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Ahnlee Jang, Hyunhee Kim

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Perception of Public Relations Majors and Non-Public Relations Majors on Public Relations Studies and The Industry

Ahnlee Jang

Assistant Professor. School of Advertising and Public Relations, Hongik University*

Hyunhee Kim

Lecturer. Business & Economic School, AD/PR Dept., Chung Ang University**

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions held by public relations majors and non-majors on public relations studies and the industry in Korea.

Methods

This study used content analysis and in-depth interview methods.

Results

Focus group interviews with 37 participants revealed that PR majors perceived PR to be the same as advertising and promotion prior to taking PR courses, but after taking PR courses, they found it to be a more comprehensive and valuable discipline, albeit rigid. Regarding the industry, PR majors perceived it as too meticulous, allowing no room for mistakes yet providing a work environment conducive to child-rearing, and having a low success-ceiling. They were also found to perceive the industry to be ethically challenging with an unequal power dynamic between practitioners and journalists. Finally, the majors were found to perceive PR practitioners as having PR pride. For the non-majors, the findings show that they perceived PR to be about promotion and that people aiming to pursue it as a career need creativity; furthermore, they were found to perceive the PR industry to be manipulative, narrow, and never in power (PR practitioners). The findings of in-depth interviews elucidate the ways in which PR majors and potential majors perceive public relations in Korea. In terms of a content analysis of 35 universities with public relations programs, the findings show that the programs' average ratio of PR to advertising courses is 1:1.6.

Conclusions

The study offers ways to strengthen PR programs and suggests ways to change the negative perception of PR to a more positive one to better communicate PR to larger constituents.

KEYWORDS PR programs in Korea, PR industry in Korea, college curriculum, PR majors, Advertising and Public Relations studies

* First Author & Corresponding Author: Hipr@hongik.ac.kr

** PR_kim@hotmail.com

Introduction

The year 2017 marked 30th year since the establishment of the first Department of Advertising and Public Relations in Korea. In 1987, the first Department of Advertising and Public Relations were founded in Hanyang and Chung-Ang Universities, since then, area of study with similar focus and title mushroomed in Korea.¹⁾ In the late 1990s, graduate programs in advertising and public relations were also established at the aforementioned two universities, as the first ones in the nation. In the following 30 years, public relations departments²⁾ reached 60, nationwide (CareerNet, 2017).

The sudden growth and interest in public relations could be said to have been due to two major reasons. First, in 2005, during the Roh administration, the president stated that “People’s agreement is of import these days and age, [therefore] public relations is the policy” (Cho, 2006),³⁾ since then 70 PR practi-

tioners were hired across government sectors for government public relations. Former president Noh also found public opinion to be critical in implementing new policies and wanted to actively use the know-hows of the non-government PR practitioners’ to do so. In the process of this attempt, PR as a profession became widely known in Korea (Park & Cho, 2007).

Second, relatedly, is the growth of the PR industry itself. Since the late 1990s, internationally renowned PR agencies including but not limited to Burson-Marsteller, WPP, FleishmanHillard, PorterNovelli, and Brodeur Partners launched their Korea branch or advanced into Korean market in the form of investment or joint venture. These changes signified that foreign PR companies were optimistic about the future growth of PR industry in Korea then (Kim, 2001). Growth of the industry indicated more job opportunities. This was critical in the 90s because Korea witnessed low unemployment rate starting 1998

1) Most of the major universities in Korea use the title “Department of Advertising and Public Relations or School of Advertising and Public Relations. The reasons for using this title as well as the reasons why these two areas of studies are grouped together are discussed below.

2) The exact name of the departments/schools differ from one another but most of the programs have either advertising or public relations, or both.

3) Researchers’ translation.

due to economic crisis. Increase in job opportunities naturally attracted more college students to choose PR as a major, which further led to increase in PR programs nationwide. The trend also influenced academic curriculum. To increase chance for PR graduate to find jobs, curriculum came to be more focused on producing field-ready students. Simultaneously, it was also the responsibility of the academia to effectively communicate what PR is to future PR practitioners.

The number of PR programs in the nation is still at its highest, however, with the demand of producing highly sought-after students who are equipped with skills and knowledge to be successful PR practitioners, it is time to check upon the current status to see how PR majors are understanding public relations. Also of import is how programs are communicating what the PR industry is to students majoring in PR to better prepare themselves for the field. Previous studies have pointed out a gap between PR studies and the industry, that is, academia focusing on theories as opposed to practical skills necessary for graduates to begin work immediately after graduation (e.g., Yum & Han, 2006; Kim & Kim, 2010. Discussed more in detail in the literature review). Moreover, previous studies have shown that PR majors

may not have a comprehensive understanding of PR as result of PR courses being taught by those who are not trained in PR (Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1985; Aldooray & Toth, 2000). Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine what perception PR majors have about PR studies and the industry if the PR majors still lack understanding of both areas. By examining varying perceptions PR majors may have with the study and the industry, it seeks to perhaps clarify and demystify what it is to one of its key publics.

It has been almost 15 years since Kim and Kwon's 2003 comprehensive examination of 17 PR programs in Korea and even more so since Jung's 1999 study on PR curriculum in Korea. With 37 interviews of PR majors and non-majors on PR programs and industry as well as content analysis of 35 PR programs in Korea (exhaustive list), the current study not only provides an overview of the current status of PR programs in Korea but also limitations of PR programs and directions for future in further enhancing PR programs. Such a comprehensive follow-up study on its own has its meanings and the findings can be used in minimizing the gap between the field and the academia, as well as producing field-ready PR students prepared to work in the industry

with knowledge and skill set necessary for the field.

Secondly, this study seeks to examine whether PR studies are communicating what public relations is to its another key constituent, namely here, non-PR majors to examine whether potential PR majors have enough knowledge, interest and information about PR to make change-of-major decision in due course. To the authors' knowledge there are no research that examined whether and how non-majors are perceiving PR studies and the industry. Not only can non-majors switch majors to PR but those who major in practical areas of studies such as design, business, journalism to name a few have potential to work with PR in the field. By introducing PR and teaching what PR and the industry is to non-majors, there can be more collaboration and cooperative work done between PR and other related field practitioners. Therefore, how the non-majors make meaning of the PR industry and PR studies were concurrently examined. By exploring these aspects, the study can suggest potentials PR programs

have in recruiting students to advance PR academia and the industry. Findings of the study can contribute in understanding global PR in terms of PR studies and PR industry and further developing PR education at the international level.

Literature Review

Development of Public Relations Studies in Korea

As of today, there are currently 60 number of departments in Advertising and Public Relations.⁴⁾ The two areas of studies, advertising and public relations, have been coupled under the title of "advertising and public relations" since the beginning of the discipline. Yoon suggests that "two small shooting stars became one. Both advertising and public relations are too small to stand as an independent department yet if they conjoin with traditional area of study such as journalism, they are both bound to be influenced by their tradition. Therefore, public relations

4) The researchers were able to find 60 universities from CareerNet. CareerNet is sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the site provides exhaustive list of departments across the nation. Based on the search term "Advertising and Public Relations" the researchers found 60 (search date Jan, 13, 2018. The site was last updated on Dec. 8. 2017). However, the researchers further narrowed it down to 35, only including program that has either "advertising" "public relations" or both. 25 programs did not include these names in their title.

and advertising both had to be severed and become independent (from traditional discipline). And because they work closely together and are small enough, they formed an area of study” (Yoon, 2018).⁵⁾ Yoon, suggesting that most would agree with such a rationale of the situational background that birthed advertising and public relations department, also added that both advertising and public relations are similar in terms of sending organization’s messages to their constituents.

Moreover, because of the ways in which the PR and advertising industry work closely with one another in Korea, the naming of the programs was naturally influenced. Also, as result of growing industry and interest in PR, as well as shift in industry from old media to new media, college programs in Korea changed its name from Media and Journalism or Newspaper and Broadcasting Studies to Advertising and Public Relations. Although some universities still hold their previous name, or have both advertising and public relations as well as journalism and media in the title of the department names, most universities have switched to the new trend.

Also, to note is that, Korean universities

purposely used “*hong-bo*” in the naming of the program, rather than using the English words, public relations. That is because of two reasons. First, the government encouraged use of Korean in general to prevent abuse of foreign words, especially English (Lee & Kim, 2011). Therefore, most of the names of the academic associations or academic journals use ‘*hong-bo*’, rather than English words ‘public relations’ (Lee & Kim, 2011). But more importantly, the Korean word for public relations, *hong-bo*, holds a different meaning in Korea. That is, *hong-bo* in Korea is more focused on ‘publicity’, in terms of the work involved in doing PR in Korea, rather than ‘relations’ as is in the US. Scholars in the US have defined public relations as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics” (Public Relations Society of America, 2012) and Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000) defined it as “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.” These definitions stress the im-

5) Yoon Sheung-hoon, professor at Dongguk University, at an in-person personal interview (Aug., 31, 2018)

portance of relationship and mutual benefit in the works involved in public relations. However, as the meaning of 'hong-bo' is different from the English term 'public relations' and as there are no agreed term in Korean that stress on 'relations' aspect, the public relations programs in Korea continues to use the term 'hong-bo' in their naming of the programs. Because of these factors that influenced the naming and meaning of public relations in Korea, the programs were also influenced by the industry and the people who taught PR programs.

Curriculum in PR studies in Korea

Since 1990s, debate on PR curriculum mostly centered on two issues, namely, what the curriculum has to be and who should teach PR courses (Kim, 2001; Park & Cho, 2007). A study on PR undergraduate curriculum, chapter 4 in the report by the Commission on Public relations Education (2018) by Sandra Duhe and colleagues, suggests that core PR education should include public relations principles, research, writing, campaigns and case studies, and internship or supervised work experience, and ethics. Moreover, the following 6 topics are suggested to be covered within the set of required courses: social media, strategic communications, measurement and evaluation,

content creation, campaign management, and publicity and media relations (p. 59). Another research, Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education (1985) that examines what PR curriculum ought to be, suggest what should be taught from the perspective of PR practitioners in the field and academia. The study suggests that PR curriculum should center on 3 areas: namely, communication, PR, and field experience. Here, 1) Communication includes PR planning; law, ethics and history; and social and psychological factors that affect communication processes, 2) PR includes courses such as PR theory; PR practicum such as writing press releases; planning and evaluation, strategy development and implementation (including case studies); specialized areas such as international PR, marketing relations, employee relations and IR, and 3) Field experience includes internship. Both educators and practitioners rated the field experience as the most important aspect of the curriculum (1985).

Scholars in Korea, in their examination of PR curriculums, found that the ratio of theory classes in comparison to practicum courses was 4:1 (Jung, 1999); and the ratio was found to hold still when it was reexamined in 2005 (Choi, 2005). However, Choi's study found some differences compared to Jung's study in

terms of the theory classes. While theory courses were found to consist of 75.6%, 40.5% were what could be referred to as general theory courses (courses such as introduction to PR theory), while 35.1% were specialized theory courses such as PR campaign, PR Case Studies, and Advertising Strategy & Planning. Though small, this was 5% decrease in general theory courses compared to Jung's 1999 study.

Another characteristic of PR curriculum in Korea was that the curriculum reflected what the PR practitioners thought was critical in the field. Some of the suggestions made by practitioners were that PR curriculum ought to include PR principles, specialized areas in PR (such as media relations, employee relations etc.), PR planning, PR communication and PR evaluation (Kim, 2001). More specifically, practitioners found courses about publicity/media relations, employee relations, problem/opportunity analysis, long/short term PR strategic planning, crisis management, message strategic and media PR techniques, and setting PR goals and evaluation standards to be of import in PR curriculum. Kim (2001) in his 2001 study concluded that

in comparison to Stacks' 1998 suggestion, PR practitioners in Korea focused on media relations and PR agency works as opposed to PR research, PR ethics and law or PR planning (Kim, 2001).

In Kim and Kwon's (2003) study on PR curriculum in Korea, their examination of 17 Korean universities showed that each school has its own unique curriculum that differs from one another. However, courses such as PR management, PR research and PR campaign, as suggested by PRSA are not being offered by many universities while course related to event planning or newsletter are being offered in large number (Kim & Kwon, 2003).⁶⁾ Jung's (1999) study on 17 advertising and public relations departments also found that curriculums lack principles and systematic structure. Jung also found that public relations courses, compared to advertising courses are seriously lacking. Kim and Kwon's (2003) study support this finding, they found that some PR courses even include the term Advertising in its course name and suggest that this is because PR industry came to blossom much later compared to America and that curriculum is structured in a

6) Kim and Park (2003) suggests to take caution in interpreting its main finding because not all departments post its curriculum up to date on their websites and the content of the course cannot be simply determined by its title.

way that reflects the expectation of the PR industry (more discussion below). Moreover, as the PR courses increased in number as departments increased at a fast rate, courses that should have been taught by those who have PR experience/degrees were taught by those who have similar yet other backgrounds such as journalism and mass media. As such, the structure of the PR curriculum in Korea inevitably reflects this history of PR industry in Korea and the country's history in sudden growth of PR.

Yet researches still continue to show that curricula are theory-centered. Moreover, studies suggest chasm between faculty and students when it comes to the value of PR theory courses. For example, Yum and Han (2006) and Kim and Kim (2010) found that students and practitioners both perceive curriculum ought to be structured in a way that prepares students to do actual work in the field. Yet, Kim and Kim (2010) found that faculty, on the other hand, perceived theory course to be most important in PR curriculum. Though no other follow-up studies have been examined the ratio between theory and curriculum, examination of 35 universities

with public relations and advertising departments in the current study show that 15 schools include capstone programs in their curriculum.⁷⁾

As to whom ought to teach PR courses at universities, Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education (1985) suggests that those who have field experiences and academic degree in PR ought to teach PR courses. Moreover, practitioners in the study suggest that those who work in the field as practitioners ought to teach PR courses themselves or work as adjunct faculty at universities, thereby in the process create an active exchange between the industry and academia.

Another perspective on whom ought to teach PR is that PR education must be done in management schools because it was first done so in the United States (Guiniven, 1988). Although in America, PR department is now moving to Journalism schools, many PR practitioners still believe that it ought to be taught in management schools because of its close relations with marketing (Rosenthal, 1994). Even the PRSA suggests that PR majors ought to choose management as their second

7) Capstone programs are practicum courses and puts use all of the knowledge and skills of PR studies.

Table 1. PR programs' University Affiliation in Korea (As of 2017)⁸⁾

	(College/School) Affiliations	Number of programs (proportion)
1	Social Science schools/colleges	17 (48.57%)
2	Management schools/colleges	5 (14.28%)
3	Law school	1 (2.86%)
4	Arts and Humanities	4 (11.43%)
5	Others (includes Social Service, Cultural Contents, Cultural Society, Journalism & Information, Media Communication, Interdisciplinary colleges/schools and "not listed on website")	8 (22.86%)
Total number of programs in Korea with "Public Relations" in the title (Total list of universities available in appendix)		35 Total

Source: CareerNet (Authors' compilation)

major (Report of 1987, 1987, p. 4) and Hendrix (1992) also suggests that PR majors should spend more time in studying management. Guiniven's (1988) study found that out of 187 practitioners, 99 of them (53%) indicated that mass communication of journalism school ought to teach PR and 63 (33%) of the participants indicated that management school should teach PR.

The issue of where PR education must be positioned is important because depending on what school or college PR program is situated in, the content of the curriculum differs

(Aldoory & Toth, 2000). For instance, PR situated in communication school/college/dept. focuses theoretical aspect such as rhetoric and communication theory whereas those positioned in journalism school center its education on practical skills such as reading and writing (Aldoory & Toth, 2000). On the other hand, those that are nested within management schools approach PR from the perspective of management (Kim & Kwon, 2003). Hence, depending on the school/college as well as the makeup of faculty members and their academic background what is

8) The researchers narrowed down 60 universities to 35 universities based on the title of the program (CareerNet, search date Jan, 13, 2018. The site was last updated on Dec. 8, 2017). Then searched the website of the each programs to check the school affiliation. The search was conducted in the month of January (affiliation or title of the programs may have changed since January of 2018).

taught in PR could be significantly different (Kim & Kwon, 2003).

In Korea, majority of PR programs are nested in social science school/colleges followed by management schools (see Table 1). Korean scholars think that those interested in PR should major in humanities as an undergraduate or major in management or administration then study PR in graduate school (Kim & Kim, 1981). Another ideal track is to study mass communication as an undergraduate study and study PR in graduate school (Kim & Kim, 1981).

Development of PR Industry in Korea

The function of public relations in Korea centered in public information as used by the government from the beginning. Public information or *gong-bo*⁹⁾ was first introduced by the American military forces at the end of World War II (Oh, 1991) and Korean government began to use *gong-bo* in order to control public opinion and establish policies proposed by the American military government. Though use of public relations was far from its professional standard, it was a key junction in the development of public relations in

Korea (Kim, 2003). However, the development of PR as an ethical and professional industry further faced struggles as Korea's economy grew at a fast rate, leading unethical practice of public relations. More specifically, as the government became the driver of industrialization it provided immense financial and political support to big companies. This network of conglomerate business groups, also known as *chaebol* system, was used to fuel illegal public funds (Kim & Hon, 1998) and in the process unethical and unprofessional public relations practice ensued such as bribing journalists to write news to cover misdeeds (see Kim & Hon, 1998 for more discussion).

Significant changes in public relation climate were brought in during the late 1980s as multinational companies such as Burson-Marsteller and Hill & Knowlton joined the 1988 Seoul Olympic project (Choe, 1992). Moreover, strengthening of democracy and demise of dictatorships also led to fertile ground for public relations to grow as a profession (Kim, 2003). As result of these changes, the function of public relations became more diversified and grassroots citizens

9) Gong-bo is the Korean term for public information.

came to participate in organizational decision-making process more actively. Furthermore, during the 1990s, scholars who studied public relations from America returned to Korea and contributed in extending and strengthening public relations as an academic discipline. As result, the theoretical development and sophistication of public relations as a practice in the industry came to the fore (Kim, 2003).

As result of aforementioned historical background in the development of public relations industry in Korea, Korean PR practitioners' tasks in the 1990s mainly focused in media relations amongst technician role, problem-solver and media relations (Yoon & Shin (1992). In fact, according to Annuals of Korean Advertising 1997, public relations agencies indicated that 95% of their work involves media relations such as news monitoring (Annuals of Korean Advertising, 1997). Oh's (1992) study also suggested that PR work in Korea is mostly centered on promotion or *hong-bo* and practitioners themselves also perceive PR to be means of publicity. Therefore, PR practitioners in the field put more emphasis on practical skills and urge PR majors to be more field-ready, that is, learn practical skills in college prior to joining the field. For this purpose, the PR practitioners have been found to perceive PR cur-

riculum should include more practicum courses (Kim, 2009).

PR studies as seen by academics

A sudden growth in PR industry naturally led to a sudden growth in the academia as well. One example that illustrates this is the sheer quantity of researches published since 1990s. *Hongbohag Yeongu (Journal of Public Relations Research)* was founded in 1997 and until 1999, only one issue was published per year; whereas 5 issues are published every year. According to Lee (2003), in 5 public relations related journals in Korea, from their first issue to 2002, only total of 143 articles were published. However, for 4 years since 2003, 212 articles about PR were published in 3 of the PR related journals. These examples indicate that researches in PR have also experienced major growth since 1990s.

However, as a result of the sudden growth, PR studies in Korea have a few characteristics. First, is that many studies about PR are about case studies. Cho (2016) refers to this as functionalistic approach or external research. Here, external indicates research about the field/practice and internal being inward studies, that is, about public relations itself. Cho suggests that PR studies during the initial period of growth in PR studies, majority were

external studies. Lee (2003) also found that of the studies published in 5 journals since its first publication issue to 2002, 85% of them were external studies (such as campaigns and case studies); hence calls for more inward studies for PR studies to move PR forward.

Another characteristic is that, Korean scholars, mostly educated in the States, rely on theories produced in the United States (Cho, 2016; Lee & Kim, 2016).¹⁰⁾ Second, scholars use public relations (English term) and *hong-bo* (Korean term for public relations) interchangeably. This could cause confusion because some scholars use the term *hong-bo* to refer to promotion and others to refer to what public relations means in English. This interchangeable use signifies that the term public relations has yet achieved representativeness in the academia (Cho, 2016), hence, there is a need for the academics to agree upon the meaning of each term. Though many of the college professors in Korea have been educated in the US, and are teaching public relations with focus on relations and mutual understanding, whether and how that is being communi-

cated clearly to the PR majors and non-majors need further examination. Moreover, as result of the gap between academic and the industry, how the students view and understand the industry need in-depth examination.

Also because of the gap between the industry and academic, whether or not college students understand the industry prior to college graduation is important. Since the Korean PR curriculum has been pointed out to be too theory-oriented with limited practicum courses, whether PR majors graduate with the necessary skills and understanding under their belt to be field-ready is in question. If students have mis-understanding or lack of understanding about the field, these unclarity must be clarified and demystified in order to better prepare them for the field. In addition, as to how PR is being communicated to non-majors is also in question. Also, although most PR practitioners in Korea major in PR, some become practitioners without having education/practice in PR. Therefore, in order to make sure whether PR academia and industry is communicating PR clearly to its larger constituents, the current study further

10) Because Korean scholars generally cite Americans scholars when it comes to defining terms and theories, definitions of public relations and public relations theories are the same as foreign scholars. Therefore, the authors found no need to define how Korean scholars define public relations terms differently from foreign scholars.

examined how PR is being communicated to non-majors.

Based on these research gaps, the researchers asked the following questions to the current PR majors and non-, but, potential-PR majors/practitioners.

RQ1a: What are the perceptions PR majors have on PR studies?

RQ1b: What are the perceptions PR majors have on PR industry?

RQ2a: What are the perceptions non-PR majors have on PR studies?

RQ2b: What are the perceptions non-PR majors have on PR industry?

Methods

To explore how public relations majors and non-PR majors understand Public Relations studies and the industry, current study employed qualitative research method. Qualitative methods are appropriate since this study aimed to “get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12). Specifically, focus group ses-

sions were chosen since this study attempted to understand personal meaning-making processes as well as ideas or feelings that emerge from the same group (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Aside from FGI that was used to understand students’ perspective of PR studies and the industry, content analysis was also used to grasp ways in which the PR studies present its area of study through its curricula. Multi-method study is useful in bringing more robust findings and it can overcome the risk of method biases (Davis et al., 2011; Yin, 2008).

Focus Group Interview sample

Participants for the FGI were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling. All of the interviewees were ethnically Korean students attending 4-year universities in Korea. Initially posters and fliers were used to recruit interested participants and those who participated introduced the study to their friends so that the researchers could recruit enough participants for the study. Ten focus groups interviews were conducted at two universities: one in Seoul and another in Sejong. Of the 7 focus groups, 5 of them were with the PR students and 2 were with non-PR majors. The FGI of the major students were conducted separately from the non-major

students. Non-majors were recruited from the majors that were related to PR or have potential to work with PR industry such as Business.¹¹⁾ The total number of participants was 37 (24 majors and 13 non-majors). All of the groups were mixed in terms of gender, age and school year (19 Females and 18 Males). The age ranged from 20~27 and included freshmen year students who have taken at least 1 PR course to seniors (5 freshmen, 4 sophomores, 15 juniors, 12 seniors, 1 NA). The interviews were held at either researchers' offices or in classrooms. Small focus groups with four or five participants were ideal since the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of people's experiences (Kruger & Casey, 2009). The researchers took turns in moderating the focus groups; they both have advanced training in qualitative research methods and have much experiences in leading focus group interviews.

Each of the participants were given approximately \$20 for their participation and all of the focus group interviews ranged from 40~70 minutes, the average being about 50 minutes long. All of the interviews were audio-taped upon consent and upon completion of the in-

terviews, the interviews were transcribed.

Content analysis of web sites

The initial list of the PR programs in Korea was searched from CareerNet. The site is run by the National Career Development Center, which is set up by the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training by the Ministry of Education (CareerNet, 2017). The site also came up as the first source on google when the researcher used the search term "Advertising and Public Relations department" on January 13, 2018. The site provided 60 Advertising and Public Relations programs available as of December 8th, 2017. However, through cross checking by the two researchers and one assistant coder total 9 of them were no longer running or listed twice. Also, the researchers excluded programs that did not include the words "Advertising" or "Public Relations" which left the 35 programs total. The 2 researchers counted the programs together and made the decisions to exclude program without "advertising" and "public relations" in its programs to meet the purpose of the study. Therefore 35 programs (exhaustive list of Advertising and Public Relations programs

11) Most of the non-major students we recruited were preparing for tests to become media personnel or journalists.

in Korea) were included in the current research (see appendix A). The researchers and assistant coder checked the program website and copy/pasted the courses listed on the program website from Jan 14 to Jan 28th, 2018. Then the researchers gathered information about the year the program began, location, name of the program/(college/school) affiliation at the university and its curriculum (e.g., course titles, required/elective courses, degree offered).

Data analysis

Interview analysis

The transcribed interviews were analyzed and coded by the researchers using a constant comparative method and open coding to identify common themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researchers kept, exchanged, and discussed their memos right after each of the interviews and the focus groups so as to capture the comprehensive dimensions of the interviewing processes, including non-verbal aspects (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Taking a team-based approach to data analysis and interpretation through memoing and note sharing allowed the authors to recognize any personal biases

that emerge in the data analysis process. Finally, for analyzing and reporting purposes, meaning-based translation into English was undertaken by the researchers who are proficient both in English and Korean (Guest & MacQueen, 2008).

Content analysis

Information were extracted from 35 universities' websites. Once the information was organized in excel file, following information was coded for content analysis: components of courses (required/elective), year established, location, program affiliation. Then the number of advertising vs. public relations courses were counted to show the ratio between the two area of studies (only the course with exact wording, that is, "advertising" and "public relations" were counted). For the reliability, Krippendorff's alpha was computed and yielded sufficient reliability score of $\alpha = .82$.

Results

RQ1a: What are the perceptions PR majors have on PR studies?

Isn't PR the same as advertising?

Interviews revealed that most of the PR majors

studied public relations because they were first interested in advertising.¹²⁾ Participants discussed how during high school, when it was time for them to decide on their majors, they read a book called *Advertising Genius Lee Jae-suk*¹³⁾ and became interested in advertising. Interview revealed that the book had a great influence on participants in choosing their majors. But most of them thought PR and advertising is one area of study because they did not know what PR was nor took any courses related to PR prior to college. "I don't think I knew what PR was before coming here, I was just interested in advertising and thought PR and advertising is the same thing," said one participant and similar comment resonated throughout interviews with the PR majors.

Others discussed how they chose the major because they thought it would be related to media. Since some schools have journalism and media studies rather than public relations and advertising, they figured these would be similar or thought that PR and advertising would be something similar to jour-

nalism and media studies, only different in their names.

Yet others thought that because they have outgoing personalities and think that they are creative, advertising would be something that suits them, hence, chose PR and advertising as their major, without fully understanding what PR is or whether or not it would be of interest to them. Majority of the PR-majors were unaware, uninformed about public relations prior to coming to college. It wasn't until they took Introduction to Public Relations course in their first year, that they gained the first substantial exposure to public relations studies.

Isn't PR promotion?

When asked what they thought public relations was coming in to college, a group of participants said that they had thought PR was the same thing as *hong-bo* or promotion. As most of the Korean public use the word *hong-bo* (equivalent to public relations) to refer to promotion, they also thought that PR was promotion as in one of the 4 Ps in

12) Though the term here should be *hong-bo*, for the purpose of easier understanding of the readers, the researchers will use public relations to indicate *hong-bo*.

13) Lee Jae-suk (2010). *Gwang-go cheonjae Lee Jae-suk* (Advertising Genius Lee Jae-suk). Hakgojae. This book is about an advertising AE Lee Jae-suk.

marketing. Since most participants had some exposure to 4Ps of marketing prior to college, they had mis-understanding of public relations. Yet, that was the most connection they could make about what public relations is prior to learning public relations more seriously in college. Interviews revealed that no participant understood PR as they now know it today prior to taking PR courses in college.

Students discussed how they were confused about PR in the beginning because of the terminology. Korean term for public relations, *hong-bo*, is generally used to refer to public relations and because they were unfamiliar with the English term public relations, they figured the two terms must mean different things. It wasn't until they took Introduction to Public Relations in college that they understood public relations as the English term for Korean. But since upon learning that *hong-bo* generally refers to promotion and public relations to be more inclusive term, students discussed how there should be Korean term that carries the meaning of public relations. Using English term "public relations" to them felt distanced because it was English; and they also thought using initials "PR" could be easier to accept and use compared to whole term "public relations" yet, they still preferred a Korean term

that means the same thing as public relations. The importance of having a Korean term to replace public relations did not resonate during interviews. But students discussed how *hong-bo* carries limited meaning in Korea, thereby easily giving a wrong impression about the discipline itself (or not able to fully communicate what it really is to layperson in general) to potential PR majors and general public. However, they couldn't come up with a better substitute word to replace *hong-bo* though.

PR is everywhere and much more comprehensive (than I had ever thought)

When asked what the participants now think about PR now that they have all taken at least one public relations course, they discussed how PR is about building relationships, creating mutually beneficial relationship, and stressed upon the importance of two-way communication. Most of the students had taken more than two but a few of the majors were in their third semester and because most of PR courses were for upperclassmen, while they had taken all the PR courses possible, they only had one course, two at most, under their belt. One student said, "it has to do with building mutually beneficial relationship...it's about having the right attitude and manner towards

the other. It's about maintaining positive relationship for both parties." Other participants also gave similar answer as to what they think PR is. Most of them stressed on the importance of engaging in two-way communication with publics and also highlighted how critical it is to be ethical in the process of engaging in communication. One of the participants said, "It's a lot more comprehensive than I had thought. Before taking any PR courses I thought PR was pretty narrow and simple but after the first class on PR, I realized that PR is much broader area of study," and similar comments were echoed throughout the interviews. Another participant added, it's more structured and systematic than I had thought. Everything needs to be planned out meticulously to meet your goal." Emphasizing how he learned this through PR Planning course, he realized how each PR course is teaching him different aspect of PR.

There were students who thought of PR as that which is used to cover up things. Though he didn't say "spin doctor" he was referring to how PR is used to cover up the mess celebrities or politicians have made. In similar context, others also mentioned on PR is always "behind-the-scenes" never up-front to show what is it that companies are doing with their PR person/department. One of the

students said, "I now realize PR is everywhere but you don't usually see it. You have to know the type of work PR entails and really pay attention to see that, yes, it was PR." Such a comment was made up by upperclassmen who had taken several PR courses.

PR is a valuable discipline

Because the PR and advertising majors who participated in this study did not attend schools that have PR and/or Advertising "tracks" in their programs, students were free to take whichever course they wanted; as long as they met the minimum number of major credits needed to graduate. However, those who were interested in PR ended up taking most of the PR course and those interested in advertising ended up taking advertising related course. Therefore, while Introduction to Advertising and Introduction to PR were major requirements, upon taking these two intro courses, students 'made up' their mind as to which one of the two is better for them and planned out the rest of the curriculum.

Because the participants of this research included those who were interested in advertising as well, those who were interested in PR seemed to highlight on the 'good' side of PR and those who were less interested in PR seemed to stress on the "unethical" or 'bad' as-

Table 2. Ratio of PR to advertising courses in 35 Korean universities with advertising and public relations programs¹⁴⁾

Program details	Numbers (programs)	Proportion (%)
Programs with more advertising courses	27/35	77.14%
Programs with more Public Relations courses	3/35	8.57%
Programs that have equal number of PR to advertising courses	2/35	5.71%
Ratio of PR to advertising courses	1:1.6	(all programs)

*Content analysis of all 35 university websites.

pects of PR. Such categorization became more evident as the interview progress because those who were more interested in advertising began saying, “I’m on advertising side” or “I think I’m more of an advertising person, but based on what I’ve observed in my intro to PR class and friends who are interested in PR, it seems to be such and such...” In these ways, though they were all PR and Advertising majors, the degree of interest and perception of PR varied depending on what they were more interested in between PR and advertising.

Some of the PR majors were found to consider PR as public service because it “promotes public interests.” This was because they thought PR focuses on building relationship

with its key constituents. Because they perceived PR to be public service, they thought PR to be more valuable and worthy discipline than advertising. Those who said this thought advertising is too commercial-oriented, only seeking to make more profit and increase return of investment. Comparing PR to advertising, they thought PR was less commercial. PR being less commercial was evidenced with less use to social media and traditional media to promote their product and services. Those who had taken more advertising and media related classes said this with more confidence. “Yes, they do use social media in PR but much less than the advertising industry. PR seems to be media relations-oriented; they do use media but it’s to send out their

14) Only courses that included words “advertising” and “public relations” (either in Korean or English) were counted.

press releases...they interact with people more.” For these reasons they argued PR was more public interested and less commercial than advertising.

PR is too rigid

Interviews revealed that some of the PR majors had negative perception about PR studies. Some of the perceptions they had at the beginning of college years were that PR is very rigid and formal. One of the students said, “at first I thought PR was too strict and rigid, I would get points off for spelling mistakes in my assignments. I thought it was very different from advertising.” Similar comments were echoed during the interview.

However, participants had initially thought PR was too fixed and very confined but after experiencing PR outside of classroom their perception about PR were changed. One student said, “I used to think the same way but then I was able to work at an international event where I was in charge of taking care of the VIPs and things that my professors told us in classes were really happening. And PR just became fun and alive for me at that point.” For him, personal experiences changed the negative perceptions he had about PR. For another student it was indirect experience that made PR more interesting, “I also didn’t

think PR was fun but after taking Health communication I found interest in PR. Some of my family members are in that field so I grew up hearing about what people do in that industry. So after health communication course, PR became real and I was able to connect that to what I already know. It just become so interesting.” As such indirect experiences also helped in making PR more intriguing for students.

The stories participants told revealed that when students said PR being ‘rigid’ and ‘too formal,’ it meant ‘no fun,’ ‘boring,’ ‘not interesting.’ This was more so because they were comparing PR with advertising, and advertising for them was fun and interesting because they would watch interesting commercials in advertising courses and in comparison, PR courses weren’t that intriguing. However, indirect experiences (knowing people who are in the field or hearing stories about PR industry in/outside of classrooms) and direct experiences (internship) students acquired overtime slowly but surely changed their mis-understanding and perception about PR.

RQ1b: What are the perceptions PR majors have on PR industry?

Meticulous-no room for mistakes

Interviews revealed perceptions PR majors have towards the industry. The most prominent perception was that PR work involves meticulousness. Those who have had internship experiences in PR agencies or PR in in-house, discussed how the environment encouraged perfection. One of them said, “we really had to be meticulous about everything we did, especially when sending out important messages, we had to proof read several times.” Those who haven’t had internships but had heard stories from those who had internship in PR companies said, “so I asked this friend about her internship experience, she interned at a PR division of a company and she just said it was hard. She said that in a way that carried out so many meanings, I just couldn’t ask any more questions. I just imagined it must have been really tough.” Majority of the participants had friends, acquaintance who had interned in PR agencies or PR division of a company but what they heard from them were very similar from one another. Words such as “meticulous” “perfectionism” resonated throughout the interview when asked about what they thought about the PR industry.

Work environment conducive for child-rearing but low success-ceiling of the industry

Interviews revealed that there was a difference between gender when it comes to perception of the PR industry. The female students thought PR industry was definitely better for women because as there are more women in the industry, they thought work environment, benefits and employee welfares were more practical and better for women. They also heard that there are much less afterwork outings in PR companies compared to advertising companies. Moreover, they heard from others that PR practitioners have more independent schedule and more freedom in their work. The female participants thought that all of these work environments were more conducive to child-rearing and finding work-life balance.

While none of male students mentioned the aforementioned aspect of the PR industry, they did put more emphasize on the possibilities the industry offers. “I think there is a general understanding that becoming a PR practitioner really can’t get you that far.” Others also echoed similar sentiment saying that career in the PR industry can’t give you the type of ‘success’ they want in life. While the definition of success was different for everyone, they all agreed on the glass-ceiling of

PR industry. While both females and males did mention this aspect about PR industry, male students were found to talk about it more and give more meaning to it as they were contemplating on life-long career.

Gap between academia (classroom) and the industry: Ethics and power

Another perception the PR majors had about the PR industry was the gap between theories and the actual field work. Students who had internship experiences discussed about the gap they had perceived between the industry and the classrooms. One of them said, “I wanted to do something with crisis management but I ended up doing media monitoring, writing press releases, contacting journalists, managing SNS accounts and translating some documents.” Others also mentioned how they ended up doing event planning or taking care of guests and journalist at events and press conferences. Similar comments were heard during the interview. The PR majors imagined that they would be doing some ‘important work’ being in the front line in major crisis situation but what they ended up doing was “mundane” and “insignificant” work-very different from what they had thought. While they were disappointed, they realized that they lacked skills and work ex-

periences to do what they wanted to do.

While students discussed how they realized how diverse PR works are compared to what they learned in classrooms, they also realized that what they learned in classroom were perhaps too theoretical. They had learned about the importance of engaging in ethical communication and two-way communication for mutual-benefits yet, they realized how many situations challenged one’s ethical standards and mutually beneficial decision.

One of the students discussed how he is worried about ending up doing work that challenges his ethical standards. “I think I have this fear...fear of doing PR work for an organization that may make unethical decisions.” Because he thinks that if he chooses to become a PR practitioner, his career might make him do things that he doesn’t want to do, he isn’t sure if he wants to choose PR as a career. He was already concerned about being challenged ethically if he works in the PR industry. As such, interviews revealed that while students weren’t so concerned about ethical issues in the classroom those who had some experience in the industry were more serious and conscious of ethical challenges PR practitioners face in the industry.

Another prominent perception that was stressed about the PR industry was the power

imbalance between PR practitioners/agency and their constituents. Students used *Gab* and *Eul* to describe the relationship. The *Gab* and *Eul* denotes power dynamic between those in power, *Gab*, and those who are in lesser position of power, *Eul*. Originally, they are legal terms generally used in drawing contracts, but students were using the terms to describe relationship between PR practitioners and its publics. "I don't think PR practitioners can ever be *Gab*, I saw my boss and my boss's boss bowing their heads 90 degrees to journalists." He continued, "I don't understand why they have to be so formal and humble to journalist, they aren't even direct relationships between them. Advertising can be *Gab* if they work in the marketing department and have subcontractors but I don't that would ever happen in PR." Others also commented in similar nuances.

Another said, "yeah, I think that's why people interested in PR end up becoming professors whereas that's not always the case for advertising." As such, for PR majors, they were serious and conscious of the power dynamic and was contemplating on PR as a career because they thought PR practitioners would also be in a lesser power position. This was not so much because they wanted to be *in power* but because they abhor being

in position where they *don't have power* in decision making process. As they have lived majority of their lives being in position where they don't have power (that is, being young students with no job security) and as they hear so much about people who are taken advantage of because those in *Gab* position take full advantage over those who are in the subordinate position. Having heard so much about the injustice and unfairness those who don't have power experienced, the participants didn't want to choose a path where they are likely to be in *Eul* position for a long-haul.

Perception on PR practitioners (choose one or two words): self-controlled with PR pride

Interviews revealed that PR majors have some perception toward PR practitioners. Most prominent perception was PR practitioners are "in control of their emotions" "not direct in expressing what they want." Others discussed how they perceive PR practitioners to be "decisive" "good with understanding situation quickly" "have insights of complex situation." Others commented about their other qualities such as "being eloquent" "self-conscious" "well-dressed" and "relationship-oriented" "calm" and "level-headed." When asked why they gave these descriptors to describe

PR practitioners they said these are characteristics of their peers interested in PR, bosses and co-workers where they had interned, and alumni whom they had met in school events. Students discussed how different people, though they work in different sectors seem to carry similar characteristics. Though the qualities listed above are different, they all convey similar image or message, that is, “self-controlled” or very “put-together.” Students also discussed how they think PR practitioners have “PR pride,” something they haven’t seen with people who work in advertising.

Students also discussed that PR practitioners care too much about the process and formality. Though the participants all agreed that these processes can definitely help in doing good work at jobs, they thought it was too conventional. In other words, they thought that within PR, formality preceded the actual content which gave them a sense that PR might be too old school for them.

As such, interviews revealed that some of the students who chose to go along the advertising path had decided to choose that path because they didn’t think PR was right for them. While they didn’t think advertising was right for them either, at least they didn’t think they had to be in a certain way to be in the advertising industry. But most of the par-

ticipants were very firm on their perception as to what types of characteristics PR practitioners ought to have and if they didn’t meet those qualities, they didn’t think they were suitable for that path. Such a perception seemed unequivocal in their minds.

RQ2a: What are the perceptions non-PR majors have on PR studies?

The research question 2a and 2b discuss how the non-majors perceive the PR studies and PR industry. 13 students majoring in Sociology, Philosophy, Business, and others were interviewed and findings show that they perceive PR to be promotion and the PR major students need to be creative. In terms of the PR industry, the non-majors perceived PR to be manipulative, narrow and never in power. Each theme is discussed below.

PR is about promotion and you need to be creative

Interviews revealed that non-PR majors’ perception of PR was similar to that which PR majors have about PR prior to entering college. They perceived PR to be similar to advertising and thought that PR and advertising is the same thing, just one area of study. When asked what they thought PR was, they

said PR is a study on communication between companies and consumers. A couple of students who were majoring in journalism and media, had more exposure to public relations through their communication courses and defined PR as that which builds two-way communication between organizations and publics. However, other non-PR majors perceived PR as promotion. When asked what they thought PR students learn in classrooms, students mentioned course that are more practical such as writing and marketing. As such, what the PR-majors' knowledge and perception on PR were very limited and non-majors were very much similar to what they PR majors thought before taking any courses as a PR major.

The non-PR majors also had perception toward PR majors. One of the students said, "as far as I know, students who study PR are eloquent and they are really creative." Another said, "yeah, I have worked with PR majors in other elective courses in team projects and it's always the PR majors who end up making the PowerPoint. They are also good writers." Similar comments were echoed during the interviews. They all thought PR majors are creative and talented in making good PowerPoint presentation slides. Often times PR majors were to ones who ended up being

in charge of either making PowerPoint or giving the presentation as students tend to divide-up the work amongst members for the team projects. Because PR majors in Korea take PR Planning course and courses on creativity such as Advertising Copy-writing, non-PR majors discussed how impressed they were of PR majors with their skills. One student said, "so I was commenting on how [PR major] was so talented but they he discussed how others in the major are so much more talented and creative than they are." I was just looking at him and thought that he was good but I guess being in a major with creative and talented people like himself could be different. I thought "how stressful of an environment it must be to be constantly be with and be compared with other who are just as or even more creative."

RQ2b: What are the perceptions non-PR majors have on PR industry?

PR is manipulative, narrow, and never in power

The PR industry was perceived differently by the non-majors. One of the things non-majors stressed more was how narrow they thought the PR industry was in terms of the work PR practitioners are involved in. One of the students

said, "I think PR agencies mostly work on managing SNS sites." They thought most of the PR work involves creating contents to upload on their SNS. Yet another student asked, "don't they manipulate SNS sites?" He thought PR companies use college students as interns to write positive reviews on internet or write positive comments on news articles concerning their product and services. When asked why they thought in this way, a few students discussed how they saw in the news how companies hire college students to write positive reviews/comments on on-line news articles so their products/services could be seen in a more positive light. Therefore, they had made generalization thinking that that's what most PR companies do. This was because some of them thought that PR is about making a good impression of their company-creating positive image of their company and brand.

Yet one thing non-majors thought similarly with the PR majors were that PR being in *Eul* position. Some of the students have heard from their acquaintances who were in the PR industry so they understood the power dynamic between PR agency/practitioners and their constituents. They also thought that PR practitioners have a lot of work, needing to often work until late after work-hours.

Another perspective that was shared by

both majors and the non-majors was the glass ceiling of the industry. The non-major students also thought that in Korean society, PR industry was not perceived as THE career path to so called "success" in Korea. Therefore, those who were more ambitious or who wanted to become successful did not think the path was right for them.

Discussion

Importance of communicating PR to PR majors

Findings of the study indicate the importance of communicating what PR is to its key constituents, namely, PR majors and future PR majors. Interviews revealed that even students who came to major in PR did not know what it was prior to taking his/her first PR course. They had more interest in advertising and many chose to do PR because PR happened to be tied to advertising in most Korean undergraduate programs. This phenomenon highlights how PR is not being communicated to the larger public as to what it is. It is alarming to think that had PR not been within the same program as with advertising, chance of PR being chosen as a major would have been much less.

Moreover, findings suggest that for the participants of the current study, even after students take their first PR course, it's not until the second year that they can take the second PR course (and not the second semester of the first year; according to the content analysis, most of the programs predominately have more advertising and media-related courses than PR courses during the first year). Therefore, findings suggest importance of introducing students with courses in the first year so they have a good grasp of what PR is and what it entails. Unlike advertising, students have difficulties understanding the depth and breadth of PR just by taking introduction to PR course, therefore, at least allowing students to take two courses in the first year would be significantly helpful in understand and developing further interest in PR.

According to the content analysis, unfortunately, even today, similar to the past, courses in PR are much less than that of Advertising (the ratio being 1:1.6). Jung's (1999) examination of 17 advertising and public relations departments showed serious lack of PR courses in comparison to advertising courses and this still holds even after 19 years. PR programs in Korea needs to not only change depth and width of the course material but also increase sheer number of

courses to introduce more understanding of PR to its key constituent, that is, PR majors.

Moreover, interviews revealed the importance of first PR course, generally titled as the "Introduction to PR." As students were found to choose their 'track' after taking the introductory course, it is critical to make the course not only interesting but also insightful so they gain understanding of the PR industry, the type of work PR practitioners are involved in, and different works of PR. As some students had thought the PR intro course was too theoretical or abstract (compared to advertising), faculty or undergraduate course director (or whoever structures the curriculum and course contents) must consider where the students are coming from, their background knowledge and understanding of PR and approach in a way that is more understandable and interesting to freshmen so to peek their interests.

Findings indicate that once their interests are peeked, and confident that they have the qualities to pursue career in PR, they are more likely to take PR courses, continue their interest in PR by attempting internship in PR and so on. Therefore, the current research indicates the critical importance of the first PR course in its curriculum.

Moreover, the current study shows that PR majors have somewhat negative view of PR

industry. Because the PR discipline and the industry would always be compared to that of advertising (as long as PR and advertising studies stay together as a discipline in Korea), PR practitioners, industry and professors need to introduce PR industry to the students more in a positive light. It may be that some professors tell their personal experiences in class or upperclassmen whom had already had internship experience exaggerate their personal experiences to lower-classmen that may give negative impression of the field. Interviews revealed that these negative impressions have a big influence on the ways in which budding college students perceive the industry. Therefore, there is a need to keep the perception positive or neutral by projecting the study and the field as interesting, exciting, growing, and less daunting so that students stay more open minded prior to learning PR in-depth. Though this does not mean to guide the students blind-folded, students should not pursue PR studies or join the industry with negative bias.

To reach this goal, undergraduate programs should provide more opportunities to students so they have more direct/indirect exposure to the industry. Some suggestions are inviting alumni who already work in the industry to introduce the industry as they see

and experience it, take them on field trips to reputable PR agencies, provide more internship opportunities to students not just in pro-profit organizations but also in government and NGO sectors. By having more exposures to the diversity and different works within PR, students would be able to make more discernment in perceiving PR.

Furthermore, by doing the above (giving more exposure about the industry), students would also be able to observe PR practitioners, thereby making less judgmental opinion about PR practitioners and also in the process, they would understand that not all PR practitioners need to have self-controlled or well put-together image to do their work well. By perceiving that different PR practitioners do different types of work, they would also be able to see that different characteristics are needed to do PR works and that they do not have to choose advertising or another career because they don't see PR fit for them.

As to making the PR curriculum more practicum-oriented was beyond the scope of this research as it did not research the practitioners or PR scholars. However, the current study, based on suggestions PR majors have made, suggests that PR courses must be strengthened in number as well. Not only were

PR courses significantly less compared to advertising courses, both university programs did not have courses such as PR in NGOs, or public policy, PR and current events (more of a seminar where students can discuss how PR is related to current events) (These courses were what students wanted to have in their curriculum). By introducing more specialized topics in the undergraduate courses, they could have more interests and less biases about the PR industry, practitioners and the discipline overall.

Findings show that unlike previous studies on perception of PR majors on PR studies and the industry, PR majors in Korea focused less on the strategic management process of PR. Since many PR majors in the US come to study PR with a perception that PR is fun, about networking and socializing (Bowen, 2003), strategic management process (research, strategic action planning, communication, evaluation) come more as a surprise. However, since students in Korea do not have preconceived notion about PR (being fun and not challenging), the students did not mention challenges they face in learning the strategic management processes or the theory aspect of PR.

However, similar to students in the US, some students in the current study came to understand and learn public relations with a

negative perception about PR, that is, PR being about making a good image of a company. However, as to the extent to which such negative perception influences students' career choices or how their negative perception balances with positive aspect of PR were beyond the scope of the study. Future studies ought to examine these aspects to help PR majors to ponder more about ethical issues of PR prior to becoming PR practitioners.

Using different platforms to effectively communicate PR to the larger public

As for the non-majors, because findings indicate that PR is not being communicated effectively to them, the current study suggests using different media platforms to communicate PR more effectively to future PR majors. As the current study suggests that non-majors only understand PR as promotion, there is a need to introduce different aspects of PR to this audience. This public could also encompass current middle and high school students so they have the knowledge and information about PR at an early age-such an approach could give them more opportunity to choose PR as their major. Therefore, by using the medium they use, PR industry and undergraduate programs can make videos to introduce and describe what PR is to recruit good students

in the near future.

Because media has been less influential in shaping what PR is to public in Korea as it has in the US (For instance, American TV sitcom, *Sex in the City* was not aired in Korea, nor has there been a famous TV program that portray PR practitioner in a certain way,¹⁵) therefore, there is no predominant perception of PR practitioners formed via media.) As result of the influence of media in the US, public relations majors in America perceive public relations to be glamorous, the work to involve little other than media relations and special event planning, and industry to be dirty, that is, only selling a profile or image (Bowen, 2003). Such negative perception and misperception of public relations in the US is heavily influenced by the media. Negative misrepresentation of public relations via TV, newspaper, and movies have been found to influence public relations majors in the US (Bowen, 2003). Such a previous findings could be used for practical purposes. For instance, by utilizing the power of media, publics' negative perception could be changed to that of positive by shaping a positive image of the industry and PR practitioners, by put-

ting public relations more in a positive light in the media. Another practical application could be using publications. For instance, PR scholar/ practitioners could write a book similar to *Advertising Genius Lee Jae-Suk* to introduce PR to the larger public or lobby TV production directors to create a role in a hit TV show that shows PR practitioners in a positive light, or at least, break the negative perception that PR is not so much about manipulation but more about building relationships with the publics. Here, the goal would be for the PR industry to utilize media more to effectively to communicate what PR is to the larger audience as the current study shows that non-majors or general public only has a narrow view of PR.

Moreover, the findings show the need to offer introductory PR courses to non-majors to introduce what PR is to one of its key constituents. By introducing PR to non-majors, not only would the courses attract and encourage non-majors to change majors to PR but also give an in-depth understanding of PR to who may in the near future work with PR. Area of studies such as Business, Computer graphics, Arts and design, and Journalism to

15) There have been TV programs with characters whose work involved PR, however, the influence in introducing what PR is to general public in Korea were incomparable to that of what Samantha and *Sex in the City* have had to audience in the US.

name a few, will work closely with PR, therefore, understanding PR would enhance not only the quality of partnership but also productivity and efficiency of collaborative work.

Conclusion

The current study investigated how the PR majors and non-PR majors perceive the PR studies and the industry. Findings of the study suggest that PR needs to communicate more effectively to the current PR majors by making the PR intro class more interesting with wider breadth (rather than depth), and introducing PR to non-majors through use of different media platforms to connect with them.

Efforts would be needed to implement the aforementioned programs at the undergraduate level. Yet, the current job market as well as the findings of the current study shows that improvements are needed in order to keep the PR and advertising program in demand in the near future as well. By understanding how the PR majors and non-PR majors perceive the PR studies and the industry, improvements could be made in the curriculum and in the ways in which the PR undergraduate program and the industry is

introduced to its key constituent.

The current study was only limited to interviewing 13 non-majors, though the number may be small, the second focus group interview with the non-majors stopped short because they lacked knowledge and information about PR. Though both researchers were skilled in FGI, it was challenging to moderate a focus group where no one spoke much. Such point only emphasized the necessity of communicating what PR is more effectively to the larger public.

Also, due to its scope the current study was only able to examine the perceive of PR studies and the industry from the perspective of PR majors and non-majors. Future studies should examine the perception of the academics and the practitioners of the PR programs and the industry to show whether the negative perceptions are misperception or biases.

Despite the aforementioned limitations the current study contributes largely in twofold, first, the current student examines the status quo of PR programs in Korea as of today. Such a comprehensive overview of the PR programs wasn't conducted as far as the researchers know and the examination of the number of advertising class vs. public relations courses was not examined since Jung's 1999 study. Therefore, the current study gives an

overview of PR programs in Korea. Second, the current study provides insights as to the current limitation and the direction for PR programs in Korea in terms of its curriculum. The findings could be applied to advance PR program, fill in the gap between academia and practitioners, and attract potential PR majors to their programs. Also, the findings could be applied to provide a general elective course to non-majors so that those who may work in areas related to PR could gather in-depth understanding of the breadth and depth of works involved in PR. Such an understanding could provide more cooperative relationship between PR practitioners and those who work in related fields.

Findings of the study are not generalizable to all PR undergraduate programs in Korea because different programs have different emphasize, student body, and curricula. However, the findings shed light on communication method used in PR industry and aca-

demical, or lack thereof. Past 30 years could be said to have introduced and stabilized PR as an academic discipline, changes are needed to further strengthen PR discipline and introduce varying aspects of PR to its critical publics: current and future PR majors who will eventually become PR practitioners and scholars. The current study shows how one of the countries where PR has been and continues to grow has dealt with shaping of the practice and curriculum-as to how Korea par with other countries, and whether and how Korea should further strengthen curriculum and PR practice needs global attention and discussion in order to bring further development of PR in Korea. By bringing global standard of PR in its academic program and the industry, it could become model to other nearby countries with less developed PR programs and industry and function as an Asian hub of international PR industry.

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홍보학 및 홍보업계에 대한 홍보 전공자들과 비전공자들의 인식 연구

장안리 홍익대학교 광고홍보학부 조교수*

김현희 중앙대학교 경영경제대학 광고홍보학과 시간강사**

배경 및 목적

본 연구에서는 홍보 전공자 및 비전공자들이 홍보학 및 업계에 대해 어떻게 인식하는지 살펴보는 것을 주목적으로 하였다.

방법

위의 목적을 위해 본 연구에서는 내용 분석과 심층 인터뷰를 사용하였다.

결과

국내에 '홍보'가 학과 명칭으로 들어가는 35개의 커리큘럼 및 37명의 전공자 및 비전공자들을 통해 아래와 같은 결과를 도출해 내었다. 전공자들의 경우에는 전공 수업 이수 전에는 홍보를 광고 혹은 프로모션으로 인식하는 것으로 나타났으며 전공 수업 이수 후에야 홍보가 어렵지만, 포괄적이며 의미 있는 전공이라고 인식하는 것으로 나타났다. 또한 업계에 대해서는 꼼꼼함을 요구하며, 실수를 하면 안 되는 분야라고 인식하고 있었으며 육아에 도움이 되는 업무 환경을 제공하는 것으로 인식하였다. 하지만 업계 자체가 자신들이 원하는 사회적 성공을 가져다주지는 않는 것으로 인식하는 것으로 나타났다. 아울러 전공자들은 언론인들과 홍보 실무자들 간의 권력 불균형이 있는 것으로 인식하고 있었으며 여러 차원에서 윤리적 도전을 직면하는 분야라고 인식하고 있었다. 비전공자들의 경우에는 홍보는 프로모션과 관련성이 높으며 홍보 전공자들이 되기 위해서는 창의성이 요구된다고 인지하고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 35개 학교의 홍보 전공 웹사이트에 있는 교과목 목록을 근거로 실시한 내용 분석에 있어서는 홍보 대 광고 수업의 비율은 1:1.6인 것으로 나타났다.

논의 및 결론

본 연구는 위의 연구 결과를 근거로 홍보 교과 과정에 대한 제안 및 홍보에 대한 부정적인 인식에 대한 대응 방법을 제시하며 추후 홍보업계와 긴밀하게 협업을 하게 될 인접 학문 졸업생들의 홍보에 대한 긍정적 인식 제고 방법을 제시하는 데 의의를 둔다.

KEYWORDS 홍보학, 홍보업계, 학부 교과 과목, 홍보 전공자, 광고홍보학과

* First Author & Corresponding Author: Hipr@hongik.ac.kr

** PR_kim@hotmail.com

Appendix

A. List of the universities in Korea with PR studies

	학교	학과/부 명칭	지역	설립연도	광고홍보 수업 비율
1	중앙대	광고홍보학과	서울	1974	15:10
2	국민대학교(본교)	언론정보학부/광고홍보학전공	서울	1997	5:3
3	동국대학교(서울)	광고홍보학과	서울	명시되지 않음	11:9
4	세종사이버대학교	경영학부/마케팅·홍보학과	서울	명시되지 않음	6:3
5	숙대(본교)	홍보광고학과	서울	1997	15:19
6	송실대(본교)	언론홍보학과	서울	1999	3:4
7	연대(신촌)	언론홍보영상학부	서울	1972	2:5
8	이대(본교)	커뮤니케이션·미디어학부/ 커뮤니케이션·미디어학전공	서울	1960	10:6
9	한국외국어대학교(본교)	미디어커뮤니케이션학부/광고·PR·브랜드전공	서울	1978	4:4
10	경성대학교(본교)	커뮤니케이션학부/광고홍보학전공	부산	1989	10:3
11	고신대학교	광고홍보학과	부산	1999	13:4
12	동명대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	부산	명시되지 않음	14:6
13	동서대학교(본교)	미디어커뮤니케이션학부/광고PR전공	부산	1997	5:6
14	동의대(본교)	미디어·광고학부/광고홍보학전공	부산	1999	18:3
15	신라대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	부산	1996	11:10
16	목원대학교(본교)	광고홍보언론학과	대전	1995	13:4
17	계명대학교	언론광고학부/광고홍보학전공	대구	1981	32:32
18	차의과학대학교	의료홍보미디어학과	경기도	2013	5:6
19	평택대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	경기도	2008	27:23
20	한신대학교(본교)	미디어영상광고홍보학부 광고홍보전공	경기도	1995	5:8
21	한양대학교(ERICA 캠퍼스)	광고홍보학과	경기도	1989	11:10
22	협성대(본교)	미디어영상광고학과	경기도	명시되지 않음	11:5
23	카톨릭관동대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	강원도	2007	15:5
24	상지대학교(본교)	언론광고학부/광고홍보전공	강원도	명시되지 않음	11:8
25	한림대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	강원도	1996	10:8
26	극동대학교(본교)	언론홍보학과	충청북도	명시되지 않음	3:2

	학교	학과/부 명칭	지역	설립연도	광고홍보 수업 비율
27	서원대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	충청북도	1997	20:7
28	세명대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	충청북도	1995	14:7
29	청주대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	충청북도	명시되지 않음	19:15
30	남서울대학교(본교)	광고홍보학과	충청남도	1996	21:4
31	청운대학교(인천캠퍼스)	광고홍보학과	인천	명시되지 않음	20:3
32	우석대학교(본교)	광고홍보이벤트학과	전라북도	명시되지 않음	18:3
33	대구카톨릭대학교(효성캠퍼스)	언론홍보광고학부/광고홍보전공	경상북도	1998	12:8
34	제주대학교(본교)	언론홍보학과	제주도	1998	5:3
35	홍익대학교(세종캠퍼스)	광고홍보학부	세종시	1998	12:6

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<http://www.career.go.kr/cnet/front/base/major/FunivMajorView.do?SEQ=54#tab2>

B. Participant composition

Participants information	Number
Number of participants	37
Gender	$F = 19, M = 18$
Ages	20~27
Majors	PR = 24, Non-PR = 13
Campus	Seoul = 13, Sejong = 24
Year in school	Freshmen = 5, sophomore = 4, juniors = 15, seniors = 12, NA = 1
Number of focus group	7 (3 groups of 5; 1 group of 7; 1 group of 9; 1 group of 4; 1 group of 2)