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Attitudes of Public Relations Professionals in Ukraine Toward the Problem of Bribery

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Attitudes of Public Relations Professionals
in Ukraine Toward the Problem of Bribery

Liliya Velbovets

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Attitudes of Public Relations Professionals in Ukraine Toward the Problem of Bribery

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Ukraine, just as many other countries that were part of the former Soviet Union, is suffering from the problem of bribery. The public relations field in Ukraine is not immune to corruption, and bribery between public relations professionals and journalists is a well-known phenomenon. In the current qualitative study, the goal was to explore the attitudes of Ukrainian public relations professionals toward bribery and to create a guide for doing business in Ukraine. Through a semistructured survey, the researcher obtained the perceptions of Ukrainian public relations professionals toward bribery, including the definition of *bribery*, the differentiation between bribery and traditional gift giving in Ukrainian culture, assumptions regarding the situations in which bribery occurs, and the magnitude of the problem in Ukrainian society. The analysis of the responses showed a dual nature in the public relations professionals' attitudes toward bribery. The participants defined *bribery* as a negative action; however, they believed that bribery occurs regularly even though the participants indicated they had not personally participated in bribery transactions. The participants also reported that bribery occurs between public relations firms and clients. The participants also shared some positive attitudes toward bribery, indicating bribery is a method of achieving goals in business. Additionally, the participants indicated bribery is more common in smaller cities than in large cities, such as the capital. The findings of the study indicate that public relations education and professional training need to include an emphasis on ethical behavior, ensuring public relations professionals in Ukraine have a better understanding of the importance of ethics in the public relations profession.

Keywords: Ukraine, bribery, international public relations

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Center for the Study of Ethical Development in the United States reported that the public relations field is one of the top 10 professions in which personnel deal with the most ethical decision-making issues. Only journalists and dentists face such issues more often (Coleman & Wilkins, 2004). This circumstance makes sense because of the nature of the profession, in which public relations professionals face a great amount of ethical decisions in interactions with their customers, journalists, and government representatives. Public relations professionals can directly influence the destiny of large investments by changing the public's attitude from negative to positive or by raising awareness of an issue in a targeted part of society. With such influence and pressure from customers, public relations professionals may develop the attitude that achieving a goal justifies its means. While this problem is influencing professionals around the world, the current research involved examining how Ukrainian public relations professionals deal with the problem of bribery.

In the current research, the interest was not so much concerning the final actions of professionals and their associates in regard to bribery, but instead, about exploring the professionals' opinions and feelings about the problem of bribery. The research was designed, therefore, to learn how public relations professionals in Ukraine¹ feel about bribery based on the

¹ Ukraine—a lot of people in the United States call Ukraine “the Ukraine.” Such usage is a vestige of the USSR heritage, where Ukraine was part of the larger country, hence the use of “the Ukraine.” Since the country gained its independence in 1991, it is not a part of any other country and so there is no need for the article *the* preceding *Ukraine*. The Ukrainian language does not have articles as the English language does; many Ukrainians are now using the article *the* without giving it much thought, and such usage is frequently seen in various publications. In this work, out of respect to Ukraine as an independent country, I will not be using the article *the*.

In his article, Gregorovich (1994) stated that “there are only two groups of countries which require the article in English: Those with plural names, such as the United States or the Netherlands. The others have names with adjectival or compound forms, which require the article, such as the United Kingdom, the Dominion of Canada, or the Ukrainian SSR. English grammar does not require a definite article before the names of singular countries, such as England, Canada, or Ukraine” (para. 3).

realities of corruption and ideas of ethics. This topic is of particular interest considering Ukraine's historical culture of corruption and high level of corruption during a transitional stage in Ukrainian society (Nevmerzhyzky, 2008).

To better explain some of the opinions expressed in this research, it is important that I (hereafter referred to as "the researcher") include some personal background information. The researcher was born in 1983 and was raised in Kyiv, Ukraine—a perfect time and place to observe the crash of the dysfunctional USSR and communist system and the birth of the unstable yet determined democracy in all of the Eastern European countries. The researcher attended Kiev Shevchenko University for a few years, studying international relations, and after receiving an opportunity to study abroad, the researcher transferred to Brigham Young University. The researcher's goal was to pursue a degree in public relations and learn a different view of the world. Before starting her master's program at BYU, the researcher decided she was responsible for making some impact on the public relations industry in Ukraine and for presenting her understanding of her country to the world. With each class and research assignment, the researcher brainstormed regarding how she could accomplish this goal within the framework and the time limit of the graduate program. She finally decided she should explore a problem that has a great impact on public relations in Ukraine: the problem of bribery and the attitudes toward this problem. As a result, the researcher chose this topic for her master's thesis.

From reviewing public relations data on Eastern Europe, it is apparent that most of the research was not conducted on Ukraine but, rather, on Russia. However, because the problem of bribery has existed in Russia as well, it is beneficial to examine similarities and differences in how bribery is handled in Ukraine and Russia. Since bribery is a well-known problem and is often examined from the perspective of measurement in scales and charts, this study set out to

examine only the attitudes of professionals who live and work daily in an environment in which bribery might be perceived as a normal, and perhaps acceptable, occurrence.

Ukraine has a complex nature, which makes it an attractive country to study. Ancient cultural traditions coexist with Western business standards, remnants from the destructive Soviet regime, and centuries of the people fighting for freedom. After many years without independence, the people of Ukraine are still working on defining their identity and establishing their place in the world. Some people in Ukraine are confused by the new freedoms because in much of the country's history, they have either lived or learned about living under someone else's control and influence. The newfound independence in 1991, and then the famous Orange Revolution, which will be discussed in the literature review, gave Ukrainians more opportunities for free expression and brought many new professional fields to Ukraine. Public relations was one of those new professions.

In examining the topic of bribery problems in Ukrainian public relations, it is important to first gain a general understanding of international public relations and how Ukrainian public relations fits into the global context. Though some researchers believe that through globalization, most public relations practices can be united through similar principles (Kinzer & Bohn, 1985), others claim there is a need for detailed research on each country and its culture because there are crucial, unique factors contributing to the success of the public relations profession in the country (Culbertson, 1996; Tsetsura, 2005). Ukraine is often viewed as a part of the Russian region and Russian public relations, and though it is a valid cultural fit because of the similar histories and the geographical proximity of these countries, Ukraine is a separate, independent country that deserves to be explored on its own.

Due to the need for such country specific research, Sriramesh (2003); Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig (1996); and Wakefield (2001) indicated that when using the generic/specific theory, it is impossible to look at the situation of public relations in each country without looking at all the factors that influence public relations in the country. The same analysis is required when looking at the problem of bribery within the public relations industry in Ukraine; it is impossible to fully explore this problem without looking at all of the factors that influence professionals in Ukraine.

In the current research, the spotlight is on a country that was in the shadow of Russia for the last few hundred years. Yet, in today's environment, especially with the country's size and capacity, it has become a rising player in modern world affairs and in the profession of public relations. Understanding the specific cultural and historic nature of the public relations profession and attitudes in Ukraine will help professionals and companies better understand the people and conduct more successful public relations business in this region.

While Ukraine was a part of the USSR, Ukraine's citizens experienced a lack of freedom and a muddled identity because of the constant restrictions and persecutions experienced by those with a nationalistic mindset and desire to speak out. An unfortunate but powerful lasting effect of the USSR era is lowered ethical standards in multiple areas of Ukrainian life. Erzikova and Berger (2008) explored ethical attitudes of public relations students in Russia and found a persisting lack of ethical behavior among the students because of the "difficult economic situation in the country, Russian authoritarian culture, [and the] development stage of public relations in Russia" (p. 14). Even though these vestiges of the authoritarian culture and political system are also realities in Ukrainian public relations, the democratic situation in Ukraine looks better than that of Russia according to the data about journalism freedoms.

In 2009 Ukraine was ranked as having a greater degree of journalistic freedom than Russia (a ranking of 89 versus 153), according to the Reporters without Borders Press Freedom Index (2009). However, the next year Ukraine's ranking fell to 131, mostly as a result of the corrupt and oppressive presidency of Victor Yanukovich. As indicated in the Press Freedom Index report (2010), there has been a "slow and steady deterioration in press freedom" in Ukraine "since Victor Yanukovich's election as president in February" (p. 1).

Considering the complexity of the influences of and contradictions between the old and the new, the repressive and the democratic, Eastern and Western, it is indeed interesting that the profession of public relations exists in Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine. It is impossible to fully understand how this profession operates within the framework and realities of Ukraine without working and living in Ukraine for some time. In the current study, the problem of bribery in Ukrainian public relations was examined from the perspective of public relations professionals in Ukraine, helping readers to better understand the challenges of public relations in Ukraine today. This study is different from other research on the topic because the topic was approached from dual Ukrainian and Western perspectives, based on the researcher's birth and upbringing in Ukraine and her education in both Ukrainian and United States universities.

The overall goal of this study was to learn about the attitudes of public relations professionals toward bribery between public relations professionals and journalists and to provide a guide for business in Ukraine. Since there are many cultural and historical reasons that may influence these attitudes, it is important to understand how public relations professionals view and understand their relationship to journalists, specifically regarding bribery as an ethical or unethical public relations practice. It is the researcher's hope that examining such an important issue as bribery will be a significant addition to the literature on Ukraine.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While the world is becoming more connected and communication is becoming more global, there is still a need for a targeted local approach to public relations as well as research on public relations. Epley (1992) said that “no matter how small the globe shrinks, it is still made up of many tiny segments, each with its own unique culture, language, politics, and idiosyncrasies. Global public relations is local public relations” (p. 111). Recent studies have indicated that due to the overwhelming effect of global communications, including the broad spectrum of social media, the effects of culture could actually be more influential on the work of the public relations professionals (Wakefield, 2010).

Some examples of the powerful effects of media and communication on globalization are recent political movements, such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 (with the help of cell phone networks), the political uprising in Tunisia in 2011, the political revolution in Egypt in 2011, and the protests for fair elections in Russia in 2011 and 2012. These movements were inspired by ideas from members of neighboring countries, and the use of the subtle yet powerful tools of the Internet and social networks helped unify the grassroots activists and spur them into action (Ingram, 2011).

In the last few years, tyrannical and oppressive governments have been overthrown through the power of social media portals, such as Twitter and Facebook. However, it seems that Epley’s (1992) observation still holds true that despite the impact of globalization, the local components still remain paramount. Nande (as cited in Wakefield, 2010) stated: “People are not global; it is the systems that are global—the interconnectedness is increasing, but large parts of the world are not interconnected” (p. 664). In addition, Gower (2006) stated that “cultural differences in the way public relations is practiced have been found in every country” (p. 180).

Public Relations from an International Perspective

Wakefield (2001) asserted there is a new international movement in public relations that cannot be ignored. “With nearly 40,000 multinational entities and thousands more considering the global marketplace, the implications of the world inevitably confront all organizations—even those that do not want to ‘go global’ but face the reality of foreign competitors in their own backyards” (p. 639). Wakefield (1999) also stated that “even though societies are moving into an increasingly interactive global environment, there is still considerable confusion over the concept of international public relations” (p. 179). It is often not clear for professionals, how to better approach the work with public relations companies and professionals abroad.

Nevertheless, Kruckeberg (1998) stated that the world is moving toward international standards in public relations and “as the level of public relations professionalism increases, a multicultural perspective” will change to “solidarity of ethical assumptions based on common beliefs and ideology” (p. 46). It is clear that many professionals and researchers are already dealing with many international perspectives and constantly searching for better ways to adjust the classic outlines of the public relations profession.

Wakefield (2008) stated that even if a company has offices in more than one country, if an office only operates in one country, the operations are considered domestic. The current study is focused specifically on domestic public relations practices in Ukraine. However, as most of the modern concepts and guidelines of the profession have been developed in the United States and Western Europe and most of the scholarship has been generated by Western researchers, in the existing literature the situation in Ukraine has been viewed from an international or foreign public relations perspective. This international perspective is largely based on the elements of comparative research as described by Culbertson and Chen (1996).

They said that the primary purpose of comparative research “is to identify more or less universal problems that challenge many or all nations and to search for generic principles that apply widely” (Culbertson, 1996, p. 2).

There is a need for understanding and improving business practices during this era of globalization, in which members of more cultures are receiving opportunities to freely work together. Wakefield (1999) addressed the process of individualization in international business that is occurring simultaneously with globalization. He stated that some of the greatest problems appear when “cultures live together but fail to understand each other” (p. 180).

When considering any issue in public relations or communications, obtaining certain additional information leads to a better understanding of the reasons behind the development of an issue and the behaviors and attitudes related to the issue. Even though bribery is a concept that can probably be easily understood in any country, there are still country-specific factors that need to be explored to fully understand the nature of the problem in a certain country. In public relations scholarship, one way to start examining practice in individual countries is through the framework of the generic-specific theory. This theory is useful for understanding the essence and specific nature of business in a country by examining the various factors associated with the country. Wakefield (1996) indicated the researcher should examine the following factors: (a) the level of development in the country, (b) the local political situation, (c) the cultural environment, (d) language differences, (e) the potential for activism, and (f) the role of the mass media. Examining these factors can lead to an understanding of the specific situation in a given country and the issues that are applicable to the country. For a country that has such deep cultural and historical roots as Ukraine, it is essential to use the generic/specific model to better understand the people of Ukraine and the problems in this country.

To understand a country and the traditions and public relations practices in the country, it is important to first look at the roots of the profession in the country. Al Enad (1990) asked an important question after researching public relations development in India: “What is public relations in a culture where the word *public* does not exist in the language?” (p. 4). In Ukrainian, *public relations* is translated as *zvyazky z gromadskistyou*, meaning connections with the public. Even though the Ukrainian concept is similar to that of the English term, the professionals in Ukraine often use the English term *public relations* to describe their work. The term is widely understood in the country and is used as a noun and a verb; for example, “to public relations something” is a widespread expression in Ukraine. Though the same term is used in the United States and Ukraine, the perceptions and practices regarding public relations differ in various ways in the two countries.

Ukraine

Before diving into the details of business in Ukraine, specifically the profession of public relations, it will be useful to provide a more detailed picture of the ancient history of Ukraine. To truly understand the background of the country, it is important to separate the history of Ukraine from the relatively short-lived Soviet Union.

One of the important factors in setting the context for the study is understanding the development of Ukraine (Botan, 1992). Ukraine went from being one of the most influential countries in Europe to being assimilated into Russian culture during the Soviet Union era, followed by a new period of independence and restoration—a restoration that is still occurring. At one time, Ukraine was one of the most powerful countries in Europe, particularly because of being geographically at the heart of Europe, located at the strategic crossroads between East and West. During the 10th and 11th centuries, Ukraine was known as Kyivan Rus and was “the first

eastern Slavic state” (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). At that time, Ukraine was the center of cultural, political, and church life in Eastern Europe. For centuries, Ukraine contained the best educational institutions in Eastern Europe and had the most educated elite (Subtelny, 2000). It was also the largest country in Eastern Europe. The country’s geographic location, famous fruitful soil, and educated population made Ukraine a desirable destination for colonizers from neighboring countries, such as Russia, Poland, Austria, Turkey, and Mongolia (Subtelny, 2000). Along with colonization, multiple invasions became the norm in the country, contributing to the Ukraine’s national character and history of struggling for independence.

The relationship with Russia was an important factor in the development of Kyivan Rus and later with Ukraine. The historical similarities in development, as well as the geographical proximity and cultural similarities, have resulted in these two countries being highly involved in each other’s affairs and development. Historically, Russia grew and strengthened its position in Eastern Europe, which led to the perception of Ukraine as Russia’s sidekick or “little Russia,” rather than as an influential international player.

To strengthen Russia’s influence in Ukraine, Russia’s leaders have incorporated many methods through the years. In the 19th century, Russia’s leaders started suppressing Ukrainian culture and statehood, and this suppression continued until the end of the Soviet Union. One of the most destructive periods of Ukrainian history began when Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union. The government of the Soviet Union worked hard to destroy one of the main components of the country’s development and statehood: the national identity. Efforts to achieve this goal included restricting the use of the Ukrainian language and persecuting and often executing the nation’s philosophers, poets, and anyone else who dared to say anything against the Soviet power (Subtelny, 2000).

One of the most dramatic efforts aimed at extinguishing any attempts to rebel against Soviet power was the government-ordered famine of 1933. Under Stalin's direction, approximately 10 million people in Ukraine were starved to death while the crops from their fields were gathered by the government and sold abroad. Some researchers consider this event to be Stalin's greatest attempt to break the independent spirit of Ukrainians (Bilinsky, 1999; Marples, 2005). One of the reasons such inhumane methods were used is because the ruling party realized that without Ukraine, there would be no Soviet Union and Russia could not be an empire. Ukraine was considered "the most important economic component of the former Soviet Union, producing about four times the output of the next-ranking republic" (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009).

Some of the most developed industries in Ukraine historically were agriculture and manufacturing. Ukraine's top exports were and continue to be coal, electric power, ferrous and nonferrous metals, machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, and food processing. Because of Ukraine's fertile black soil, which contributed to the production of high quantities of grain, sugar beets, sunflower seeds, and vegetables, the country was called the "European Bread Basket."

After the country's independence was obtained in 1991, Ukrainians faced the challenges of establishing a new democracy and resistance to economic reforms, which shook the stability of the country. The slow progress of the reforms and continued dependency on Russia for energy has resulted in constant tension between the two countries and has deepened the instability in Ukraine. Some of the most important reforms that still need to occur include combating the shadow economy that takes 45.4% of Ukrainian GDP (Davidenko & Gerasymova,

2009), fighting corruption, developing capital markets, and improving the legislative framework (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009).

Culture

An important factor of the generic-specific theory is analyzing the culture and the language of the selected country (Sriramesh, 2003; Vercic et al., 1996). Ukrainians have a complicated nature because of the language, history, and cultural complexities in the region, which also influences how public relations is practiced in Ukraine.

Though both Ukraine and Russia have complicated cultures and the citizens' cultural identities were melded into one another during the Soviet rule, there are still significant differences between these two countries. Shulman (2006) identified five major cultural differences between these countries, and these differences provide some hints regarding attitudes toward moral and ethical norms. Regarding Ukraine, Shulman named individualism, or the freedom of will, as one of the most significant national features; in contrast, in Russia, the czar has been considered as only slightly below God and therefore required complete submission. The Russian people have considered it a natural state of things to submit their wills to their government, while for Ukrainians that would be considered close to torture (Shulman, 2006).

The second feature is the love of Ukrainians toward democracy, whereas Russia has never had a period of popular rule by people. The third characteristic is Ukrainians' love of the land and popular folk culture, whereas Russians are more focused on the city-based elite, who are separated from people in the countryside. The fourth feature is the emotionality and romanticism of Ukrainians, while Russians are more materialistic. Finally, the fifth factor is Ukrainians' tolerance of individuals of other nationalities who live in Ukraine, whereas Russians are characterized as being suspicious and intolerant of the beliefs of others (Shulman, 2006).

These characteristics, though they could be debated, can be helpful in distinguishing between Ukraine and Russia.

As Ukraine becomes more attractive to foreign businesses, the cultural relationships and differences between Ukraine and Russia will become even more important to understand in order to effectively conduct business in these countries. According to Morrison (1993), “the Russian-Ukrainian relationship is to Eastern Europe what the Franco-German relationship is to Western Europe. Just as the latter provides the core of the European Union, the former is the core essential to unity in the Orthodox world” (as cited in Huntington, 2007, p. 168).

Language

A country’s language is also important to understand in order to fully understand the functions of public relations in each of the countries. The language is sometimes considered as just a part of the culture; however, language differences and peculiarities indicate that a language is much more than just a means of communication. Language variations can be used to predict the political, economic, and social status of an individual. In regard to public relations, it is possible that the specific diction selected will affect how successful a public relations campaign will be.

Therefore, it is important to understand the language of the people and how it reflects their national character. In communications research, language is one of the most significant variables because each language brings with it a different set of values and moral beliefs. Even though in business it may not be apparent, the language factor can create multiple problems that are sometimes attributed to other factors (Hinner, 2009). The complex situation regarding the Ukrainian language is an important factor to understand when considering conducting public relations or communications business in Ukraine. As a result, in the current study Ukrainian

culture and the Ukrainian language were paid special attention to understand how they influence the practice of public relations and attitudes toward bribery in public relations.

Multiple theories exist regarding the development of modern Ukrainian, and researchers are far from reaching agreement on which is correct because there are not enough documents to prove one theory is accurate. However, researchers do know that the language that was used in Kyiv Rus was called Old Church Slavonic (Evans, 2007), and it is a possibility that this language is the origin of both Ukrainian and Russian.

During much of its history, Ukraine has been under the control of countries such as Russia, Poland, and Austria. The leaders of these countries often restricted the use of the native language of the people in Ukraine. Despite the restrictions, the language was preserved through rich Ukrainian folklore, literature, and music. Today, Ukrainians pride themselves in the melodic sounding of their language, which is sometimes called “the singing language” (Bilaniuk, 2003).

Ukrainian is the official language of the country today; however, because of the Soviet restrictions on using Ukrainian, Russian still has a significant presence in the country. Even though the official language is Ukrainian and 77.8% of the residents are Ukrainian (with only 17.3% Russian) Ukrainian is spoken by only 67% of the people, with 24% speaking Russian (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Since Russia is adjacent to northern and eastern Ukraine, there are more people in these areas who speak Russian. People in western Ukraine mostly speak Ukrainian, with some influences of Polish and Czech.

It is useful to make some comparisons when explaining the difference between Ukrainian and Russian. Bilaniuk and Melnyk (2008) stated that these two languages have a lexicon difference of 38%, which makes them analogous to the differences between Spanish and Italian,

which have a 33% variance. Clearly, there are more similarities than differences between Ukrainian and Russian. For example, a Russian-speaking person can usually understand and sometimes communicate in Ukrainian after a few weeks of visiting the country.

One of the difficulties regarding communication in Ukraine that a visitor to the country will quickly observe is that despite the official language being Ukrainian and education being provided in Ukrainian, most people automatically use Russian for personal communication (Podolyan, 2005). Podolyan (2005) stated that in Ukraine there “still remains a clear-cut division between workplace and home in terms of one’s language choice” (para. 11). He also explained an interesting duality of language use in Ukrainian’s lives:

A common sight in Ukraine is a top political or business executive giving a public speech or interview in Ukrainian, addressing alongside his/her assistants behind the camera in Russian. It is quite typical of a university professor to lecture in Ukrainian and interact in Russian with his/her students after classes. The same goes for journalists who daily contribute articles in Ukrainian and who converse in Russian out of habit. (Podolyan 2005, para. 11)

Snyder (2010) stated that Russian is used more in Ukraine on a domestic level, while Ukrainian is now admired as a language of the higher political elite.

The public relations profession has a close connection to both the language and the culture of the country. Depending on the language and cultural connotations, any message could have several meanings. Additionally, based on the language a media professional or a manager uses, people make assumptions regarding the person’s education and political views (e.g., pro-Ukrainian or pro-Russian). There is a saying in Ukraine that the more languages you know, the

more times you are a person because with each new language, you become a completely new personality and understand the world in a new way.

Public Relations in Ukraine

The profession of public relations in Ukraine is fairly new. In regard to the early stages of public relations in a country, Wakefield (1999) stated that “a nation’s level of development will affect the practice of public relations; but a local component of an excellent international public relations program will adjust to the particular nation’s level of development” (p. 100). In the current study, it became evident how both of these variables—the national development of Ukraine as well as the local component—influence the unique way that the Ukrainian public relations industry operates.

As stated earlier, the national development of Ukraine has been significantly influenced by the years of control by the Soviet Union. Close to the end of the Soviet rule (1989–1991), the first people to join the public relations profession were journalists who worked through their networks to get good coverage for their clients. However, simple networking was soon not enough to truly broadcast a message. It is probable that people who moved from other fields to the public relations profession were scared that the information would be distorted, and started restricting their companies’ information, a situation journalists were not happy about (Goregin & Nikolaev, 1995). Some of the public relations professionals started using mass media as an advertising medium and paying journalists for publicity.

While the profession of public relations is still largely undefined in Ukraine, it is becoming more established. The first study on public relations in Ukraine was conducted by Publicity Creating (2007), and the findings indicated that the profession was still not fully structured in Ukraine but that the situation had the potential to change. In a 2009 report,

Publicity Creating (2009) stated that companies whose public relations departments were fulfilling the strategic function didn't go through much department cutting; companies whose public relations departments were only fulfilling one-time public relations promotions or activities experienced some personnel cuts, which shows the importance of strategic public relations in Ukraine and its value for companies. Bugayova (2009) stated that the profession had been recognized by the Ukrainian government and that various branches of the government had public relations departments. The official acknowledgement of the profession is an important development because it adds credibility and professionalism to citizens' views of the profession.

Bugayova (2009) reported that in a study of Ukrainian public relations professionals, 60% of the professionals described public relations as a communication function "that helped establish cooperation with key publics; build, maintain and harmonize relations with them; and manage reputation" (p. 45). As mentioned earlier, Ukrainian public relations professionals use the English term *public relations* to describe their profession since the Ukrainian and Russian translations of the terms mean relations with the public, which Bugayova (2009) explained was "rather narrow and did not reflect the meaning of the English term entirely" (p. 45).

As the public relations field has grown in Ukraine, it has followed the same path as in many other nations, moving into various specialty areas of the practice. The first specialization of public relations professionals in Eastern Europe was political relations (Tsetsura, 2004). After 1992, the view on public relations became more professional and the first consulting firms were organized, with specific emphasis on strategic communication (Nikolaev, 1996). Romyr & Associates, a public relations company from Canada, claims to be the first public relations firm in Ukraine, and there seems to be no evidence to indicate otherwise. The first Romyr & Associates office in Ukraine was opened in 1993. Company officials have asserted that the field

has grown significantly since it was established in Ukraine. In particular, public relations “experts are now often consulted before businesses embark on any significant endeavor” (Romyr & Associates 2001–2008). Just as in the public relations field in other countries, public relations professionals in Ukraine struggle to influence the management of a company, and the progress in this area shows that the profession is starting to be taken seriously in Ukraine. However, there is still a lack of proper education and training in the public relations discipline. Public relations professionals must work under the influences from multiple disciplines, such as advertising, marketing, and political science, as well as from rich historical Ukrainian and post-USSR propaganda traditions and attitudes.

According to Bugayova’s study (2009), public relations professionals in Ukraine named the following variables as the most important in influencing the development of contemporary public relations in Ukraine: “1) economic development; 2) politics; 3) media; and 4) Soviet heritage” (p. 47). One of the results of the Soviet heritage is a tradition of propaganda that still affects the public relations profession in Ukraine. Perhaps for this reason, Bugayova (2009) also found a negative perception toward the public relations profession, stating that “according to the participants, a few years ago public relations was mainly associated with politics, ‘black PR,’ manipulation, and dirty political games” (p. 56). In addition, many participants stated that even though they perceived public relations negatively, they could not define what public relations was. Bugayova (2009) also found that the term *public relations* is used in everyday language to portray someone who is advertising himself or herself or is conceited. It should be noted that in most of Eastern Europe individuals are considered arrogant when they talk about accomplishments or even accept compliments. Usually, when a person is given a compliment,

the person has to deny its significance. Therefore, the intent of using the term *public relations*, in the minds of many Ukrainians, is to indicate the arrogance of a person.

Just like there are still difficulties in choosing the right term for this profession in Ukraine, the standards of this profession are also in the process of refinement. Because public relations in Ukraine is in the early stages of development, the market should expect new and improved business standards and progress. Nords, the chief executive officer of Nords Porter Novelli in Latvia and Ukraine, stated that “experts forecast the Ukrainian market volume will increase tremendously in the next five years, and new public relations players and clients will enter the market demanding more complex services and practices (as cited in Tsetsura & Grunko, 2009). The projected increase in business opportunities in Ukraine will lead to a number of Western companies operating in Ukraine, which in turn will create a greater need for research to allow for better cultural understanding between Western and Ukrainian businesses. One of the current cultural aspects of public relations in Ukraine, unfortunately, is the problem of bribery.

Tsetsura (2004) stated that ethical problems in public relations seem to be closely associated with unethical behavior in political advertising and manipulation of the press. Tsetsura and Grunko (2009) examined news transparency in Ukraine and discovered public relations professionals and advertisers place significant pressure on journalists to place stories in the Ukrainian media. The researchers also stated there is a need for a better definition of public relations roles and ethical standards in Ukraine. According to Tsetsura and Grunko (2009), Ukraine lacks media transparency, and “media professionals as well as public relations practitioners have yet to identify the modern roles and functions of both media and media relations and have yet to find ways to underpin their professional codes of ethics” (p. 1). The

main problems between journalists and public relations professionals in Ukraine, according to Tsetsura and Grunko (2009), are “1) direct forms of influence, such as concealed, or hidden, advertising and cash payments to journalists, . . . and 2) publicity in exchange for advertising is the most widely spread indirect form of influence on the media” (p. 10).

To better understand these ethical issues in the Ukrainian public relations field, it is useful to examine Ukraine’s neighboring countries. Tsetsura (2004, 2005, 2008) and Tsetsura and Grunko (2009) wrote articles about public relations in Russia, Ukraine, and Poland, providing summaries of local publications and research, as well as analysis of Western scholarship. According to Tsetsura’s research, much of Russian public relations campaigns are dedicated more to governmental and political public relations than to business development.

When considering the historical influences on the development of the bribery problems in Ukraine, it is important to review the era when Ukraine was under the USSR umbrella and to explore how being part of the Soviet Union influenced the current development of Ukraine. After the fall of the USSR, Ukraine was left with a heritage of despotism, media restrictions, distrust, and corruption. Despite the current development of democracy in the country, the vestiges of USSR rule continue to have an effect on the country, including on public relations.

Low ethical standards in all areas of the country is one of the major problems evident in all countries that were under the Soviet umbrella. Perhaps the root of the problem is the lack of motivation or ambition in the workplace resulting from the USSR’s emphasis on the equality of all workers and the belief that excellence and skill should not be rewarded. Often, the only way to move up the corporate ladder was through having the right connections or bribing the right people. From the personal observations of the researcher, this idea that to get anywhere in life you need to know how to cut corners instead of working hard and being good at something,

could be deeply ingrained in the minds of many people in the countries previously controlled under the USSR.

This negative affect of the Soviet regime continues and perhaps has the most influence in the central and eastern regions of Ukraine. Since eastern Ukraine borders Russia, Russian political, business, and cultural influences may be stronger on professionals in eastern and central Ukraine. Additionally, Russian business and government leaders have great interest in central and eastern Ukraine because the area is considered an industrial center (Mite, 2004). As a result, it is possible that eastern and central Ukrainian business professionals have different attitudes toward bribery than do people who live in western Ukraine. Further, more people in eastern Ukraine than in other areas of the country favor Russia as well as the arguments for the return of the USSR (Mydans, 2011). The implication is that they favor the established USSR principles and culture, which could possibly lead to a more-accepting attitude toward bribery.

Differences in the attitudes toward bribery in Ukraine could also be influenced by whether a public relations professional operates in a smaller city or a larger city. Since the smaller cities in Ukraine have made slower progress and have less media access, bribery could be more acceptable in those cities than in larger cities.

Tsetsura (2005) examined bribery in public relations in Poland, which is an important country for Ukraine because of Poland's close relationship and similarities with Ukraine. Both Poland and Ukraine have been under occupation for much of their histories, and they both were part of the USSR. However, Ukrainians consider Poland as a more developed and more European country than Ukraine. Tsetsura's (2005) study on Poland showed an important distinction between direct bribery, or monetary bribery, as it is sometimes called, and indirect bribery, which regards services. Based on the findings, Tsetsura stated that communication

leaders in Poland are “more concerned with indirect cases of media bribery, such as publishing materials in exchange for advertising in the same media, putting financial pressure on media outlets to present information that comes from news sources, specifically, companies and PR agencies” (Tsetsura, 2005, p. 2).

Interestingly, Tsetsura (2005) also found that more public relations practitioners than journalists view their practices as ethical. The researcher stated the following:

Almost a half of PR professionals but only a third of journalists reported they agree PR is practiced in [an] ethical manner. At the same time, about a quarter of PR professionals, 40% of journalists, and almost half of the marketing specialists disagreed with this statement. (Tsetsura, 2005, p. 2)

Because public relations is a fairly new profession in Poland, just as in Ukraine, the struggles of Polish public relations professionals to identify with and adapt to the Western concept of ethical and moral business behavior may also be found among public relations professionals in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Public Relations Organizations: Differing Ethical Philosophies

Ukrainian public relations is as complicated and mixed as Ukrainian society. There are two opposing views among professionals in Ukraine on how public relations is developing or should be developing in Ukraine. One view comes from the Western-oriented Ukrainian Public Relations Association (UAPR). The other view comes from the more internally oriented Ukrainian Public Relations League (UPRL).

Some of the differences in the attitudes of the members in these two professional organizations can be understood by studying the organizations' foundations. The UPRL was developed in 2003, during the first years of Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union. The

League consists mainly of older public relations professionals, who entered public relations from other fields and from Soviet political organizations. UAPR was founded in 2005, after the events of the Orange Revolution, which led to more open communication in Ukraine, and during the time Ukrainians were celebrating the country's democratic steps. UAPR generally consists of younger public relations professionals who look to Western examples in their efforts to establish the profession in Ukraine (Bugayova, 2009).

Bugayova (2009) stated that these two professional organizations had developed in “parallel for some time without cooperating or uniting their efforts” (p. 34). The evidence of this dispersed coexistence is the work of these two groups. UPRL's members mainly work toward organizing licensing of public relations professionals in Ukraine, advancing the professional image of public relations in Ukraine, and organizing business forums to promote corporate responsibility (UPRL, 2010). UAPR activities have a more international character and involve organizing competitions and a European public relations congress, inviting international speakers to the events, and integrating international standards into Ukrainian public relations practice (European PR Congress, 2006). Although the members of both organizations are working on establishing the public relations profession in Ukraine, UPRL members focus more on establishing recognition of the profession in Ukraine and adopting the profession to the business realities in the country, while UAPR members focus on enforcing ethical standards and promoting the international presence of Ukrainian public relations professionals and their campaigns.

In 2005, the members of UAPR established a code of ethics that in many ways resembles the codes of other public relations organizations around the world. The code was patterned after the code of the International Communications Consultancy Organization. UAPR's code has 50

statements and states that bribery in public relations is an unacceptable practice and that infomercials should be used instead (UAPR, 2006). At the same time, UPRL's members also established a code of professional ethics, stating that ethical behavior is the basis of public relations practice in Ukraine and encouraging all professionals to adhere to ethical behavior. UPRL's code does not indicate whether media transparency is an element of ethical behavior (Tsetsura & Grunko, 2009).

Though members of both associations state they are standing against bribery in the profession, because of the differences in the structures and organizations of these two associations, the members also have different views on the problem of bribery in Ukrainian public relations. UAPR's members are highly critical of the typical public relations practices in Ukraine. They define the problem of bribery in public relations as "paid PR—where the public relations professionals pay journalists to get their material printed" (p. 1) They assert that while "some people hold the view that this is the only way to perform business in Ukraine," they believe "that it is possible to do it differently" (UAPR, 2006, p. 1).

Nunn (2009), chief executive of Whites Communications in Kyiv, Ukraine, stated that UPRL members think paid journalism is acceptable and that UAPR members follow the traditional Western practice and ideals of public relations. One of the reasons UPRL members may consider paid journalism to be acceptable is the older age of the members, who may be used to accepting unethical methods of doing business as part of practices during the Soviet rule. According to Nunn, UPRL has more members and support even from foreign clients, adding that changing the ways of "paid PR is like trying to turn a super tanker with a paddle" (p. 1). Nunn also stated that one of the biggest reasons for this situation is the lack of a "legitimate education in PR" (p. 1).

Bugayova (2009) similarly stated that there are few educational institutions that provide public relations training in Ukraine and that there is still a lack of a “clear understanding about the standards and curriculum of public relations educational programs” (p. 34). According to Bugayova, public relations or closely related majors are offered at only five or six universities. The programs are supplemented by numerous forums and training programs, some of which were organized with the help of one of the public relations organizations in Ukraine.

In response to Nunn’s statement about the corrupt public relations practices in Ukraine, Pankratieva (2009), a member of IPRA and the chief executive officer of Noblet Media CIS, stated that despite the transitory state of Ukrainian public relations, agencies in Ukraine are still performing at a high level of professionalism. She stated, “We participate in international projects; we get international PR awards for our projects; we have international education and experience” (Pankratieva, 2009). Addressing the bribery issue in the Ukrainian public relations field, she stated that often bribery in Ukraine is overemphasized and should not be considered as such an unusual situation in Ukraine when it is a problem around the globe. Expanding on this idea, she stated:

It is always funny to hear that American or European media never take money or services for publication, or that they are not influenced by somebody’s opinion. It is always the same everywhere—and everywhere PR professionals and real journalists struggle against it. (Pankratieva, as cited in IPRA, 2009)

Tsetsura and Grunko (2009) explored news transparency in Ukraine and discovered significant pressure from public relations professionals and advertisers to place stories in the Ukrainian media. The researchers also found a need for a better definition of the public relations roles in Ukraine, as well as a better definition of ethical standards. Bugayova (2009) stated that

the absence of established ethical standards significantly hinders the development of public relations in Ukraine.

Though the members of UAPR and UPRL disagree regarding the ethical basis of the profession and would rather work on their own, they are working on creating more unified standards for Ukraine. For example, UAPR and UPRL members met in 2008, at which time they agreed to work together to develop ethical standards for public relations in Ukraine (Bugayova, 2009).

Defining *Bribery* in Ukrainian Society

In recent years, the success of public relations professionals has mainly been measured based on the role they play in their respective companies' decision-making processes. Rawlins, Grover, and Stoker (2003) stated that the roles of public relations professionals could determine their ethical standards. Those who are in managerial roles are more likely to behave morally than those in lower-level roles, and unethical decisions are most likely to be made by middle managers.

In addition to the public relations professional's role in the company, another factor that could influence public relations professionals' moral and ethical conduct is the lack of positive examples in the public relations field. Brown and Velbovets (2010) found there is no generally accepted moral exemplar among public relations practitioners in the United States, and more ethical and philosophical inquiry is needed to further develop an ethical base in public relations. Unethical behavior exists in many professions, and Cabelkova and Hanousek (2004) stated that more research is needed in each field to understand the reasons for bribery in the specific field.

The public relations field appeared in Ukraine shortly after the Soviet Union fell apart. The background of the profession in Ukraine consists of a combination of the Western

experience of public relations and the political traditions of propaganda that prevailed in the Soviet Union. Consequently, probably just as with many other professions in Ukraine, public relations is still being adapted to the unique environment of the young democracy.

The Western world has created a somewhat distinguished model for recognizing and studying the behavior of bribery—a model in which bribery is always viewed negatively. However, it is possible that on an international level, the practice is not as defined and the mixture of cultural elements and historical and political heritage results in situations that could be considered gray rather than black or white.

Since Ukraine was under Russian influence during the periods of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, it is important to note some of the inherited aspects from this relationship. Grodeland, Koshechkina, and Miller (1998) stated that the problems of bribery in the Tsar's Russia are similar to the modern situation of underpaid employees who turn to bribery as a means of survival:

A major reason for the extensive corruption in Tsarist Russia was simply the low salary given to officials—[who] were, if not forced, then at least tempted to “provide for themselves” by accepting bribes. And poor control mechanisms made it less likely that one would get caught. As the Russian proverb goes: “The tsar is far away, and God is in heaven!” (p. 5)

When examining the problem of bribery, the first important step is to define the term and consider the reasons behind the behavior. Buchholz (1989) stated that even though bribery is more a matter of private relations than public relations, the reality is that public relations as a profession involves large amounts of money, power, and prestige and therefore is fertile ground for corruption. Buchholz claimed that bribery is an occupational hazard for the public relations

profession. Tsetsura and Kruckeberg (2003) used the definition of *bribery* given by Guralnik: “1. Anything, esp. money, given or promised to induce a person to do something illegal or wrong. 2. Anything given or promised to induce a person to do something against his wishes” (p. 11).

These definitions are helpful in establishing the problem in the current study. In Ukraine, people have developed a somewhat different attitude than the Western world toward the act of bribery. Phillips (2009) stated that “in the West a bribe is paying for something you’re not entitled to. In Ukraine a bribe means paying for something that you are entitled to” (Phillips, 2009, p. 10). One of the reasons for the feeling of entitlement could be the underpaid labor in the country.

Considering the problem of underpaid labor, it is worth noting that Ukraine, like many other post-Soviet countries, became a democratic society without having a middle class. Instead, there was a strong polarization between the poor and the rich. Currently in Ukrainian society, there still is only a relatively small number of people in between the two categories. Gorodnichenko and Peter (2007) used the differences in wages to measure the amounts of bribery in Ukraine. They found a significant wage gap in the workforce, explaining that “the wage gap between private and public firms is surprisingly large (24 to 32% conditional on worker characteristics) and remarkably stable over recent years (1997–2003)” (p. 4). The researchers added “that the wage gap is largest (can exceed 60%) among the most productive and highly paid workers” (p. 4).

Gorodnichenko and Peter (2007) also stated that public sector managers and medical employees have the largest discrepancies in the level of responsibility and wages, and, therefore, bribery serves as an equalizer. The researchers reported that “the presence of additional non-

reported monetary compensation . . . allows employees in the public and private sectors to enjoy similar levels of consumption. We refer to this unobserved compensation in the public sector as a bribe” (p. 4). Further, Gorodnichenko and Peter asserted that bribery in Ukraine accounts for about 1% of the country’s GDP and that the country’s leaders should spend that same amount of money on ensuring equal wages among its citizens. The researchers also stated:

Bribery accounts for at least 20 [percent] of the total wage compensation in the public sector in Ukraine, which is equivalent to 460–580 million U.S. dollars or 0.9–1.2[%] of Ukraine’s GDP in 2003. Our alternative estimates suggest that the amount of bribery could be as high as 750 million U.S. dollars in 2003. (Gorodnichenko & Peter, 2007, p. 5)

Though bribery is widespread in Ukrainian society, another study indicated that only 25% of participants had personal experience regarding bribery “and two-thirds of the population learn[ed] about this phenomenon via television” (Cabelkova & Hanousek, 2004, p. 384). In other words, few people report initiating or personally witnessing bribery.

Ukrainian Bribery: A Result of Corruption

The problems with bribery are the same as the problems with corruption in Ukraine. The roots of corruption are from the Soviet Union, which inherited this behavior from the Russian Empire. Grodeland et al. (1998) stated that “while the Soviet period certainly added its particular flavour to these problems, and in the process elevated both to unprecedented levels of influence, the roots of official corruption extend back into Russian history” (p. 5).

During the Soviet Union era, corruption was the means of purchasing something that an individual could not otherwise purchase because of the deficit of many desired products in the country (Grodeland et al., 1998). Some researchers have stated that corruption was a normal and

even an essential element of the functioning of the country. For example, Grodeland et al. (1998) stated that revisionists have found corruption to be “functional to economic and political development” (p. 4). Other authors have argued that “developing countries might benefit from corruption” (Grodeland et al., 1998, p. 4). Grodeland et al. (1998) explained that Sovietologists believed corruption was a crucial element “in facilitating the privatization of the Soviet system prior to the introduction of economic reforms under Gorbachev—an informal privatization that paved the way for the collapse of the USSR by undermining the ideology upon which it was founded” (p. 4). As noted previously in the literature review, society has accepted some of this mindset, and it is possible to make a conclusion that people sometimes consider corruption and bribery as normal happenings in countries once under Soviet rule.

Such a mindset can be found in the business world as well. In her research, Bugayova (2009) found that the Soviet heritage is one of the most influential factors that shaped the development of public relations in Ukraine. Bugayova (2009) quoted a participant in her study, who stated the following about the overall business view of transparency: “Business and [the] public in general don’t really see advantages of transparency. This is something that was not needed for decades and was discouraged under the Soviet rule. There is no demand for publicity, especially when concerning crisis situations” (p. 55). Instead of transparency and openness, the strict controls and persecutions in personal life, combined with corruption in business, have led to the lack of openness in the country.

Bugayova (2009) also reported that under Soviet Union control, company leaders tried to keep their businesses low-profile because “any privately owned business was considered suspicious and was subject to higher taxes” (p. 55). For this reason, it is still hard for business leaders to become accustomed to new economic rules and the need to promote their business and

emphasize ethical standards. Another participant in Bugayova's study explained how Soviet propaganda has influenced public relations in a negative way: "Soviet heritage has influenced public relations greatly. The public at large associates public relations with politics and elections. I think such a perception is influenced by old Soviet-style propaganda" (Bugayova, 2009, pp. 55–56).

Guth (2000) stated it is important for practitioners from Russia and other previous Soviet countries to remember there is a difference between propaganda and public relations:

Critical to this discussion is an understanding that propaganda, an attempt to have a viewpoint accepted at the exclusion of all others, is not public relations. Nor is it a form of hidden advertising, where clients pay undisclosed payments for story placements. However, in the early days of Russian public relations, these distinctions are lost on some. (p. 193)

When the Soviet Union fell, only a small number of privately owned businesses in Ukraine existed because most of the organizations were owned by or supervised by the government. In many instances, the people at the top of the political ranks in the Soviet Union became the owners of the large businesses even while they remained in high governmental positions. One example is Kuchma, who became president of the newly independent Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Before becoming president, he was at the top of the Soviet leadership elite, and he brought some of the highest levels of corruption to the country. Gorodnichenko and Peter (2007) stated that during the time of Kuchma's rule, "according to the 2002 national survey of corruption, 44% of the participants indicated that they had paid bribes or given gifts at least once in the previous year" (p. 5). The world remembers Kuchma's presidency because of the president's possible involvement in one of the cruelest murders of a journalist in

Ukraine and the resulting fear of Ukrainian journalists to speak out (Weston, 2001). It is clear, according to Grodeland et al. (1998), why people are actually more concerned and focused on governmental corruption than on business corruption in the post-Soviet era. Quoting Wing Lo, who studied corruption in the former British colony of Hong Kong, Grodeland et al. explained:

The public [does] not always feel as threatened by corrupt businessmen as they do by corrupt public servants . . . public sector corruption is often related to extortion and solicitation of bribes by civil servants . . . [which is] far more annoying and disturbing to the daily lives of people. (p. 5)

This perspective may be a reason why, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the widespread corruption among political leaders translated into flourishing corruption in business. On the other hand, Cabelkova and Hanousek (2004) stated that too much media attention on corruption could cause the expansion of the problem in certain organizations or structures if the country has a low respect for the law. “The higher the perceived corruption in an organization, the more probable it is that a person dealing with that organization will offer a bribe, therefore supporting corruption” (p. 383.). Therefore, corruption in a country whose members have little respect for the law could be compared to the circle of addiction, in which corruption causes media attention and media attention makes people feel that corrupt practices are acceptable because everyone is engaging in it (Cabelkova & Hanousek, 2004).

Cabelkova and Hanousek (2004) stated that ending the cycle of corruption could be a complicated task. “If corruption becomes ingrained in a society it is very difficult to root it out, even if the best legislation is in place and people perceive corruption to be a serious problem” (p. 383). The authors also stated that “since corruption scandals in Ukraine do not result in a legal action, information in the mass media about corruption informs the public that government is

open for dirty business. Such information might encourage people to give bribes” (p. 384). Further, the authors reported that the decision to give or take a bribe could be based on the condition that the reward will be higher than the risk. For example, in the health care industry, the patient giving a bribe may receive better service from a doctor and therefore save the patient’s life.

Another factor that influences ethical behavior in Ukraine is its geographic position. Since Ukraine is situated between the strong influences of Russia on the east and Western Europe on the west, the country is divided between the mindsets of these culturally opposite neighbors. Huntington (1997) discussed the differences between pro-Russian eastern Ukraine and pro-Ukrainian western Ukraine. The distinctions were clearly visible during the 1994 presidential election, and these voting patterns have continued ever since. Commenting on this geopolitical phenomenon, Huntington stated that there is a “reflected, even crystallized, split between Europeanized Slavs in western Ukraine and the Russ-Slav vision of what Ukraine should be. It’s not ethnic polarization so much as different cultures” (p. 166).

Regardless of whether bribery is more common in the eastern or the western regions of Ukraine or in smaller cities than in larger cities, bribery might be one of the prevalent characteristics of political life in Ukraine. To better understand the attitudes of the public relations professionals in Ukraine toward bribery, it is important to consider the political environment in which public relations professionals work.

Other Causes of Bribery

To comprehend the recent political environment requires an understanding of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, one of the most important events in Ukrainian history after gaining independence in 1991. In 2004, much of the world heard about the Orange Revolution, a

peaceful democratic demonstration in which people overturned the fraudulent votes for Viktor Yanukovich, a corrupt candidate, and elected pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko as the new president, bringing hope for change in the country (D'Anieri, 2006). One of the election promises of the new president was to combat the widespread corruption in Ukraine. Despite this goal, Ukraine moved from 122nd place (out of 180) in the Corruption Perception Index in 2004 to 150th place in 2011 (Transparency International, 2011). The country ranked as highest in corruption in 2011 was Somalia, and the country ranked as lowest in corruption was New Zealand. The United States was ranked 24th (Transparency International, 2011).

It is worth noting that the rankings are closely associated with income levels in the countries: The less income enjoyed by the country's citizens, the lower the ranking of the country in the index (Transparency International, 2010). In Ukraine, the two regions with the highest income in 2010 were the Kyiv region, with about 3,000 UAH in monthly income, and the Donetsk region, with about 2,500 UAH in monthly income (State Statistic Service of Ukraine, 2010). Based on information previously discussed in the literature review, it might be concluded that these regions in Ukraine experience less bribery because of the higher rates of income; however, to draw a firm conclusion, it would be important to determine the range of income levels in these cities. In regard to the wages of public relations professionals, one estimate is that public relations managers earn about 4,000 UAH (\$500) a month and public relations directors earn about 10,000 UAH (\$1,250) a month.

After 5 years of celebrating increased freedom of speech and a more-democratic society, Ukraine did a 180-degree turnaround by electing Viktor Yanukovich in the next presidential election. He had previously been defeated in the Orange Revolution on the basis of forged votes, yet he was elected president in 2010. International observers have claimed the election to be fair,

and despite such a controversial win by a man who once was defeated, the situation was a demonstration of what the people stood for in the Orange Revolution: fair elections.

The 2010 election is another example of the division between western and eastern Ukraine. The election results show that Ukraine is clearly divided in the center regarding the two candidates. Yanukovich won the election with 48.7% of the votes, and Tymoshenko lost with 45.5% of the votes. Besemeres (2010) explained:

Any Ukrainian leader has to reckon with the tribal divisions in Ukrainian society and politics. Voting patterns in this election were as regionally divided as ever, with Yanukovich winning big in the Russophone east and south, and Tymoshenko easily carrying all the Ukrainian-speaking west and centre (para. 18).

Even though Yanukovich promised to correct the mistakes of the previous Orange government during his presidency, a recent article in the Ukrainian newspaper *Pravda* contained the results of a study in which the people of Ukraine acknowledged the current president as the greatest threat to human rights in Ukraine (“Ukrainians Consider Yanukovich the Main Reason for Rights and Freedoms Violations,” 2011). The election of this president, who was in jail in his youth and convicted because of fraudulent election activities in 2004, raised multiple questions about Ukrainians’ attitudes toward ethics in Ukraine. It appears the Ukrainian people had learned not to expect honesty from government officials and the judicial system, both before and after the country’s independence, and these low expectations were reflected in the much joked about election of the controlling Viktor Yanukovich.

An example of the decreasing human rights in Ukraine is a recent situation regarding the Ukrainian Supreme Court. In 2010, the Supreme Court of Ukraine lost many of its privileges “as the place of ultimate appeal” (Lavrov, 2012, p. 1). Tarasova, chairperson of Ukraine’s Court

Association for Promotion of Justice, stated that currently the country's judiciary system is having "the worst time ever" (as cited in Lavrov, 2012, p. 1).

It is worth noting, however, that the current situation in Eastern Europe is dramatically changing because educated young professionals are becoming tired of living under oppressive and corrupt governments. One example occurred recently in Russia. Just as the people in Ukraine marched on the streets of the central square in Kyiv to protest a fraudulent election, young and educated members of the middle class in Russia surprised the world by protesting the forged election of the famous alpha dog of Russian politics, Vladimir Putin (Rajghatta, 2010).

Many of the people who are participating in such demonstrations were raised by parents who witnessed the cruel destiny of individuals who dared to speak or act against the system in the past. Therefore, it is surprising yet inspiring to learn of the motivation behind many individuals' participation in the Russian protests. Navalny, a Yale-educated lawyer who is considered to be behind the recent protests in Russia, stated the following from a jail, where he was sent after one of the demonstrations:

There is no repression and batons. No arrests and detention for 15 days. All this is nonsense. You cannot beat and arrest hundreds of thousands and millions. We were not even scared, but just for a while convinced that the life of frogs and rats, the life of the silent beast, it's the only way to get a reward of stability and economic growth.

(Navalny, 2011, p. 1)

It appears that numerous people in Russia are fed up with the many years of government corruption and that they have taken a stand for the first time since the fall of the USSR.

Ukrainians have been torn between Eastern and Western cultural influences for a long time, and members of the surrounding countries are influential in Ukrainians' attitudes toward

government. According to Grodeland et al. (1998), one of the results of the Eastern influence is that “countries following the Eastern tradition of administration are less trusting of their officials than in countries that have been influenced by Western civilization” (p. 6). Another effect of corruption could be a lack of respect for laws in Ukraine. Grodeland et al. (1998) stated the following:

In countries where there is no tradition or a weak tradition of respect for the law, legislation to curb corruption is not likely to be successful and corruption tends to flourish, and to be functional, where institutions are weak and inflexible. (p. 5)

A lack of respect for the law could also be a result of the Soviet rule, when mere survival became the highest priority—more important than following the law. Additionally, people often found themselves in situations in which the law was not fair to them; therefore, several generations of Ukrainians learned to disregard the law and care for their own interests and safety.

The historical heritage of corruption in Ukraine, current political problems with corrupt government as well as numerous recent movements in Ukraine and Russia for the increase of freedom of speech could be helpful in explaining the sometimes less-than-logical attitudes toward business ethics in Ukraine. In Eastern Europe in general, members of each profession have endeavored to create safeguards and limitations to ensure ethical behavior in their professions. Professionals such as in the field of medicine have created strict guidelines about professional conduct. In public relations, codes of ethics have been established, but they are not necessarily enforced in some countries, such as Ukraine, because of cultural and environmental influences.

A Bribe or a Gift?

Some of the gray areas regarding bribery relate to the definitions of *bribery* mentioned earlier and the idea of traditional gift giving. Smart (2003) stated that the difference between the two concepts regards the goals an individual is trying to achieve; he also noted that the element of an established personal relationship is what distinguishes gift giving from bribery: “Gift exchange differs from the exchange of commodities in that gift exchanges are inextricably tied in with the relationship between the transactions” (Smart, 2003, p. 399). Smart used the definition by Yang to show this difference: “In bribery, barter, black market, and legal market economy, transactions are not embedded in social relationships other than that dictated by the purely economic one at hand.” (Yang, as cited in Smart, 2003, p. 399).

According to this definition, bribery is an absence of the goal to foster relationships. It is easy to see that the similarities between bribery and gift giving could result in confusion regarding their use. In public relations, the goal is most often to build a relationship, making it easy to rationalize that a bribe is actually a gift exchange for the sake of a relationship. This issue might be one of the dilemmas public relations professionals in Ukraine experience when making decisions about gift giving in their jobs.

Corruption and bribery have significantly hindered Ukraine in establishing many international relationships. Snyder (2010) stated that “Ukraine is like Europe in its democracy and like Russia in its corruption; more than anything else, it is corruption and the absence of legal predictability that keep it out of the European Union” (p. 1). Ukraine’s unique mixture of the heritage and cohabitation of the past and present, of democracy and the leftover communist mentality, make Ukraine an important country to research. A deeper understanding of the expanding field of public relations in Ukraine is needed; in particular, research is needed on

ethics in public relations so that a stronger foundation for the profession can be established. For Ukraine's democracy to be strengthened, Ukrainians need to overcome the plague of corruption.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Research Questions

Bribery in Ukrainian public relations is a complicated issue because of the country's history and cultural characteristics. Some of the factors include limited freedom of speech during the Soviet rule and the lack of competition in the country among professionals. According to the literature reviewed, it is also evident that there is a significant difference between the western and eastern regions of Ukraine in regard to corruption and bribery. Eastern Ukrainians in general have a worldview closer to that of Russia, while western Ukrainians generally have a worldview with more influences from Western Europe. Some of the literature indicates that Russian society has had a problem with bribery since the time of the Russian Empire, and the assumption has been made that Russian influence in eastern Ukraine might result in more favorable views on bribery in this region of Ukraine. Meanwhile, western Ukrainians are trying to gain acceptance in the Western world, where bribery and corruption are not approved of.

Since the problem of bribery in Ukrainian public relations is somewhat convoluted by the professional responsibilities of public relations practitioners to build and strengthen relationships and by the Ukrainian tradition of gift giving, the question becomes: How do Ukrainian public relations professionals define the issue of bribery? To lead to a deeper examination, an additional question could also be asked: When do public relations professionals consider it appropriate to use bribery when conducting public relations?

Although the current ethical state of bribery is important, it is equally if not more important to identify the issue of how bribery will be dealt with in the future.

Taking the above factors into consideration, the following research questions were developed for the current study:

RQ1: How do public relations professionals in Ukraine define the ethical state of public relations in the country and particularly in regard to bribery?

RQ2: What are the attitudes of public relations professionals toward the problem of bribery in Ukraine? When do these professionals consider bribery appropriate or inappropriate?

RQ3: What is the difference between the eastern and western regions of Ukraine in regard to attitudes toward and practices involving bribery?

RQ4: What do public relations professionals in Ukraine project will be the future ethical state of the public relations profession in Ukraine?

Research Objective

Considering the complicated historical and cultural heritage of Ukrainian public relations, this study was not limited strictly to comparing or statistically analyzing measurements of the attitudes among public relations practitioners. Instead, the overall objective was to explore the practitioners' feelings and views regarding bribery.

To achieve this objective, information was gathered through using open-ended and multiple-choice survey questions that were developed to address the research questions through multiple dimensions, with the aim of a high level of inductive exploration of the participants' answers. The focus was not on whether bribery is a problem in Ukraine. It is common knowledge that significant corruption is present in the country, including in almost every discipline and field. The implication is there are many professionals who work daily within an environment with corruption, and their voices—not numbers or graphs—need to be expressed.

Their feelings and attitudes will help lead to a holistic picture of the situation regarding bribery in the public relations field in Ukraine.

Because of the researcher's understanding of and experiences in both Ukrainian and U.S. cultures, one of the researcher's objectives was to be able to explain to readers in the United States the perceptions of Ukrainian public relations professionals regarding bribery. It is hoped that after reading this study, individuals will feel as though they had just spent enough time with public relations professionals to understand what the public relations field is like in Ukraine, how professionals think, and what problems they face. Based on these objectives, a qualitative method was most appropriate for this study.

Qualitative Research Method

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) summarized the uses of qualitative research, stating that this method is complex and aimed at discovering human nature and science. It is used across multiple disciplines to explore moral issues, psychological dilemmas, political problems, legal discourses, and other similar issues. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) described qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 145). King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) differentiated quantitative and qualitative research by pointing out that qualitative research involves discursive methods, whereas quantitative research involves numbers and statistical methods.

In one of the variations of qualitative research, called naturalistic research, the researcher stays as close to the environment of the researched material or the subject as possible (Willems, 1969). The main goal of naturalistic research is to capture the essence of the researched topic without restricting the behavior of the researched objects in any manner (Chesebro & Borisoff,

2007). Considering the cultural background of the researcher and the close ties to Ukraine, the researcher could be considered a part of the researched environment, making naturalistic research appropriate for the study.

Guba and Lincoln (1985) defined a human as an instrument in a qualitative study, stating that “we mean that the human-as-instrument is inclined toward methods that are extensions of normal human activities: looking, listening, speaking, reading, and the like” (p. 1999).

According to Guba and Lincoln:

In qualitative research it is important to look at the nature of paradigms that are defined by the set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deal with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world,” the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. (p. 107)

In this study, the attitudes of public relations professionals toward the problem of bribery were explored through the multiple paradigms of public relations professionals, consisting of the individual attitudes influenced by their historical and cultural roots as well as current events and the presence of corruption in the country. Because the practitioners’ attitudes are influenced by the individual circumstances and influences of every participant, the survey was composed of ontological questions, which Guba and Lincoln (1994) described as related to the “form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it” (p. 108).

According to Scholl (2008), qualitative researchers endeavor to “explore new phenomena and describe them intensively (thick description) and from different perspectives” (p. 1).

Qualitative methods involve inductive reasoning; the theory building occurs as the research unfolds, and the researcher sometimes has little idea what the result of the research will be. In

this study, theory building occurred through obtaining new applicable information from news reports on the ever-changing political situation in the region, research from other disciplines, and the participants' answers to the survey questions. One of the main concepts in qualitative research is to get to the core of the problem and understand exactly the feelings or the culture of the subjects. The process of research and observation is just as important as the results (Scholl, 2008).

One of the most important elements in qualitative research is establishing the reliability of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term *dependability* instead of *internal validity* to indicate that the findings are consistent and can be repeated, *transferability* instead of *external validity* to show that the findings can be applied in other contexts, and *confirmability* instead of *objectivity* to indicate the trustworthiness of the findings of the study and that they are shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias. In this study, questions might arise about the transferability or generalizability of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that the local conditions “make it impossible to generalize” (p. 124).

Study Sample

In contrast to quantitative research, in qualitative research there is more flexibility in selecting a sample. The researcher can use unstructured tools for the study to better accomplish the goals of the study. The sample for this study was selected from members of the online business network LinkedIn. According to the website, more than 135 million people are members of the network, which is the “world’s largest professional network” (LinkedIn, 2012). A number of Ukrainian public relations professionals are members of this network, making the website a good source for obtaining the study sample.

Using the researcher's professional account on LinkedIn, the researcher joined a number of Ukrainian public relations professional and business groups on LinkedIn: PRweb.com.ua, UAPR, Ukraine Executives, Ukraine Telecoms, Ukrainian PR Professionals, Ukrainian Twitter Community, and Ukraine Connections. The researcher posted announcements about the study on the discussion boards for these groups and also e-mailed randomly selected members of the groups. The researcher also randomly selected professionals from the contact lists of the group members. Since the researcher also has personal contacts in Ukraine who work in public relations, she posted the study participation invitation on the wall of her Facebook account, as well as on the walls of several public relations professional groups that were likely to have connections with Ukraine.

For the sample, the researcher selected the most qualified people who responded to the invitation to participate. The qualifications to participate included that the person must be living in Ukraine and hold a public relations position in a company. Therefore, the sampling method for selecting study participants could be considered purposive. The researcher purchased a special LinkedIn profile organizing program that helped her keep track of all the participants she contacted and maintain a record of all communication with and feedback from the participants.

Data Collection

To assess the attitudes of Ukrainian public relations professionals, the researcher created a survey containing 28 questions. The questions were partly based on Kruckeberg and Tsetsura's (2003) Bribery Index, a composite index by country based on variables related to the likelihood of bribes being made for news coverage. However, it is important to note that because of the need to explore specific attitudes, the researcher's personal interest in obtaining certain information, and the questions resulting from the literature review, the questions from

Kruckeberg and Tsetsura's study were more of an inspiration for the survey questions in this study rather than a ready-made research instrument. The survey questions were developed to approach the research questions from different angles. However, the questions were not grouped according to the research questions to prevent the participants from fully understanding the theme of the study and to ensure the participants' responses were as authentic as possible.

The survey contained demographic questions to obtain a general idea about the people completing the survey. Also included were questions related to the current state of public relations in Ukraine. The purpose of these questions was to prompt the participants to provide their own perspectives of the situation in Ukraine and perhaps express their feelings and attitudes toward the situation. Because of the information in the reviewed literature indicating the significant differences between the western and eastern regions of Ukraine, questions were developed to address the business differences between the eastern and western regions of the country as well as the differences in public relations practices in the capital and various regions in Ukraine. Because the main focus of the study was to learn about the attitudes and perceptions of public relations professionals in Ukraine toward bribery, a number of questions were designed to encourage the participants to explain their feelings, attitudes, and experiences related to ethical decision making as well as the issue of paid publications.

The researcher sent the study survey to the participants, giving them the opportunity to answer the survey questions at their convenience and in the language of their choice—Ukrainian or Russian. Providing these options allowed the participants to respond via the language most convenient and comfortable for them. (The researcher translated all of the questions from English to Russian and then from Russian to Ukrainian.) The idea before beginning the research was to use the data on the language choice to explore the connections between the language used

and the attitudes towards bribery. However, it was later determined that this exploration was outside the scope of the study. Therefore, such exploration may be an appropriate topic for follow-up studies.

Initially, the survey questions were sent to participants through the LinkedIn messaging system as well as through e-mails. However, when it was discovered that Qualtrics software included functionality for Russian and Ukrainian and could be used to analyze the survey responses, all the questions were input in the Qualtrics survey system via two files, one in which the questions were in Ukrainian and the other in which the questions were in Russian. The participants responded by filling out the survey form using the Qualtrics service or through e-mailing their answers.

The data gathered was grouped and analyzed using Qualtrics analytical tools, and then observations were analyzed. Traditionally, the analysis of large amounts of textual data is conducted using content analysis. Content analysis is defined as “a research technique for making inferences by systematically . . . identifying specified characteristics within a text” (Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie, 1966, p. 5). A variation of content analysis is called thematic analysis. According to Boyatzis (1998):

Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The encoding requires an explicit “code.” This may be a list of themes; a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms. (p .4)

In the current study, the coding was organized in both the original languages of the responses—Russian and Ukrainian—as well as in English. The responses were then grouped according to the research questions and the reoccurring themes in the responses.

Since multiple outlets were used to send the survey, the responses were gathered from the various outlets. Of the 41 responses, two were received through e-mail and 10 were received through LinkedIn messages. The rest of the responses were received through the Qualtrics system.

In the current study, as in any study, the need for continual translation could have led to some subjectivity in interpreting the data. To prevent subjectivity, the researcher's analysis was reviewed by another researcher who speaks Russian and has no public relations background, as well as an American who does not speak Russian but has a public relations background.

According to Eisner (1991), the quality of qualitative research can be determined by whether it is understandable, whether the information in the study is consistent with experiences and evidence known to the reader, and the usefulness of the study. As previously mentioned, it is assumed that this study will provide useful information for individuals who plan to engage in public relations in Ukraine. These individuals will gain an understanding of the cultural and historical background that lead to professionals' attitudes about ethics and bribery. As one of the first studies of its kind, the current research will also serve as the foundation for more studies and a better understanding of Ukraine overall and public relations in particular.

Chapter 4: Results

In this study, 41 participants answered the 28 questions. Nine demographic questions were asked to develop a profile of each participant, and 19 questions were asked about the general situation of public relations in Ukraine, ethical standards, and specific cases related to bribery in public relations. Of the 41 participants, 14 chose to complete the survey in Ukrainian and 27 completed the survey in Russian. Most of the participants were from Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. Not all of the participants answered all of the questions in the survey. However, the goal of learning about the attitudes of public relations professionals was achieved because the total collection of responses indicated patterns in the attitudes among public relations professionals.

Profiles

Profiles of the professionals who completed the survey are provided based on the languages in which they completed the survey (see Tables 1–3). Of the 27 participants who answered the survey in Russian (see Table 2), 13 were male and 14 were female. The youngest person was 23, and the oldest was 45. The participants had worked in the public relations industry 2–15 years. Of these participants, 17 were working in corporate public relations, six were working in local private agencies, three were working in public organizations, and three were working in international public relations agencies. The rest of the participants represented government, banking, and entertainment public relations. Out of this group, six of the participants stated that their monthly income was 25,000–30,000 UAH (\$3,000–\$3,600) a month, five were paid 3,000–6,000 UAH (\$347–\$730) a month, and another five were paid 11,000–15,000 UAH (\$1,248–\$1,838) a month. All of the participants in the Russian-language group had received higher education degrees, with most of the participants having earned a master's

degree. However, only five of 23 participants had earned their degrees in public relations or mass communications.

Table 1

Survey Information

Category	Results
Location of participants	Ukraine
Participants	41
Ukrainian responses	14
Russian responses	27
Questions	28
Demographic questions	9
Topical questions	19

Table 2

Profile of Participants Responding in Russian

Profile category	Results
Gender	
Male	13
Female	14
Age range	23–45
Years of public relations work experience	2–15
Type of work organization	
Corporate public relations	17
Private agency	6
Public organization	3
International public relations agency	3
Income	3,000–30,000 UAH (\$347–\$3,600)
Participants with education in public relations	5

Table 3

Profile of Participants Responding in Ukrainian

Profile category	Results
Gender	
Male	4
Female	7
Age range	20–46
Years of public relations work experience	5–20
Type of work organization	
Corporate public relations	7
Private agency	2
Public organization	1
International public relations agency	3
Income	6,000–30,000 UAH (\$735–\$3,600)
Participants with higher education degrees	5

Regarding the 14 participants who chose to complete the Ukrainian-language version of the survey (see Table 3), four were male and 7 were female, the oldest person was 46 and the youngest was 20. Of these participants, seven worked in corporate public relations, and three worked in international public relations agencies, two worked in private agencies, and one worked in a public organization. Of the participants in the Ukrainian-language group, five reported they made 6,000–9,000 UAH (\$735–\$1,103) a month, and three stated they made more than 30,000 UAH (\$3,700) a month. Out of 10 who chose to respond to the question about education, eight participants had higher education degrees, predominantly master's degrees.

In analyzing the responses in Russian and Ukrainian as well as in English, it was interesting to observe the different dynamics and attitudes that were evident in the responses to the open-ended questions. Many of the participants were not happy with repetitive questions, and questions on the problem of bribery elicited some sarcastic and many pessimistic responses; however, some responses indicated hope that problems regarding bribery would soon improve.

Analysis of the Findings

For data analysis purposes, the survey responses were categorized according to their relationships with the research questions. The analysis is as follows.

RQ1: How do public relations professionals in Ukraine define the ethical state of public relations in the country and particularly in regard to bribery? According to the results of the survey, public relations professionals in Ukraine mostly do not consider bribery as ever appropriate, describing it as an illegal activity. The participants defined *bribery* as any sort of exchange of benefits or monetary exchange for a favor or illegal action. According to one of the participants, bribery involves “the benefits in exchange for the illegal way of problem solving or receiving benefits. It is not ethical.” Another participant described bribery as “taking money for the service that should be free” or as “when money is taken for something that has to be done anyways in accordance to the job description.” Another description of bribery was related to motivational purposes. As one participant stated, bribery is “the usage of the unlawful motivations in the personal egotistical pursuits.” Another participant explained the following:

A bribe is an illegal monetary compensation of an authority in exchange for the service that this authority has to do as part of the professional responsibilities, or which he or she does not have the right to perform at all.

One participant seemed to blame bribery on leaders and managers, whether they be in a public relations company or the country’s government, and described the problem of bribery by stating that “the fish starts decomposing from the head,” which is a Ukrainian saying indicating that those in higher rankings with bad morals influence individuals below them in rank. Another participant stated that the problem of bribery is not just related to the relationships between public relations professionals and journalists; rather, the problem occurs in organizations before

the services of public relations agencies are secured. The participant further explained one way that bribery occurs: “When the company is choosing (bidding on) a PR agency, there is often a talk about large sums of ‘gratitude’ for the victory in the competition among the agencies, and about the payment for the publication in mass media.”

Some participants expressed positive attitudes about public relations professionals in regard to bribery. One of the participants described bribery as “getting some benefit for making the decision that profits someone providing this benefit.” The justification for turning to bribery is implied in the statement of one participant that bribery means to “propose or give money with a goal to convince a person to do something that you need and that is impossible to do for free.” One of the participants boldly stated that bribery is a necessity, and another indicated bribery is “part of the expense” of doing business.

To give the participants a chance to objectively and openly explain how frequently they must deal with the problem of bribery, the following multiple-choice question was asked: From your communication with other public relations professionals, how often do they deal with the bribery situation? The participants had a choice of five responses: daily, once a week, monthly, once or twice a year, and other. In addition to those answers, the participants were able to add open-ended responses. Of those who completed the survey in Russian, seven of the 20 participants to this question stated that people witnessed this problem once or twice a year. Of those who completed the survey in Ukrainian, two of the 10 who responded to this question indicated public relations professionals experienced this problem on daily basis and two responded that the occurrence was about once or twice a year.

Witnessing or participating in bribery is a sensitive topic, seemingly a topic some of the participants preferred not to talk about. One of the participants stated:

People are trying not to talk about this. When there is a need to fix the situation, an agency is hired that takes care of all the details. If it has to do with publication in mass media, the agency is often writing these materials.

Another participant shared a story:

In my practice, I had only one such instance with a colleague. The governmental worker said that he would approve the project of the agency if he gets 25% of the business deal. If not, he will put a hold on a project and no one will get the money. This problem happened with a new government and new leaders in place.

Pointing out the idea that ethics might be less of a priority when big money is involved, another participant explained that “this happens when working with larger business deals.”

To examine the problem of bribery as an activity in which a public relations professional could be an aggressor, the participants were asked whether public relations professionals ever bribed journalists. Of the 22 participants who answered this question, 6 said “no” and 16 gave more detailed responses explaining their opinions. Based on these responses, public relations professionals do bribe journalists to expedite work assignments and to satisfy greedy purposes.

One of the participants stated:

Yes, [public relations professionals initiate bribes] at times when the management is making such requests that are impossible to finish without the bribe and if there is an understanding that the journalist is not interested in the subject, but the end goal is to print an article in this publication.

Another professional added that public relations professionals initiate bribes if “it is important to PR or the project that leads [the public relations agency] to the greater income.” An additional participant added that “nobody talks about it, and so I cannot say for sure.” A few

professionals explained that this situation happens “sometimes.” One of these participants noted that “some Ukrainian businessmen and also Russian businessmen consider it to be normal to pay the journalists or media in Ukraine for publications of positive information about themselves and even the lies and incorrect information.”

Since, as noted in the literature review, Ukraine has a strong culture of gift giving in personal as well as in business relationships, questions were asked to understand public relations professionals’ perspectives of gift giving in the professional setting. Specifically, the participants were asked whether journalists expected gifts from public relations professionals, whether there was a need to give gifts, and when it was acceptable to bring a present to a business meeting. In another question, the participants were openly asked whether one of the reasons for bringing a present to a journalist was to ensure a story would be published and whether clients tried to bribe public relations professionals to get stories published.

The responses indicate that in general journalists do not expect presents from public relations professionals. However, one participant stated that “if I didn’t know the journalist—then [that present would be] money. If I did know the journalist—then just minimal gratitude [is enough].” Another participant stated that some presents are necessary for “the encouragement of the journalist work, for the more involvement in their business, turning them [the journalists] into the loyal users of our services.” Certain gifts could be acceptable, such as “discount cards (to purchase the products of the company for 10–15% off [referring in particular to the products a news story was to be written about]), free entrance to companies’ events (for example, concerts), etc.” In the literature review, bribery was differentiated from innocent gift giving in that a bribe involves giving a gift for any purpose other than to build a relationship. The responses to the

question in this study, however, indicate that gift giving is used in one way or another to encourage the publication of desired information.

In responding to the question on whether gifts are appropriate in some business situations, most of the participants indicated gifts were not needed except when partnerships have already been established. One of the participants stated that “I think that giving presents when signing a business deal is not acceptable,” and another participant supported this idea by saying that “if the present is analogous to the bribe—it is always unacceptable.” A few presents, such as a pen or a book, were identified as symbolic and acceptable. Another point was made that if the relationship involves changing attitudes toward a product or a service, then it is ok to give that product or service in a business situation, treating it as a sample. Additionally, a participant stated that “presents could be purchased for different occasions and a different price. It is not always bribes.”

Other acceptable reasons for gifts in professional situations that were identified by the participants include professional holidays (e.g., journalist day) and national holidays. Reasons to give presents specifically to journalists include: to build friendly relationships, to recognize birthdays and holidays, and to express gratitude for work. Only two of 18 professionals stated the reason to give a present to journalists is get information published.

Another question was asked to determine whether other professionals could be a significant influence on the decision of whether to give a bribe. Based on the responses to the question, this influence does seem to exist; however, some participants indicated being unsure because the topic is not often discussed. One of the participants stated that “top managers and marketing leaders that are usually the bosses of PR people often require the bribes.” Another participant described a situation in which “two of my previous PR bosses in 2006–2009 asked

the journalists/media to pay them personally for publications of the positive information about the politicians and about the business campaigns.”

Most of the participants reported they would be upset if their press releases were not published because the priority was given to someone who bribed the journalists. For example, one participant said, “I will not work with such a publication; we have a lot of mass media in Ukraine.” However, another participant stated that “it did happen, but you can avoid this by improving your contacts with the journalists or by payment for the material.” A few participants stated they would be mad if the situation occurred and would actively work to change it. As one participant explained, “it did happen to me. Such is life. Usually in the situations like these, the honest players on the market are grouping together and publishing an open letter in which they are telling about this situation and asking the colleagues and the company not to work anymore with such players.”

A few professionals stated that if such a situation were to occur, they would need to think about improving their work or wait for the situation with the media to improve. As one participant indicated: “Yes, this happened to me. This means that next time I need to add more interesting facts, so the mass media does not look past the newsworthy story.” Another professional stated that if such a situation were to occur, he would “wait for the growth of professionalism in the media” or “look for other opportunities in other publications.” Yet another participant added that “it always makes me sad and makes me want to protest. I try to explain to journalists/or media that bribery is not acceptable. Yes, it happens regularly.”

RQ2: What are the attitudes of public relations professionals toward the problem of bribery in Ukraine? When do these professionals consider bribery appropriate? Based on the responses to the survey, it appears that the general attitude of public relations professionals in

Ukraine toward bribery is somewhat mixed. Most of the participants seemed to not support bribery; however, in some instances there appear to be exceptions, with participants indicating personal or observed acceptance of bribery.

One participant indicated there is “a less significant [problem with bribery in Ukraine] than 5–10 years ago.” In addressing the issue, some participants not only discussed public relations professionals bribing journalists but also the situation in the government in general, including bribery of high-ranked officials. One of the participants stated that bribery “is not a problem but a way of doing business,” whereas another professional added that the problem could be described as “full-blown extortion, especially in the specialized press.” The participants described the problem of bribery as an issue extending beyond a relationship between public relations professionals and the journalists. For example, one of the participants stated that the problem of bribery in Ukraine is characterized by “ordered materials on a few levels of the hierarchy: mass communication, journalists, the head of the departments” and that “this is a standard problem—you always need to pay for everything.” Paying seems easy to do, based on the following comment from one of the participants:

There are no problems with bribes in PR; this is a norm and some of the pricing is officially recorded in the mass media price lists. The amount of bribe to the officials—it is not an official price, but you can learn about it from friends. Sometimes the official himself tells the amount of bribe.

Another problem noted by the participants is the practice of public relations agencies virtually bribing potential clients in order to be chosen for a project. The overall high level of corruption in the country, specifically in politics, was also named as one the main troubles for the public relations profession.

Positive responses indicate that the attitude toward bribery in Ukraine among public relations professionals is that bribery is common and a necessity. One participant expressed his observations about the duality of the attitude toward the subject: “Publicly—negative [attitude]. But among themselves—everyone acknowledges it as a normal practice.”

As previously indicated, it seems that the subject of bribery is something people are not willing to openly discuss. One of the participants shared the following: “This subject is rarely discussed. Surely publicly they are fighting for transparent relationships with the media, but if the situation requires it, most are ready to pay for the publication.” The negative responses were mostly one-worded and indicated that the attitude is negative. The participants who provided fuller answers indicated that the general attitude among other professionals is that sometimes bribery is acceptable. For example, one of the participants stated that the attitude is “mostly negative. However, some PR specialists consider that sometimes you can give the bribes.”

To give the participants another avenue to express their attitudes, the participants were asked whether they would stand up against a situation involving bribery. All of the participants stated they would stand up against such a situation because of their morals and the belief bribery is always wrong and could severely damage their reputations. One of the participants shared his personal situation: “I left the previous work for the reason that the manager required to give bribes to the journalists and editors in exchange for publication of certain materials.” Another participant explained his position by stating that “I do not give the bribes to the journalists because later I will not be able to work with them for free,” and another participant explained his dedication to the standards of his association by stating that “you need to avoid situations where there is a danger to give bribes. Not [only] because I am a member of the Ukrainian Association of Public Relations (UAPR), and I am following the ethical code of UAPR.”

Participants also reported problems of nepotism and low professionalism in the workplace. As one of the participants explained, “people do not care about the results of their work because everyone is working under the nepotism principle,” which implies that certain business activities are handled differently depending on whether one is dealing with a relative, a good friend, or a stranger. In this way, business ethics are largely undermined because the nepotism principle in Ukraine lets people bend and avoid certain rules because of closer relationships with certain people. Another participant asserted “the market is just recently formed and there are not that many professionals; this is why the question of ethics is hard.” However, this same participant stated that “the professionals are trying to follow the ethical norms; there is an ethical code.”

Besides these problems, which relate to specific actions of public relations professionals, the participants also identified a few general ethical problems in Ukraine: negative attitudes towards public relations in Ukraine in general, incongruent perceptions of the public relations role within an organization, and a lower level of social morality in Ukraine in general. One of the professionals summarized this situation as “the absence of morality and honor,” and another participant commented that “the general moral problems are transferred to the workers of any industry.” One of the professionals described a “misunderstanding by the leaders of the role that PR has in organizations; for example, PR specialists and PR agencies are taken as ‘the burro of free media placement’,” which possibly means that public relations is viewed and used as a way to avoid the cost of advertising and yet place the promotional materials in the media.

RQ3: What is the difference between the eastern and western regions of Ukraine in regard to attitudes toward and practices involving bribery? In the literature review, one of the assumptions discussed is that there are differences in the attitudes toward bribery depending

on the geographical location of the professionals. Most participants agreed there is a difference according to the region. For example, one of the participants stated the following:

There is a belief that in the western regions (that are closer to Europe) there are higher standards of work and that the bribery is not as widespread. At the same time, eastern regions (Kharkov and Donetsk) have more tendencies for corruption.

Another participant stated that “there is a significant difference. In the region, without the command from above and even for money it is hard to receive good information.”

Participants indicated that the problem of bribery in Ukraine is more prevalent in areas other than the capital of Ukraine. The reason for such differences was explained to be a lack of professionalism and differences in salary between professionals who work in the capital and in other areas of the country.

One professional pointed out the difference between working in the capital and in other areas: “In the capital, PR as a profession is way more developed than in the regions.” Another participant supported this opinion: “In the region the problem of paid articles is even sharper than in Kyiv.” One other participant stated that “yes, the regional media always requires bribes.” When asked why such differences exist, the participants stated that the standards of work and opportunities could be some of the most influential factors. One of the participants stated that “here [in Kyiv] we have more specialists oriented on the world-class standard of work,” and another participant explained that “in Kyiv it is easier to work without the presents.” Addressing other influences, a participant stated that “the market of the regional publications is small and has low qualifications [for professionals],” and according to another professional, it is more difficult to “get things done” outside of Kyiv without a bribe. Another participant noted that “there is a

significant difference. In the region, without the command from above and even for money it is hard to receive good information.”

Because information in the literature review indicated a possible connection between wages earned and attitudes toward bribery, the survey included questions to determine how public relations professionals feel about the level of income of both public relations professionals and the journalists they interact with. The participants were asked whether average public relations professionals and journalists can support their families on their wages. Of the 21 participants who answered this question in Russian, 10 stated that public relations professionals cannot support their families on their incomes. Only nine of the Ukrainian-language participants answered this question, with four stating they could not support their families on their incomes. One of the participants who said the wages were not enough stated: “The income of the PR professional is about 5000–6000 Ukrainian Hryvna, which is about 625 dollars.” Another participant asserted that it “depends on the family” and then explained that “if it is one to two people then yes, but if we are talking about a single mom with three children—then no.” Another participant concluded that it is possible if the professional is working “in a large company or a good PR agency.”

When asked whether an average journalist can support his or her family, the responses were similar to those regarding public relations professionals. Of the 20 people who responded to the survey question in Russian, 10 said journalists could not support their family. Of the eight who responded in Ukrainian, three said journalists could not support their families. One of the professionals explained that “the situation is the same as with [public relations professionals], and in the governmental mass media [they make] even less.” Therefore, the situation depends on the size of the family and the place of employment, so no exact connections were established.

However, it seems that the general attitude of the participants is that it is difficult for public relations professionals and journalists to support their families with their wages. Further research is required to find any distinct correlations between the levels of bribery among public relations professionals and their wage.

The participants also indicated that one of the main ethical problems in public relations in Ukraine is bribery between public relations professionals and journalists, specifically journalists requiring money for their publications, or as one of the professionals stated, “the usage of paid materials under the appearance [of being] printed.” Another participant explained that “usually journalists are asking for money for the publications.” Another problem that was identified is that company leaders are hiring public relations agencies using dishonest tenders or, as one participant complained, “no transparent tenders, corrupted news organizations,” and as another added, “corruption in the mass media: paid publications, paid PR tenders.”

RQ4: What do public relations professionals in Ukraine project will be the future ethical state of the public relations profession in Ukraine? Even though no specific questions were asked to explore RQ4, the responses provided some data on this question. The purpose of the fourth research question was to examine how participants’ perspectives of the role of bribery in Ukraine may affect the country’s goal to participate more fully in the global economic and political communities, which have strict guidelines about the corruption level in a country. It seems that the future of the public relations profession in Ukraine will be largely influenced by improvements in the public relations industry, particularly on improvements in professional standards. The participants repeatedly stated that the “absence of the professional journalism” and the “low quality of PR specialists, the lack of desire by PR specialists to learn about PR and raise their qualification” are some of the causes of ethical problems in the public relations

profession in Ukraine. The early stage of the profession in Ukraine could play a big part in the ethical and moral problems because “there are not that many [public relations] professionals.” Consequently, there is a need for higher educational and training standards for public relations professionals.

The future of public relations in Ukraine will most likely involve more high-quality public relations materials, which will hopefully replace the use of monetary bribes to get press releases published. It appears that public relations professionals realize high-quality, professional material can be as enticing as paid materials. Answering the questions on how the participants feel if their press releases were overlooked because paid press releases were favored, some of the participants stated that to overcome this problem they would improve the quality of their material. This attitude gives hope for the future of the profession.

Some of the participants explained why they would stand up against bribery, stating that they would because they are members of public relations organizations where they are bound to obey ethical standards. Participation in public relations organizations might be another characteristic of the improved quality of the profession in Ukraine. Such participation encourages ethical standards, international perspectives, and professional responsibility.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

While analyzing the survey responses, some of the themes and concepts from the literature review emerged as interesting patterns that provide answers to the research questions. This chapter contains discussion of each of the themes that emerged.

Education

As mentioned previously, the survey contained demographic questions, including regarding the educational levels of the participants. Most of the professionals reported having completed higher education, which means a bachelor's and master's degrees in public relations or a related field. The prevalence of having completed higher education can be considered ordinary in post-communist countries such as Ukraine. During the Soviet rule, most of the Eastern European countries that were part of the Soviet Union provided free, government-sponsored education for their citizens, making earning a higher degree in these countries easier than it would be in other countries.

Unfortunately, a higher education degree in Ukraine does not necessarily mean a better job and a higher salary. Often Ukrainians hear stories of individuals who received PhDs and still are not able to provide for themselves or own their own housing. In some instances, a higher education degree also does not mean that the person received his or her diploma honestly. Because of widespread corruption and nepotism in the country, even in education, it is difficult to be entirely sure whether a diploma was received honestly. The education of high-level political officials is often questioned due to multiple instances of purchased diplomas. As a result, it can unfortunately be the case that professionals with higher education could have been practicing bribery even to obtain their education.

Consequently, the value of education in Ukraine is lower than in nations in which this problem does not exist. Among the small universities in Ukraine, only two are ranked as top universities in the country: National Shevchenko University and Kyiv Mohyla Academy. The remainder of Ukrainian education institutions could be summarized as follows: “For the moment, Ukrainian education is too inward-looking, too corrupt, and too poor to do a good job” (Popova, 2010).

Defining *Bribery*

Since there are various ways people define *bribery*, the purpose of the first research question was to identify negative or positive connotations in the definitions of bribery given by Ukrainian public relations professionals. The intent of the second research question was then to determine the attitude of public relations professionals toward the problem of bribery.

When reviewing the responses to question 10 of the survey (“What is your definition of bribery?”), it could appear to be a difficult task to determine whether the attitude of most Ukrainian public relations professionals regarding bribery is negative or positive. Analysis of the responses indicates that some of the professionals’ attitudes are neutral in general, as if they are not trying to accuse anyone of any wrongdoing. For example, one participant defined *bribery* as “getting some benefit for making a decision that profits someone providing that benefit.” However, most of the responses showed a negative attitude in defining the problem, using such words in the definition as *illegal* and *unlawful action* or *unlawful activity*.

Based on the responses to question 14 (“From your communication with other public relations professionals, how often do they face the situation involving bribery?”), for the most part, such a situation is witnessed only once or twice a year. In further explaining their responses, however, some of the professionals gave additional information that implied that the

actual witnessing of bribery may be underreported because of peer pressure. Many reported ideas such as “people are trying not to talk about this” and “when there is a need to fix the situation, an agency is hired that takes care of all the details. If it has to do with publication in mass media, the agency is often writing these materials.” One participant stated that “this happens upon signing up the contacts on important business deals.” The ambiguity in the responses to this question might support the idea that the general attitude of public relations professionals toward bribery is related to the general attitude toward bribery in society, and this general attitude might influence opinions of individuals even though they might never have had, or at least never reported, a firsthand encounter with bribery.

In question 15, the participants were asked the following: “Do you think the journalists expect the bribes from public relations professionals? How often? Under what circumstances? Give at least one example.” The intent of this question was to explore whether public relations professionals believe that journalists always expect bribes. Most of the answers indicated that public relations professionals think journalists expect bribes. One of the professionals illustrated the situation with media bribery in Ukraine by stating that “almost 20% of the business media in Ukraine (newspapers, magazines, and websites) are ready to publish untruthful information in exchange for bribes.” public relations practitioners seem to believe that the problem of journalists expecting bribes could be more significant in rural regions than in the larger cities of Ukraine. As one of the participants noted, “it is more a problem of the regional media,” and another professional added, “for the national and business media it is not that big of a problem, but for the regional and specialty focused—it is a real problem.” However, another professional stated that journalists do not expect bribes. Clearly, there are some polarized opinions regarding this situation.

Another professional told the following story illustrating this situation:

In 2010, a Ukrainian bank with Russian capital was searching for the opportunity to become the leader of the media ratings of the banking services, and so the management ordered confidential research about whom in journalism and media and how much you need to pay [or who to bribe and how much to pay]. The results of this research demonstrated that almost 20% of the business media in Ukraine (newspapers, magazines, and websites) are ready to publish untruthful information in exchange for bribes. In a month after this research, the bank appeared among the leaders of the bank media ratings.

Many of the responses in this survey indicate that regional and specialized media in Ukraine seem to be largely viewed as the outlets in which bribery occurs. It also seems there is a basic misunderstanding of the public relations role, which is supposed to involve supplying recent and truthful news about an organization rather than pushing older or irrelevant information. This misunderstanding appears to be one of the reasons, according to public relations professionals, why journalists are prone to request bribes, since the function of the public relations professional as a supplier of interesting and timely information is being replaced with expectancy of a mandatory printing of any information desired by a company.

Bribery Initiation

Further exploring the dynamics of bribery relationships between public relations professionals and journalists in Ukraine, it is usually assumed that journalists are the ones who are asking for bribes. However, in responding to question 16 (“Do public relations professionals initiate the bribes? If yes, then why?”), of the 22 responses to this question, only six were “no”; the rest of the responses were “sometimes” and “yes.” A few participants shared the view that paying for the publication is a way for public relations professionals to ensure they receive a

placement in the media and to satisfy the requirements of the managers who demand a publication. One participant stated that public relations professionals turn to bribery “at times when the management is making such requests that are impossible to finish without the bribe and if there is an understanding that the journalists are not interested in the subject but there is a goal to print an article in this publication.”

It is interesting that most participants answered “no” to question 17 (“Do you think that the journalists you were working with were expecting a present from you?”). In comparing the attitudes to questions 16 and 17, it seems that public relations professionals might have a slightly more negative perception about themselves than about journalists in Ukraine in terms of ethical behavior.

In question 20, the participants were asked, “Do public relations professionals bribe the clients? Give examples of such a situation.” The purpose of the question was for the participants to discuss similar situations between public relations professionals and their clients. The question naturally resulted in a few responses that began with “it depends on how you define a bribe.” Most of the participants indicated that public relations professionals do not bribe clients. A few participants stated they were not sure such situations existed, while a few other participants stated there is a tendency to bribe clients in large industries and politics.

One of the reasons the participants described bribery as a negative activity but later were a little prone to agree that bribery could be acceptable at times is because gift giving is a large part of relationship building in Ukrainian culture. It might be that professionals feel conflicted when distinguishing between an actual bribe and an acceptable gift exchange. Such situations could create business problems for Western professionals who are trying to understand how to conduct business in Ukraine.

As indicated in the literature review, many of the attitudes and actions related to bribery are influenced by others in the same field, such as bosses, and from the general public accepting the existence of bribery. Question 26 asked: “How much are public relations professionals influenced in their decision to give or not to give a bribe by other public relations professionals?” The participants shared a variety of opinions. A few of the professionals stated ideas such as “a real professional should make a decision for himself” or herself. Participants also noted that Ukrainian public relations is structured based on advertising and marketing, and the professionals in those fields are the individuals who influence public relations professionals to pay for media placements. A few participants stated that the manager or the boss is one of the most influential individuals in regard to public relations professionals’ attitudes toward bribery.

Attitudes Toward Bribery

In question 28, the participants were asked the following: “How do you feel knowing that some of our press releases will not be published because the priority is given to those that were paid for or accompanied with a present. Did this happen to you?” Most of the participants who responded to this question indicated that if such a situation occurred, public relations professionals would be mad and would stop working with the corrupt journalists. The participants seemed to be willing to protest such corrupt decisions. However, a few of the participants stated that they would work on improving the quality of their press releases to get published in the future, indicating they would rather take a passive approach to the situation. Rather than seeing the situation as a problem regarding bribery, they considered the situation to be a problem with their own actions or work. Nevertheless, this approach of writing more compelling content might be an appropriate method of addressing the problem. One of the participants stated that such a situation could be improved by “improving the contacts with the

journalists or by payment for the material.” It is interesting that contemplation about such a situation elicited ethically contradictory conclusions from the public relations professionals.

The public relations profession in Ukraine is considered one of the more prestigious professions; however, that does not necessarily mean that being a public relations professional will result in a higher income. This situation is not surprising considering that in Ukraine there are underpaid doctors and dentists as well. From the results of this survey, it is hard to say how public relations professionals compare to other professions in income levels because in any profession there are different levels of progression in the profession. However, according to the results of this study, it is safe to conclude that public relations professionals could have a more comfortable lifestyle in Ukraine if they were highly regarded and worked for the well-known companies. However, many of the participants admitted that the average public relations professional cannot support their families on their wages. Though the public relations professionals who completed the survey all had high educational levels, and it can be assumed that their peers also have high educational levels, the findings of the study indicate that one of the largest problems in the public relations field in Ukraine is the lack of professionalism.

The literature review included discussion of the concept that public relations practitioners and journalists may decide to engage in bribery if their incomes are not high enough to support their families. Such a question is also difficult to analyze because the income of both public relations professionals and journalists in Ukraine largely depends on the companies they are working at, their industries, and their geographic locations. However, it is reasonable to conclude that in general an average public relations professional or journalist does not make enough to comfortably support his or her family, particularly because Ukrainian professionals at most levels and in most specializations are not able to support their families.

In response to question 11 (“Is there a problem with bribery in public relations business in Ukraine?”), most of the participants stated that there was a problem; however, a few participants said they had not had any personal encounters with bribery. Once again, such attitudes raise the question of whether the problem of bribery in public relations is driven by the general assumption that the problem exists rather than concrete evidence the problem exists.

To better understand this situation, the participants were asked question 12 as a follow-up to question 11 (“If yes, then what is the problem of bribery in Ukrainian public relations business?”). The responses to this question were clearer. Every participant who answered this question clearly explained that bribery is one of the largest problems in Ukrainian public relations. The participants stated that the problem of bribery is so prevalent that in some cases people or journalists “show you the price list for services.” The problem of bribery was also described as “corrupt mass media and nontransparent business,” as well as dishonest public relations tenders. One of the participants even stated that bribery is “the nature of these people.” Another participant reported that there is a “market for bribes.”

A justification of this situation was hinted at in the comment that “this is a standard problem—you always need to pay for everything.” Another professional gave a more detailed answer: “Some journalists/media require [you] to pay them for the publication/information about the business, because they consider it to be a normal way of making money.” Another participant expressed the view of a few of the professionals that the problem of bribery exists in Ukraine because “the problem is in the fact that the Soviet mentality is taking the toll over the professional attitude towards the work on the proper level of competitiveness.” The responses to this question indicate that public relations professionals in Ukraine view the problem of bribery as illegal or something that is not supposed to occur.

Regional Attitude Differences

The purpose of question 22 (“What do you think is the general attitude towards bribery among public relations professionals?”) was to determine whether public relations professionals in Ukraine support the assumption that there are differences in the attitudes toward bribery in different parts of Ukraine. Before the study began, the assumption was made that the geographic location would play a significant role in both the level of bribery among the professionals and in their attitudes toward bribery. As described in the literature review, the assumption was that eastern Ukrainians would be more accepting of bribery because of the stronger influences of Russia, which has a long history and deep culture of bribery. However, because of the difficulty in obtaining a study sample including separate groups of individuals in eastern and western Ukraine, the direction of the research in regard to regional implications was changed. One of the main difficulties in obtaining an appropriate sample was the fact that the researcher was conducting the study from the United States and most of the professionals who were easily accessible online and responded to the survey invitation were from Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. However, a few participants did support the notion that professionals in eastern Ukraine and the south are more prone to bribery because of their proximity to Russia. Nevertheless, to further confirm this idea, more research is needed.

The results of this study indicate another difference in attitudes toward bribery among Ukrainian public relations professionals: the difference between professionals who work in larger cities versus those who work in smaller cities. This topic was addressed in survey question 23 (“If so, why do you think this difference exist?”). Similar to the assumption that professionals in eastern Ukraine are more accepting of bribery, the majority of participants indicated that those who worked in smaller cities in Ukraine were more accepting of bribery.

Some of the participants indicated that smaller cities in rural regions of the country have lower-quality specialists than those in the capital and other larger cities. In the capital, there is a greater possibility “to get things done without a bribe,” as stated by one of the participants. There is a need for additional research to establish any correlations between city size and attitudes toward bribery.

Client Bribery

As previously mentioned, one interesting variable regarding the problem of bribery in Ukraine is the existence of corrupt public relations tenders or competition when company personnel are supposed to choose a public relations agency based on the best match with the company’s needs. The results of this survey show that those needs are sometimes not what one would expect in a professional setting. According to the responses of the professionals in this study, members of public relations agencies sometimes bribe company personnel to choose their agencies rather than other agencies. From the Western, logical view, such activity completely undermines the meaning of the tender, which should be aimed at finding the best possible and most ethical public relations agency for the particular need and not the agency with the best bribes.

Yet, it appears that some companies in Ukraine are doing just that—looking for the public relations agencies whose personnel are best at bribing. In addition to the standard reasons for bribery that were stated in the literature review, such as compensation for lower pay and the ability to push unnewsworthy material into print, this form of bribery creates a perpetual cycle in which company decision makers pick the public relations agency with the best bribes and then the members of that agency deliver results by bribing the media, which creates higher expectations among the companies that when any of their material can be placed in the media.

As stated by one of the professionals, some managers consider public relations to be “the burro of free media placements.” It appears that such behavior could increase the appetites of journalists who become accustomed to paid publicity and become completely uninterested in proactively finding newsworthy information and staying impartial and objective. As one of the participants stated in his response, “what happened to good old FREE journalism.” From the responses of the public relations professionals, it is easy to see the desperation they feel because of the problem of bribery that is found in almost all the levels of the public relations profession in Ukraine.

Appropriate Gifts

Another assumption in this study was that Ukrainian public relations professionals have mixed feelings toward the problem of bribery since it might be considered justifiable when used in the same way as gift giving. However, most of the participants described the problem of bribery in terms that are similar to the general Western description of bribery, including corruption, lack of transparency, and payment for journalist services that are supposed to be free. The participants in this study often acknowledged that the problem of bribery is at times considered to be a given or accepted as part of the reality in Ukraine. In response to question 13 (“If no, why is bribery not a problem as you see it?”), just a few of the participants gave reasons why bribery was not a problem. These reasons included the acceptance of the reality of the situation, such as, “it is often a normal way of doing business” and “for every client who wants to pay [a] bribe there will be another who does not.” An attitude of justification was also expressed: “How bad is it to pay for being famous?”

It is interesting that depending on the question about the problem of bribery, the professionals expressed varying attitudes regarding bribery, ranging from completely negative, to

accepting, to even protective. Part of the reason for this phenomenon could be the political and the cultural realities and the conditions in Ukraine. It appears that Ukrainians are used to hearing about and observing others achieving success when they “cut the corners,” and in the new democratic reality of business competition in Ukraine, it seems that public relations professionals are tempted to find justifications for corrupt actions, perhaps partly because they feel as though everyone else is doing it and sometimes it is just how things work.

Based on the Ukrainian tradition of hospitality, it is standard for anyone who visits a home to bring a present for the hosts. This cultural tradition is deeply rooted in Ukrainian society, and it is easy to see how this tradition could create confusion regarding the problem of bribery in the workplace, where professionals might be expected to bring presents when meeting for business deals.

In Question 19, the participants were asked the following: “What would be the reason to bring presents for the journalists; would one of them be to publish your information? Name others.” Based on the responses to this question, it is very clear that public relations professionals understand that presents should be used only for relationship building and that presents are intended for such personal occasions as birthdays, holidays, and similar occasions. This idea is also supported in the answers to question 18 (“When do you think that there is a need for a present in a business situation, or when do you think it is not acceptable?”). The participants stated that giving presents during business hours is not acceptable, except perhaps for important holidays or birthdays. The participants gave examples of appropriate presents for such occasions: a bottle of wine, a pen, or a notebook. Some participants discussed the products they would give to journalists for free so the journalists could write their opinions on the products. Another reason identified for giving gifts is to express gratitude for great work.

Though it is generally understood that some presents are allowed in any working relationships, there appears to be an obligation to use presents to establish relationships with journalists in Ukraine. Since relationships with journalists are the basis of the public relations profession, it may be assumed that skillful public relations professionals in Ukraine could benefit by understanding how and when to give certain presents. Unfortunately, this assumption could also mean that skillful bribery could be a way for some public relations professionals to get ahead in the profession and do a better job promoting their clients than professionals who do not use bribery.

Standing Up to Bribery

In addition to exploring the prevalence and use of bribery in public relations in Ukraine, another objective of the study was to explore whether negative attitudes toward bribery are strong enough for professionals to stand up against bribery. The purpose of question 27 (“Do you think there is ever a situation where you need to take a stand against giving a bribe when you are asked for it?”) was to examine the participants’ opinions on this topic.

All of the participants who answered this question stated that they would absolutely stand against situations involving bribery. The participants gave numerous moral and professional reasons why they would take or have taken a stand against bribery. For example, one participant stated, “I am always against it because it is not a correct way and the way to nowhere,” and also added that “the manager that does not understand, that is not my manager.” Another professional explained, “I do not give bribes to the journalists because later I will not be able to work with them for free.” An additional participant shared a personal story: “I left the previous job for the reason that the manager required to give the bribes to the journalists and editors in exchange for publication of certain material.” It seems that the general attitude of public

relations professionals in Ukraine is strictly against bribery. The public relations professionals in the study indicated that the idea of taking a stand against bribery is much more attractive than any publicly acceptable justifications of bribery. public relations professionals' clear understanding of what bribery is and willingness to fight against it gives hope that the situation in Ukraine can be improved with time.

The intent of the fourth research question and related survey questions was to determine the views of public relations professionals in Ukraine regarding the general ethical situation of the profession in the future. The responses to question 9 (“What are the main ethical problems for the public relations professionals in Ukraine”) indicate that the main ethical problems in the profession relate to bribery, and specifically with paid publications and public relations tenders. Additionally, there is a problem regarding the use of paid material presented as being written objectively by journalists, as well as the lack of professionalism on the part of both journalists and public relations professionals. A few participants suggested that the public still has a negative perception about publications, viewing it as “black PR.”

Bribery Influence Model

The attitudes and opinions of public relations professionals in this study and Ukraine's history and cultural factors show that bribery is a complicated problem in Ukrainian public relations. Figure 1 on the following page contains a visual representation of various factors influencing bribery in public relations in Ukraine. These factors include the Soviet heritage of corruption, low press freedom, insufficient income, clients' expectation to pay bribes, and journalists' expectation to receive bribes in return for publication of press releases. While all of these factors occur simultaneously and create a complicated picture of bribery in Ukraine, the

issue could still improve because of recent political activism and public relations professionals' desire to improve their understanding of public relations and the quality of their work.

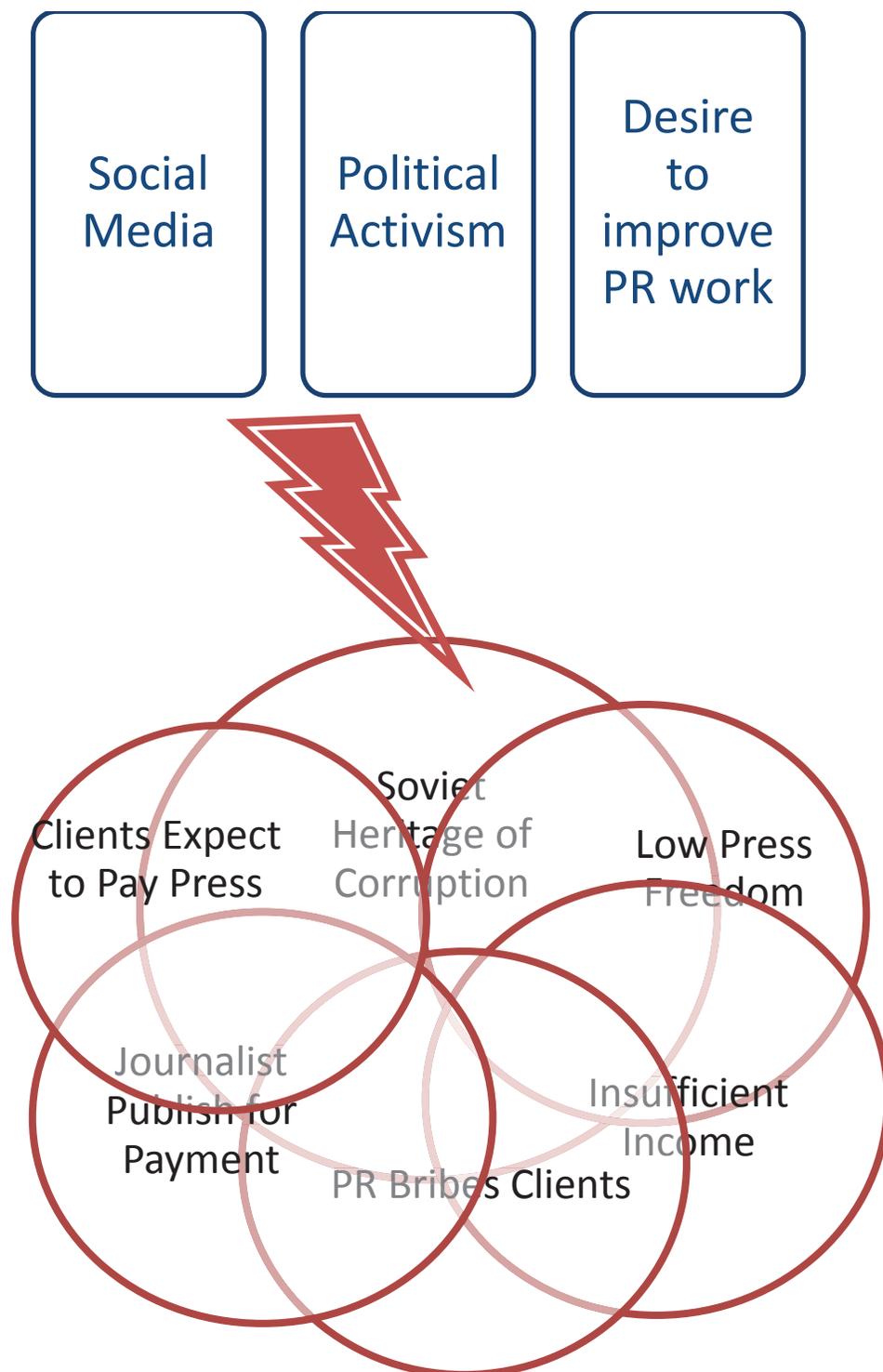


Figure 1. Bribery influence model.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Ukraine is one of the relatively newly independent countries that is currently transitioning from the realities of the Soviet Union regime and lack of business initiatives in the country to the modern ideas of more open and transparent communication in business. It seems that on a societal level as well as on an individual level, Ukrainians are fairly conflicted in their beliefs about right and wrong in relation to bribery.

Based on the findings of this study, the accepting attitudes toward bribery are not necessarily the result of individuals being criminally minded and intent on breaking the law or cheating. Instead, acceptance of bribery is more of a social phenomenon in Ukrainian society; the country's people have observed for years and years how their coworkers, managers, and particularly government officials get ahead by cutting corners and bribing various individuals. Consequently, people have concluded that some bribery is acceptable if it is used, for example, as an innocent means of building relationships or personal gift giving. It is important to emphasize that the results of this study indicate that Ukrainian public relations professionals seem to have a clear understanding and a negative attitude toward the problem of bribery; however, they also have a firm belief that this problem is part of society and that bribery is how some people are used to conducting business.

Based on the findings of this study, the conclusion could be made that Ukrainian public relations professionals clearly understand the importance of honesty in public relations as well as personally striving to be honest and maintain open relationships. However, it appears there is still a long way for these professionals in Ukraine to go before they achieve their goal of honest and open relationships. One of the first steps that must occur to achieve this goal is establishing an improved public relations education program in Ukraine, with an emphasis on moral issues,

critical thinking, and decision making in public relations. The level of professionalism in the country has to be increased significantly so that professionals better understand and act in accordance with the principles of honest business behavior.

Although public relations professionals already have a strong negative attitude toward bribery, there is still a need to establish practices that limit or eliminate payments to journalists for materials that should be free and published on the merits of newsworthiness. This quest definitely requires significant time and efforts from many people from all levels of Ukrainian society, including from different professional fields. This is something that Ukraine's population and politicians must work on together. This improvement might take a long time to occur, and considering the thriving corruption around the world, there is a possibility that even if the situation regarding bribery in Ukraine is improved, another form of corruption could take its place.

One of the other issues in Ukrainian society in general as well as in public relations in particular is the need for checks and balances within business and educational systems, particularly in smaller Ukrainian cities. It appears that the idea of working in a more segregated community and often being invisible to others in the world because of operating in a small, inward-focused community is significantly increasing the severity of bribery in rural regions of Ukraine. It seems that relatively secluded smaller villages are the perfect environment for bribery to thrive in. Another improvement on a national level would involve raising the wages for public relations professionals and journalists, particularly in rural regions. Leaders of international companies that establish operations in Ukraine should consider paying their Ukrainian employees based on international standards.

As all Ukrainians work together to increase standards of honesty in the workplace, the hope is that the services of public relations professionals will also be accepted with a better understanding of the moral standards in the field. One of the most significant findings in this study is the situation regarding public relations tenders, in which public relations professionals are bribing their way into receiving company bids. This finding is troublesome because it seems that companies whose personnel use this practice are supporting the idea that the value of the public relations professionals is based on a certain level of trickery and not on their professional achievements. The hope is that more and more leaders across different industries will require higher performance standards from their own employees as well as from any service providers working with their companies.

This situation can also work the other way around, with public relations professionals strictly maintaining high moral and ethical standards in any business operations and not letting the corruption of other people influence their ethical decisions or judgments. Achieving this goal will probably be one of the hardest challenges in the transitional state of business and the economy in Ukraine, where many people are still living with memories of difficulties in the past. From the researcher's perspective, it will likely take a long time for many people in Ukraine to develop higher ethical and moral standards and expectations concerning professional and ethical performance, regardless of the standards or the behaviors of their managers or even political leaders.

The very obvious resolution of this problem could be achieved through continuous improvement in the level of political freedoms in the country, one of the most important of which is freedom of speech. In the last few years, with the help of social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter, people all around the world have obtained more access to unregulated

public outlets to express their perspectives and gather people of similar views to participate in the powerful movements that have overthrown strong regimes that have been abusing people for many years.

In regard to the situation in Ukraine as well as in other Eastern European countries, freedom of speech is a new luxury that people in these countries lived without for many generations. Because of the punishments implemented for saying anything against the centralized power of the higher government, people in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries have been trained to believe it is better to lie low and not voice their opinions, sometimes for the purpose of protecting their lives. The concept of public relations and its relationship with journalists relate directly to the concept of freedom of speech and the controls in the field of public relations. The improvements in ethical understanding among public relations professionals in Ukraine will also bring improvements regarding freedom of speech in the country and vice versa—improved ethical and moral standards in Ukraine will bring improvement in all of its industries, including public relations.

Limitations

This study contained limitations, indicating areas for further research. This study was limited to exploring connections and correlations because it did not involve collecting quantitative data or determining relationships between variables. Instead, the focus of this study was on a qualitative exploration of the feelings and attitudes of public relations professionals in Ukraine. There are multiple possible follow-up studies, some of which could be quantitative, to establish correlations and relationships between different variables. Follow-up studies could have a focus on examining the problem of bribery within each of the income levels of public relations professionals and journalists, as well as possibly determining whether any connections exist

between specific instances of bribery and low salaries among public relations professionals and journalists. Also beneficial would be an exploration of the details of regional differences in the profession of public relations in Ukraine.

Since the purpose of the study was to explore attitudes toward bribery, the survey contained only a few questions related to whether the participants took part in bribery activities. It appears that one of the patterns in the participants' responses is that public relations professionals have a very high respect for ethics and consider any unethical situations involving bribery as unacceptable. At the same time, however, it seems that in some instances when the participants were asked to describe the attitudes of other public relations professionals, they expressed a duality of attitudes regarding bribery. It would be interesting to explore the different attitudes expressed among professionals when reporting on personal attitudes versus the attitudes of others.

Additionally, as previously noted, all of the participants in this study reported having obtained higher education degrees. Even though having completed higher education should lead to higher professionalism, most of the professionals in the study, who likely work with other highly educated professionals, reported in their responses a very low level of professionalism among public relations professionals. One of the reasons could be the corruption in the Ukrainian education system, which might be creating some of the early patterns of bribery. In a future study, it would be interesting to establish whether a correlation exists between the types of universities where public relations professionals earned their degrees and the professionals' attitudes toward bribery and perceptions regarding the level of bribery in the field. The assumption could be made that attending smaller and more secluded universities leads to more accepting attitudes toward bribery than does attending a higher-quality international university.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

ПР в Украине

Добрий День,

Если вы работаете в сфере ПР в Украине, примите пожалуйста участие в этом исследовании. Я хочу больше узнать о отношении к проблеме взяток в Украинском ПР. Выберите язык и кликните на линк!

Русский https://byu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_2csYEQx8sr9m1SI

Українська https://byu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bxB6erVjpHAieqM

Спасибо!

Лилия Вельбовец

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT

USA

Appendix B: Questionnaire

1. Gender: Male___ Female___
2. Age_____
3. How many years of experience do you have as a public relations professional?_____
4. Main sector in which participant works: Corporate___, Nonprofit___, Government___,
5. Public___, Higher education___, Local Public Relations Agency___,
Global Public Relations Agency___, Other___
6. Your income range monthly in UAH: 1000–1500___, 1500–2000___, 2000–2500___,
3000–3500___, 3500–4000___, 4500–5000___, 5000 and over___
7. Do you have a university degree? Yes___ No___
8. If yes, what is the highest degree you have achieved?_____
9. What are main ethical concerns for public relations professionals in Ukraine?_____
10. What is your definition of bribery?_____
11. Is there a problem with bribery in Ukrainian public relations?_____
12. If yes, what is the problem of bribery in public relations?_____
13. If no, why is bribery not a problem as you see it?_____
14. From your communication with other public relations professionals, how often do they
face the situation involving bribery?_____
15. In your opinion, would the journalists be expecting a bribe from public relations people?
How often?___ Under what circumstances_____? Give at least one
example._____
16. Would a public relations professional ever initiate a bribe?_____ If so
why___? How often would that happen?_____

17. In your opinion, do journalists you were working with expected from you to bring a gift?_____. How often would that happen?_____
- 18.
19. When is it appropriate for you to bring a gift during a business deal?_____. Is it no?_____ When is it not?_____
20. What are possible reasons for giving presents to journalists?_____. Would one be printing stories?_____ Are there others?_____
21. Are public relations professionals bribed by their clients? How often?____ Under what circumstances? Give an example._____
22. What do you think is the general attitude towards bribery among public relations professionals?_____
23. Is there a difference in attitude towards bribery in public relations between different regions of Ukraine?
24. If so, why do you think this difference exist?
25. Can an income of an average public relations person in Ukraine sustain his or her family? Yes or No.
26. In your opinion, could an average journalist sustain a family on his salary? Yes or No
27. To what extend would a public relations professional influenced by another public relations professional to give or not to give a bribe? Please provide an example?_____
28. What are the situations to ever take a stand when you are asked give a bribe?_____ Would you do it?_____ Why?_____

29. How would you feel knowing that some of your press releases will not be published because the priority was given to those that were paid for?_____.

Appendix C: Responses

The responses to the open-ended survey questions are provided below. The responses to the demographic questions are not included because they are explained in detail in the discussion section of this thesis.

9. What are main ethical problems for the public relations professionals in Ukraine?
- “Jeansa” is like a closed circle, where Media does not want to talk about the companies for free and companies do not put the affords towards meaningful thought and preparation of the PR events, and instead prefer paying”
 - Bribery
 - Corruption in the mass media: paid publications, paid “tenders”
 - Corruption in the mass media: paid publications, paid PR tenders
 - Many sin using paid publications
 - Otkaty is the way to judge about it
 - The absence of the professional journalism
 - The purchase of the media placements
 - The usage of paid materials under the appearance of printed
 - Usually, journalists are asking for money for the publications
 - A low qualification of PR specialists, the lack of desire by PR specialists to learn about PR and to raise their qualification. The lack of the desire to follow the ethical standards of PR
 - As a PR specialist, I do not feel ethical problems
 - At the time of crisis the department has to bear the fault of the whole company falls on the organization, at the same time, not receiving enough support from other departments – the lawyers are not giving the law basis, considering to remain silent, the HR department is not ready to inform the personal about the changes and the manager to comment about the situation.
 - Clients think that PR means lying to publics, “black” political techniques are the synonyms of PR.
 - If the company is working on the market of ratings or FMCG, often the PR specialist is required to produce the publications about the product. At the same time, the company is not ready to pay money for the advertising placement and instead, the company is preferring to use “the PR connections.”
 - Intense competition. Black PR.
 - Not transparent tenders, corrupted news organizations,
 - People do not care about the results of their work because everyone is working under the “brotherhood” principle.
 - PR is considered not as a strategic role but as a marketing communication role.

- Professionalism of the journalists (the differentiation of the editorial and advertising department), transparently.
- The absence of morality and honor
- The fact that sometimes you need to represent and protect the interests of the person that you are personally not supporting, the fact that you need to pay for the placement of the information in the media, even if the information is not about business but has an educational or cultural topic, and this is the work of press and informational agencies – to sell to people the information.
- The general moral problems are transferred to the workers of any industry
- The lack of understanding by top management of the goals of public relations, as a result it is viewed as a normal thing to “place” the information (most likely paid)
- The market is just recently formed and there are not that many professionals, this is why the question of ethics is hard. The professionals are trying to follow the ethical norms, there is an ethical code
- The misunderstanding by the leaders the role of PR in organization, specifically, PR specialists and PR agencies are taken as “ the buro of free media placements”.
- There are no problems, what do you consider a problem?
- Unprofessionalism and conviction that paid PR is also PR.
- what happened to good old FREE journalism

10. What is your definition of *bribery*?

- Getting some benefit for making the decision that profits someone providing this benefit
- Propose or give money with a goal to convince a person do something that you need and that is impossible to do for free
- The benefits in exchange for the illegal way of problem solving or receiving benefits, it is not ethical
- The proposition of the material or monetary goods to the official, who makes a decision in some action of an interest for his help
- The usage of the unlawful motivations in the personal egoistical pursuits
- This is the part of political life of the country where the government does not take part. It is practically the calculated level of mistrust to the government
- When money is taken for something that has to be done anyways in accordance to the job description
- A bribe - is an illegal monetary compensation of the authority in exchange for the service that this authority has to do as part of the professional responsibilities or does not have the right to perform them at all.
- Actions against the law
- Demanding the additional funds for doing something that a person supposed to be doing but is not doing

- Giving any material valuables with a goal to influence the decision for one's profit or benefit.
- Necessity
- Part of the expense
- Something that is not done without money
- Taking money for the service that should be free
- The acceptance by the official of any valuables (things or money) or some sort of monetary benefit or the service for the action (or the absence of the action) that has to be completed due to the work responsibilities or possibilities, in the interest of the person who gives the bribe.
- The acceptance of the valuable presents by governmental workers to make the needed decision
- The bribery is the need to pay cash to the journalists/media for the publication of the information about the business activity.
- The buy off with the specific purpose
- The demand for money for certain services, preferences, lobbying of the interests
- The fish starts decomposing from the head (the saying that means that the leaders are the first one to get corrupted)
- The material reward for the usage of the work privileges in subjective interests.
- The proposition to get outside of work responsibilities/procedures in exchange for monetary benefit
- very common in Ukraine
- When the company is choosing (bidding on) a PR agency, there is often a talk about large sums of "gratitude" for the victory in the competition among the agencies, the payment for the publication in mass media.

11. Is there problems with bribery in public relations business in Ukraine?

Responded Yes: 9

- I have not encountered it personally
- I have not have to deal with such instances
- I think so but I have not experienced it myself.
- If we are talking about corrupted mass media that yes.
- Not familiar
- Right now it is less significant than 5-10 years ago.
- The system of bribes works
- There is a problem of "otkaty" that came from the advertising industry.
- There is a problem with "otakty", from the side of the agency, there are proposals of large bonuses to those who make decisions.
- This is not a problem but way of doing business
- This is not a significant problem

- Yes and the definition is changing here a little. To propose or give money with the goal to convince the publisher of mass media or the “right” person in the government or the organization, to print something without the note “published as an advertising” or to make needed for your organization decision. The other understanding of bribes are with a journalist – this is when a journalist is receiving money for the publication of a certain article and then lobbying the publication to the editor.
- Yes, at the time of the competition amount the PR companies
- Yes, I see it on each step – its proposed and required
- Yes, there is a full blown extortion, especially in the specialized press.

12. If yes, than what is the problem of bribery in Ukrainian public relations business?

- Actually people just openly show you the pricelist for services
- Corrupted mass media, nontransparent business
- Dishonest determination of the PR tender winners among PR firms
- It is specifically the problem of political activities
- it is the nature of these people
- Ordered materials on a few levels of the hierarchy: mass communication, journalists, the head of the department
- Some journalists/media require to pay them for the publications/information about the business because they consider it to be the normal way of making money
- The “otkat” is given to PR people by contractors for placing an order with them.
- The desire of the corporate PR people to receive “otkaty” through the agencies
- The problem is in the fact that the Soviet mentality is taking the toll over the professional attitude towards works on the proper level of competitiveness
- There is a market for bribes and “otkaty”
- There is no problems with bribes in PR, this is a norm and some of the pricing is officially recorded in the mass media price lists. The amount of bribe to the officials - it is not an official price but you can learn about it from friends. Sometimes the official himself tells the amount of bribery.
- This is a standard problem – you always need to pay for everything.
- Vidkaty (Bribes)

13. If not, then bribery is not a problem?

- Because it is often a normal way of doing things
- Because we are not working with the governmental workers
- For every client who wants to pay bribes there will be another who does not
- I can’t judge how bad it is to pay for being famous.
- I have not have such instances in my professional work

14. From your communication with other public relations professionals, how often do they deal with the bribery situation?

Russian Language Responses

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Daily		1	5%
2	Weekly		3	16%
3	Monthly		3	16%
4	Once or twice a year		7	37%
5	Other		6	32%

- People are trying not to talk about this. When there is a need to “fix” the situation, an agency is hired that takes care of all the details. If it has to do with publication in mass media, the agency is often writing these materials.
- I have not heard about his problem from my colleague. I heard about it from my husband that has his own event s planning agency and he states that it is impossible to get through to some large companies even with a presentation because everything was already “regulated”. His interesting ideas stay with him.
- I have not heard
- In my practice I had only one such instance with a colleague. The governmental worker said that he would approve the project of the agency, if he gets 25% of the business deal. If not, he will put a hold on a project and no one will get any money. This problem happened with the recent coming of the new government and new leaders taking place at the top.
- This happens upon the signing of the contracts on important business deals.

Ukrainian Language Responses

	Answer		Response	%
1	Daily		2	20%
2	Weekly		1	10%
3	Monthly		2	20%
4	Once or twice a year		2	20%
5	Other		3	30%

15. Do you think the journalists expect the bribes from the public relations professionals? How often? Under what circumstances? Give at least one example?

- How often? This is the bread for journalism. Under which circumstances? Someone is moving to power. Give at least one example. Most of the cases come out during the elections. However, specifically at this time there is a paid PR space that works for the reproaches of each other, there are also made up stories.
- If it is an important cultural event than no. If it has to do with politics – 100% they will be expecting the bribe.
- If the PR person brought old news that will not be published in any other way but for the money.
- In my practice people were not expecting from me
- In my practice this did not happen. The paid texts/ episodes are officially paid for through the advertising department.
- In my three years working with journalists, I did not deal with such practice. More than that, all the materials that were written for me by journalists were free. There is a commonly accepted practice to keep the relationship with journalists such as dinner during the press conference, souvenirs and presents for mass media (something like cups, pens, notebooks, discount cards, gift certificates, key chains, flash drives etc.) – trips to the foreign press tours (the trip to the company's headquarters in another country that involves the view of the company, dinners etc. The expenses for these trips are paid by the company, and the journalist not officially obligates to write the article of the discussed volume.
- It depends on the specific publication. There are publications that are used to working with the PR professionals only for money. It is specifically characterizes by the regional mass media.
- It happens all the time during the parliamentary or presidential elections
- It is a payment for the news placement and for the interview article.
- It is all depends on the purpose
- It is more a problem of the regional media

- It is really rare, mostly in the regional media.
- Maybe they are expecting. However, the professional companies do not deal with the journalists on the basis of the material benefit.
- Most of the time, not the bribes but presents
- No, because the politics of the publications depend on the editors.
- Only people who work on the very low level would expect the bribes from the journalists, the professionals just call it an official payment, or work under with gifts of gratitude, or the most professionally: the PR person is preparing the quality information and journalist finds that information useful for his publication.
- The bribes to the journalists are not that wide spread, the situation with media is pretty hard and many publications were closed, those that are left, ready to make exceptions to not lose the advertisers.
- The media is interested in making money not with the quality content but with advertising, as a result, the quality of the magazines is falling, because of this the media is often requiring from the members of the different markets, money for the publication and advertising.
- They are most likely to purchase the place in the newspaper for an editorial. For the national and business media it is not that big of a problem, but for the regional and specialty focused – it is a real problem. We are dealing with this on regular basis but we never pay because for us it is the questions of ethics.
- They do not expect it
- They will be, if there is a need in a publication of necessary for the PR materials.
- This happens very often, especially in the regions. For example, company X is making a great and interesting public event. The regional channels refuse to broadcast it (even though the event for the city is very prominent) because they did not get money.
- Yes depending on the situation, the preparation of the material, hidden advertising in the publication and news.
- Yes, sometimes. If we are talking about publication of the information about business. In 2010, a Ukrainian bank with Russian capital was searching for the opportunities to become the leader of the media ratings of the banking services and so he ordered confidential research to whom in journalism and media and how much you need to pay. The results of this research demonstrated that almost 20% of the business media in Ukraine (newspapers, magazines, and websites) are ready to publish untruthful information in exchange for bribes. In a month after this research the bank appeared among the leaders of the bank media ratings.
- Yes, usually when mentioning the company on TV or in the article.

16. Do public relations professionals ever initiate the bribes? If yes than why?

Responded with No: 6

- I think not because they can “sell” their products well
- I think yes – they need to demonstrate the result
- In some way, if it is important to “PR” the project that that leads to great income
- It’s a two ways street
- More often if you do not have the good relationships with this journalist, in whose publication you want to publish the material, than without the money this material will not be published by anyone.

- Nobody really talks about it, and so I cannot say for sure. In entertainment business you can get two types of “encouragement” (5-10%) from the team's payment for the concert. But this scenario will be unlawful only if you are organizing the concert on your territory, without making it known to the management. If you are organizing this concert in another place than this is a fully legally practice.
- Not always. There is a group of PR people in Ukraine that consider the “placement” of the information (or paid publications) as the guarantee for success of the PR campaign. So these PR professionals initiate the bribes on their own
- Rarely, unprofessional agencies, that pay the journalists for the publication about their events
- Sometimes
- Sometimes, maybe...I have not noticed this among my colleagues
- Sometimes, when they want to get the “otkaty”
- Sometimes. Some Ukrainian businessman and also Russian businessman, consider it to be normal to pay the journalists/media in Ukraine for the publications of the positive information about themselves and even the lie and incorrect information.
- There is a black sheep in every herd; lucre
- Yes they can. To make the process faster
- Yes, at times when the management is making such requests that are impossible to finish without the bribe and if there is an understanding that the journalist is not interested in the subject but there is a goal to print an article in this publication.
- Yes, because the management is asking for the results and for the fulfillment of the plans

17. Do you think that the journalists you were working with, were expecting a present from you?

- No
- Yes
- Not the present but the payment for the services
- If I didn't know the journalist – than money. If I did know the journalist – than just minimal gratitude.
- No
- Sometimes yes, sometimes no. There are different journalists and different situations.
- No
- No
- Rarely
- Really rarely
- Sometimes
- Not
- Not
- Yes
- Not

- Not
- Not all
- Yes. For the encouragement of the journalist work, for the more involvement in their business, turning them (the journalist) in the loyal users of their services, the company is using the following instruments: discount cards (to purchase the products for 10-15 % of more), free entrance to companies events (for examples the concerts)
- Yes
- No
- No
- No
- Yes, often

18. When do you think that there is a need for a present in business situation, when you think it is not acceptable?

- A simple gratitude is ok, but only when the agreement is signed.
- Almost always you need to pay some respect to the person, there is a difference in the price and the form of the present.
- At the signing of the contract. It is not acceptable for the high level specialists
- For the business deal no. Maybe according to tradition to exchange pens
- I consider the presents during the business deal as not effective instrument and not acceptable. However on the governmental level, however it is a very spread issue on the governmental level. It is a rare situation in the corporate sector
- I think that giving present when signing a business deal is not acceptable.
- I think that with journalist we should work under the same scheme as with the usual clients of the company “if you want to attract the client, if you want him to use your services/ goods or writes about them – than make him interested! Think about bonuses, promotions, lotteries, that will inspire the person to become your loyal client. This is why, presenting the press with discount cards, free entrance to the events and so on, it is a totally normal form of the business relationship. In other situations (when there is a business deal between the company and the PR agency) there is a big bribe or otkat. To avoid such situation and to be an honest player, what we need in this market: have the competitions between all the PR companies on the market where the victory is given to the best and not to the one who paid more.
- If the present is analog to the bribe – It is always unacceptable
- If you have partnership relationships.
- In the event if there is a need to make or change the attitude towards the products, there is a need to let people try it. For example, if there is a need to provide the understanding of the service – give the opportunity to use it free, the product is the same. The presents could be different - it can be the products of the company or something, specially

purchased. The presents could be purchased for different occasions and different price. It is not always bribes.

- It is a tradition to send greetings to the journalists for such holiday as New Years, 8th of March and Journalism Day. It should not be necessarily presents, it can be an electronic greeting or a greeting card.
- It is hard to say, depending on situation
- It is not acceptable
- It is not acceptable for business. You can say Happy New Year and Happy Birthday
- Never in business. You can bring a present for birthday but very symbolic (such as the flowers and a greeting card)
- The only acceptable present at the time of business deal in my opinion, is a book
- The present is possible after the successfully finished project
- These situations do not exist. It is not acceptable
- This is not acceptable at any situation. It is only acceptable to give present to the journalists during their professional holidays
- When it is acceptable. When you are working with a good person
- When the business deal not fully in accordance with the law, when there is a need to publish the information at a certain time.

19. What would be the reason to bring the presents for the journalists, would one of them be to publish your information? Name others?

- Birthdays, professional holidays, they will not publish for the presents
- Creation of the emotional connection with the journalists, communication, reminding about yourself and the company. It is important that the presents would be useful and not expensive, it is a souvenir not the bribe. The reason – so that journalist remember about us, so that when all the conditions the same, they choose us for the interview, questioner, or analysis etc.
- Do something nice to people (before the holidays)
- For creating relationships. To be published would be one.
- Holidays (New Years, birthdays, Journalism Day). If the present is given to publish something – than this is not a present as a nice gesture but a bribe.
- I congratulate journalists with New Years
- I think that the present are a good idea only to with happy Journalist Day (and even than, of a small cost, so that people do not feel obligated) – for example – the bottle of good but not expensive wine or not expensive notebook... in general adequately. New years – also a reason for a small present...
- I work with the journalists, mostly on pay-free basis, that is on the basis of creating the interest to the company and its speakers.
- In my case – as a gratitude for great work. My present will be increasing publication among other equal, but it is not the only reason for some particular publication.

- In Ukraine we give a new product to the journalist so that they write about it
- Supporting the relationships
- The birthday of media, the congratulations could be done through the Internet
- The gratitude for the partnership
- The personal gift on personal occasion. Not necessarily. It is not the reason for the present.
- The reason to give presents to the mass media: 1. To get publicity or an article about the company's work. 2. To get the maximal publicity - so they write only about you. 3. Forming significant loyalty towards the company (turning a certain mass media into loyal an friendly)
- These reasons do not exist, besides birthday, however you cannot expect a publication because of that
- Yes
- Yes

20. Do public relations people bribe the clients? Give the example of such situation.

- Depends of how you define bribe. If it's a present in a form of companies products – this is a normal things to do, so that PR person could use the services and products of the company
- I did not experienced such situations.
- I did not have to deal with such situations
- I do not know such occasions
- I don't know
- I don't have such experience. The holiday greetings I received were very modest and so they were not obligating me to anything.
- No
- No
- No
- No
- No
- No
- No, they do not exist. The clients are paying only for the amount of the contract with PR company
- There are systems to encourage people – discount cards/bonuses/ privileges that the PR person can use to promote a certain company. I don't think it should be called bribe
- Yes
- Yes, a lot
- Yes, an important project in real estate, politics
- Yes, specifically this is tendency of the alcohol manufacturing, or if the interests of the company have to do with the rent or the purchase of the land.

21. What do you think what is the general attitude towards bribery among public relations professionals?

- It is good when I can make something out of it
- Bad
- Depends on the level of the professionalism
- Different. There are three unequal groups: two large ones- those who don't care and those who are against. One smaller one – those who are against.
- Hard to say
- Indifferent
- It is a common thing
- It's a necessity
- It's an instrument
- Its negative. The professionals do not want to pay money for the bad quality of work. And no one is interested in putting their reputation under the question.
- More negative than positive
- Mostly negative. However, some PR – specialists consider that sometimes you can give the bribes
- Negative
- Negative
- Negative
- Not positive
- On words everyone is against it but in action many take and give.
- Overall, negative, specifically among the professionals
- Publicly – negative. But among themselves – everyone acknowledges it as a normal practice.
- The country, with the coming of the new president more and more goes into the gap of chaos and horror. Stupid and wrong leadership of the country brings the changes to the law, permissiveness
- There could not be only one opinion
- This subject is rarely discussed. Surely publicly they are fighting for the transparent relationships with the media, but if the situation requires it, most are ready to pay for the publication.

22. Is there is difference in the attitude towards public relations in the different regions of Ukraine?

- I can't say for sure, but I think that yes. There is a belief that in the western regions (that are closer to Europe) there are higher standards of work and that the bribery is not as widespread. At the same time, Eastern regions (Kharkov and Donets) have more tendency for corruption. The capital is also because it is a capital. But this is only a belief. I think that the problem of bribery exists in lawmaking and governmental levels, and exists in some way in all the regions. To take or not take a bribe is a belief of each separate person.

- I do not have such information
- I don't know
- I don't think so
- I have not seen the difference
- In the capital PR as a profession is way more developed than in the regions. In the regions if you make the press conference, the newspapers are often sending together with journalists, the specialist in advertising, the role of which to convince you to pay for the publication. "Since you are making press conference and inviting us, this means you need to have a story written. This means you need to pay for it".
- In the capital there are more people against
- In the region the problem of paid articles is even sharper than in Kyiv
- No
- No
- No
- No
- PR as a profession is mostly localized in the big cities and there are only 5 of those.
- There is a significant difference. In the region without the command from above and even for money it is hard to receive good information
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes there is. Bribery in PR is very spread in Kyiv and in the large industrial cities of the East and south of Ukraine and in the Crimea.
- Yes, the regional media always requires bribes

23. If yes, than why do you think this difference exists?

- Here we have more specialists oriented on the world –level of the work.
- In different cities there are different opportunities to receive the bribes, and also the attitude
- In Kyiv it is easier to work without the presents
- In the regions the infrastructure of mass media is weakly developed
- In the regions where bribery exists in PR, there are also Russian companies and their activity in the Ukrainian companies – this is why they often are searching for the way for the guaranteed positive mentions in the media of their work.
- The different level of the pay for PR services
- The market of the regional publications is small and has a low qualifications
- The wrong word in the region can cost the person everything

24. Can the income of the average public relations professional support his family?
Russian Language Responses

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		5	29%
2	No		10	59%
4	Comments		6	35%

- I think yes
- If he is making about 4000 gryvens than the PR specialist cannot support himself and the family. If the income is more than 10000 than yes.
- In the center yes
- It's hard to say, most likely no.
- No because the income of the PR professional is about 5000-6000 gryven, which about 625 dollars.

Ukrainian Language Responses

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		5	83%
2	No		0	0%
4	Comments		4	67%

- Depends on the family. If it is 1-2 people than yes, but if we are talking about a single mom with three children – than no.
- If he is working in a large company or a good PR agency
- It depends on the company and on the place of work.

25. Do you think that an average journalist can support his family?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		4	25%
2	No		10	63%
3	Co		6	38%

- Can but hardly. If one more member of the family also working
- Hard to say, but most likely no
- No, the situation is the same. In the governmental mass media event less

Ukrainian Language Responses

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		3	50%
2	No		2	33%
3	Comments		3	50%

- The same as for PR people
- If he works in a popular publication
- Depends on the publication and the work place

26. How much public relations professionals are influenced in the decision to give or not to give a bribe? Give examples.

- “The professional” is orienting in the situation by himself, coming out of his personal experience.
- As I said earlier, the PR professionals rarely talk about this subject. The decision to give or not to give the bribe, comes from the need to decide some specific goals.
- For example, the director of the company is requiring that journalist writes in a specific fashion, than the PR specialist is required to pay the journalist.
- Hard to say.
- In Ukraine, PR is going after advertising and marketing, taking their schemes. So if they give/take in advertising – they will give/take in PR
- It depends from the philosophy of the organization and the opinion of the managers. They give the tone.

- Significantly
- Such influence sometimes exists. Two of my previous PR bosses in 2006-2009 asked the journalists/media to pay them personally for publications of the positive information about the politicians and about the business campaigns.
- To receive the benefit in the future for the company and for the additional money income.
- Top managers and marketing leaders that usually are the bosses of PR people, often require the bribes .

27. Do you think there are ever situation where you need to take a stand against giving a bribe when you are asked for it? Would you be able to do it? Why or why not?

- I am always against. Because it is not a correct way and the way to nowhere. The manager that does not understand that, is not my manager.
- I do not give the bribes to the journalists because later I will not be able to work with them for free.
- I left the previous work, for the reason that the manager required to give the bribes to the journalists and editors in exchange for publication of certain materials.
- If it is negatively influencing the further image of the company, I would not give the bribe.
- It is a usual; professional ethics. I never take part in the shady schemes.
- Never let yourself be seen in a bad light
- The respect to the ones reputation and reputation of the manager (of the company you work for)
- The tendency to except bribes works against the general reputation of the company, and the PR professional. It is never positive for the business of the company or the increase of the client numbers. This is why it is important to refuse the bribe, first of all because you want to safeguard your honest name. Secondly. If you take money once, than next time you will have to do it again, and this will never end, and you will be under the influence of those who give.
- When I principally think that everything could happen without the additional stimulation. I do it all the time.
- Yes but I was not worried since it demonstrated the low level of the publication.
- Yes. I could. Otherwise, once you step away from the principles, you can do anything else.
- You always need to do it. Yes. Because in business you need to work ethically.
- You need to avoid situations where there is danger to give bribes. No, because I am a member of the Ukrainian Association of the Public Relations (UAPR) and I am following with ethical codecs of UAPR, that was started in Ethical Party of PR in 1996

28. How would you feel, knowing that some of your press releases will not be published because the priority is giving to those that were paid for or accompanied with the present. Did this happen to you?

- Even if similar situations happened, than it was not due to the bribe, but because of the influence of other people on journalists.
- I will not work with such publication, we have a lot of mass media in Ukraine.
- I would be mad. No.
- I would feel ok, it does happen that they do not publish my press release, but I can know if the reason is paid material
- I would look for other opportunities in other publications.
- I would not feel comfortable but this did not happen yet.
- It did happen that they were not published but it was not because of the bribery
- It did happen to me. Such is life. Usually in situations like these, the honest players on the market are grouping together and publishing an open letter in which they are telling about this situation and ask the colleagues and the company not to work anymore with such players (mass media or company)
- It did happen, you can avoid this by improving the contacts with the journalists or by the payment for the material.
- It is not the last publication. There is also direct mail or e-mail. As if your news story was better.
- It's always makes me sad and makes me want to protest. I try to explain to journalist/ media that bribery is not acceptable. Yes it happens regularly.
- NO
- No, or I might not have known about it.
- Our company is following such position to not pay for the publication of press releases
- The publication of press releases is overall, very strange measurement of the work. It should not be published at all. If the journalist is using it in his further work – he will take the information and will start to unfold the subject and will ask the questions. If not – than your press release is not interesting or it is bad. It did happen to me.
- To wait for the growth of the professionalism in the media, if these instances take place
- Yes, there are always many alternative methods to increase or decrease the meaning of the information.
- Yes, this happened to me. This means that next time I need to add more interesting facts, so the mass media does not look pass the newsworthy story.