were contacted using a formal as well as an informal email and agreed to participate in the panel. Because the principle investigator has worked in a publicly owned organization for over two years, personal references were contacted to consider their participation in the study. Seven participants were contacted and all of them expressed their willingness to participate in the study. All seven participants had the requisite expertise and interest in the subject under investigation. The participants of this study work for large MNCs in Asia, Europe, and the United States, making the panel truly global. This extensive multistep process recruited 11 experts for participation in the Delphi panel for this study.

Collection and Analysis of Data

This study consisted of two separate Delphi rounds or iterations. The process took about two months to complete. The first round of this study with the recruited participants started on Tuesday, January 22, 2009 and the second/final round was completed on Tuesday, March 20, 2009. The following sections discuss the processes used to complete both Delphi rounds, the process of instrument development in the two rounds, and procedures adopted for data collection and data analysis.

First round questionnaire development, data collection, and analysis

The first-round questionnaire was sent through email to the panel members (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was drafted in English because all the participants are proficient in it. To facilitate responses, professional online survey software was used to distribute the questionnaire. Cover letter emails (Appendix D) for the panel included the online survey address, which comprised of seven open-ended questions corresponding to the seven presuppositions developed in this thesis based on the extensive multidisciplinary literature review. Scholars mention that first-round instrument asks broad questions regarding the topic under investigation in the Delphi

study; this is an open-ended approach (Delbecq et al., 1975; Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Wakefield, 1994; Windle, 2004). In subsequent rounds, results from the previous round are organized into similar groupings thereby eliminating repetition, and respondents are asked to rate the level of agreement with the statements using a Likert scale, which is an approximate survey research approach (Wakefield, 1997). This combination of open-ended and close-ended approaches allows participants to lead the study into subcategories and variables and provides structure to the final theory (Rowe & Wright, 1999; Wakefield, 1997).

Because of the exploratory nature of this study, the first-round questionnaire followed the open-ended approach. Sample cover letter email and round one questionnaire are included in the appendix at the end of this thesis. The participants were instructed to provide detailed answers to each question without any specific limit on the maximum or minimum length of the answers. Two alternative approaches were followed. Participants were given two options to send their responses: 1) They could write their responses online in the space provided or 2) they could print out the questionnaire, write their responses as best as they could, and either fax or mail the responses back. As it turned out, all participants chose the first option and filled their responses online. Respondents were told that, presuppositions developed in this study are normative, meaning that we think this is how coordination and control of global public relations after international M&As should be organized to be effective. The scenarios drawn by these presuppositions may be very different from public relations practice in their organization. Specifically, they were instructed to answer the following questions while providing their feedback: Do you agree with our presuppositions? If the practice is different from our normative views, in what ways? Are these views possible in your organization? If they are not possible, why?

In addition, an explanatory document (Appendix B) was also sent to the participants as a separate link within the cover letter email. This document included a definition of some terms that may not have been readily understood. This document was called the "Glossary of Terms" and is also included as an appendix at the end of this thesis. In addition, instructions were provided to help clarify the meaning behind each proposition and about how to approach them. All of these actions should have helped the participants understand the objective of the study and the presuppositions to which they were asked to respond.

All 11 participants responded back to the first round, which is a 100 percent response rate. All responses were copied on a document to preserve the data for further analysis. Each response was then analyzed to gauge if respondent agreed, disagreed, or was uncertain about the propositions and why. The responses were then combined together to eliminate repetitions. Subsequently, the data from the first round was organized into two parts: Declarative statements and specific comments. The declarative statements were modifications to the original presuppositions based on the feedback from the panel members. To avoid confusion and enhance clarity, some presuppositions were divided into more than two statements, which resulted in 11 presuppositions. In addition, respondents provided additional comments on presuppositions, which were combined together to send with the declarative statements for feedback in the second round.

Second round questionnaire development, data collection, and analysis

The second round questionnaire consisted of 11 declarative statements and 8 specific comments (Appendix F). The second round of this Delphi study gave respondents an opportunity to respond to each other's opinions, an important characteristic of an effective Delphi study (Rowe, Wright, & Bolger, 1991). Following Wakefield's (1997) approach, the second-round instrument followed the summated ratings method. With each of the declarative statements, a

five-point Likert scale was attached. Participants were asked to go through each statement and pick the option that best describes the extent to which it represents professional reality (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) sometimes, (4) very often, and (5) always in their experience. Space was provided for comments. Though comments were optional, participants were encouraged to provide specific comments to explain their reasoning, if they so desired. In addition, participants were sent eight specific comments to which their feedback was asked. Again, with each of specific comments, a five-point Likert scale was attached. Participants were asked to go through each statement and pick the option that best describes their level of agreement or disagreement from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, to (5) strongly agree. Space was provided for comments to explain their reasoning, if they so desired.

The second-round instrument was emailed to all 11 participants who responded in the first round, on Tuesday, March 3, 2009. Similar to first round, the second round instrument was administered using professional online survey software. The link to the questionnaire was provided in the cover letter email (Appendix H) that was sent to the participants. All 11 participants (100 percent response rate) completed the second round by Tuesday, March 20, 2009. One participant did not finish the questionnaire; however, their responses to the initial statements were considered as all statements were independent of each other.

To analyze data from the second round, all responses were entered into SPSS, a statistical computer software package. Although, the small sample size does not warrant itself to significant statistical analysis, numbers helped in drawing more accurate picture of where the responses fell in the spectrum of opinions for each presupposition. If most of the responses clustered towards one extreme (never or always) it makes us more confident about consensus among the participants. If however, the numbers were scattered all over the spectrum then it would indicate

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that participants have not reached a consensus yet. Mean of responses for each statement was calculated to examine the level of consensus among participants. Most participants did not provide any additional comments, even when encouraged to do so. Of those who did, most of the comments simply repeated or were similar to those provided in the first round.

A Delphi study is an iterative process and may include two or more rounds (Linstone & Turoff, 2002). Most studies stop after a consensus has been reached among participants about the statements proposed by the researcher. However, according to Wakefield (1997), diversity of opinions, particularly in a previously unexplored field is another important ingredient to consider in a Delphi study. In this study, participants responded to the presuppositions based on their experience with international M&As in diverse parts of the world including the United States, Europe, and Asia. With most of the presuppositions, a fair amount of consensus was obtained among the participants (as seen in the results section). Where there was not enough consensus, it seemed like the proposed statement held true in only some specific conditions or needed further examination from theory. Therefore, the study stopped after two Delphi rounds.

Ethical and Practical Considerations

The following sections discuss ethical and practical considerations of a Delphi study as they apply to this thesis including anonymity and confidentiality of participants, voluntary participation and personal harm, subject mortality, and influence of the researcher.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity of participants in a Delphi panel investigation ensures that participants do not get influenced by each other's responses. For example, if the participants know that one of the panel members is a well respected and established expert in the field, then it would likely make

them agree with that well known expert. For this study, participants were not asked to reveal their identity throughout and after the study. Therefore, only the principal investigator could identify the participants.

In addition, panel members were assured that their responses will remain confidential and will not be associated with them in any manner. The responses from both the rounds are available for analysis by other researchers on request without associating the responses to the respondents.

Voluntary Participation and Personal Harm

For social sciences research involving human subjects, five ethical responsibilities should be fulfilled: Voluntary participation, informed consent, no personal harm, confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy (De Vaus, 2002).

Voluntary participation means that subjects should not be required to participate in the study. In addition, they should be instructed that all responses and feedback would be used only for research purposes. In addition, all results should only be released as aggregate data and not as individual responses. Because the coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs after international M&As was not a sensitive topic that could embarrass participants there was no potential physical or emotional harm to subjects. In addition, participants were given a choice to make a decision about participation in the study. To ensure this, participants were explained the purpose and extent of the study, how their responses will be used, the amount of commitment in terms of time and energy needed on their part, and that their participation was entirely voluntary. We did not ask participants to sign a separate consent form; it was provided online and mentioned that participants are consenting to participate by responding to the questionnaire.

Subject Mortality

As mentioned in previous sections, subject mortality is an important concern in a Delphi study. Fortunately, for this study, all participants participated in both the Delphi rounds. Only one participant did not complete the second-round questionnaire.

Influence of the Researcher

Another concern in a research project involving human subjects is the ability to collect data without unreasonable influence of the researcher on the data collected (Sheng, 1995). If the researcher influences the data in any manner that may lead the respondents to similar opinions and will skew the results (Babbie, 2003).

In this study, although the initial presuppositions were normative in nature and grounded in extensive literature review, participants were challenged to think beyond the normative views by asking specific questions. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with the statements and to justify their reasoning either way. This process ensured that participants analyzed the statements and applied their own experience to evaluate them, irrespective of the researcher's initial propositions.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This section presents the results of the two rounds of the Delphi process discussed in the

previous chapter. The collective responses from 11 participants to the seven presuppositions

about the coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs after international M&As

are presented here. In this section, we first provide some background information about the

participants including demographic information and professional experience. Next, we present

the results from both first- and second-round questionnaires, rather than discussing them

separately, to avoid repetition of presuppositions. Under each presupposition, qualitative

responses from the participants are provided followed by the quantitative results from the second

round in the form of a Likert scale.

Participants

The 11 participants who agreed to participate in this Delphi panel investigation were

recruited using snow-ball sampling (as discussed in Chapter 3). From an initial list of about 137

participants, we were able to recruit 11 participants for this study, resulting in 8.1 percent

response rate. In addition, all 11 participants stayed through both the Delphi rounds, resulting in

a 100 percent response rate in the second round. In the first round, the participants were asked to

provide some information about their demographics and professional experience. In addition, the

principle investigator knew some of their demographics based on her own understanding of the

participants. This information about the panel members in provided in Table 4-1.

As shown in Table 4-1, in both Delphi rounds, participants are from three continents:

North America (n = 9, 82%), Asia (n = 1, 9%), and Europe (n = 1, 9%). Most of the participants

were male (n = 10, 91%), with only one (9%) female participant. About four (36%) participants

had a professional experience of 1-5 years in the field of public relations, two (18%) had 6-10

Table 4-1. Demographic Information and Professional Experience of Delphi Panelists

Number of Respondents	Round 1: 11 total	Round 2: 11 total
Continent/Region	Number: Percent	Number: Percent
North America	9: 82%	9:82%
Asia	1: 9%	1: 9%
Europe	1: 9%	1: 9%
Totals:	11: 100%	11: 100%
Gender	Number: Percent	Number: Percent
Male	10: 91%	10: 91%
Female	1: 9%	1: 91%
Totals:	11: 100%	11: 100%
Professional Experience in Public Relations		
1-5 Years	4: 36.4%	4: 36.4%
6-10 Years	2:18.2%	2:18.2%
11-20 Years	4: 36.4%	9: 36.4%
21-25 Years	1:9.1%	1:9.1%
Totals:	11: 100%	11: 100%
Type of Organization		
Corporation	7: 63.7%	7: 63.7%
Public Relations Agency	1:9.1%	1:9.1%
Non-Profit Organization	1: 9.1%	1: 9.1%
Education-related	1: 9.1%	1: 9.1%
Organization	1:9.1%	1:9.1%
Health-related Organization	11:100%	11:100%
Totals:		
Present Full-time Position		
CEO/President/Owner	1: 9.1%	1: 9.1%
Vice President	3: 27.3%	3: 27.3%
Director	2: 18.2%	2: 18.2%
Manager	3: 27.3%	3: 27.3%
PR/Communications Specialist	2: 18.2%	1: 18.2%
Totals:	11: 100%	11: 100%
Highest Degree Earned		
College Graduate	1: 9.1%	1: 9.1%
Master's Degree	7: 63.6%	7: 63.6%
Doctorate Degree	3:27.3%	3:27.3%
Totals:	11: 100%	11: 100%
Major		
Journalism & Mass Comm.	1:9.1%	1:9.1%
Public Relations	2:18.2%	2:18.2%
English	1:9.1%	1:9.1%
Business	7:63.6%	7:63.6%
Totals:	11: 100%	11: 100%

years, four (36%) had 11-16 years, and one (9%) had 21-25 years of professional experience in public relations. Regarding the type of organizations participants are currently employed with, most participants indicated that they work for a corporation (n = 7, 64%), followed by one each for public relations agency, non-profit organization, education-related organization, and health-related organization. One participant is CEO/president/owner of an organization, three are vice president, two director, three managers, and two work as public relations/communications specialist within their organization. Most participants (n = 7, 64%) have a Master's degree as their highest earned degree, followed by doctoral degree (n =3, 27%), and college graduate (n = 1, 9%). Seven (64%) participants studied business for their highest degree, two (18%) public relations, one (9%) studied journalism and mass communication, and one (9%) studied English for their highest degree.

The participants in this study are highly qualified and experienced public relations professionals, with an average of over ten years of experience in public relations. Seven out of 11 participants are currently working in MNCs that were involved in international M&As. All of the participants have first-hand experience with international M&As, making them highly suitable for participation in this study.

Results of the Delphi Data

This section presents the results from the two Delphi rounds. Results are presented presupposition by presupposition, followed by the numerical results from the second round. This section presents the presupposition and discusses the full range of qualitative responses that were obtained from the first round. This is followed by the round-two statements corresponding to the presuppositions and the numerical representation of responses to those statements. Each of the Likert scale option is followed by a number that represents the number of panel member who

picked that option, followed by the response mean for that statement. A summary of responses from both the rounds is also presented at the end of each presupposition.

Presupposition one: Public relations executives working at large-size or strategic merged (or acquired) organization will be offered greater power and autonomy in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations operations than those working in ordinary merged (or acquired) organization.

Most participants said that the above statement holds true in general; however, there are several external as well as internal factors that influence the amount of power and autonomy delegated to public relations practitioners in merged (or acquired) organization. According to the participants, these factors are financial structure of the two organizations (privately held or publicly held); merged (or acquired) organization's public relations executives' skills, expertise, performance, and reputation; type of M&A and the strategy behind it; corporate culture of the two organizations; and the time frame of the M&A process.

One participant who works as communications manager at a multinational information technology services company commented, "I believe that this is, generally, a true statement if all other parameters are considered identical. This is because the executives of (sic) bigger company are more likely to have a better/proven track record. However there will be situations when this might not be true" (online communication, Feb. 27, 2009). While working for his organization, the participant has witnessed several small, medium, and large international M&As and therefore, according to the participant, type of M&A and the strategy behind it affect the decision of power and autonomy given to public relations practitioners in the merged (or acquired) organization. For example, whether an M&A is done to gain access to new markets or to consolidate in existing markets; public relations executives in the latter case might get more

overall autonomy. Similarly, another participant who is CEO/owner of his company that is under

negotiations with an MNC in a M&A deal said that the decision is governed by the corporate

culture of the two organizations collaborating in an M&A deal. The participant added that the

presupposition is "applicable for companies who have good corporate governance with

transparent working mechanisms"(online communication, Feb. 8, 2009) . Along similar

reasoning, another participant who worked as vice president of investor relations and was

primarily responsible for supporting M&As in an MCN mentioned that if the headquarters

exercises control over other subsidiaries or departments it will use similar policies over the

public relations department in the merged (or acquired) organization.

One participant who is director of communications at a large Fortune 500 pharmaceutical

company that operates in over 100 countries commented that power and autonomy form an

inverse relationship with each other; large organizations have several layers in the management

hierarchy, which limits the amount of autonomy that is delegated to public relations executives.

In addition, comment was made about the time frame of the M&A; according to one panel

member who is manager of communication planning at a global brand communications and

consumer contact organization that consulted clients during international M&As, public relations

executives will enjoy more autonomy and power during the process of M&As; however, in the

long term, their performance will dictate the amount of autonomy and power they are given

within the merged (or acquired) entity.

Following feedback from round one, presupposition one was revised and sent to the panel

for their response in round two:

Presupposition one (revised): Irrespective of the size of the merged (or acquired)

organization, power and autonomy in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation

of public relations operations offered to public relations executives working at merged (or

acquired) organization depends on several factors, such as the financial and corporate structure

of the two organizations; skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired)

organization's public relations executives; types of merger and acquisition (M&A) and the

strategy behind it; and the period before, during, and after M&As.

Table 4-2 indicates the mean and standard deviation of responses from the panel in the

second round and Figure 4-1 shows the respective box plot.

Table 4-2. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 1

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=11)	SD (N =11)
Presupposition1	0	0	0	7	4	4.36	0.5
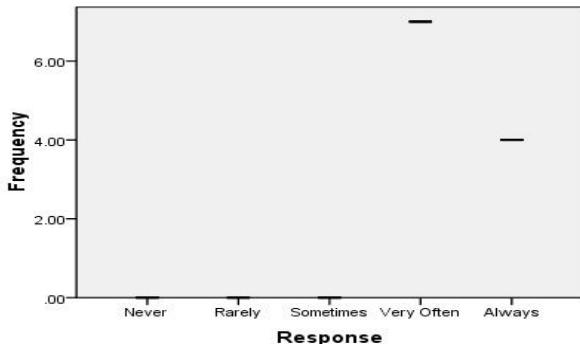
Figure 4-1. Box plot of round 2 means related to revised presupposition 1

As Table 4-2 shows, seven participants said that the revised presupposition is true very

often and four said the statement is true always, bringing the mean for the revised presupposition

to 4.36 out of five (SD= 0.5). Two participants provided additional comments in response to the

revised presupposition. A participant who is PR/communications specialist in a multinational oil

and gas corporation pointed out that the revised statement more accurately described acquisitions

than mergers and added:

Mergers, in my view, occur between companies on a basis of cooperation where resources and different areas of expertise are combined to form a stronger more streamlined entity. On the other hand, acquisitions have more to do with "buying" another organization for a "fit-for-purpose" objective, and molding the acquired organization to suit specific business needs/objectives. In this case, the acquired organization may, depending on if the acquisition was friendly or hostile, have little-or-no say outside the "overall" goals and objectives of the acquiring organization. (Online communication, Mar. 9, 2009)

Another participant emphasized the importance of management's confidence in the skills and talent of the public relations department in the merged (or acquired) organization and said that it is even more important for public relations, which is a "function that manages the company's public perception" (online communication, Mar. 5, 2009). The participant was a senior public relations manager in a multinational technology company that merged with a competitor to seek new opportunities of growth and enhance profits. According to the participant, his organization had a well-established and experienced public relations team with proven record of accomplishments. In addition, both the merging organizations had understaffed public relations department. Therefore, the senior management combined the expertise from both organizations and provided equal amount of power and authority to public relations executives in the merged organization.

Therefore, to summarize, the mean of 4.36 indicates a strong agreement among the panel members regarding revised presupposition one, which proposes that irrespective of the size of the merged (or acquired) organization, the decision of amount of power and autonomy given to public relations executives in that organization depends on a number internal and external factors, which are taken into consideration by the management while the decision is taken.

In round one, participants indicated different factors that affect the amount of power and autonomy delegated to public relations professionals in the merged (or acquired) organization. In order to evaluate the relative importance of these factors, in round two we supplied these as specific comments to the participants and asked them to indicate their level of

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agreement/disagreement with these statements on a five-point Likert scale. These statements were:

Statement 1a: Acquiring organization's financial structure affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization. For example, privately held operations are able to provide a greater level of autonomy for its operations than those that are part of publicly held operations.

Statement 1b: Corporate culture of the two organizations affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization.

Statement 1c: Skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired) organization's public relations executives affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization.

Statement 1d: Types of M&A and the strategy behind it affect the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization. For example, whether an M&A is done to gain access to new markets or to consolidate in existing markets; public relations executives in the latter case might get more overall autonomy.

Statement 1e: The time frame of an M&A affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in an merged (or acquired) organization; public relations executives will play a more active role during M&As; however, in the long term power and autonomy is dictated by their performance within the organization.

Statement 1f: Power and autonomy form an inverse relationship; large -size organizations tend to offer greater power to public relations executives; however, these organizations usually have multiple levels in the management hierarchy, and thus autonomy is relatively restricted.

Table 4-3 presents the means and standard deviation of the responses to these specific

statements and Figure 4-2 to 4-7 show the respective box plots.

Table 4-3. Round 2 means related to addition comments about presupposition 1

|	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean (N= 10)	SD (N= 10)
Statement 1a	0	2	1	4	3	3.8	1.13
Statement 1b	0	0	2	4	4	4.2	0.78
Statement 1c	0	0	1	6	3	4.2	0.63
Statement 1d	0	0	2	4	4	4.2	0.78
Statement 1e	0	0	1	5	4	4.3	0.67
Statement 1f	0	0	4	3	3	3.9	0.87
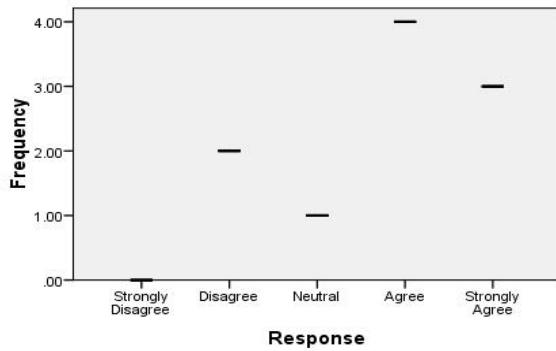
Figure 4-2. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 1a
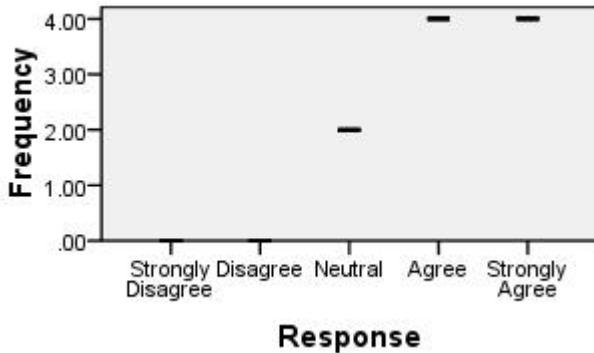
Figure 4-3. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 1b
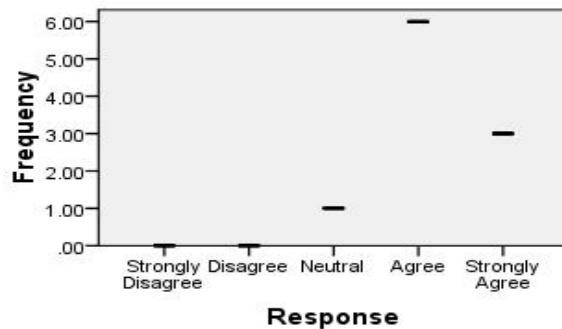
Figure 4-4. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 1c
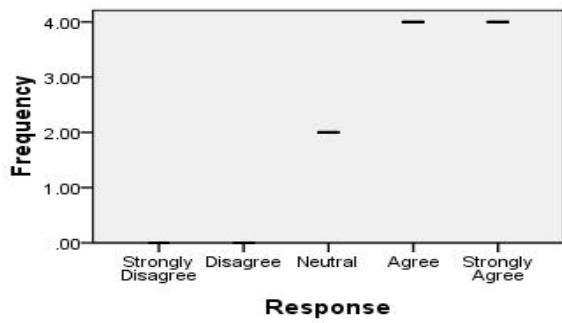

Figure 4-5. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 1d
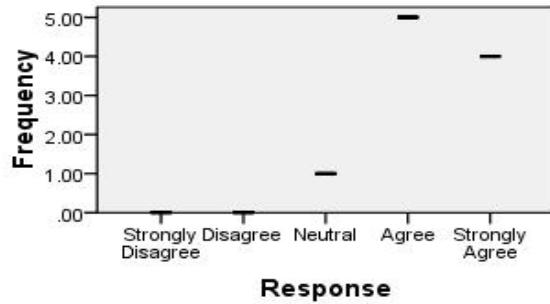

Figure 4-6. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 1e
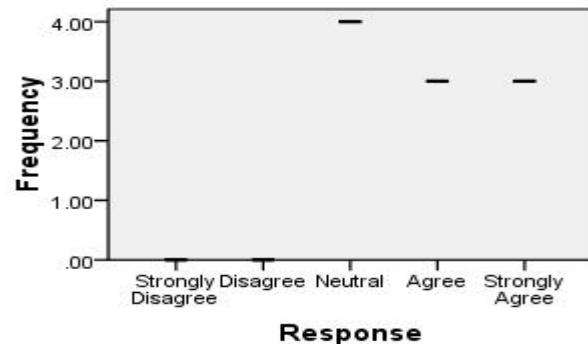
Figure 4-7. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 1f

As Table 4-3 shows, the means of the responses for these statements varies from 3.8 to 4.3 indicating that participants in general agreed with these statements. The most consensus was observed for statement1e (M = 4.3, SD=0.67), which says that time frame of the M&A process most influences the amount of power and autonomy provided to public relations practitioners within merged (or acquired) organization.

Presupposition two: Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor standardization of the public relations function.

Participants, in general, agreed with the above statements but suggested that the presupposition would hold true only if there are no differences between the two organizations in terms of corporate cultures, and language, cultural or regional background of employees. One of the participants who works for an organization that is in the process of being acquired by an MNC and is planning its local operations pointed out that "certain provisions at local levels like process variances, size of the teams in different regions, etc., should be kept optional while standardization is planned" (online communication, Feb. 8, 2009).

Therefore, in round two, two declarative statements corresponding to the second presupposition were sent to the participants for their response:

Presupposition 2a: Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor standardization of the public relations function ONLY IF there are no differences between the two organizations in terms of corporate cultures, language, cultural or regional background of employees.

Presupposition 2b: Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor standardization of the public relations function. HOWEVER, the public relations function may need localized modifications depending on the nature of industry also. Therefore, certain provisions at local levels like process variances, size of the teams in different regions, etc., should be kept optional while standardization is planned.

Table 4-4 presents the means and standard deviation of responses from participants in the second round and Figure 4-8 to 4-9 represent the respective box plots.

Table 4-4. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 2

|	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=11)	SD (N= 11)
Presupposition2a	1	3	3	3	1	3.0	1.18
Presupposition2b	0	0	0	6	5	4.5	0.52
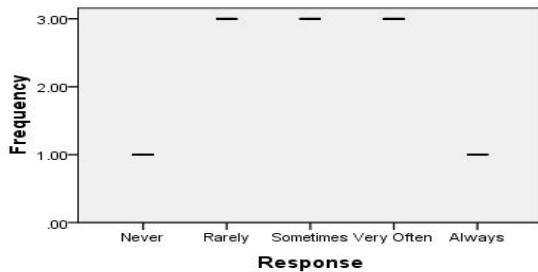
Figure 4-8. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 2a
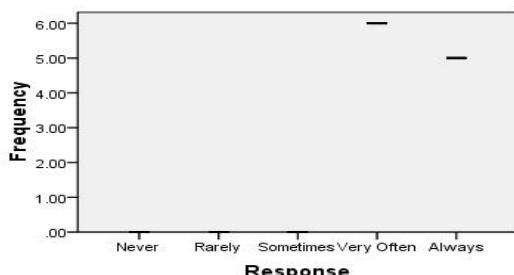

Figure 4-9. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 2b

As Table 4-4 shows, the first declarative statement corresponding to presupposition two received mixed responses from the participants with a mean of 3.0 (SD= 1.18). Figure 4-8 shows that there were two outliers in the data corresponding to two responses: Never and Always. In this case, an alternative measure is the median or the middle score of the data, which is three. This shows that according to the participants, in general presupposition 2a is only sometimes applicable.

However, most participants agreed with the second revision and the mean of responses for this statement was 4.5 (SD= 0.52), indicating a strong consensus among panel members. Participants who did not agree with the first revision, indicated why they thought that it was never, rarely, or only sometimes applicable. One participant said, "It is my experience that companies will not carry duplicative overhead, rather it will retrain or regionalize its functions to allow for handling of cultural and language differences" (online communication, Mar. 20, 2009). The participant works as vice president of communications for a large multinational pharmaceuticals company and was involved in several international acquisitions that his organization has done over the past few years. Reflecting on his experience with international M&As while working with a multinational telecom service provider, another participant pointed out:

> There are so many examples of corporate cultures of acquired companies being chewed over by the acquiring company until there is nothing left from the original culture. For good or bad, corporate culture, language, background of employees will quickly fall victims to the need for standardization if corporation decides so (online communication, Mar. 7, 2009).

Overall participants agreed that if the organizations shared similar market development conditions, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments), the public relations function would

be standardized between the two organizations. There were no additional comments made in round one corresponding to presupposition two, therefore they were not evaluated in round two.

Presupposition three: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise.

In general, participants agreed with this statement; however, suggested that in addition to management's confidence in public relations executives' skills, abilities, experience, and expertise, the decision of autonomy and power also depends on how management wants to integrate the two organizations, i.e., if there are efficiencies in localizing these functions and the market conditions are conducive. One participant also added that the presupposition was especially true in cases where the merged (or acquired) company provides an area of expertise that considered strategically important for the "parent" organization. While working as senior public relations manager for his organization that merged with a competitor, the participant experienced that public relations executives in the merged organization were given more power and autonomy. This occurred because the public relations team had proven records of accomplishment as competitor in the past and the senior management wanted to duplicate similar results within the merged entity. Following the feedback, two declarative statements were developed corresponding to presupposition three and were sent to the panel members for their response in the second round.

Presupposition 3a: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise AND there are efficiencies in localizing these functions and the market conditions are conducive.

Presupposition 3b: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise, ESPECIALLY in cases where the acquired company provides an area of expertise that is deemed strategically important for the "parent" organization.

Table 4-5 shows the means and standard deviation of responses corresponding to presupposition 3a and 3b in round two, followed by respective box plots that are shown in Figure 4-10 and 4-11. As Table 4-5 shows, the means of responses for the two statements were 4.1 (SD= 0.94) and 5.0 (SD=0.5) respectively, indicating that participants reached an agreement on the two after the second Delphi round. In addition to mean, the median of responses corresponding to presupposition 3a was four, which implies that participants considered presupposition 3a to hold true very often.

Table 4-5. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 3

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=11)	SD (N= 11)
Presupposition3a	0	1	1	5	4	4.1	0.94
Presupposition3b	0	0	0	4	7	5.0	0.5
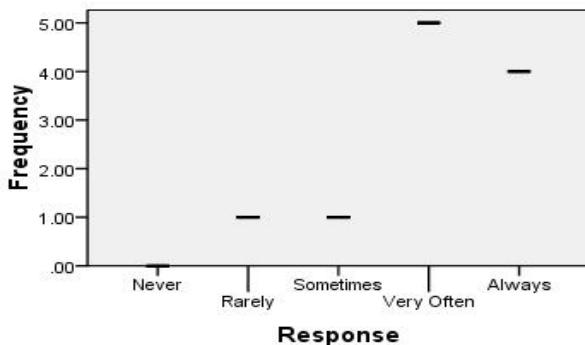
Figure 4-10. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 3a
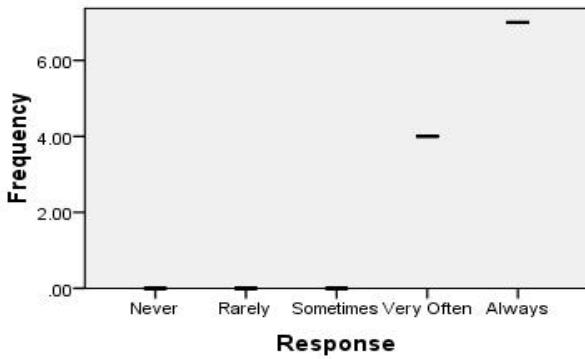
Figure 4-11. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 3b

Presupposition four: Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance performing public relations tasks.

In general, most participants made two comments in response to presupposition four. First, participants said that the decision is governed by the corporate culture of the two organizations; that is, if the organizations considered public relations a strategic function. Second, participants mentioned that the level of expertise and sophistication of the public relations department in the merged (or acquired) organization influences the decision.

One participant raised an interesting and important issue, "that it is not 'critical' for any organization (irrespective of size) to have an in house PR competency. Even some of the biggest organizations…outsource their PR to specialist professionals and have some resources in house to supervise them" (online communication, Feb. 6, 2009). The participant works as manager of communication planning at a brand communications and consumer contact organization and has several clients who have outsourced their public relations function to the organization. Participants evaluated this statement in the second round.

Another participant said that although large organizations will have specialized public relations departments, "interdepartmental cooperation is inevitable if public relations, or any other department for that matter, wants to communicate strategically; overall organizational success hinges on interdepartmental cooperation and interdependence" (online communication, Feb. 8, 2009). The participant mentioned that as PR/communications specialist in a multinational oil and gas corporation part of his daily activities involve interacting with teams from other departments such as marketing, legal, and human resource.

Therefore, in the second round, two declarative statements corresponding to presupposition four were evaluated by the participants.

Presupposition 4a: Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance performing public relations tasks ONLY IF the corporate culture is conducive, management understands the importance of strategic public relations, and public relations department has the required expertise and sophistication.

Presupposition 4b: Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments, such as human resources, legal, or finance taking over the public relations role. HOWEVER, it is not "critical" for any organization (irrespective of size) to have an in-house public relations competency. Even some of the biggest organizations outsource their public relations to specialist professionals and have some resources in house to supervise them.

Table 4-6 shows the mean and standard deviation of responses in the second round, followed by Figure 4-12 and 4-13 that show the respective box plots.

Table 4-6. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 4

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=10)	SD (N= 10)
Presupposition4a	0	1	2	6	1	3.7	0.82
Presupposition4b	0	3	5	1	1	3.0	0.94
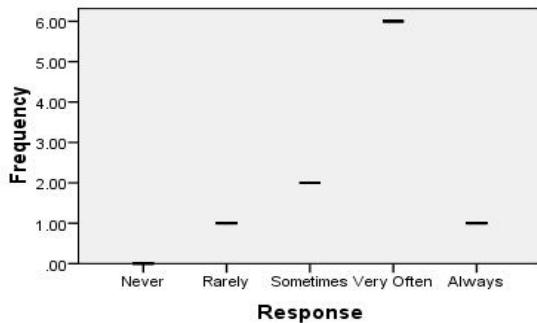
Figure 4-12. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 4a
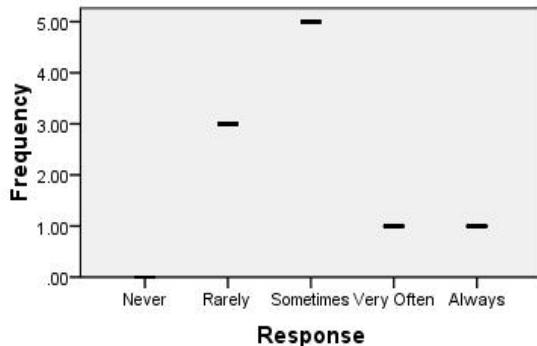
Figure 4-13. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 4b

The means for the two statements indicate that presupposition four might hold true sometimes but not always. In addition, the median for presupposition 4a was four and for presupposition 4b was three, indicating that presupposition 4a is true very often and 4b holds true only sometimes. In round two, one participant pointed out, based on their experience with several multinational organizations that often many organization's headquarters run the

communication department at all international subsidiaries. However, some participants did mention that not having a specialized public relations department for a large operation is detrimental to the growth of the company and may negatively affect its reputation.

Presupposition five: International mergers following a split control arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management.

In the first round, most participants suggested that split-control management would work well if the merged (or acquired) organization was capable as well as had the expertise needed to carry forward the operations in local markets. In addition, some participants said that they have seen all three arrangements (split control, shared, or one partner dominant) working well. One participant who works with a global public relations firm said that today, "very few organizations understand how to manage dialogue across a shared management agreement, making public relations less effective in that model"(online communication, Feb. 19, 2009). Participants also said that split-control management worked well in large operations because under split-control management, responsibilities were clearly allocated which avoided confusion and duplication of work. However, a few participants in round one said that the split-control management did not work better than the shared or one partner dominant management.

Therefore, in round two, following statements were evaluated by the panel:

Presupposition 5a: International mergers following a split-control arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant

(either MNC or local partner) management ONLY WHEN local partner has the required

expertise to carry forward the operations in local markets.

Presupposition 5b: International mergers following a split-control arrangement to

designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners WILL

NOT perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner

dominant (either MNC or local partner) management.

Table 4-7 shows the means and standard deviation of responses from the second round. In

addition, Figure 4-14 and 4-15 show the respective box plots.

Table 4-7. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 5

|	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=10)	SD (N= 10)
Presupposition5a	0	0	1	7	2	4.1	0.57
Presupposition5b	0	3	5	2	0	2.9	0.73
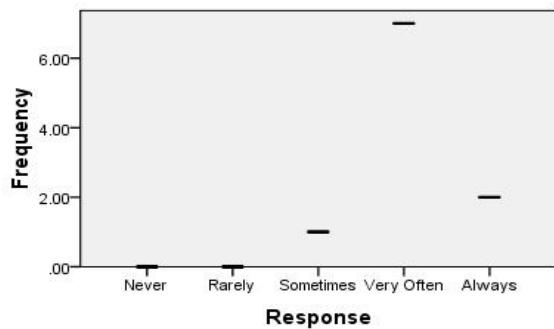
Figure 4-14. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 5a
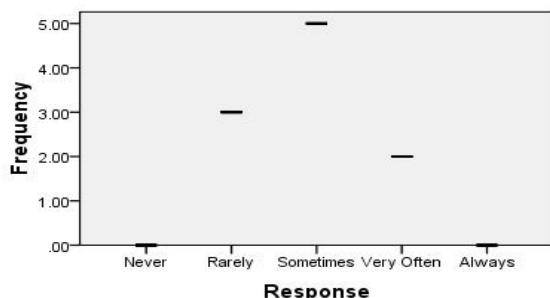
Figure 4-15. Box plot of round 2 means related to presupposition 5b

As Table 4-7 shows, the mean for the first statement was 4.1 (SD= 0.57) indicating a strong agreement among the participants; whereas, the mean for the second statement was 2.9 (SD= 0.73) indicating a weak agreement.

Some participants provided additional comments on the revised presuppositions. However, all of them said that they believe split-control management works better than the other two. One participant said that one partner dominant management would perform better if the merged (or acquired) organization does not have the required expertise to take the responsibility of local operations.

To further explore presupposition five, additional comments made by participants in the first round were sent to the panel in round two for their response. These were:

Statement 5a: International mergers following a one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or split control.

Statement 5b: The decision of split controls versus shared management or one partner dominant arrangements depends by and large on the type of industry, span and nature of operations, and top management mindsets of both the partner organization.

The means and standard deviation for these statements are presented in Table 4-8 and the respective box plots are shown in Figure 4-16 and 4-17.

Table 4-8. Round 2 means related to addition comments about presupposition 5

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean (N= 10)	SD (N= 10)
Statement 5a	0	1	5	2	2	3.5	0.97
Statement 5b	0	1	1	6	2	3.9	0.88
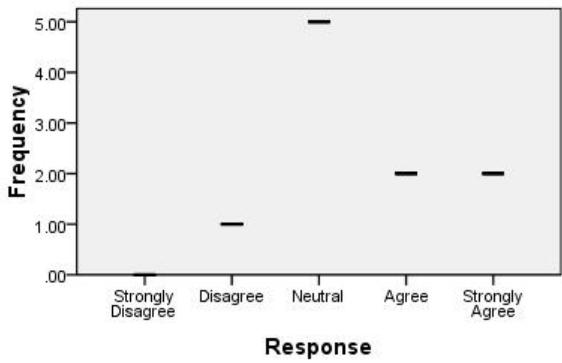
Figure 4-16. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 5a
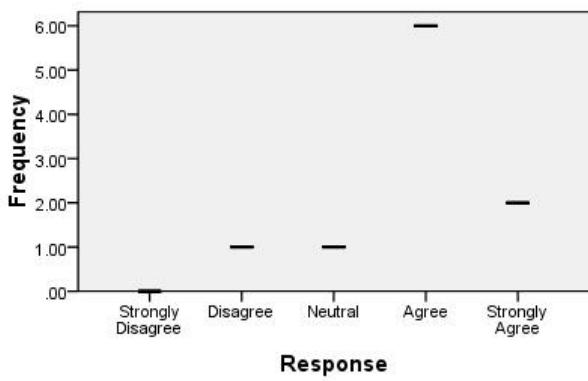
Figure 4-17. Box plot of round 2 means related to statement 5b

The means for the two statements, 3.5 (SD= 0.97) and 3.9 (SD= 0.88), indicate that panel members somewhat agreed with the statements.

Presupposition six: The level of integration will vary across the strategic communication practices (e.g. investor relations, community relations, employee relations, media relations) within the merged (or acquired) organization.

Overall, most participants agreed with presupposition six; however, they said that the level of integration depends, to varying extents, upon the available resources and the organizational structure. Therefore, the following revised presupposition was sent to the participants in the second round:

Presupposition six (revised): The level of integration will vary across the strategic communication practices (e.g. investor relations, community relations, employee relations, media relations) within the merged (or acquired) organization depending upon the available resources and organization's corporate culture.

Table 4-9 depicts the means and standard deviation of responses obtained in round two. The mean of responses for the revised presupposition was 4.0 (SD=0.94), indicating that participants agreed that the presupposition reflects professional reality very often. One participant said that the level of integration varies irrespective of corporate cultures.

Table 4-9. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 6

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=10)	SD (N=10)
Presupposition 6	0	1	1	5	3	4.0	0.94
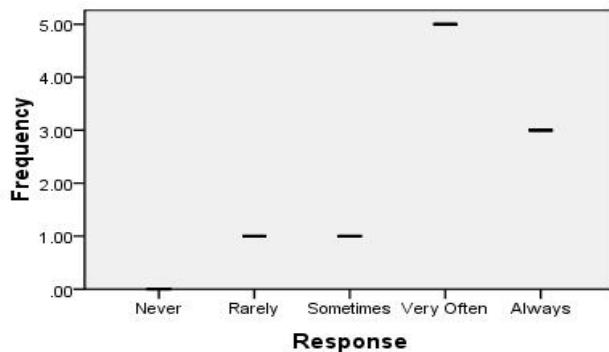
Figure 4-18. Box plot of round 2 means related to revised presupposition 6

Presupposition seven: Organizations that utilize a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control will be more effective than those who do not.

Participants expressed their agreement with presupposition seven in the first round and therefore did not indicate any modifications to it. Most of them said that a balanced approach to coordination and control that includes formal and informal mechanisms is most effective. One participant reflected the overall summary of participants' responses:

The formal mechanism avoids confusion and ensures uniformity of messages. Ambiguity is reduced. However, it tends to become impersonal in nature and is slow to implement. The informal mechanism is more people oriented since there is more contact. Hence, it is faster to implement. An informal approach backed by formal communication is usually what is followed. Organizations try to achieve the best of both worlds. (Online communication, February 19, 2007).

However, one participant said that presupposition might not hold true for large organizations, where a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control may lead to confusion and ambiguity. To evaluate this comment, the round-two instrument contained a revised presupposition as follows:

Presupposition seven (revised): Organizations that utilize a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control will be more effective than those who do not. HOWEVER, it is not true for large organizations, where a combination of formal and informal mechanisms can lead to uncertainty.

Table 4-10 indicates the mean of responses to the revised presupposition and the respective box plot is shown in Figure 4-19.

Table 4-10. Round 2 means related to revised presupposition 7

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Very often (4)	Always (5)	Mean (N=10)	SD (N=10)
Presupposition 7	0	3	2	4	1	3.3	1.05
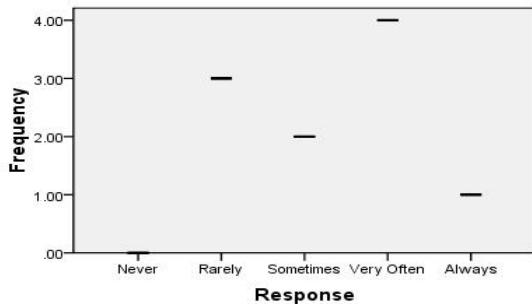
Figure 4-19. Box plot of round 2 means related to revised presupposition 7

A mean of 3.3 (SD= 1.05) was obtained for the revised presupposition seven. Participants who said the revised presupposition holds true only rarely explained that according to their professional experience the presupposition is true for all organizations, including organizations with large operations, which indicates that no revisions were necessary to presupposition seven.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs following international M&As. Specifically, the major purpose of this study was to develop a theoretical framework to direct future practices of coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs within the context of international M&As. Using a Delphi panel investigation of public relations practitioners, who have had worked with MNCs that have experienced M&As on an international scale, this study derived its conclusions from the experience of its participants. Although marketing and advertising scholars have examined the effects of M&As on brand image and brand identity; the literature in public relations that examines their effects on the practice is non-existent. By drawing inspiration from international business management research and literature, this study, therefore, takes the first step towards filling this gap in public relations research by adding to the process of theory building about the coordination and control of global public relations.

Summary of the Results

The Delphi panelists agreed that the study reflects the framework of coordination and control mechanisms used after international M&As. In this study, three research questions were explored with the help of seven presuppositions developed through extensive multidisciplinary literature review. In this section, we discuss each research question and its corresponding presuppositions. A summary of results and their theoretical and practical implications are presented.

The first research question analyzed the factors that affect the role and responsibility delegated to the public relations practitioners in the merged (or acquired) organization. In essence, the objective of RQ1 was to understand the factors that affect the coordination and

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control of global public relations in the context of international M&As. Scholars have outlined several factors that affect the amount of coordination and control exercised by MNCs over their subsidiaries (Barlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Cray, 1984; Daniels et al., 2007; John & Young, 1995; Laroche et al., 2001; Martinez & Jarillo, 1989; Molleda, 2000).

Based on previous scholarly research, RQ1 was examined within the framework of five presuppositions. Public relations experts in two Delphi rounds evaluated these presuppositions. Results from the first Delphi round indicated that presuppositions, although normatively applicable, did not reflect professional reality in their current form. Therefore, participants suggested modifications to these presuppositions, which were incorporated to reflect the opinions of the panel members. In the second round, participants evaluated the revised presuppositions and as results show, reached an agreement that the revised presuppositions were indeed practically applicable. Each of the revised presupposition corresponding to the first research question is now discussed:

Presupposition one (final): Irrespective of the size of the merged (or acquired) organization, power and autonomy in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations operations offered to public relations executives working at merged (or acquired) organization depends on several factors, such as the financial and corporate structure of the two organizations; skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired) organization's public relations executives; types of merger and acquisition (M&A) and the strategy behind it; and the period before, during, and after M&As.

According to panel members, the decision does not only depend on the size or strategic value of the merged (or acquired) organization, but is rather contingent on several internal and external factors. These factors were in turn evaluated on a five-point Likert scale in the second

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round to determine their relative importance. The factors that were considered most important by the participants was the time frame of the M&A process (M= 4.3); corporate culture of the two organizations (M =4.2); skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals (M =4.2); and type of M&A and the strategy behind it (M = 4.2).

According to Silver (2009), public relations practitioners play a crucial role during M&As because they act as communication interface between the management and the diverse organizational target audience such as employees, shareholders, and media. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that they will be delegated more power and autonomy during M&As; however, as Daniels et al. (2007) point out, in the longer-term, organizations regulate allocation and utilization of resources to ensure that employees implement its elements as planned. The authors also emphasize that the organizational culture, which includes values and principles of management, work climate, traditions, and ethical standards often determine the strategy a company adopts or rejects. They mention, "Research suggests that none of these approaches has much of a chance of producing sustainable benefits and lasting competitive advantage without an organization that has complimentary culture" (p. 543). Finally, participants emphasized that the types of M&A and the strategy behind them influences the power and autonomy assigned to public relations practitioners in merged (or acquired) organization. Although, scholars have identified types of M&As (for e.g. horizontal, vertical, or conglomerate) (Gaughan, 2002), it is unclear how they affect the coordination and control of global public relations. Participants indicated that in M&As conducted to consolidate in existing markets, public relations executives might get more overall autonomy than when M&As are done to gain access to existing markets.

However, future research needs to explore this variable further to examine its effects on the coordination and control of global public relations.

Presupposition two (final): Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor standardization of the public relations function. However, the public relations function may need localized modifications depending on the nature of industry also. Therefore, certain provisions at local levels like process variances, size of the teams in different regions, etc., should be kept optional while standardization is planned.

From the first round, two revisions were suggested to the second presupposition. However, after the second round, the first revision is rejected because of low mean score (M= 3.0). The second revision obtained a high mean score (M= 4.5) and is accepted. Overall, the results corroborated assertions from scholars that similar market, external and competitive environment conditions between the two organizations favor standardization of the public relations function (Daniels et al., 2007; Griffitt, 2000; Laroche et al., 2001; Molleda & Laskin, 2007; Webber, 1996).

Presupposition 3a: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise, there are efficiencies in localizing these functions and the market conditions are conducive.

Presupposition 3b: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise, especially in cases where the

acquired company provides an area of expertise that is deemed strategically important for the "parent" organization.

Both the modifications to presupposition three suggested in the first Delphi round obtained high mean scores of 4.1 and 5.0 respectively in the second round. Therefore, the revised presupposition three is split into two statements to more appropriately reflect panel members' feedback. The first revision reiterates the principle of standardization versus localization in international operations. As discussed in Chapter Two, MNCs face two asymmetrical forces: pressures for global integration and pressures for local responsiveness; an MNC would adopt a strategy, which lies on a continuum bounded by these two asymmetrical forces depending upon the relative efficiency gains of these two approaches (Blumentritt & Nigh, 2002; Daniels et al., 2007; Ovaitt, 1988; Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003). In addition, the second revision is in agreement with previous research that found that the expertise of the subsidiary managers is positively correlated with the amount of independence that these subsidiaries have (Laroche et al., 2001; Molleda & Laskin, 2007).

Presupposition four (final): Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance performing public relations tasks; provided, the corporate culture is conducive, management understands the importance of strategic public relations, and public relations department has the required expertise and sophistication.

In the first round, two revisions to presupposition four were suggested. However, in the second round the first revision received low mean scores (M= 3.0) and was rejected. The second revision obtained moderate mean score (M= 3.7) and is incorporated above to address feedback

from the panel members. Similar to presupposition one, the revisions indicate that certain internal and external factors affect the way public relations department is structured within the merged (or acquired) organization. These factors have been discussed previously in this section.

Presupposition five (final): International mergers following a split-control arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management only when local partner has the required expertise to carry forward the operations in local markets.

Following feedback from the first round, two modifications were made to presupposition five. However, after round two, only one of the modifications was accepted, which obtained a mean score of 4.1. The other modification was rejected because of low mean score (M= 2.9). The results support previous findings by Choi and Beamish (2004) and Beamish (1993) that international mergers following split control management perform better than any other approach of management control because each partner takes control of those value-creation activities for which it has the skills or resources available.

In this study, the second research question examined how various public relations activities, such as investor relations, community relations, employee relations, and media relations are integrated within the merged (or acquired) organization. This research question was explored through presupposition six:

Presupposition six (final): The level of integration will vary across the strategic communication practices (e.g. investor relations, community relations, employee relations, media relations) within the merged (or acquired) organization depending upon the available resources and organization's corporate culture.

Here again, participants emphasized the importance of corporate culture, similar to their feedback on presupposition one and four. The results are in accordance with the assertion made by Molleda (2000) and Molleda and Laskin (2007) that different strategic communication or public relations practices, such as investor relations, media relations, employee relations, and community relations, experience different levels of integration.

Finally, with the help of presupposition seven, the third research question analyzed the coordination and control mechanisms used by the management, within the perspective of the public relations department, after international M&As.

Presupposition seven (final): Organizations that utilize a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control will be more effective than those who do not.

One participant in the first round indicated that a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control might create ambiguity and confusion in large international organizations. However, in the second round participants rejected this modification (M= 3.3) by indicating that it might be true only sometimes. Therefore, no changes were made to presupposition seven and it is accepted in its original form. Scholars indicate that organizations that utilize a combination of these coordination and control mechanisms are more effective that those who utilize an either/or strategy (Molleda, 2000; Molleda & Laskin, 2007). It was pointed out by the participants, that increasingly organizations are incorporating a balanced approach of coordination and control, which include formal rules, policies, and procedures and socialization through visits and meetings.

Theoretical Conclusions: Model of Coordination and Control of Global Public Relations in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) after International Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As)

Results of this study indicate that variables proposed for the coordination of control of global public relations after international M&As are supported in a broad base of MNCs. Delphi

panel members in this study showed general agreement with the presuppositions generated by the extensive review of existing academic research and many of these presuppositions elicited unanimous consent of the participants. Therefore, it could be assumed that the theoretical framework developed here represents professional reality and could work in a variety of settings. However, the inference is based on the assumptions that participants adequately represent the views of experts working in MNCs in various countries (headquarters and subsidiaries and/or sister companies); the study was conducted properly; the presuppositions were developed accurately; and the interpretation of data in the two rounds was done reliably and objectively.

The variables tested in this study such as size and strategic importance of merged (or acquired) organization; similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between partner organizations; and management's confidence in the skills, abilities, experience, and expertise of public relations practitioners in the merged (or acquired) organization have been examined in literature from the business perspective. This study, examined their applicability to the coordination and control of global public relations in the context of M&As. The novel element of this study is that participants proposed some new variables based on their experience with M&As. These variables include corporate culture and financial structure of the two organizations; time frame of M&As; type of M&As and the strategy behind them; and language, cultural or regional background of employees.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the advantage of qualitative research is that conclusions emerge from the discussion among participants; whereas quantitative research starts with structured hypotheses and tests them is a controlled environment (Babbie, 2003). With the valuable contribution of the participants based on their experience with M&As, this study could

generate a theoretical framework or "Model of Coordination and Control of Global Public

Relations in MNCs after M&As." The model is depicted in Figure 5-1.
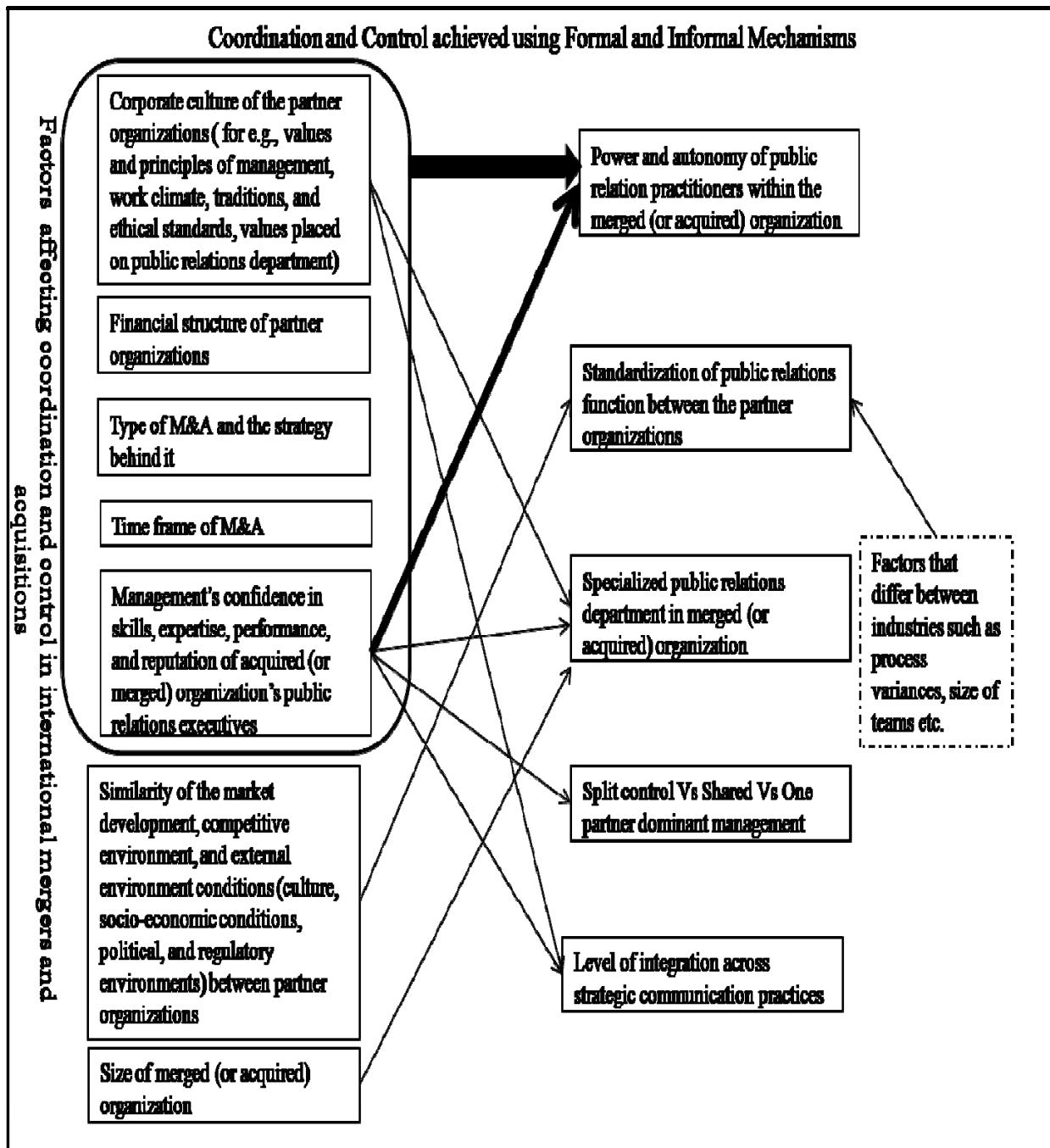
Figure 5-1. Model of coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs after
international M&As, indicating factors affecting roles, responsibilities, integration,
and configuration of public relations department in the merged (or acquired)
organization

The model describes, as simply as possible, variables present in the internal and external environment of partner organizations in international M&As and their effects on public relations department in the merged (or acquired) organization. The model is in accordance with the structured flexibility approach of Brinkerhoff and Ingle (1989), and demonstrates that effective management incorporate the internal and external contingencies present in the international operating environment (Negandhi, 1983). It also highlights that in an international setting, MNCs need to create a balanced strategy between global imperatives and local responsiveness (Blumentritt & Nigh, 2002; Daniels et al., 2007; Lim, 2009; Molleda & Laskin, 2007; Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003).

Although, there could be several other contingencies to which management would have to respond in international M&As, the purpose of the model is to demonstrate the results of this study, that is, it includes only the variables specifically discussed in this research. The top rectangle in Figure 5-1 shows five factors that panel members said affect the power and autonomy in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations operations offered to public relations executives working at merged (or acquired) organization. These are, corporate culture and financial structure of the two organizations; type of M&A and the strategy behind it; time frame of the M&A; and management's confidence in the skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired) organization's public relations executives. Out of these factors, the most influential factor during coordination and control of global public relations after international M&As is the confidence that the management has on the skills, expertise, performance and reputation of the public relations practitioners in the merged (or acquired) organization. The panel members emphasized this factor numerous times.

Management is most likely to standardize public relations functions between the partner organizations, if there are similarities in the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the two organizations. However, there could be contingencies that emerge from industry variations, such as process variance, size of the teams, etc.

Merged (or acquired) organization with large operations in a given region will have a specialized public relations department, if the corporate culture is conducive, that is, management considers public relations functions strategically important and management has confidence in the skills and expertise of the public relations executives in the merged (or acquired) organization. This will be, therefore, especially true in cases where the merged (or acquired) organization offers an expertise that is considered essential by the parent.

The decision between split versus shared or one partner dominant management to distribute roles and responsibilities between the two partners will be determined by the skills and expertise of the merged (or acquired) organizations' public relations professionals. If management thinks that, the public relations practitioners in the partner organization could bear the responsibility they will delegate them power and autonomy for local operations.

Finally, expertise and public relations resources available in the partner organization will determine the level of integration across strategic communication processes. If the merged (or acquired) organization has the required skills and talent to run specialized departments, some functions such as employee relations and community relations will be localized while the parent will look after other strategic functions such as investor relations.

Recommendations for Coordination and Control of Global Public Relations in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) after International Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As)

This study attempts to define the framework or model of coordination and control of global public relations after international M&As. The model, which was based on extensive multidisciplinary review of scholarly research, evolved through discussions among public relations experts, who based on their experience with M&As strengthened model's presuppositions. This study, not only provides the theoretical framework, but also practical recommendations on how MNCs can integrate and configure public relations departments within partner organizations after international M&As.

The first recommendation that this study makes is to balance global and local public relations practices. After international M&As, management should evaluate the effectiveness of public relations practitioners in the merged (or acquired) organization based on their past performance, reputation, skills, and expertise in order to decide the amount of power and autonomy that should be delegated to them. At the headquarters, management would create provisions to align the overall public relations strategies with organizational missions and goals. However, management should also respond to contingencies emerging from pressures of local responsiveness. By utilizing formal and informal coordination and control mechanisms such as training sessions, written policies, and regulations, the newly incorporated unit's practitioners should be educated about the overall organizational philosophy and managerial style. It is imperative for MNCs to integrate public relations units worldwide, coordinating common goals; however, public relations practitioners should be given enough autonomy and power in decision making and planning to run the local operations.

Along similar lines, it is recommended that public relations department should cooperate with other communications departments such as marketing, advertising, human resources, and

legal services, but should not work under them. Interdepartmental cooperation should be promoted by the headquarters; however, it should ensure that large operations have specialized public relations unit to carry forward the local operations.

Similarly, merging (or acquiring) organization should ensure that its public relations practitioners understand the overall goals, mission, and philosophy of the newly merged entity. Merged (or acquired) organization's management should also create opportunities for its public relations practitioners to share ideas and obtain feedback from the headquarters. This could include training sessions, formal and informal meetings, and visits to headquarter to align via socialization its public relations staff with the overall organizational policies and goals.

After the process of international M&A is complete, management should encourage the public relations practitioners to evaluate each other's competitive advantage, available expertise, skills, and talent, and to split the responsibility between the two sets of practitioners, so that both partners contribute to complimentary resources. This split control management will ensure that everyone is responsible for an activity they could perform best.

Recommendation for Future Research

This study developed an introductory theoretical framework of coordination and control of global public relations following international M&As by soliciting responses from a sample of public relations practitioners on seven presuppositions. This theoretical framework, not only provides guidelines to MNCs for effective integration and configuration of their public relations department after international M&A, but also creates opportunities for future researchers to add, modify, or enhance the suggested model. With this framework, this study aspires to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in public relations.

Future research should seek responses from a larger sample of public relations experts working at MNCs that have experienced international M&As at some point of time. Although, a

sample of 11 participants is considered adequate for a Delphi panel, research in the future could solicit feedback from a larger panel. In addition, participants in this study were recruited from three major regions, North America, Asia, and Europe. Future research could recruit a more diverse and internationally representative sample to verify, contradict, or enhance the presuppositions in the model. Future research could also generate more variable or factors that affect the coordination and control of global public relations after international M&As and test them to make the model more comprehensive. A factor that emerged in this study, although to a lesser extent, was that coordination and control mechanisms could vary by industry type. This factor should be explored further by conducting a cross-industry analysis of coordination and control mechanisms. Each of the variables in the proposed model warrant further examination to determine their relationship with coordination and control of global public relations and with each other. The strength of these interrelationships should be examined by future studies to develop a comprehensive theory of coordination and control of global public relations after international M&As.

Future research could also examine the effectiveness of the proposed model of coordination and control of global public relations during international M&As. By studying some successful international M&As and the coordination and control mechanisms used by managers, future research could analyze if internal and external environmental variables proposed in the model are effective in achieving managerial objectives for the newly created entity.

<div align="center">**Limitations of the Study**</div>

Although, the researcher tried to meet the highest standards of reliability, validity, and objectivity while developing the theoretical model, this study has some limitations. First, the size of the panel probably was too small for such an extensive study. Linstone and Turoff (2002)

indicate that size of Delphi panel is not as important as its expertise. According to Witkin and Altschuld (1995), the approximate size of a Delphi panel is generally under 50; however, more have been employed. However, a study that aspires to build a universal model of coordination and control of global public relations could benefit from a larger sample.

In addition to the size of the panel, its composition could have been a problem. Most of the participants have had experienced with international M&As; however, some of them did not have a direct experience and were rather involved at a meta-level. Most of the participants agreed with each other and no real differences in opinions surfaced in both the Delphi- rounds. Participants were recruited using a snow-ball sampling procedure and were acquaintances of mine or of someone else. This could probably have created a researcher bias. However, participants were encouraged to provide reasoning of why they thought in a particular way, which could have reduced researcher's bias; however, it is still a possibility.

Finally, while interpreting the results, potential bias could have been introduced, although the researcher tried to objectively analyze the data. However, it could only be ascertained by conducting future research.

APPENDIX A
DELPHI ROUND ONE INSTRUMENT

The Delphi round one instrument is on the following five pages. Because the actual round was conducted online, it is not possible to recreate the instrument as it was presented to practitioners. The original questionnaire was six pages including the first consent form page, second instructions page, and the last expressing thank you page. There were two pages containing four presuppositions each soliciting responses, and one page to gather demographic information and professional experience of the participants.

Delphi Round One Instrument

How to Proceed with the Responses

Below are seven presuppositions about the coordination and control of global public relations in multinational corporations after international mergers and acquisitions. We define the process of coordination and control as the one where the distinctive character of both acquirer and acquired can be maintained whilst managing relationships across the boundaries between the two organizations. Our assumption is that effective coordination and control of global public relations depends on several external and internal factors that operate at both local and international level.

The presuppositions are normative, meaning we think this is how coordination and control of global public relations after mergers and acquisitions should be organized to be effective.

The scenarios drawn by these presuppositions may be very different from public relations practice in your organization. This is what we need to know. Do you agree with our presuppositions? If the practice is different from our normative views, in what ways? Are these views possible in your organization? If they are not possible, why? Our purpose here is to begin a dialogue of experts that may eventually lead to a theory or theories on the coordination and control of global public relations.

To assist us with this study, then, please carefully review these presuppositions, then respond to them according to your experiences and understanding of public relations in your organization. As you look at each presupposition, you may ask yourself. Or even respond to, the following questions:

   a.   Do you agree with the statement?
   b.   If you do agree, why? If not, why not?
   c.   Is the statement true in every situation you know of, or might there be
   circumstances, which could create the need to adjust the statement?

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d.   If the circumstances render the need for modification, what adjustments would need to be made to make the statement largely accurate?

Once you have considered these questions, as well as the specific presuppositions, please respond to each presupposition by supplying your views of how the normative theory might work in your organization or how it may have problems. Please try to provide specific examples to support either view.

You may complete this assignment in writing and email it back to us; or you may print out a copy of the questionnaire, fill it out by hand, and mail it to us at the address mentioned in the email sent to you, with no return address on the envelope. Here are the presuppositions, then, for which we would like your response:

#1: Public relations executives working at large-size or strategic[2] merged (or acquired) organization will be offered greater power and autonomy in decision making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations operations than those working in ordinary acquired organization.

#2: Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor standardization[3] of the public relations function.

#3: Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise.

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[2] Strategic here implies an merged (or acquired) organization that is large, technologically complex, and highly profitable

[3] Standardization refers to a global strategy developed by the acquiring organization and implemented by all subsidiaries and merged (or acquired) organizations

#4: Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance performing public relations tasks.

#5: International mergers following a split control arrangement[4] to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management.

#6: The level of integration will vary across the strategic communication practices (e.g. investor relations, community relations, employee relations, media relations) within the merged (or acquired) organization[5].

#7: Organizations that utilize a combination of formal[6] and informal[7] mechanisms of coordination and control will be more effective[8] than those who do not.

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[4] Under split control management, the partners agree to control distinct functional activities by following a division of labor between partners based on available resources and skills. In shared management arrangement, partners share control over all value-creation activities by mutual agreement. One-partner-dominant management resemble the global standardization versus local adaptation strategies, where either a global strategy developed by the MNC or a local adaptation developed by partner is executed.

[5] For example, previous research indicates that while community relations is the most decentralized public relations area, MNCs implement more centralized investor and media relations policies.

[6] Structural and formal mechanisms of coordination encompass departmentalization of organizational units, centralization or decentralization of decision making authority, formalization and standardization using formal policies and procedures, and other similar strategies

[7] Informal coordination mechanisms include lateral or cross-departmental relations, informal communication, such as personal contacts, meetings, and conferences, and socialization to establish shared strategic objectives and values

[8] Effective here means that M&A achieve the objectives set forth by the management prior to M&A deal.

Demographic Information and Professional Experience

1. How many years of full-time experience do you have in the practice of public relations?

•1-5 years _____ • 6-10 years _____ • 11-20 years _____ • 21-25 years _____• more than 30

years _____

2. Which best describes the organization with which you are employed on a full-time basis?

Corporation_____ • Public Relations Agency _____ • Government_____ • Non-profit

Organization_____ • Education-related organization_____ • Health-related

organization_____ • Trade Association_____ • Independent PR Consultant _____• Other

(Please, specify)_____

3. Which title best describes your present full-time position?

CEO/president/Owner _____ • Vice President _____ • Senior Account Executive _____

•Account Executive _____• Assistant Account Executive _____ • Director _____• Manager

_____ • Public Relations/Communication Specialist _____ •Other (Please, specify) _____

4. Please specify your gender: Male_____ Female_____

5. Which is the highest degree you earned?

• Some High School_____ • High School Graduate_____• Some College_____ • College

Graduate_____• Master's Degree_____ • Doctorate Degree_____• Other (Please, specify)

_____

6. What did you study as your highest degree?

• Journalism & Mass Communications_____ • Public Relations _____ • Advertising ____ •

English _____ • Speech Communication _____ • Business _____ • Other (Please,

specify) _____

7. If you have additional comments or thoughts on the coordination and control of global

public relations in MNCs after international M&As, please include them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!! It is only with your generous help that

this research can be successful.

APPENDIX B
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. COORDINATION AND CONTROL: Coordination refers any administrative tool for achieving integration among different units within an organization or to mechanisms used to integrate various activities of MNCs' business value chain. Control refers to the process by which merging (or acquiring) organization influences, to varying degrees, the behavior and output of merged (or acquired) organization through the use of power, authority and a wide range of bureaucratic, cultural and informal mechanisms.

2. GLOBAL INTEGRATION AND LOCAL RESPONSIVENESS: A multinational corporation (MNCs) faces two asymmetrical forces of standardization or the pressures for global integration and adaptation or the pressures for local responsiveness. Forces of global integration include need to maximize efficiency by exploiting global economies of scale and scope, Convergence of national markets and need for production efficiency, and efficiency gains of standardization. Forces of local responsiveness include need to maximize market sensitivity by addressing differences in language, cultural and socio-economic environment, and historical legacy, consumer divergence, and host-government policies.

3. STANDARDIZATION AND ADAPTATION: To deal with the above mentioned pressures, an MNC can follow a global approach (standardization) in which home country assumptions are fundamental or a local approach (adaptation) in which host country practitioners exercise a high autonomy in planning programs and activities based on their experiences and contacts.

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORM

Dear <NAME>,

I am a graduate student at the College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida, working with Dr. Juan Carlos Molleda, associate professor in the department of Public Relations on my master's thesis. The purpose of my thesis is to understand the coordination and control of global public relations in multinational corporations after international mergers and acquisitions.

Dr. Molleda and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Because of your rich and vast professional experience, your views are extremely valuable to us.

We know you are extremely busy professional, but this study will only take 10-15 minutes of your valuable time. This study is structured as a Delphi panel investigation and seeks your responses to a set of presupposition developed by the researcher from the scholarly research in the field of coordination and control of public relations. The questionnaire is structured as an online-survey with seven open-ended questions. After you respond to the initial set of statements, we will analyze and compile the data and send it to you for your final review. A Delphi study requires at least two "rounds" of data gathering, and perhaps three. In other words, after you respond to the initial set of propositions attached here, the data will be analyzed and compiled into one more set of statements to which you again would be asked to respond a few weeks from now. If you agree to participate in the project, it is critical that you continue with it through both rounds.

Please note that Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However, once the researcher receives yours responses, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed (any encryption,

IP addresses, host securities, etc. will be discarded). The data resulting from this study will be

kept indefinitely in secure office storage for purposes of data analysis. If you are not comfortable

with the level of confidentiality provided by the Internet, please feel free to print out a copy of

the questionnaire, fill it out by hand, and mail it to us at the address given below, with no return

address on the envelope.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no anticipated risks,

compensation or other direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. You are free to

withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the study at any

time without consequence.

Without the cooperation of people like you, this project would not be possible. If you have

any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, please contact:

Rajul Jain
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida 32611- 8400
jainrajul@ufl.edu
(352) 871- 0467

Dr. Juan Carlos Molleda
College of Journalism and Communications
3046 Weimer hall
PO box 118400
Gainesville, FL 32611- 8400
jmolleda@jou.ufl.edu
(352) 273-1223

Please Note: Research at the University of Florida that involves human participants is overseen
by the Institutional Review Board. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a
research participant should be addressed to the IRB02 Office at the University of Florida, Box
112250, Gainesville, FL 32611- 2250. Telephone: (352) 392-0433

By completing the online questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the research. Please
begin the questionnaire now by clicking on the "Next" button below.

APPENDIX D
DELPHI ROUND ONE EMAIL COVER LETTER

Date: <DATE> 2009 07:51:07 -0800
From: Rajul Jain <jainrajul@ufl.edu>
To: jainrajul@ufl.edu
Subject: University of Florida seeks your participation

Dear <NAME>,

I am a graduate student at the College of Journalism and Communications, University of

Florida, working with Dr. Juan Carlos Molleda, associate professor in the department of Public

Relations on my master's thesis. The purpose of my thesis is to understand the coordination and

control of global public relations in multinational corporations after international mergers and

acquisitions.

Dr. Molleda and I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Because of your rich and

vast professional experience, your views are extremely valuable to us.

We know you are extremely busy professional, but this study will only take 10-15 minutes of

your valuable time. This study is structured as a Delphi panel investigation and seeks your

responses to a set of presupposition developed by the researcher from the scholarly research in

the field of coordination and control of public relations. The questionnaire is structured as an

online-survey with seven open-ended questions. After you respond to the initial set of

statements, we will analyze and compile the data and send it to you for your final review.

To start the study, please use the following links. The first link contains 7 presuppositions for

which we would like your response. The second link is a glossary of terms used in this study to assist

you in your responses.

Presuppositions: <LINK>

Glossary of terms: <LINK>

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. It will be immensely helpful, if you could complete the questionnaire by <DATE>.

If you know someone, who you think can contribute to this study, please feel free to forward this email to them.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. Without the cooperation of people like you, the project will fail. If you have any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, please contact

Rajul Jain
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APPENDIX E
DELPHI ROUND ONE FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Date: <DATE> 2009 07:51:07 -0800
From: Rajul Jain <jainrajul@ufl.edu>
To: jainrajul@ufl.edu
Subject: Reminder: University of Florida seeks your participation

Dear <NAME>,

Dr. Juan Carlos Molleda and I are extremely grateful to you for expressing your

willingness to participate in a Delphi study on the coordination and control of global public

relations in multinational corporations after international mergers and acquisitions.

We would like to thank you, if you already responded to the online questionnaire. If

however, you haven't had a chance to fill it out yet, we would like to extend our request to fill

out the online survey by <DATE>.

To start the study, please use the following links. The first link contains 7 presuppositions

for which we would like your response. The second link is a glossary of terms used in this study

to assist you in your responses.

Presuppositions: <LINK>

Glossary of terms: <LINK>

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. Without the cooperation of people

like you, the project will fail. If you have any questions about the research, now or during the

course of the project, please contact

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DELPHI ROUND TWO INSTRUMENT

The Delphi round two instrument is on the following six pages. Because the actual round was conducted online, it is not possible to recreate the instrument as it was presented to practitioners. The original questionnaire was two pages corresponding to 11 declarative statements, two pages corresponding to eight additional comments, and the last expressing thank you page.

Delphi Round Two Instrument

How to Proceed with the Responses

Below are 11 statements corresponding to the 7 propositions sent to you in Round 1. These statements represent revisions based on your responses in the first round. Please read each statement carefully and indicate if the statement reflects professional reality Always, Very Often, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never. Then, if you wish, add comments as to why you feel that way (if you do not have a specific comment about the statement, you need not say anything – but comments would be appreciated).

1. Irrespective of the size of the merged (or acquired) organization, power and autonomy in decision-making, planning, implementation, and evaluation of public relations operations offered to public relations executives working at merged (or acquired) organization depends on several factors such as the financial and corporate structure of the two organizations, skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired) organization's public relations executives, types of merger and acquisition and the strategy behind it, and the period before, during, and after merger and acquisition.

   The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

2. Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory

environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor

standardization of the public relations function ONLY IF there are no differences

between the two organizations in terms of corporate cultures, language, cultural or

regional background of employees.

The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

3. Similarity of the market development, competitive environment, and external

   environment conditions (culture, socio-economic conditions, political, and regulatory

   environments) between the collaborating organizations' regions will favor

   standardization of the public relations function. HOWEVER, public relations function

   may need localized modifications depending on the nature of industry also. Therefore,

   certain provisions at local levels like process variances, size of the teams in different

   regions etc. should be kept optional while standardization is planned.

   The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

4. Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise ONLY IF there are efficiencies in localizing these functions and the market conditions are conducive.

   The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

5. Merged (or acquired) organization's public relations professionals will obtain more autonomy and power in decision making in their markets, if the management has more confidence in their skills, abilities, experience, and expertise, ESPECIALLY in cases where the acquired company provides an area of expertise that is deemed strategically important for the "parent" organization.

   The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

6. Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic

communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance taking over the public relations role ONLY IF corporate culture is conducive, management understands the importance of strategic public relations, and public relations department has the required expertise and sophistication.

The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

7. Merged (or acquired) organizations with large operations in a given country will have a specialized public relations department, who will be responsible for strategic communication functions instead of personnel from other departments such as human resources, legal, or finance taking over the public relations role. HOWEVER, it is not "critical" for any organization (irrespective of size) to have an in-house public relations competency. Even some of the biggest organizations outsource their public relations to specialist professionals and have some resources in house to supervise them.

    The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

8. International mergers following a split control arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management ONLY WHEN local partner has the required expertise to carry forward the operations in local markets.

   The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

9. International mergers following a split control arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners WILL NOT perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management.

    The above statement is true:

   a. Always

   b. Very Often

   c. Sometimes

   d. Rarely

   e. Never

10. The level of integration will vary across the strategic communication practices (e.g. investor relations, community relations, employee relations, media relations) within the

merged (or acquired) organization depending upon the available resources and organization's corporate culture.

The above statement is true:

 a. Always

 b. Very Often

 c. Sometimes

 d. Rarely

 e. Never

11. Organizations that utilize a combination of formal and informal mechanisms of coordination and control will be more effective than those who do not. HOWEVER, it is not true for large organizations, where a combination of formal and informal mechanisms can lead to uncertainty.

 Below are specific comments from participants in Round 1. Please read each statement carefully. On the scales of 1 (strongly disagree)-5 (strongly agree), mark the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Then, if you wish, add comments as to why you feel that way (if you do not have a specific comment about the statement, you need not say anything – but comments would be appreciated).

1. Acquiring organization's financial structure affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization. For example, privately held operations are able to provide a greater level of autonomy for its operations than those that are part of publicly held operations.

 a. Strongly Agree

 b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

2. Corporate culture of the two organizations affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

3. Skills, expertise, performance, and reputation of merged (or acquired) organization's public relations executives affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

4. Types of merger and acquisition and the strategy behind it affect the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization. For example, whether M&A is done to gain access to new markets or to consolidate in existing markets; PR executives in the latter case might get more overall autonomy.

    a. Strongly Agree

b. Agree

c. Neutral

d. Disagree

e. Strongly Disagree

5. Time frame of merger and acquisition affects the power and autonomy offered to public relations executives in merged (or acquired) organization; public relations executives will play a more active role during merger and acquisitions; however, in the long-term power and autonomy is dictated by their performance within the organization.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

6. Power and autonomy form an inverse relationship; large -size organizations tend to offer greater power to public relations executives; however, these organizations usually have multiple levels in the management hierarchy, and thus autonomy is relatively restricted.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

7. International mergers following a one partner dominant (either MNC or local partner) management arrangement to designate responsibilities to public relations departments of MNCs and local partners will perform better than other arrangements, such as shared management or split control.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

8. The decision of split controls versus shared management or one partner dominant arrangements depends by and large on the type of industry, span of operations, nature of operations and top management mindsets of both the partner organization.

    a. Strongly Agree

    b. Agree

    c. Neutral

    d. Disagree

    e. Strongly Disagree

9. If you have additional comments or thoughts on the coordination and control of global public relations in MNCs after M&As, please include them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your time and consideration!! It is only with your generous help that this research can be successful.

APPENDIX G
DELPHI ROUND TWO EMAIL COVER LETTER

Date: <DATE>2009 07:51:07 -0800
From: Rajul Jain <jainrajul@ufl.edu>
To: jainrajul@ufl.edu
Subject: Invitation for second round of University of Florida study

Dear <NAME>,

Dr. Juan Carlos Molleda and I are extremely grateful to you for participating in the Round 1 of this Delphi study on the coordination and control of global public relations in multinational corporations after international mergers and acquisitions a few weeks ago. Finally, after days of analysis of your responses, the second and final round of the study is ready for your participation. Now that you have so kindly participated in the first round, your assistance in the second round instrument is even more important.

This study gathered responses from 11 international public relations and communications experts like you. We are extremely pleased with the breadth of participation. It represents a broad portion of the world. From your combined, thoroughly insightful comments, we have been able to produce the second and final instrument.

We have tried hard to select a sample of statements that represent the broad range of your feedback - those you agreed and those who disagreed with our own viewpoints. The statements, for the most part, are included here exactly as you wrote them. In a few instances, we had to modify a word here or there to clarify or strengthen the assertion. Please don't be offended if you recognize one of your comments that has been slightly changed (or understand that someone else may have made a comment very similar to yours, and theirs is the one actually included here).

This study will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. There are 11 declarations and 8 specific comments for which we would like your response. Probably the best way to proceed is

to go through each statement and pick the option that best describes the extent to which it

represents professional reality in your experience. Then, if you wish, add comments as to why

you feel that way (if you do not have a specific comment about the statement, you need not say

anything – but comments would be greatly appreciated).

To start the study, please use the following links:

Declarations and Comments: <LINK>

Glossary of terms: <LINK>

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. Please review this instrument and

respond to it by <DATE>.

Without the cooperation of people like you, this project would not be possible. If you have

any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, please contact:

Rajul Jain
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Gainesville, Florida 32611- 8400
jainrajul@ufl.edu <mailto:jainrajul@ufl.edu>
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PO box 118400
Gainesville, FL 32611- 8400
jmolleda@jou.ufl.edu <mailto:jmolleda@jou.ufl.edu>
(352) 273-1223

Date: <DATE>2009 07:51:07 -0800
From: Rajul Jain <jainrajul@ufl.edu>
To: jainrajul@ufl.edu
Subject: Reminder: second round of University of Florida study

Dear <NAME>,

Dr. Juan Carlos Molleda and I are extremely grateful to you for participating in the Round 1 of this Delphi study on the coordination and control of global public relations in multinational corporations after international mergers and acquisitions a few weeks ago. This study gathered responses from 11 international public relations and communications experts like you. We are extremely pleased with the breadth of participation. It represents a broad portion of the world. From your combined, thoroughly insightful comments, we have been able to produce the second and final instrument.

You might have received our invitation to participate in the second round of this study a few weeks ago. We would like to thank you, if you already responded to the second round. If however, you haven't had a chance to fill it out yet, we would like to extend our request to fill out the second round survey by <DATE>.

We have tried hard to select a sample of statements that represent the broad range of your feedback - those you agreed and those who disagreed with our own viewpoints. The statements, for the most part, are included here exactly as you wrote them. In a few instances, we had to modify a word here or there to clarify or strengthen the assertion. Please don't be offended if you recognize one of your comments that has been slightly changed (or understand that someone else may have made a comment very similar to yours, and theirs is the one actually included here).

This study will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. There are 18 multiple choice questions for your review. Probably the best way to proceed is to go through each statement and pick the option that best describes the extent to which it represents professional reality in your experience. Then, if you wish, add comments as to why you feel that way (if you do not have a specific comment about the statement, you need not say anything - but comments would be greatly appreciated).

To start the study, please use the following links:

Declarations and Comments: <LINK>

Glossary of terms: <LINK>

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. Without the cooperation of people like you, this project would not be possible. If you have any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, please contact:

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rajul Jain was born in 1981 in Indore, India. She received the Bachelor of Engineering in Information Technology from Ragiv Gandhi Technical University, Bhopal, India in 2003 and the Master's of Technology in Information and Communication Technology from Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Gandhinagar, India in 2005. She was awarded the certificate of outstanding achievement by the University of Florida in 2007-08. She has served as a Teaching Assistant and Instructor in the Department of Public Relations at College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida. Her research interests include international public relations management, global coordination and control mechanisms, and international business management strategies. Rajul has worked as a Business Analyst from 2005-2007 at Reliance Communications, India.