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Mass Media Orientation and External Communication Strategies: Exploring Organisational Differences

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses relationships between mass media orientations of communication professionals in organisations and their external communication strategies. We assume that mass media orientations within an organisation may affect an organisation's external communication strategies of bridging and buffering. A survey among 150 Dutch communication professionals working for both for-profit and public organisations as well as NPOs was conducted. Our study shows that preferences for specific communication strategies are related to different forms of media orientation. Having media attention as an organisational goal is more strongly associated with buffering, that is, one-way and symmetric communication, yet a more negative attitude toward the media also hinders an organisation from bridging activities. Overall, few differences between the three types of organisations regarding communication strategies and media orientations were found.

Mass media are said to be increasingly pervasive in political and organisational life (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2010; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Schillemans, 2012). According to mediatisation scholars, media logic is incorporated in the functioning of organisations (Hjarvard, 2008; Klinger & Svensson, 2014). Consequently, organisations adapt their processes and structures to media pressure (Hjarvard, 2008; Pallas & Fredriksson, 2013; Schillemans, 2012). One example of these adaptations is that organisations professionalise their strategies to deal with the media (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007). External communication strategies have received increasing scholarly attention over the past decade (Jain, De Moya, & Molleda, 2014). External communication aims at reaching out to external stakeholders such as shareholders, customers, or the general public via various channels such as mass media, social media, and newsletters. A reoccurring assumption in research on external communication strategies is that these strategies are flexible and continuously adapted, for instance, to the institutional environment of the organisation (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Sandhu, 2009; Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005). Therefore, two questions are raised when combining the supposition of mediatisation on the one hand and the assumed flexibility of external communication strategies on the other hand. These concern 1) the relation of mediatisation and external communication strategies and 2) organisational differences regarding these relationships.

The first question is to what extent organisational mediatisation processes affect external communication strategies. Mediatisation can apply to several processes, levels, and structures in organisations (Pallas & Fredriksson, 2013). In this study, we focus on the links between a specific form of mediatisation, which is media orientation, and its relations with two main communication strategies: bridging and buffering. "Media orientation" refers to the attitude of communication professionals towards mass media. It can be used as an indicator of the status of mediatisation within organisations

on the individual level of communication professionals (Kohring, Marcinkowski, Lindner, & Karis, 2013: 173). Previous research has not yet studied how professional attitudes towards the media influence decisions regarding external communication strategies.

Processes of mediatisation are often examined within one type of organisation, for example corporations (e.g., Pallas & Fredriksson, 2013) or public sector organisations (Schillemans, 2012; Thorbjørnsrud, Ihlen, & Figenschou, 2014), but no comparisons between these groups of organisations have been made. Studies that focus on the mediatisation of nongovernmental organisations (NPOs) seem to be non-existent. For that reason, a second issue is organisational diversity: To what extent do these processes differ between organisation types? Three types are taken into account in the present study: companies (private sector or profit organisations), public (sector) organisations, and NPOs. As these organisations differ in fundamental respects, such as the relevance of certain environmental factors and internal processes and structures, it could be expected that not all types of organisations are equally susceptible to mediatisation processes (Rainey, Backoff, & Levine, 1976; Sandhu, 2009).

We expect not only that media orientations will vary between communication professionals in organisations, but also that their external communication strategies will be different. Previous research shows that the institutional environment matters for PR. It shows that there are differences between public and private sector communication practices, for example in budgets, public pressure, media coverage frequency, and media coverage evaluation (Liu & Horsley, 2007; Liu, Horsley, & Levenshus, 2010).

Research on external communication strategies traditionally belongs to the domain of communication science (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005). Research on public sector organisations and their relations with media, however, is limited compared to research on the media relations of companies (Jacobs, 2014; Liu & Horsley, 2007; Liu et al., 2010; Schillemans, 2012). Even less is known about external communication strategies that are adopted by NPOs or social movements whose media and communication circumstances are a little more different. As Vliegthart and Walgrave (2012) state in their chapter on social movements in the news, research in this field is often conducted by sociologists.

Therefore, one of our tasks in this study is to integrate literature from these different fields. In the end, firms, public organisations, and other nonprofit organisations all belong to the same family or umbrella category of “organisations” (Scott & Davis, 2007). Our goal is to explore media orientations of communication professionals across these types of organisations and differences in consequence of these media orientations for external communication strategies. For this reason, we adopt the perspective of communication science to study communication professionals’ media orientations and external communication strategies and the perspective of organisation science to describe their institutional features. This constitutes our contribution to our understanding of communication strategies in different institutional contexts. To answer our questions, we conducted a survey among Dutch communication professionals who work at public sector organisations, NPOs, and profit organisations (firms).

Mediatisation and media orientation

Mediatisation has increasingly attracted scholarly attention. The concept is applied in the fields of politics, religion and science (Kohring et al., 2013; Landerer, 2013; Livingstone, 2009), but organisations seem to have stayed outside the scope of research on this concept for a long while. In the literature on mediatisation and organisations, two strands are dominant (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Deacon & Stanyer, 2014). The institutionalist tradition (as explained by Hjarvard, 2008) treats media as an independent social institution that has its own set of rules. The second strand is called the social-constructivist tradition, which refers to a communicative construction of reality and the role of various media in these processes (Couldry & Hepp, 2013).

The present research fits the first strand and follows Hjarvard’s conception of the media and their transformative influence; media are said to integrate into the operations of other social institutions, “while they also have acquired the status of social institutions in their own right” (Hjarvard, 2008: 113). Klinger and Svensson indicate that the concept of mediatisation both serves as a meta-process

to describe the infiltration of media logic in societal processes and as a way to “analyze the interplay between media and other social institutions” (Klinger & Svensson, 2014: 1243). We are interested in the latter, institutional meaning (Hjarvard, 2008).

If media are understood as an institution with its own logic, then mediatisation implies that other social fields or systems accommodate to its logic (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008). These media rules are commonly described as “media logic,” a term that was coined by Altheide and Snow (1979). Therefore, “mediatisation” refers to the adaptation of nonmedia actors such as organisations to the logic of the media (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Strömbäck, 2008). Thus, if nonmedia actors want to act successfully in a society in which media are dominant, conformation to media logic is necessary (Couldry & Hepp, 2013: 196).

Despite its popularity, mediatisation suffers from a lack of conceptual clarity. Strömbäck (2008: 229) states that the concept is used more often than that it is properly defined. Due to the varying conceptualisations, the concept has little discriminatory power: It is “a container in which different things can be placed” (Sartori, paraphrased in: Deacon & Stanyer, 2014). Next to that, the assumptions about causation are doubtful. Are the mass media powerful enough to bring about change and are they both necessary and sufficient for the alleged effects (Deacon & Stanyer, 2014)? Deacon and Stanyer (2014) also point to the issue of time and indicate that little agreement exists on the definition of the starting point and the end of mediatisation processes.

Regarding the conceptual confusion, we do not aim to test the full concept but follow the approach that is discussed by Lunt and Livingstone (2016); we treat mediatisation as a concept that opens up a research programme. For this reason, we use “mediatisation” as a presumption for this research. Mediatisation is understood as a “prevailing transformation,” not only on the level of the organisation but influencing communication activities of individuals as well (Pallas & Fredriksson, 2013: 420). Therefore, we focus on a manifestation of mediatisation, which is mass media orientation (Kohring et al., 2013). This concept captures mediatisation effects at the individual level (Kohring et al., 2013). Our expectation is that personal and organisational orientations towards journalists and media can be considered a crucial aspect of mediatisation and could be an important factor in determining organisational external communication strategies, as we suppose that media are an important factor in the environment of organisations (Rainey, 2009: 116–117). Among other factors, considerations about the environment shape organisational strategies, such as external strategies (Scott & Davis, 2007: 317–319). Consequently, communication strategies of organisations may differ, dependent on the evaluations of the media environment.

Mass media orientation

Media orientation is an important part of mediatisation (called “medialization” by Rödder (2009: 461)),¹ but it has not received much empirical attention (Rödder, 2009: 454). In social science, various concepts related to “orientation” exist. Their commonality is the identification and analysis of a certain aspect of the environment and, consequently, the undertaking of actions on the basis of this analysis. “Competitor orientation,” for example, can be defined as “the ability and the will to identify, analyze, and respond to competitors’ actions” (Narver & Slater, paraphrased in: Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997: 78). “Identity orientation” describes how individuals view themselves with respect to others. It also refers to how self-views shape people’s actions and motivations (Brickson, 2007). “Goal orientation” refers to beliefs that lead to the different ways in which people approach achievement situations (Ames, cited in: Wolters, Yu & Pintrich, 1996: 212).

In our case, we refine the concept of “media orientation” to “mass media orientation.” This concept describes how relevant or influential media coverage about their organisation is perceived by communication professionals for their work in particular, as well as for their organisation in general (Rödder, 2009; Weingart, 1998). Consequently, it might influence their strategies. Kohring et al. (2013) state that “media

¹Rödder (2009: 463) uses “medialisation,” “mediatisation” and “mediation” synonymously.

orientation” can be used to capture mediatisation effects at the individual level and call this “mental mediatisation.” In their (and our) view, mass media orientation can be seen as a subdimension of mediatisation in organisations, as it refers to the perceived relevance and importance of media coverage for the organisation.

Previous research has used this concept mainly in the context of science communication. Rödder uses rather broad phenomena, specific to the field of science, as indicators for media orientation. For example, she indicates press conferences, publication of research results in the mass media prior to their scientific publications, the occurrence of “visible” scientists in the media and the intertwining of the media discourse with other discourses (Rödder, 2009: 454). Also Weingart (1998) discusses the phenomenon of a “media orientation” specifically in the context of its consequences for science. These rather specific conceptualisations are, however, not applicable to the comparison of organisations from a broader variety of contexts. The work of Kohring et al. (2013) is most useful here. They investigated (among other things) media orientations of university decision makers drawing on generalisable aspects of this concept.

Together with the rise of new media, new conceptualisations of media logic are emerging, such as network media logic (Klinger & Svensson, 2014). Media usage, production, and distribution occur in a different way on social media platforms compared with mass media. Network media logic focuses much more on the level of the individual user, its sharing behaviour, and its preferences, instead of the journalist’s selection mechanisms (Klinger & Svensson, 2014). With the rise of social media and network media logic it is important to discern different media types in any empirical conceptualisation of mediatisation. Therefore, building on previous work on media orientation, this article focuses on orientations towards the mass media, thus mass media orientation, and not towards the media landscape as a whole. We refer to mass media as organisations that distribute content to wide audiences by means of various technological channels (Potter, 2012). These channels thus include traditional offline as well as online platforms.

Based on previous research, we discern three important subdimensions of media orientation: attention seeking, strategic impact, and media hostility. The first dimension of media orientation describes the perceived relevance of media coverage and media attention for an organisation (Kohring et al., 2013). In other words, how important is it for an organisation to attract media attention? Media attention is not just a goal on its own but might have consequences for organisational decision making (Kohring et al., 2013).

For adequate strategic decision making, it is necessary to scan the organisational environment for, among other things, risks and opportunities. This also implies that the current media situation is taken into account (Scott & Davis, 2007). Therefore, a second dimension of organisational media orientation comprises the relevance of media attention for strategic decision making. Future as well as past media attention may play a role here, as we know that organisational learning and behaviour are influenced by experiences in the past (Argyris & Schön, 1978).

Finally, a third dimension takes the perceived quality of media coverage about an organisation into account. Although media coverage is considered a useful instrument to increase publicity by many organisations, research has revealed that companies, and multinationals in particular, are often covered in negative ways (Choi & Cameron, 2005). The tone of media coverage, thus, might determine to what extent media coverage is desirable and how it affects decision making. Research on hostile media effects has shown that partisans tend to perceive media as biased against their own political stance (Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia, 2001). Similarly, hostile media perceptions might be found among members of organisations and, consequently, influence the communication strategies of their organisations.

External communication strategies

Strategic communication is generally defined as “the purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfill its mission” (Hallahan et al., 2007: 3). As such, it is used as an umbrella concept that covers goal-directed communication activities (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015: 3). It refers to the organisation’s self-presentation and promotion by, among other actors, communication practitioners

(Hallahan et al., 2007: 7). Holtzhausen and Zerfass redefined strategic communication as “the practice of deliberate and purposive communication that a communication agent enacts in the public sphere on behalf of a communicative entity to reach set goals” (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, cited in: Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015: 4). This definition can be considered as more comprehensive. Research in this field regards the interaction of organisations with stakeholder groups such as employees and customers, but focuses on interaction with the media as well (Hallahan et al., 2007). External communication can be considered as a part of strategic communication. It aims at reaching out to external stakeholders such as shareholders, customers, or the general public. This occurs via various channels such as mass media, social media, and newsletters. Although it aims at reaching out to external stakeholders, internal stakeholders might also be affected via these channels. This is vital for organisations in order to maintain relations with their (external) stakeholders and the public.

Communication strategies have been characterised by their underlying aim to either form a bridge or buffer between an organisation and its stakeholders (e.g., Grunig, 2006). Although buffering is applied to preserve an organisation’s position and reputation, bridging takes a more active stance by engaging with stakeholders to reach mutual understanding and being open to organisational transformation. Buffering and bridging have been described specifically as public affairs strategies (Meznar & Nigh, 1995) or more generally as two possible issue-specific response strategies. The distinction between defensive and proactive strategies is also reflected by the polarity of advocacy and accommodation introduced by contingency theory (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997). In practice, a diversity of communication strategies is applied by most organisations depending on specific situational and organisational factors. Therefore, bridging and buffering should be regarded as a continuum as opposed to discrete models of communication strategies (Cancel et al., 1997; Grunig, 2006). With the rise of new media, new opportunities have opened up for organisations regarding bridging and buffering strategies. We do not, however, include them in this research since this article is oriented towards the way communication professionals are oriented towards the mass media.

Bridging

Bridging has been described as an open and active approach toward the organisational environment (Meznar & Nigh, 1995). Following this approach, organisations are open and willing to adapt to changing external conditions or expectations. This is in line with an accommodating function of external communication that focuses on mutually dependent relationships between an organisation and its various stakeholders (Cancel et al., 1997). Two types of external communication strategies might prevail in the practice of bridging: two-way and symmetrical communication as well as practices of research and evaluation.

Two-way communication aims at information exchange by means of dialogue between an organisation and its stakeholders (e.g., Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Two-way communication implies that the organisations listen to the opinions of their (perceived) public. Authentic two-way communication implies a certain degree of communication symmetry. Symmetrical communication tries to adjust the relationship between the stakeholders and organisation (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). More specifically, symmetrical communication implies that an organisation reflects on its own policies and behaviour after considering the public’s views (Sha, 2007: 11).

In addition, bridging strategies often incorporate prior research and subsequent evaluation. The organisation is interested in the public’s positions and tries to find out about them. After applying communication strategies, the organisation may conduct an evaluation to critically assess outcomes and consequences (Sha, 2007: 12).

Buffering

In contrast to bridging, the approach of buffering shields an organisation from external changes and influences. Consequently, the focus here lies on actively influencing the organisational environment

(Mezner & Nigh, 1995). According to contingency theory, buffering coincides with the role of communication professionals as advocates who mainly defend and protect the interests of their organisation (Cancel et al., 1997). In practice, buffering is associated with one-way and asymmetric communication as well as tendencies of conservation.

As opposed to two-way communication, one-way communication is oriented towards information dissemination and is a monologue (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Consequently, this way of communication is largely asymmetrical, leaving the organisations untouched. It aims at changing the public; it is imbalanced (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

Contrary to an open approach toward the organisational environment, organisations lean toward conservation, which reflects the “organisational unwillingness to change” (Sha, 2009: 300). Conservation entails sticking to certain ideals or principles that the organisation will never give up. The organisation is rather immune to pressure from the environment. Next to that, it refers to a certain “egocentricity” of the organisation. Its own goals are central; the organisation is more interested in accomplishing its own agenda than in the individual’s opinion (Sha, 2007: 12). This concept is further rooted in organisation science. It has similarities with Power’s conception of *decoupling* and *colonisation*. In his article on the effects of audit processes on organisations (which can be seen as external pressure, just as media attention), he explains that organisations either try to buffer their *core* or might adapt their functioning to external pressure (*colonisation*) (Power, 1997: 95–96). In other words, it is interesting and relevant to analyse whether public relations practices aim at buffering the organisation or at bridging, i.e., adaptation in interaction with stakeholders (Mezner & Nigh, 1995).

Mediatisation of communication strategies

One of the factors influencing the degree of bridging or buffering might be media orientation, which captures mediatisation effects at the individual level. Perceptions of media attention and the relevance of media coverage for strategic decision making—thus, the degree of mediatisation of public relations—might affect choices for more buffering or more bridging communication strategies. Attention seeking as well as hostile media perceptions can be linked to linear (one-way) models of communication. The organisational aim of receiving media attention and the concern about possible effects of negative or biased media coverage is reflected by a persuasive view on communication that regards media primarily as a means to transmit messages to targeted audiences. According to Grunig (1989), theories of persuasion and diffusion are central to an asymmetric approach of public relations. Perceptions of strategic media impact, in contrast to media attention and hostility, can be related to two-way models of communication that incorporate principles of dialogue and mutual dependencies. If an organisation actively incorporates media coverage in decision-making processes, media can be assumed to serve as platforms for stakeholder dialogue going beyond the persuasive view. This is in line with Grunig (1989) who suggested that symmetric communication is guided by dialogic approaches such as co-orientation or conflict-resolution theories. Based on these assumptions we formulated hypotheses addressing the relationships of media orientation and buffering as well as bridging strategies of public relations.

H1: Buffering communication strategies are positively related to media attention seeking.

H2: Buffering communication strategies are positively related to media hostility.

H3: Bridging communication strategies of public relations are positively related to strategic media impact.

Organisation types

From the mediatisation perspective, media can be considered as “constituting and framing the environment in which ideas about the ways organisations should organise and carry out their activities are created, carried, exchanged and evaluated” (Pallas & Fredriksson, 2013: 421). We

assume that different types of organisations (firms, public sector organisations, and nonprofit organisations) will be affected differently by the same media environment, and therefore, comparing these sectors is relevant (Invernizzi & Romenti, 2009; Kim & Liu, 2012; Liu et al., 2010; Sandhu, 2009). As Sandhu puts it, “The relevance of the organisational environment also directly affects communication management” (Sandhu, 2009: 85).

PR research is often oriented towards the private sector or firms, sometimes overlooking characteristics of the public sector and other types of nonprofit organisations (Gelders, Bouckaert, & Van Ruler, 2007; Liu & Horsley, 2007; Liu et al., 2010). Liu et al. (2010) investigated the differences and similarities in government and corporate communication practices. Their findings indicate that several institutional factors differ between these groups, such as budgets, interaction with other organisations, public pressure for information, political influence, impact of legal frameworks concerning communication, communication frequency, media coverage frequency, and media coverage evaluation. Regarding media attention, public organisations face more media scrutiny than companies, as journalists might consider “keeping an eye on power” as one of their classical tasks (Liu & Horsley, 2007). On the other hand, the public might be more skeptical about government communication, as this is often associated with “spin” and “propaganda” (Liu & Horsley, 2007). This indicates that institutional differences might play a role in selecting external communication strategies (Liu & Horsley, 2007; Liu et al., 2010). Public organisations are nonprofit organisations (as opposed to privately held companies, which are profit organisations). The label of “nonprofit” contains, however, more types of organisations, such as NPOs. As so-called “third sector” organisations, they are different from governmental organisations and businesses. Two of their key features are their independence and the fact that their directors or owners do not get the profits returned (Schwarz & Fritsch, 2014). Research on nongovernmental organisations often focuses on online communication strategies (Gálvez-Rodríguez, Caba-Perez, & López-Godoy, 2014; Smitko, 2012; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014), eventually combined with branding (Nolan, 2015). For NPOs, media attention is relevant as it is part of their goals to raise public awareness, initiate social change, or raise funds (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2012). As they can draw attention to issues, the media are able to shape the public agenda and to “help” NPOs to raise public awareness (Andrews & Caren, 2010). Therefore, their legitimacy is even more dependent on their interaction with the public and media visibility (Amenta, Caren, Olasky, & Stobaugh, 2009; Cress & Snow, 2000; Yoon, 2005).

We can conclude that several institutional differences exist between these three types of organisations. Due to these institutional differences, we think that media orientations of communication professionals may differ per type of organisation. As a consequence, external communication strategies may differ between public sector organisations, private sector organisations, and NPOs. However, due to the many differences between these types of organisations, we cannot hypothesise exactly what to expect. For that reason, we formulate a specific research question:

RQ1: Does organisation type matter for the effects of media orientations on external communication strategies?

Method

Data

To analyse relationships between media orientation and communication strategies, we conducted an online survey among Dutch communication professionals in public organisations, private firms, and NPOs. Communication officers were invited to participate in the survey via professional social networks such as LinkedIn groups and personal e-mails. Personal invitations were mainly sent to communication professionals working for the most relevant organisations of each of the three sectors in the Netherlands. Seventy-one companies from the top of a list of the 500 largest companies in the Netherlands—annually compiled by the magazine Elsevier (comparable to the Fortune 500)—were

approached. All Dutch quangos (120 in total) were approached via the Dutch quango registry. Eighty NPOs were chosen on the basis of a list of best known Dutch NPOs. Three diner vouchers were offered as incentives for participation.

The online survey was held between September and November 2014. A total of 237 communication professionals participated in the survey. After excluding cases with missing values, a sample of $N = 150$ (58%) remained for the analysis. Accordingly, the response rate of the final sample was 55%. The three types of organisations were about equally represented with about one-third of the respondents working for public-sector organisations (35.3%), for-profit organisations (29.3%) and NPOs (35.3%).

To assess the quality of our sample we compared sociodemographics and some professional characteristics to the European Communication Monitor (ECM) of 2014. The ECM represents the largest European survey among communication professional in Europe ($N = 2,777$). The high share of females in our sample (62.7%) strongly corresponds to the sample distribution of the European Communication Monitor (ECM) of 2014 (61.7%). Therefore, we are confident that the sample replicates the current gender ratio in the field of corporate communication. The age of respondents ranged from 17 to 62 years with an average of $M = 41.3$ years ($SD = 9.2$). Also, this figure is very close to the recent ECM ($M = 40.9$). The share of professionals with more than 10 years of experience in our sample (58.7%) coincides with the European survey (57.7%) as well. In contrast to the ECM, fewer respondents had a position as head of communication (17.3% vs. 40.0%), fewer were unit or team leaders (12.0% vs. 27.6%), and considerably more respondents worked as team members or consultants (41.3% vs. 26.1%). In addition, fewer respondents hold an academic degree (75.3%) compared to the very high proportion in the sample of the ECM (94.1%). Overall, we can conclude that in absence of a representative benchmark for the Netherlands, our sample distribution is highly comparable to this large European study.

Measurement of constructs

Media orientation

Our measurement of media orientation is based on Kohring et al. (2013: 174) who used four items to cover university decision makers' orientation toward the media. We adapted their items to make them suitable for communication officials working for other types of organisations. The concept of media orientation consisted of three subconcepts: attention seeking, strategic impact, and media hostility. All items were answered on 7-point scales (1—completely disagree to 7—completely agree).

Attention seeking. One item that was adapted from Kohring et al. (2013) tapped into the relevance of media attention: “It is important for my organisation to attract media attention” ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.69$).

Strategic impact. Based on two items by Kohring et al. (2013) respondents were asked to rate the perceived role of future media attention in strategic decision making and the perceived role of past media attention in strategic decision making ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.57$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .841$).

Media hostility. Perceived media hostility was roughly based on Pinkleton and Weintraub Austin's (2002) concept of negativism towards media and previous measures of perceived media bias (e.g., Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1994; Gunther & Schmitt, 2004), but adapted to the organisational context. The respondents rated to what extent “The media only cover negative news about my organisation,” “The media try to damage my organisation,” and “The media wrongly cover competitors and comparable organisations more positively than my organisation.” In addition, respondents were asked to what extent media coverage about their organisation is unbiased and correct and to what extent journalists have enough knowledge to report correctly on their organisation. These three items were reversed. All six items yielded a reliable scale ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.91$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .708$).

External communication strategies

To gauge the activities of bridging and buffering, measures of the strategic dimensions of public relations were adopted from Sha (2007). In total, 15 items of the dimensions two-way communication, symmetrical communication, and conservation were included. The dimension of ethical communication proposed by Sha (2007) was not considered relevant for the distinction of bridging and buffering and, therefore, not taken into account. All items were answered on 7-point scales (1—completely disagree to 7—completely agree).

Two-way communication. With three items, respondents were asked to evaluate to what extent their organisation listens to stakeholders, conducts research on stakeholder opinions, and evaluates communication strategies. In addition, two items adopted from Reber and Cameron (2003) reflected the extent to which an organisation steps into dialogue with stakeholders.

Symmetric communication. Symmetry was gauged by two items: “The organisation consults those affected by its policies during decision making,” and “The organisation plays an important role in mediating conflicts between the organisation and its publics.” Three items gauged asymmetric communication by measuring to what extent organisations apply communication strategies to convince stakeholders, increase stakeholder support, and informs stakeholders about relevant issues.

Conservation. Finally, five items on conservation activities were included. They asked respondents to reflect on to what extent their organisation adheres to its mission and goals: “My organisation often changes its goals,” “has an overarching goal that has not been changed since its establishment,” and “is predominantly oriented towards its own goals.” The respondents also reflected on the item to what extent their organisation has “certain ideals or principles that it would never give up,” as well as on an item regarding the likelihood to change in response to external pressures.

Organisational and control variables

A number of organisational characteristics were included to take organisational differences into account. The type of organisation was reflected by two dummy variables: public organisation (35.3%) and NPO (35.3%, see above). For-profit organisations functioned as a reference category for these two dummies. In addition, we accounted for the strategic role of communication professionals in the organisation. Based on questions of the European Communication Monitor (e.g., Verhoeven, Zerfass, & Tench, 2011) 7-point scales were presented asking how seriously senior managers take the recommendations of the communication function and how likely it is that communication professionals would be invited to senior-level meetings dealing with organisational strategic planning ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.41$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .767$). Finally, the gender of the respondents (63% female, 37% male) as well as their professional experience measured on a 3-point scale ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.79$) were added as individual control variables.

Results

Levels of mass media orientation

We assumed that organisational context matters for the prevailing media orientations that might, in turn, affect communication strategies. Therefore, in a first step we assessed the levels of mediatisation by looking at the levels of media orientations for the different organisational contexts. Table 1 provides an overview of media orientations for the three types of organisations that were included in this study. With all three subdimensions measured on a 7-point scale, higher scores indicated higher levels of mediatisation. The average scores of media orientation across all three subdimensions revealed no significant differences due to the organisational context. All three types of organisation

Table 1. Media orientation per type of organization.

Media orientation	Organization type			Total M (SD)
	Profit organization M (SD)	Public organization M (SD)	NPO M (SD)	
Attention seeking	5.28 ^a (1.74)	4.74 ^b (1.90)	6.20 ^{a b} (0.88)	5.38 (1.69)
Strategic impact	5.30 (1.63)	5.12 (1.34)	4.63 (1.71)	5.01 (1.57)
Perceived hostility	2.98 (0.92)	3.22 (1.06)	2.96 (0.68)	3.06 (0.91)
Average score of media orientation	4.52 (0.91)	4.36 (1.00)	4.60 (0.70)	4.48 (0.88)

Note. $N = 150$. ^{a,b} Significant group differences (Scheffe post-hoc test, $p < .05$).

showed medium levels of mediatisation scoring close to the average of $M = 4.5$ ($SD = 0.9$). Overall, we found that organisations were remarkably homogeneous in their degree of attention seeking, perceived strategic impact and hostility of media coverage.

Among the different subdimensions of mass media orientations, attention seeking was most relevant across organisations, followed by strategic impact. Perceived hostility ranked last for all organisation types. Attention seeking was significantly more relevant for NPOs ($M = 6.20$, $SD = 0.88$) compared to profit ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 1.74$) and public organisations ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.90$; $F(2, 149) = 11.521$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$). The strategic impact of media coverage was equally relevant for all three types of organisations. All organisations scored relatively low on perceived hostility, which indicates that communication professionals perceive media coverage about their organisation more often as positive or unbiased instead of negative and biased. In sum, we found high similarities across organisations in terms of media orientations with profit organisations and NPOs being more similar to each other than to public organisations.

Bridging and buffering strategies

As a next step, all 15 items measuring communication strategies were factor analysed to explore their underlying dimensionality. Explorative factor analysis with Varimax rotation yielded initially five factors with an Eigenvalue greater than one. Due to a low percentage of explained variance and also following the indications of the scree plot, only the first four factors were considered for further analysis (see Table A1 in the Appendix). Two factors could be interpreted as bridging and the other two as buffering strategies. Accordingly, four index variables were formed, which reflected the extent of bridging and buffering ranging from 1 to 7 with an acceptable reliability. Factor 1 specifically described forms of two-way and symmetrical communication ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.09$, Cronbach's alpha = .753) and factor 4 comprised the importance of research and evaluation of PR activities ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.40$, Cronbach's alpha = .660). Factor 3, in contrast, included items of one-way and asymmetric communication that can be regarded as buffering ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.07$, Cronbach's alpha = .683). The same applies for factor 2 which comprised conservation strategies ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.53$, Cronbach's alpha = .730).

Bivariate correlations confirmed that organisations generally apply a mix of these four strategies, with the strongest co-occurrence of the two bridging strategies' two-way symmetric and research ($r = .451$) and the weakest association between two-way symmetric and the buffering strategy of conservation ($r = .065$).

Table 2 provides an overview of external communication strategies for the three types of organisations. Similar to the levels of media orientation, we found that organisations were rather homogeneous in that they applied the four external communication strategies.

One-way asymmetric communication was most prominent for all types of organisations. The strategy of two-way symmetric communication ranked second, followed by conservation. Research

Table 2. External communication strategies per type of organization.

Communication strategies	Organization type			
	Profit organization	Public organization	NPO	Total
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Bridging 1: two-way symmetric	4.94 (1.03)	5.07 (1.18)	5.01 (1.05)	5.01 (1.09)
Bridging 2: research	4.08 (1.38)	3.78 (1.52)	4.07 (1.27)	3.96 (1.40)
Buffering 1: one-way asymmetric	5.57 (1.04)	5.20 ^a (1.11)	5.75 ^a (0.98)	5.49 (1.07)
Buffering 2: conservation	4.09 ^a (1.54)	4.57 ^b (1.44)	5.61 ^{a b} (1.24)	4.78 (1.53)

Note. $N = 150$. ^{a,b} Significant group differences (Scheffe post-hoc test, $p < .05$).

and evaluation activities had the lowest relevance for all organisations. Post-hoc tests revealed three significant differences between the groups of organisations. Applying one-way asymmetric communication was more relevant for NPOs ($M = 5.75$, $SD = 0.98$) as opposed to public organisations ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.11$; $F(2, 149) = 3.825$, $p = .024$, $\eta^2 = .05$). Also, conservation was significantly more relevant for NPOs ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 1.24$) than for public ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 1.44$) and profit organisations ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.54$; $F(2, 149) = 14.446$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$). Thus, overall buffering was most relevant for NPOs.

Mass media orientation and external communication strategies

In a second step, we tested our hypotheses regarding the effects of media orientation on communication strategies. Ordinary least square regression on the four communication strategies was applied to estimate the effects of the different dimensions of media orientations. On the organisational level, the type of organisation and the strategic role of communication officers were taken into account. Gender and years of professional experience were included as control variables. All four models are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. OLS-regression models of media orientation on external communication strategies.

Predictor variable	Communication strategy			
	Bridging 1	Bridging 2	Buffering 1	Buffering 2
	<i>b</i> / <i>SE</i>	<i>b</i> / <i>SE</i>	<i>b</i> / <i>SE</i>	<i>b</i> / <i>SE</i>
Gender (female)	0.33 (0.17)	-0.17 (0.22)	0.06 (0.16)	-0.45 (0.24)
Professional experience	-0.08 (0.10)	-0.05 (0.13)	0.04 (0.10)	-0.02 (0.14)
Public organization	0.30 (0.21)	-0.01 (0.26)	-0.15 (0.19)	0.67* (0.28)
NPO	-0.20 (0.22)	0.21 (0.28)	0.14 (0.20)	1.71*** (0.30)
Strategic role	0.23*** (0.07)	0.30*** (0.09)	0.09 (0.06)	0.22* (0.09)
Media orientation: Attention seeking	0.03 (0.05)	0.02 (0.07)	0.20*** (0.05)	-0.09 (0.08)
Strategic impact	0.16* (0.06)	0.20* (0.08)	0.19** (0.06)	-0.01 (0.09)
Perceived hostility	-0.21* (0.09)	-0.11 (0.12)	-0.13 (0.09)	-0.21 (0.13)
Constant	3.61*** (0.58)	1.79* (0.73)	3.25*** (0.53)	4.35*** (0.79)
Adjusted <i>R</i> -square	.162	.185	.275	.199

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients (and standard errors). $N = 150$.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The first hypothesis stated that buffering strategies of external communication are positively related to media attention seeking. Indeed, attention seeking was positively related to the first buffering strategy ($b = 0.20$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$). Organisations for whom it was more important to receive media attention were more likely to apply a one-way and asymmetric style of communication. For the second buffering strategy, conservation, however, no significant effect of attention seeking was found ($b = -0.09$, $SE = 0.08$, n.s.). The models, thus, only partly confirmed hypothesis one.

The second hypothesis addressed the relationship of buffering strategies and media hostility. This media orientation was, however, not significantly related to one-way asymmetric communication ($b = -0.13$, $SE = 0.09$, n.s.) or conservation ($b = -0.21$, $SE = 0.13$, n.s.). Thus, the second hypothesis was not confirmed. There was, however, a negative relationship between perceived hostility and two-way symmetric communication ($b = -0.21$, $SE = 0.09$, $p < .05$) indicating that hostile media perceptions were, indeed, to some extent related to less dialogic communication with stakeholders.

Finally, the third hypothesis assumed a positive relationship between bridging strategies and strategic media impact. The models show that strategic impact was positively associated with the strategies' two-way symmetric ($b = 0.16$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < .05$) and research ($b = 0.20$, $SE = 0.08$, $p < .05$). Thus, the more organisations took past and future media coverage into account for strategic decision making, the more they applied two-way and symmetric forms of public relations and conducted research and evaluation activities, which confirms the third hypothesis. As opposed to our expectations, the analysis also revealed a positive association between strategic impact and one-way asymmetric communication ($b = 0.19$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < .01$). Strategic impact might, thus, not consistently be linked to bridging strategies but also relate to buffering activities to some extent.

Strategic role was the most relevant factor of the control variables. A strong strategic position of communication officers was positively related to both bridging strategies as well as to conservation. The models also reflected the higher relevance of conservation for NPOs and public organisations. Gender and individual professional experience did not contribute with significant effects to the models, indicating that the relationships reflect organisational characteristics that are not influenced by the individual professionals.

Organisational differences

According to the models of [Table 3](#), the application of all communication strategies except conservation did not differ between public organisations, for-profit organisations, and NPOs when controlled for characteristics of the communication professionals and media orientations. Thus, as opposed to the ANOVA test presented above ([Table 2](#)), public organisations and NPOs did not differ in their application of one-way asymmetric communication when taking these controlling factors into account.

[Table 1](#), moreover, revealed a difference in media attention seeking between public, for-profit organisations and NPOs. But did this difference also influence how attention seeking affects communication strategies for different organisations? To answer our research question (RQ1), additional OLS models that included interaction effects for NPOs and the media orientation variables and separate models that included interaction effects for public organisations and media orientations were estimated. In total, we found five significant interaction effects, displayed in [Table 4](#).

For NPOs, a negative interaction effect was found for strategic impact on two-way asymmetric communication ($b = -0.25$, $SE = 0.12$, $p < .05$) indicating that this media orientation was less relevant for predicting the first bridging strategy for NPOs compared to public and for-profit organisations. Similarly, a negative interaction effect was also found for strategic impact on the second type of bridging, research ($b = -0.49$, $SE = 0.14$, $p < .001$). Thus, although overall strategic impact was positively associated with bridging strategies, this did not hold for NPOs. In contrast, the first buffering strategy of one-way asymmetric communication was even more strongly positively related to strategic impact for NPOs compared to the other organisations, as indicated by the interaction effect ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.11$, $p < .05$).

Two interaction effects were found for public organisations. First, a positive effect of strategic impact on the bridging strategy of research ($b = 0.43$, $SE = 0.17$, $p < .05$) indicated that as opposed to



Table 4. Interaction effects of organization type and media orientations on external communication strategies.

	External communication strategy													
	Bridging 1			Bridging 2			Bridging 1			Buffering 1				
	<i>b</i>	(SE)		<i>b</i>	(SE)		<i>b</i>	(SE)		<i>b</i>	(SE)			
Gender (female)	0.31	(0.17)		-0.27	(0.22)		-0.21	(0.22)		0.11	(0.16)		0.11	(0.16)
Professional experience	-0.11	(0.11)		-0.18	(0.14)		-0.13	(0.13)		0.10	(0.10)		0.05	(0.10)
Public organization	0.34	(0.20)		0.02	(0.26)		-1.05	(1.16)		-0.18	(0.19)		-0.99	(0.83)
NPO	1.71	(1.38)		0.10	(1.73)		0.06	(0.28)		1.28	(1.27)		0.20	(0.20)
Strategic role	0.23***	(0.07)		0.29***	(0.08)		0.29***	(0.08)		0.09	(0.06)		0.10	(0.06)
Attention seeking	-0.03	(0.06)		-0.05	(0.07)		0.10	(0.10)		0.23***	(0.05)		0.16*	(0.07)
* NPO	-0.17	(0.18)		0.33	(0.22)					-0.20	(0.16)			
* Public organization							-0.24	(0.14)					0.10	(0.10)
Strategic impact	0.28***	(0.08)		0.42***	(0.10)		0.11	(0.09)		0.09	(0.07)		0.24***	(0.06)
* NPO	-0.25*	(0.12)		-0.49***	(0.14)					0.22*	(0.11)			
* Public organization							0.43*	(0.17)					-0.22	(0.12)
Media hostility	-0.31**	(0.11)		-0.23	(0.13)		-0.15	(0.17)		-0.03	(0.10)		-0.36**	(0.12)
* NPO	0.26	(0.24)		0.18	(0.29)					-0.34	(0.22)			
* Public organization							0.00	(0.24)					0.48**	(0.17)
Constant	3.37***	(0.59)		1.74*	(0.74)		2.20*	(0.94)		3.14***	(0.55)		3.74***	(0.68)
Adjusted R-square	.192			.234			.212			.292			.307	

Note. Only models with significant interaction effects (in bold) are displayed. Unstandardized coefficients (and standard errors) of OLS-regression models. *N* = 150. The interactions of the media orientation variables (attention seeking, strategic impact, and media hostility) were estimated separately for NPOs and public organizations.

* *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

the other organisation types, strategic impact was more relevant for predicting research and evaluation activities for public organisations. Second, a positive effect of media hostility on one-way asymmetric communication ($b = 0.48$, $SE = 0.17$, $p < .01$) indicated that more hostile media perceptions in public organisations translated into a higher probability of applying this form of buffering.

Conclusions and discussion

Although mediatisation processes have been studied in various contexts ranging from politics to religion, mediatisation of corporate communication and the comparison of mediatisation across organisation types have not yet received much attention. This is surprising given the strong interrelations between media and corporate communication and public relations in particular. The aim of this study was to contribute to this research area by examining the impact of mediatisation on external communication strategies. Drawing on the concept of media orientation we assumed that organisational perceptions of mass media attention affect the external communication strategies that are applied by an organisation. An online survey among communication professionals in the Netherlands allowed us to assess the influence of media orientation in public and for-profit organisations as well as on NPOs.

Overall, the findings underline the importance of a mixed motives approach to external communication (Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Van Ruler & Verčič, 2005). Organisations generally applied a mix of communication strategies consisting of accommodating or bridging as well as advocacy or buffering strategies (e.g., Cancel et al., 1997). Although one-way symmetric communication was most relevant, research and evaluation activities ranked last for all organisations. This can be read as an indication that despite the widely acknowledged advantages of bridging activities, the main task of Dutch communication professionals still is to get messages across and, thus, represent the interests of an organisation as opposed to listening and adapting to their environment (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Specifically, the low relevance of research and evaluation activities confirms previous international studies and, thus, can be considered as a more general phenomenon (Austin, Pinkleton, & Dixon, 2000; Verhoeven et al., 2011).

The mixed motives approach is clearly related to strategic considerations. The use of bridging as well as buffering strategies was positively related to the strategic role of communication professionals in their organisation. Although Cancel, Mitrook, and Cameron (1999) have stressed the relevance of the strategic position of PR professionals within organisations for accommodative communication strategies, our findings indicate that advocacy or buffering strategies are also used strategically. In addition, a strategic dimension of mediatisation also came into play here because a strategic orientation toward media coverage related positively to bridging and buffering strategies. Thus, the greater importance of past and future media coverage for strategic decision making within organisations is associated with a mix of communication strategies that offer flexibility in adapting to a specific situation or context.

Organisations who were mainly concerned with receiving media attention, in contrast, were more likely to prefer one-way and asymmetric styles of communication. The media orientation of attention seeking, therefore, seems to be more strongly related to a very traditional perspective of corporate communication as a transmitter of information and organisational viewpoints (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011).

Although attention seeking and strategic impact were the most relevant forms of media orientation across organisations, perceived media hostility was the least relevant one. Positive attitudes toward media coverage, thus, prevail in organisations. A greater perceived media hostility, however, might restrain organisations from more open forms of communication as indicated by a negative relation of hostility and two-way symmetric communication.

Interestingly, the buffering strategy of conservation was not related to one of the media orientations. By strongly adhering to organisational perspectives, goals, and missions, organisations seem to side-step mediatisation processes. Although narcissistic tendencies of organisations have been described as potential threats to an organisation's identity and reputation (Hatch & Schultz, 2002), further research is necessary to empirically explore to what extent such a protective attitude has positive or negative consequences for organisations.

In sum, the present study shows that preferences for specific communication strategies are related to different forms of media orientation. The mixed motives approach that can be observed in most organisations is particularly linked to strategic perceptions of organisational media coverage. Having media attention as an organisational goal is more strongly associated with buffering, that is, one-way and symmetric communication, yet a more negative attitude toward the media also hinders organisations from bridging activities.

We also aimed at exploring the variety in media orientations and communication strategies between the three types of organisations. This was a rather tentative assumption, as previous research elaborates on differences between these types of organisations but does not provide clear expectations that could follow from these differences. We found that the three types of organisations were remarkably homogeneous in their degree of attention seeking, perceived strategic impact and hostility of media coverage.

Overall, few differences between the three types of organisations regarding communication strategies and media orientations were found. Earlier qualitative research has already pointed to the homogeneity of public relations strategies between private and public organisations (Cancel et al., 1999). Because of trends of professionalisation in the public and NPO sector, existing differences in communication cultures might diminish even further. The remaining differences that we could identify between organisations can be strongly linked to specific organisational goals. Although the level of bridging strategies did not differ between NPOs and the other types of organisations, surprisingly, for NPOs these strategies were less guided by a strategic orientation toward the media. Since mobilising the public belongs to the core goals of NPOs (Vliegthart & Walgrave, 2012), applying dialogic principles might be more intrinsically motivated as opposed to a more strategic motivation to involve stakeholders. Buffering in the form of one-way symmetric communication, in contrast, had the highest strategic relevance for NPOs. NPOs displayed the highest level of one-way symmetric communication, and this was also more strongly linked to a perceived strategic impact of media coverage compared to the other types of organisations. This underlines the unique importance of media attention for organisational goals of NPOs (Koopmans, 2004; Vliegthart & Walgrave, 2012).

For public organisations, in contrast to NPOs, two-way communication, specifically research and evaluation, was even more strongly guided by the perceived strategic media impact. This finding might reflect that actively involving the public is not deeply rooted in many bureaucratic processes and requires additional strategic considerations. One-way asymmetric communication of public organisations, however, was more strongly guided by hostile media perceptions. Also, these findings confirm a more protective communication culture of public organisations that might be influenced by the amount of media scrutiny and public skepticism that these organisations face compared to private sector organisations (Liu & Horsley, 2007). As a consequence, mediatisation processes differ between public organisations and other organisations in this study.

Limitations and future research

The starting point for this study was the assumption that as a part of more general societal trends, external communication strategies are influenced by mediatisation processes. In particular, we looked at media orientation as an indicator of mediatisation processes. As an alternative explanation, communication strategies might be considered as an antecedent of media orientation. The choice for a specific model of communication might demand specific ways of approaching media and integrating media attention in communication tasks. Our causal assumption, thus, strongly depends on the question of whether media orientation indeed is a consequence of mediatisation. Following the institutionalist tradition, this study builds on the argument that organisations, as any other social field, need to comply with media logic in order to succeed (Couldry & Hepp, 2013). Ultimately, longitudinal research is necessary to further investigate the interrelationships between these concepts, and possible reinforcing effects might be observed.

This research focused on mass media orientation assuming that mass media (still) are a relevant factor for external communication of organisations as they can reach wide audiences and consequently contribute to shaping public opinion about organisations. With the rise of new—online—media, the diversity of mass media platforms has increased. But more importantly new media types such as social network sites that follow a completely different media logic have also emerged. Research on media orientation should, therefore, be further extended by studying social media orientation. This concept may further expand our understanding of organisational mediatisation processes. As for mass media orientation and for social media orientation, differences can be expected due to the type of organisation. For instance, differences in relationships with main stakeholders, such as consumers, citizens, or donors might become even more apparent when comparing corporate organisations, public organisations, and NGOs.

Sample quality is a common problem for studies dealing with very specific target groups. We tried to avoid strong selection biases by combining open invitations via professional networks and survey invitations based on rank list for different types of organisations. Although some research suggests that selectivity bias might have smaller effects on survey results for specific samples as opposed to general population samples (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008), the procedures followed here do not coincide with random sampling, which limits the generalisability of our findings. A comparison with the demographics of the sample of the European Communication Monitor of 2014 revealed a high similarity of our sample and a larger sample of European communication professionals. Merely the distribution of education and professional position differed, indicating a stronger bias of the ECM toward professionals with an academic degree and those with a top management position. In addition, public organisations clearly were overrepresented in our sample. Since organisation type was included as a predictor, the regression results were adjusted for this bias.

Overall this study could contribute to our understanding of mediatisation processes in different types of organisations and their consequences for external communication. From the perspective of contingency theory, the findings support that mediatisation should be regarded as an additional relevant factor influencing public relations strategies. The concept of media orientation offers a meaningful framework to study mediatisation processes in organisations. Although this study discerned three dimensions of mass media orientation, more research is necessary to further validate this concept in different empirical contexts.

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Appendix

Table A1. Factor structure and loadings of bridging and buffering strategies.

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Bridging 2-way/ symmetrical	Buffering conser-vation	Buffering 1-way/a- symmetrical	Bridging research	
My organization listens to publics' opinions	.705	-.106	.174	.212	-.169
My organization is often unable to engage in dialogue with stakeholders. (reversed)	.669	.096	.147	-.043	-.052
My organization consults those affected by its policies during decision making.	.574	.125	.129	.225	-.085
My organization is willing to engage in dialogue with stakeholders.	.569	-.081	.088	.288	-.092
My organization subscribes to certain ideals or principles that the organization will never give up.	.108	.826	-.009	.206	.000
My organization's mission is unlikely to change in response to external pressures.	-.012	.638	.006	.072	.057
My organization has a sense of purpose that remains unchanged since its founding.	-.013	.618	.058	-.060	.051
It is important for my organization to inform stakeholders on relevant issues via public relations campaigns (e.g., press releases, meetings with community organizations).	.112	-.067	.684	-.048	-.045
My organization uses external means of communication or PR to increase its support among stakeholders.	.227	.037	.642	.093	.022
My organization uses public relations campaigns with the aim to persuade stakeholders (e.g., press releases, meetings with community organizations).	.019	.130	.612	-.058	.001
My organization plays an important role in mediating conflicts between the organization and its publics.	.205	-.047	.293	.167	-.061
Before conducting public relations activities, my organization researches and tries to understand publics' positions.	.221	.133	.002	.742	-.015
After completion of public relations activities, my organization conducts an evaluation.	.327	.118	.222	.491	-.234
My organization exists primarily to accomplish its own goals.	-.027	.231	.043	-.130	.718
When my organization communicates with an individual, the individual feels that the organization is more interested in accomplishing its own agenda than the individual's opinion.	-.331	-.094	-.098	.004	.628
Eigenvalue	3.661	2.141	1.663	1.148	1.034
% of Variance	21.01	11.21	7.59	4.54	3.65

Note. Extraction Method: Unweighted Least Squares. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. Factor loadings $\geq .450$ were considered relevant for a factor and printed in bold.