

PUBLIC RELATIONS' ROLE IN SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE CORPORATIONS: CASE STUDY OF
VIVACELL-MTS

by

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List of Abbreviations

PR	Public Relations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
SI	Social Investments
EC	European Commission
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
CSP	Corporate Social Performance
GM	General Manager

Chapter I—Introduction

In contemporary society, where everything develops rapidly, corporations need better forms of communication strategies and management. With this in mind, the role of public relations (PR) becomes crucial because it has various communication models and strategies, which can be applied to different types of corporations, including profit and nonprofit organizations. Though the development of PR has shown that organizations can boost their reputation by establishing good and sustainable relationships with the public, something more needs to be achieved by corporations. A concept that started to guide organizations in their internal and external management system appeared several decades ago; corporate social responsibility (CSR) not only improves the company's reputation with its employees, stakeholders and investors, but it also spreads trust and credibility among the public. A vivid example of an organization that combines the strategies of PR and CSR, thus, attempting to shape a positive public opinion about the company is one of the leading telecommunication companies in Armenia, named VivaCell-MTS. It is the first company, which introduced the concept of CSR to Armenian market. VivaCell-MTS has been operating for more than ten years and in that short period the company has become the leading mobile operator in Armenia with more than 2 million subscribers (Newsletter, 2010).

PR is accepted as a valuable asset for managing corporate reputation. On the other hand, there are studies done that argue and cast doubt on the role of PR as a managing and executing tool in corporate social responsibility. In fact, company's social responsibility can become an innovative strategy with the aim to improve its image by solving social problems. Harold Burson, the founder chairman of the largest public relations agency in the world, Burson-Marsteller, remarked that the role of public relations is critical to fulfilling the corporation's social obligations (Burson, 2008). Indeed, PR departments of socially responsible companies use various public relations models not only to ensure effective communication with the stakeholders, including the public but also for implementing social investments

programs (SI). PR professionals work along with the CSR specialists aiming to contribute positively to the development and success of the corporation. Thus, an effective promotion of company's social responsibility through PR models can support to shape a positive corporate image within the public.

While talking about PR and CSR as two separate functional areas, a question arises. What is the function of public relations in social responsibility? Taking into account the fact that no studies have been done about the relationship and roles of PR and CSR in Armenian business corporations, this study will be the first to identify how PR models can work on behalf of the company's CSR strategy in the frame of its social investments programs through a case study of VivaCell-MTS. The focus of this study is to reveal and examine how the combination of PR models can affect VivaCell-MTS's reputation and ensure its high position not only among its competitors but also in society as a socially responsible business.

Chapter II— Literature Review

History of PR: Models and Theories

Public Relations (PR) has gone through different stages of development, becoming a critical and popular profession. Today PR not only ensures communication for an organization's success but it plays a vital role in the management of relationships and responsibilities within a corporation. With this in mind, the emergence of PR was beneficial especially for business corporations (Bernays, 1971). Indeed, PR can serve as a liaison for managing organization-public and organization-stakeholders relationships.

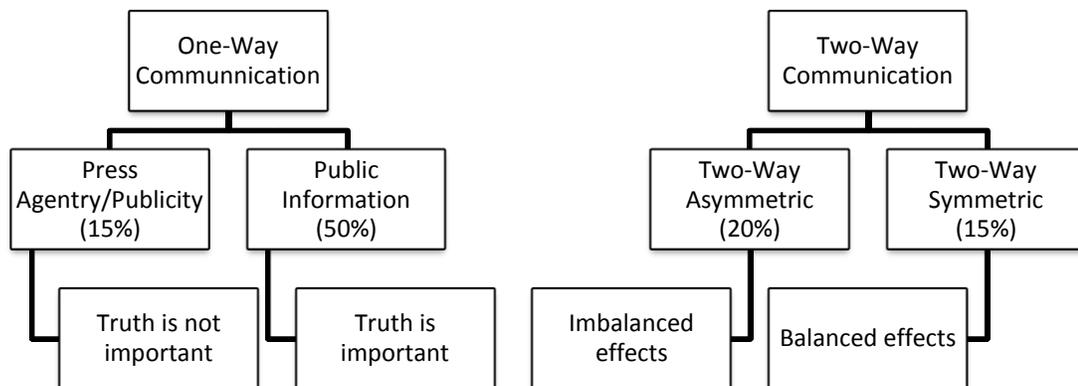
Edward Bernays had an enormous contribution to the development of PR in the United States. As he argued, the major goal of public relations is to research and learn more about the public opinion by applying social science techniques (Bernays, 1971). He (1971) explained the history of PR through an approach, called "engineering of consent," which defines the ways how public relations problems should be solved (p.297). The approach consists of several stages, including defining goals, research of public opinion, strategy, planning, and timing (Bernays, 1971). PR started to develop in the early 20th century in America (Bernays, 1971). However, World War II affected the final establishment of PR, furthering its acceptance by society and business. From 1950-1980s, the leading PR practitioners were among 75,000 Americans who could stand out with their practice while working for the Office of War Information (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012). They started to establish PR agencies, which aimed to build public support and change public opinion. Thus, the necessity of gathering public opinion is a key success for the development of PR (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2012).

PR helps in shaping image of the organization with its prospective customers in such a way that a favorable response is created. Grunig and Hunt (1984) described the history of PR in four models: press agency/publicity model, public information model, two-way symmetric model, and two-way asymmetric model (see Figure 1). Apart from discussing the history and evolution of PR, these models also reveal the

nature of communication that is managed between public and organizations even until today. Caroline Black (2014) referred to the four models theory by Grunig & Hunt, as “an up-to-date theory” that plays a crucial role in the development of public relations’ and communication’s strategies for the organizations (p. 22). The most popular and widely used source of communication is public information model. It is estimated that 50 % of organizations practice this model today (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The first two models, press agency/publicity and public information models always provide a one-way communication. In other words, the organization is the owner and sender of the message, while public always takes the role of the recipient or listener. Nevertheless, these two models differ concerning the accuracy and truthfulness of the information that public receives. The press agency model is used in sports and theater production companies, and the public information model is widely practiced in the government sector, nonprofit associations and business corporations (Grunig& Hunt, 1984).

Figure 1 Four Models of Public Relations (Grunig& Hunt, 1984)



Black (2014) highlighted the two-way communication’s model, as an ultimate goal for crowdsourcing. Specifically, the idea behind it is to gather information from the public (including audiences and stakeholders) by using its intelligence and knowledge in order to manage the organization’s task (Black, 2014). Today social media is a great example of crowdsourcing. However, the two-way asymmetric (one-sided) model’s specialists make sure that the information they send to the public is always beneficial for the organization (Grunig& Hunt, 1984). In other words, they plan how to change the

attitudes and behavior of the public on behalf of the organization. In this case, the communication received by the public is usually called “feedback” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). As Grunig and Hunt (1984) state, today the term “feedback” is widely used as a synonym for the two-way communication. However, it has never been its original meaning (p. 23). According to the cybernetic theorist Wiener (1948), “feedback is the chain of transmission and return of the information” (p. 96). In other words, feedback is a way of communication which helps to control the receiver’s (in this case public) behavior. In contrast to the two-way asymmetric model, the two-way symmetric model ensures balanced dialogue, rather than an imbalanced monologue in communication between public and organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Consequently, both public and organization are welcome to affect the change in each other’s attitudes and behaviors.

The four models of PR help the companies to attract different audiences and create a strong communication with the public.

History of CSR: Social Investments in the Frame of CSR

Defining corporate social responsibility (CSR) and understanding its nature has become an issue for an on-going debate and a topic for academic study for many years. Because of its subjectivity, it doesn’t own a globally recognized single definition. The European Commission (EC) defines CSR as a responsibility obtained by companies which aim to make an impact in society. More specifically, CSR integrates social, ethical, environmental, consumer and human rights concerns as part of a business strategy (Commission, 2017). According to the Center for Ethical Business Cultures (2005), the practice of CSR goes back to 1945 and even to earlier decades. To illustrate, Morrell Heald (1970) discussed the social responsibilities related to business in the period of 1900-1960s. In contrast, Katsoulakos, Koutsodimou, Matraga and Williams (2004) presented a history overview discussing the phases of development of CSR and suggested that the concept of CSR was put into circulation after the 1960s. Throughout that period, prominence was given to the environmental issues bringing the attention of lots of

well-known environmental protection agencies to those problems (Katsoulakos, Koutsodimou, Matraga, & Williams, 2004). Whether coincidence or not, numerous scholars include the responsibility towards the environment as a core value in defining CSR.

Nowadays, lots of business corporations and firms pay serious attention to their social responsibilities. Social responsibility is the practice of producing goods and services in a way that is not harmful to society or the environment (Cambridge, n.d.). But what does it mean to be socially responsible or towards whom should they be responsible? To be socially responsible means acting in an ethical and transparent way that contributes to the health and welfare of society (ISO 26000, n.d.). As Crowther and Aras (2008) suggest, CSR “is concerned with the relationship between a corporation and the local society in which it resides or operates” (p.10). In a broader context, local society can be referred to individual citizens, stakeholders, and governments. Taking into account the broad nature of CSR, the concept is always being redefined by various corporations. As for VivaCell-MTS, CSR works on behalf of the company's status by increasing its value in society and positioning its role as a significant asset that acts for the benefit of the country and nation (K-Telecom, 2016). Many successful corporations, including VivaCell-MTS, use ISO 26000 (International Organization for Standardization) (2010) international standard as a guide, which helps companies to act in a responsible way towards the society (including customers, employees, stakeholders, etc.) and the environment. Among the core subjects of social responsibility of ISO 26000 are organizational governance, human rights, labor practices, the environment, community involvement and development, etc. (ISO, 2010). Essential elements that are associated with CSR and attract the public, stakeholders and employees are the social investments made by the company, which boost its reputation and corporate image. The term “social investments” is discussed in the “community involvement and development” core subject in ISO 26000. Social investment is about investing in people. It means that policies are designed to strengthen people’s skills and capacities

and support them to participate fully in employment and social life. Key policy areas include education, quality childcare, healthcare, training, job-search assistance and rehabilitation (Commission, n.d.).

One of the famous CSR models by Carroll, a framework in the form of a pyramid was developed in 1991 (see Figure 2). It addresses questions referring to CSR from four different perspectives: philanthropic, ethical, legal and economic (Carroll, 1991). Philanthropic responsibilities are usually desired by the society,

Figure 2 Carroll's Four-Part Model of CSR (1991)



Many practitioners continue to debate about the similar meaning of CSR and philanthropy. In fact, they are different concepts (Seferian, 2010). As Carroll states, usually companies use philanthropy in order to demonstrate their good citizenship, which she further defines as “corporate citizenship”, and it aims to enhance the company’s reputation. Seferian (2010) reflects on CSR as “an important strategy for the whole business model”. Principles of CSR are included in the Corporate Social Performance (CSP) Model designed by Wood (1991). As he argues, CSR is proof that business and society are woven together. Thus, society has some expectations towards corporations’ behavior and actions (Wood, 1991). The three-dimensional model consists of the following categories: principles of corporate social responsibility, processes of corporate social responsiveness and outcomes of corporate behavior. On the one hand, Sethi (1979) has conducted a valuable research by assessing the CSP Model, though he didn’t

provide any definition for it. On the other hand, some other scholars, including Carroll (1979), Wartick and Cochran (1985) suggested a definition for the CSP model. All in all, the CSP model is widely used for identifying and measuring the CSR strategies used in corporations.

Connecting PR and Social Responsibility

As discussed above, there have been numerous studies and works developed separately in PR and CSR (sometimes referred to as social responsibility) fields. However, comparatively fewer studies have been done in revealing the possible connection or interdependence that may exist between these two critical concepts. “Public relations practitioners' personal ethical values seem to be a significant factor in how they view their role regarding CSR practices” (Kim & Park, 2011, p. 640). Keeping this in mind, several scholars have questioned and argued the ethical fit of CSR into PR practice. To illustrate, one of them is Jacquie L’Etang (1994) who suggested that using CSR on behalf of PR practice will bring into several moral issues within the context of human relationships which will have its negative effect on the motivation of employees. In contrast, Grunig argued that “Public Relations is the practice of social responsibility” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 47). With this, he concluded that “responsibility to publics is an important premise of public relations” (p. 47).

The term PR was firstly used by a lawyer Dorman Eaton in 1882 meaning “to look out for public’s welfare” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Similarly, Davis (1975) noticed that social responsibility is important for decision makers, as it contributes to the welfare of society along with their interests. A study conducted with 500 companies showed that the two major areas for social investments are charity and education. Meantime, the same survey showed that the same companies began to move toward “specialized social interests”- areas, in which businesses have public consequences. (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). As concluded by Grunig & Hunt (1984), in order to exercise social responsibility, organizations should practice public relations and use communication to help solve their public relations problems. Additionally, PR enables organizations to raise their voice with the aim to empower the public in organizational decision-making

(Grunig, 2011). To understand the connection between PR and CSR, it is important to realize the role of CSR communication. As Hall (2006) found through his research, communication about CSR can affect enormously the development of a relationship with the public (Hall, 2006). Thus, to complete the responsible task of communicating CSR to public, organizations will need the support of public relations' practitioners. CSR has the power to make a great contribution to the reputation of corporations, shifting from one-way communication to two-way communication (Bortree, 2014). Taking this into account, both PR and CSR can significantly affect the success of organizations and well-being of the society because the increasing interdependence between two concepts makes the connection stronger and stable.

To conclude, while some ideas support that integration of PR and CSR can violate the moral beliefs and values of corporations and human relations, many scholars argue that with the help of CSR, PR can have a significant impact on the society's welfare and success of companies. It is worth mentioning that no literature is published in Armenia about the role of PR in CSR, specifically for business corporations, like VivaCell-MTS. Taking into account that VivaCell-MTS is the first company to introduce CSR to Armenia, this study will attempt to find the exact use of PR models that are used to represent the company as a socially responsible business. Thus, it will be the first to identify and reveal how VivaCell-MTS is perceived as a socially responsible business based on its social investments programs and activities with the use of PR models.

Chapter III— Research Design and Methodology

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This capstone project aims at studying the role of public relations in social investments projects implemented in the frame of Corporate Social Responsibility. This is a case study of VivaCell-MTS, an Armenian telecommunication company. The research questions of the study are as follow:

R.Q.1: What capacity do social investments have in the company's news coverage?

R.Q.2: What types of PR models does VivaCell-MTS employ to portray a socially responsible image?

R.Q.3: What kind of role does the General Manager of VivaCell-MTS play in communicating social investments projects to the public?

H₁: In socially responsible companies, social investments serve as a part of PR strategy.

H₀: In socially responsible companies, social investments do not serve as a part of PR strategy.

Research Methodology

To address the research questions above and examine whether VivaCell-MTS implements social investments projects in the frame of CSR as a part of its PR strategy, this study used a triangulation method by combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods in an exploratory sequential design. In the first phase of the study, content analysis of relevant documents, as well as news articles on social investments, was conducted. Afterward, semi-structured interviews with the VivaCell-MTS PR and CSR specialists were conducted aiming to explore more about the role of social investments in PR. Finally, a survey was distributed to the public in order to measure the public perception of key aspects of the study. The detailed description of the research tools used in the study is presented below.

Content Analysis

Content analysis was performed based on news media monitoring of VivaCell-MTS and on the analysis of VivaCell-MTS's *Social Investments 2015 and 2016 reports*. Walizer and Wienir (1978) define content analysis as any systematic procedure, which aims at examining the content of collected data; Krippendorff (2004) defines it as a research technique, which helps the researcher to make coherent and valid references from recorded information to the researcher's content. The objective of media monitoring was 1) to determine the amount of online media¹ news related to SI programs implemented by VivaCell-MTS, 2) to compare the amount of news related SI programs and commercial-related activities of VivaCell-MTS, and 3) to identify the key areas of SI programs implemented by VivaCell-MTS on which the online media coverage is concentrated. The purpose of examining the recent SI reports of VivaCell-MTS was to disclose the key areas of the social investments programs.

The online newspapers were chosen based on a journalistic objectivity to make sure that no bias or prejudices exist in the news articles. Five online newspapers that fell within the highest circulations in Armenia were randomly selected for inclusion in the study. Four online newspapers ("Tert.am", "Panarmenian.net", "News.am", "1in.am") have a national scope and audience and the news is usually published in the Armenian language. The fifth online newspaper ("Noyan Tapan"), which mostly targets the international audience (including Diaspora) publishes its news in English. Online articles were collected for a two-year period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016. The keyword used for collecting the online articles was "VivaCell-MTS".

The search generated 1123 online articles. "News.am" generated 162 online articles, followed by 89 online articles from "1in.am", 310 online articles from "Tert.am", 238 online articles from "Noyan

¹Online/Digital media is a type of a medium, where all materials including texts and visuals are distributed over the Internet, which are either non-copyrighted or copyrighted materials provided either freely or for a fee. (BD, n.d.).

Tapan” and 324 online articles from “Panarmenian.net”. For conducting content analysis, the articles were divided into two main categories: social investments-related and commercial-related news. Based on the objective of this research, only **social investments-related** online articles were examined.

Walter Lindenmann (2006) defines content analysis as the process of examining and tracking the written content, and afterward, translating the studied qualitative data into the quantitative material using a specific counting approach, which involves coding and classifying of key messages. Thus, in order to be able to classify the media content of social investments news, a separate category system was developed. The category system was developed through a *priori* coding, which established the categories before the data were collected (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The online articles were put into 8 categories based on their content: 1) education, 2) healthcare, 3) sport, 4) community development, 5) culture, 6) environmental protection, 7) information and communication technologies, 8) Ralph Yirikian (the categories, except Ralph Yirikian, are the same as most of the areas used in VivaCell-MTS “Social Investments” reports).

Semi-structured Interviews

As a continuation of the content analysis of news and reports, semi-structured interviews were conducted. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher standardizes the questions by order. This type of interview helps the researcher collect detailed information by digging thoroughly into the topic to understand all the answers provided (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The sample of the interview included two PR Unit specialists and two CSR Unit specialists (see Appendix III) to identify the connection between PR and CSR in the company, particularly putting an emphasis on social investments programs implemented in the frame of the company's CSR strategy. In addition, with the help of the interviews, the communication channels and PR models through which the news is communicated to the public were determined. The interviews were analyzed through the discourse analysis of the transcripts.

The designed questionnaire for the interviews was comprised of 9 questions. During four interviews the same list of questions in a particular order was provided. The analysis of the interviews was divided into three sections based on the results of the content analysis of news media and Social Investment reports. The first section was concentrated on PR history, PR models and PR strategy of VivaCell-MTS. The second section was focused on the relations between PR and CSR in the company. Taking into account that the communication of social investments activities of VivaCell-MTS is generally communicated to the public through the company's General Manager (GM), the third section of the questionnaire was focused on the role of the GM in the company's PR and CSR activities.

Survey

For the survey used in this study, non-probability convenience sampling was chosen. This is a type of non-probability sample in which whoever is available at a given time period is included in the sample (Lindenmannv, 2006). The sample size of the study included 302 respondents living in Armenia and using at least one Armenian mobile provider. Surveys were administered via various means of communication, including email, social media (e.g., Facebook), and in-persons. This survey used self-administered questionnaires, which is a method when respondents complete the survey themselves (Babbie, 1945). The survey was distributed to the public with the aim to reveal their perception on VivaCell-MTS as of a socially responsible business. The questionnaire of the survey was developed based on the results of content analysis and semi-structured interviews. The data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS software program. The analysis used different test on SPSS, such as correlations, frequencies, crosstabulations, etc. Correlation was used to identify if an association or relationship exists between specific variables.

Chapter IV—Case Study

Background on VivaCell-MTS

VivaCell-MTS is a leading telecommunication company in Armenia, which started to provide telecommunication services back in 2005. The company started its activities with a small team led by the GM Ralph Yirikian, who has been with the company for 11 years. VivaCell-MTS was the first to introduce the widest 4G (4th generation) network reach and currently, spreads a wide range of Voice and Data services all over Armenia. As of 2017, it has 2,074,429 subscribers, and 80 % of the company's shares are acquired by the Russian Mobile TeleSystems (MTS) company and the rest 20 % held by Lebanon investing group Fattouch Group.

Within its achievements in the business market, VivaCell-MTS is the first business company in Armenia to integrate CSR activities. It employs its social responsibility by making substantial investments for implementing social programs in different areas, such as education, healthcare, sport, culture, environmental protection, etc. Annually, VivaCell-MTS publishes reports on its social programs. Previously the title of the reports was “Corporate Social Responsibility”, later in 2013, it changed to “Social Investments”. As of 2017, within 11 years of its operation, VivaCell-MTS has provided 28 billion AMD for the implementation of social investments in 2005-2017 (VivaCell-MTS, 2017).

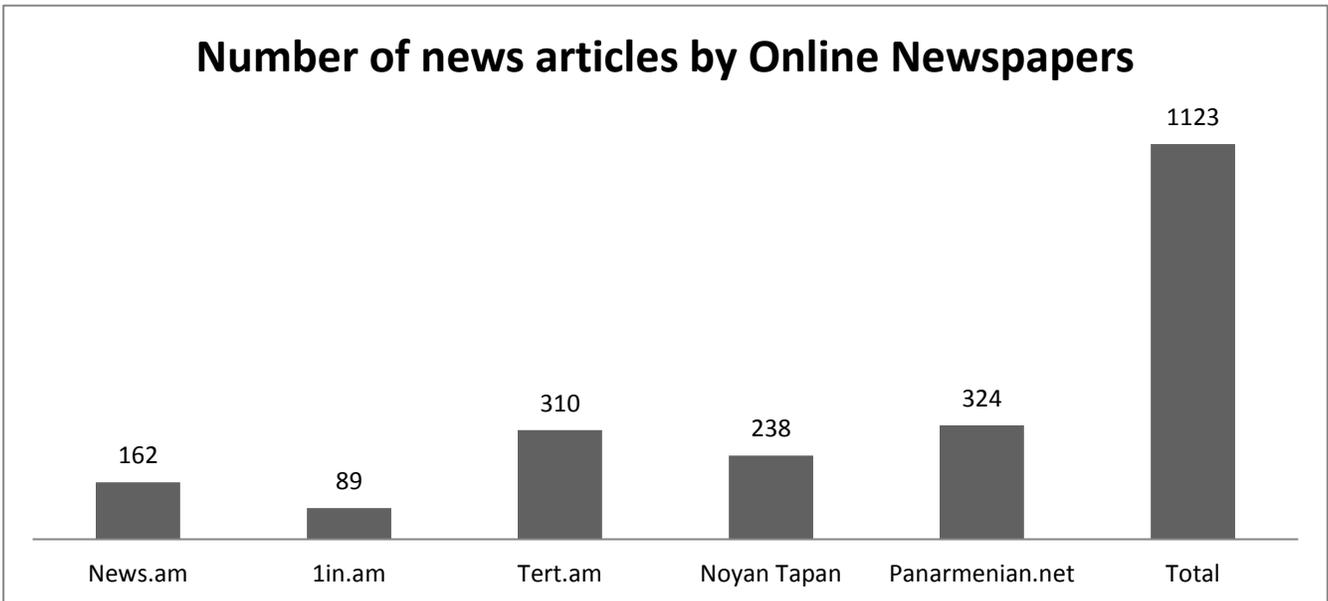
VivaCell-MTS was chosen for this study for its reputation as a socially responsible business which also made it possible to examine and reveal the role of public relations in corporate social responsibility. In accordance with the international standard ISO 26000, Core subject: Community involvement and development Issue 7: Social Investment, VivaCell-MTS has been actively involved in implementing social investments projects throughout Armenia. In 2015 and 2016, social investments included 9 different areas: culture, education, healthcare, environmental protection, information and communication technologies, volunteering, sport, regions and other.

Chapter V—Research Findings and Analysis

Media Monitoring

The overall number of online articles found with the keyword “VivaCell-MTS” in the period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016 from five online newspapers was 1123, out of which 162 online news were found on News.am, 89 news on 1in.am, 310 news on Tert.am and 324 news on Panarmenian.net (see Figure 3). The topics of 1123 online articles included both social investments-related news and commercial-related news. Commercial-related news included all the news related to VivaCell-MTS products, tariff plans, business offers, technology production and outage-related announcements, while social investments-related news included all the news related to investment programs in different areas for the development of Armenia.

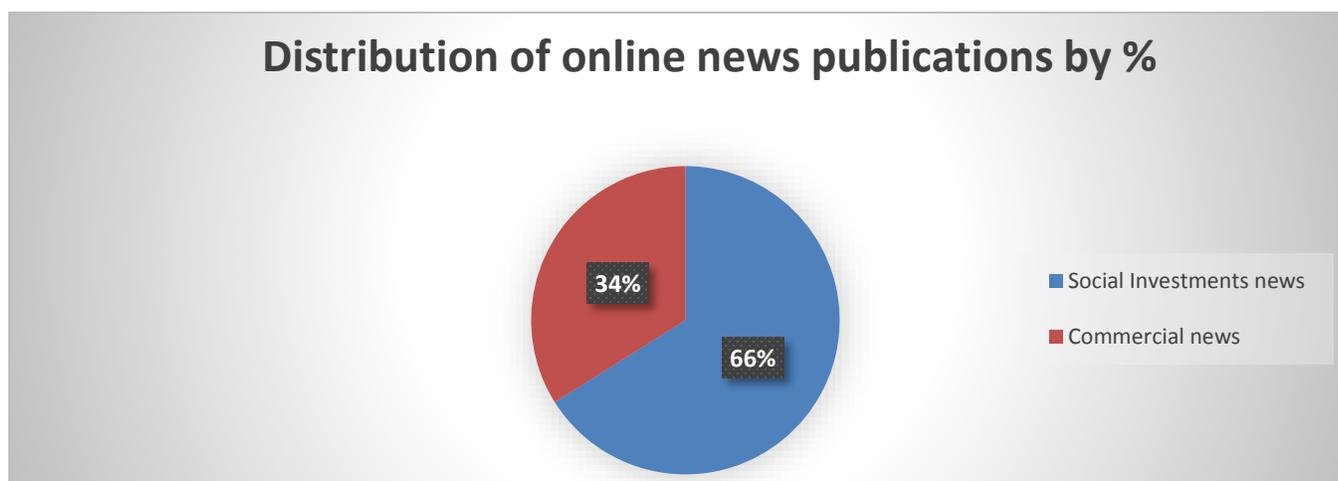
Figure 3 Publications from Online Newspapers



From the total 1123 online news derived from the five online newspapers, 742 online articles were related to social investments, and the other 381 online articles were related to commercial and

technological services. Thus, as it can be seen from Figure 4, within the period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016, 66 % of the media coverage of the five online newspapers contained news related to the social investments programs implemented by VivaCell-MTS, and 34 % was about commercial activities and promotions. Furthermore, as a result of a systematic analysis, it was revealed that the order of news coverage in online media is put in a way that multiple news on social investments come one after another first, and then multiple articles on commercial-related offers and technical-related announcements follow SI news. This shows that the order of news presented in online media is imbalanced. And to answer the first research question, based on the findings, social investments constitute a relatively larger part of VivaCell-MTS news media coverage than commercial-related news.

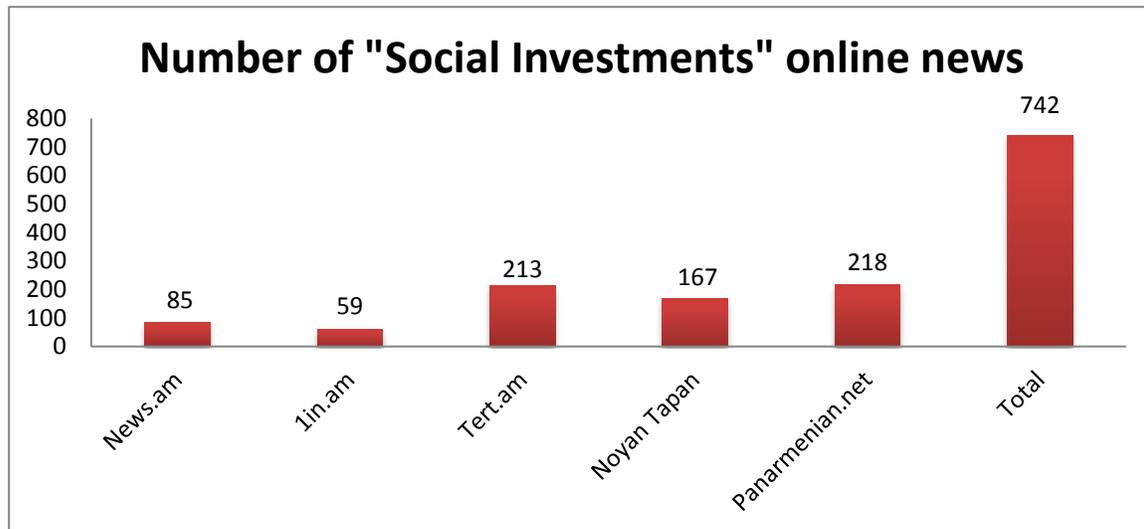
Figure 4 Ratio of publications by % (2015 January 1 – 2016 December 31)



After revealing the ratio between commercial-related and social investments-related news in media coverage, aiming to narrow down the further analysis, the content analysis of all the commercial-related news was excluded because this study was primarily focused on the systematic analysis of news that referred to social investments programs implemented by VivaCell-MTS. Thus, a total amount of 742 relevant articles remained after the exclusions which were further examined, including 85 online news

from “News.am”, 59 online news from “1in.am”, 213 online news from “Tert.am”, 167 online news from “Noyan Tapan” and 218 online news from “Panarmenian.net” (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 Social Investment Publications



According to Social Investments reports presented by VivaCell-MTS, in 2015 the telecommunication company implemented 71 projects as part of its CSR strategy, where the 3 core areas were culture, education and environmental protection. In 2016, the total number of implemented projects was 54, where most of the projects included culture, followed by healthcare & information and communication technologies with equal amount of projects.

Content Analysis of Reports and Online News

In this phase the online news and social investments reports of VivaCell-MTS were analyzed using the categories developed through a *priori* coding. The analysis focused on key areas of social investments projects that have been communicated to the public through online media coverage. The documents selected for the content analysis in this phase included: 742 online articles from five online Armenian newspapers (4 in Armenian, 1 in English) and the Social Investments reports presented by VivaCell-MTS in 2015 and 2016.

Below presented Table 1 summarizes the findings from the content analysis completed for identifying the key areas of social investments projects which VivaCell-MTS communicated to the public through public information one-way communication model, e.g. online newspapers. Meantime, Table 2 presents the findings of content analysis of the key areas of social investments in VivaCell-MTS SI reports 2015 and 2016. The main areas of those projects covered in online media and SI reports are presented according to the disaggregated descriptors. The online articles were categorized into 8 categories and the frequency mean of all the news articles was calculated. The same categorical order was utilized for the areas in SI reports, and the frequency mean of descriptors in SI reports was counted the same way as for online media articles. Frequency mean is the number of categories/descriptors (given messages) during a particular period of time. The frequency mean of all the descriptors in online news articles was calculated in the following way: the number of the category repeated in the whole document was divided by the overall number of pages of the 742 online news articles. And for the SI reports, the number of each category repeated in 2015 and 2016 SI reports was divided by the overall number of pages of both reports.

Table 1

Descriptors/Categories	Frequency Mean
<i>Focus areas of Media in SI news</i>	
<i>Ralph Yirikian</i>	1.77
<i>Community development</i>	1.58
<i>Healthcare</i>	1.09
<i>Education</i>	0.73
<i>Information and Communication technologies</i>	0.58
<i>Environmental Protection</i>	0.55
<i>Culture</i>	0.36
<i>Sport</i>	0.03

Table 1- Content Analysis of Online news from 5 Online Newspapers

Table 2

Descriptors/Categories	Frequency Mean
<i>Focus areas of VivaCell-MTS in SI reports</i>	
<i>Culture</i>	0.25
<i>Community development</i>	0.25
<i>Education</i>	0.24
<i>Environmental Protection</i>	0.13
<i>Information and Communication technologies</i>	0.1
<i>Healthcare</i>	0.08
<i>Sport</i>	0.06
<i>Ralph Yirikian</i>	0.02

Table 2- Content Analysis of Social Investment Reports 2015 & 2016

The **sport** descriptor included all the news related to social investments implemented for the support of Armenian football, tennis championships, Olympic committee, and chess federation. Overall in 2015 and 2016, VivaCell-MTS implemented 7 projects in the area of sport. Social investments projects performed in the area of sport (Frequency mean 0.03) have the least focus of online media coverage.

The **culture** descriptor included all social investments programs related to the development and preservation of cultural life of Armenia, including financial support to film festivals, concerts, music festivals, exhibitions, etc. For instance, a financial support was given to Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra, “Hover” State Chamber Choir, etc. In this field, in 2015 and 2016 VivaCell-MTS has implemented overall 28 projects. It was revealed that five online newspapers focused on social investments programs related to culture (Frequency mean 0.36) the least relative to other areas of focus (with the exception of sport).

Environmental protection category involved programs implemented for the preservation of the environment, wildlife and for energy saving. Examples of programs included tree planting, “Sun Child” festival, Wildlife rescue center in Urtsadzor, etc. Environmental protection descriptor was covered in the

media by focusing on projects implemented in cooperation with the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC). Based on the mentions in five online newspapers, the frequency mean of news related to environmental protection is 0.13. Compared to sport and culture, news related to this section was covered more frequently, however, less frequently than other areas.

Under **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)** descriptor (Frequency mean 0.58) social investments were made for the development of IT sphere in Armenia. In this particular area VivaCell-MTS implemented 13 projects in 2015 and 2016. The online news covering ICT mostly focused on covering projects, such as “VivaCell-MTS’s support to the Robotics Lab in the “Ayb” high school”, “FabLab project” and “ICT educational pilot project implemented in five high schools of Armenia”. So, under the ICT news, mentions about education were made as well.

Under the **education** (Frequency mean 0.73) category, the news included programs related to Open Doors which took place at VivaCell-MTS headquarters and aimed to invite different students from different educational institutions to become acquainted with the process of work. Furthermore, it included educational programs which provided internships opportunities, supported “Luys Foundation” for giving scholarships to Armenian students, supported with organizing conferences and educational programs, etc. The media coverage of topics related to educational programs was relatively high. The overall number of projects implemented by VivaCell-MTS in 2015 and in 2016 in the education sphere was 13 and 6, respectively. Compared to 2015, the number of educational projects in 2016 decreased by 7.

Healthcare involved projects implemented for the improvement of healthcare system in Armenia. The projects covered through media mostly included the introduction of new technologies in hospitals, financial support to daycare centers, support to medical congress in Armenia, etc. According to the media monitoring, healthcare (Frequency mean 1.09) area is the third most focused area of the five online newspapers. In 2015 and 2016, VivaCell-MTS implemented 12 projects in healthcare sphere.

Community development category referred to social investments projects implemented in the regions and rural communities of Armenia based on the media monitoring. This mostly included the house building, housewarming and water supply projects in the regions and rural communities. The frequency mean of 1.58 shows that in all online news articles related to social investments programs implemented by VivaCell-MTS, community development had the highest frequency of mentions presented by the online media coverage. This means that the key area through which VivaCell-MTS creates a high outreach through online media coverage is concentrated on social investments projects implemented in regions of Armenia for community development purposes. In Social Investments reports of VivaCell-MTS, there is no separate area for community development; instead the area is called regions.

Taking into account that mostly all online news related to social investments included mentions about **Ralph Yirikian** (Frequency mean 1.77), the GM of VivaCell-MTS, he plays a significant role in presenting news to the public. He is the key focus area of media coverage based on the analysis. This means that the vast majority of news related to social investments activities of VivaCell-MTS are presented to the public through company's GM.

So, according to media monitoring and content analysis of the online news, the least number of publications through online media coverage was in the areas of *sport* and *culture*. The highest coverage was mentioned in *community development*, *healthcare* and *education*. And as an important PR asset for communicating social investments-related news to the public, Ralph Yirikian had the highest number of mentions in the online media coverage presented by the five online newspapers. The name of Ralph Yirikian has appeared in more than 700 news articles out of 742. However, a big difference occurred while comparing the frequency means of all descriptors in online media coverage and Social Investments reports of VivaCell-MTS. As it can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, all the areas are listed in descending order (based on number of mentions/frequency mean/). Based on the comparative analysis, the greatest

difference is between Ralph Yirikian and culture. The amount of online news about cultural programs is quite low, while the focus on culture in Social Investments reports is extremely high. Respectively, according to Table 1, in online media Ralph Yirikian has the highest mean of frequency, while in Social Investments reports he has the lowest. This means that online news which is communicated to the public through online newspapers gives a high importance to the presence of Ralph Yirikian mostly in each news article. However, Social Investments reports do not focus much on the presence of Ralph Yirikian but they mostly focus on reporting and describing the overall projects implemented for the specific year. This results in assuming that Ralph Yirikian plays has an essential impact in communicating the social investments projects to the public through the public information one-way communication model, e.g. online newspapers rather than through SI reports.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Four semi-structured interviews with two PR unit specialists and two CSR unit specialists were conducted between March and April 2017 (see Appendix III). Interviews with PR and CSR specialists helped to identify the role of PR in social investments projects implemented by VivaCell-MTS, which might be an important factor for opinion- and perception-shaping regarding VivaCell-MTS as a socially responsible business. Interview transcripts were coded and highlighted through emergent coding. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2006), in case of emergent coding categories are established after preliminary data examination and it is based on common themes, which derive from the data. As a result of the data examination, commonly used and repetitive words and phrases were noted. This helped to have a better understanding of the main concepts and key arguments and statements which later were determined through several readings and repeatedly listening to the transcripts. The average time for an interview was 50 minutes. Based on the answers, interviews were put into separate themes, and the

further analysis of the interviews went based on those categories. Please see below the categories based on which the analysis of interviews was done:

1. PR in VivaCell-MTS

1.1 PR Strategy for Telecommunication Company: role and objective

The first question was, “How important it is for a telecommunication company to have a PR strategy?” According to respondents, PR strategy is a key component for any company’s success. VivaCell-MTS’s strategy has been established by the company’s PR, CSR and Advertising units and the GM in 2006. All the interviewees agreed that having a PR strategy is very crucial for the telecommunication company. Specifically, for two of the interviewees the main objective for having a PR strategy is to understand where companies begin their path and what direction they are supposed to undertake for achieving short-term and long-term goals. However, one of the interviewees saw the role of strategy less justified in terms of its obligatory effect. Thus, according to the explanation, having a PR policy rather than a strategy is more important because policy is about values and morals, while strategy is usually put into limits. Another interviewee was persuaded that PR strategy itself can be very flexible; meantime, the interviewee commented that strategy does not give the acquired freedom for deviation. One of the interviewees underlined the core objective behind the PR strategy:

“It is due to PR, as a tool that today public recognizes VivaCell-MTS”.

To continue, one of the interviewees acknowledged that being a telecommunication company, which provides services to different market segments, including the consumers, as well as stakeholders, the company needs to constantly present its activities to the public through communication channels. For this reason, a complex of various activities is undertaken which are summarized in a strategy form.

Another specialist being interviewed qualified VivaCell-MTS's strategy as a responsible management model based on the needs and assessments of the market.

1.2 PR Communication models

The interviewees summarized the types of communication tools used in VivaCell-MTS by giving a high importance to print, TV, online media and social media. However, some of them also mentioned Ralph Yirikian when talking about the communication models, as very often he also responds to public inquiries. Surveys (e.g. Net Promoter Score) and needs-based assessments are also part of the company's communication strategy. As explained, this helps the company to get a feedback and reveal the public opinion. This tool is referred to two-way communication asymmetric model, which involves "scientific persuasion". Two interviewees commented that face-to-face communication and word-of-mouth transmission of information through employees is another important tool for communication. As elaborated by one of the PR specialists, the work of the PR specialist continues even at home as a sender of information about the company's activities and news.

While some of the interviewees were satisfied with the means of communication with the public using not only one-way but also two-way communication, one of the respondents stated that "currently the company does not acquire any strong two-way communication models for interacting with the public". The point was illustrated by an argument that to some point the company needs to communicate its CSR activities through stakeholder engagement, participation in conferences without the interference of the PR unit and use of press releases.

1.3 PR specialists

As stated by the interviewees, PR specialists of VivaCell-MTS play an important role in the creation and communication of the content. The pre-organization is made and managed by PR specialists. They have the role of a content developer. Although officially the GM communicates messages to the

public, PR specialists often help the media for conducting their interviews by answering their questions through phone calls or emails. During the events, the presence of PR specialists, as well as CSR specialists is required. They are responsible for controlling the event flow and they follow up with media representatives. In a great essence, the roles of PR specialists include building and maintaining relationships between media, and more assisting and monitoring roles.

2. Roles of PR and CSR

2.1 Social Investments and PR

As stated by CSR specialist, social investments ensure an engagement with stakeholders and help to create strong bonds with the society. One of the interviewees stated that an influential part of the company's PR constitute social investments projects because they are the means through which PR works. The same interviewee mentioned that PR more depends on social investments, because if not the programs, PR will not be able to be completed. Meantime, as later mentioned, CSR depends on PR as well because PR is the provider of communication on which CSR is dependent.

To the question whether social investments form a part of PR strategy in VivaCell-MTS, one of the PR specialists mentioned that on a large scale social investments are part of CSR, because CSR unit implements the programs, while PR communicates them. Another interviewee noted that everything revolves around PR, and anything that has the potential to serve as a communication message is considered as a part of a PR. The third respondent politely rejected the fact that social investments are a part of PR stating that these projects are mostly part of CSR strategy, and that the communication of those projects forms a part of a PR. The fourth interviewee mentioned that CSR activities do not form part of a PR strategy in VivaCell-MTS. Later this interviewee mentioned that they both are much interconnected and cannot act without one another:

“It’s not that PR and CSR are just interconnected. But they have become one body. Without the intervention of PR, the opportunities of CSR are limited. Of course, CSR can act without PR, however, whatever takes place in terms of social investments, PR has a great role. ”

During the interviews, one of the specialists mentioned that social investments are an opportunity to create close relationships with the society, because by solving social problems, VivaCell-MTS succeeded to establish its market where people started to buy its products and services. Although, one of the interviewees disagreed that in VivaCell-MTS implementation of SI programs is a corporate advantage, the other three specialists agreed that SI programs is definitely a corporate advantage for the company. As mentioned later, it strengthens the customers’ loyalty towards the brand and enlarges the subscribers’ quantity.

2.2. PR and CSR specialists

All the specialists noted that the relationship between PR and CSR specialists is very connected because most of the activities are implemented in the result of both units cooperation. As mentioned, CSR provides the content for news, while PR decides the ways of communicating the content to the public. In other words, CSR comes up with the social investments projects in the company, while the coverage of the programs is supervised by the PR unit. One of the PR specialists mentioned that the bond between those two specialists is so strong that it is impossible to separate it, and when this bond weakens, it means that the success significantly drops down. In contrast, one of the CSR specialists noted that even though the relation between PR and CSR is extremely important, as of today this relationship is not that good.

3. Role of the GM

One of the interviewees often described the GM of VivaCell-MTS as a leader, by stating that all the approaches that he uses in managing the company are due to his strong leadership skills. As mentioned later, the role of the GM is very exceptional as a company manager who is respected by his employees. One of the specialists assumed that if not Yirikian’s image, the company hardly would reach its current

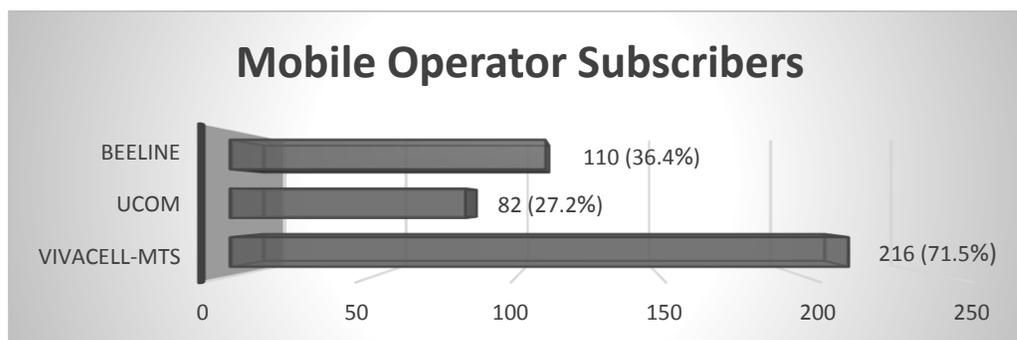
success. With this in mind, all interviewees mentioned that Ralph Yirikian is the “walking PR” for the company. Based on the interviews results, Ralph Yirikian is the only official speaker of the company, and that is part of the PR strategy. The interviewees mentioned that there is no need for VivaCell-MTS to assign any other speakers because no one can do it better than Mr. Yirikian. As a reference to the findings of the content analysis, Ralph Yirikian’s descriptor was mentioned in more than 700 articles out of 742.

Survey

Non-probability convenience sampling was used to conduct a survey with a sample size of 302 respondents. The input of survey data, as well as the further analysis was done through SPSS software program. The data analysis was done through descriptive analysis, frequencies and correlations.

Overall, out of 302 respondents 74.8 % were female and 25.2 % were male. The age range of the population was from under 18 to over 55. Among respondents, as having the highest education level were those who had Ph.D., and among lowest education degree were respondents who had secondary education. As a result of the survey, the majority of respondents was VivaCell-MTS users (there were respondents who chose to be a subscriber of both or all of the operators). (See Figure 6)

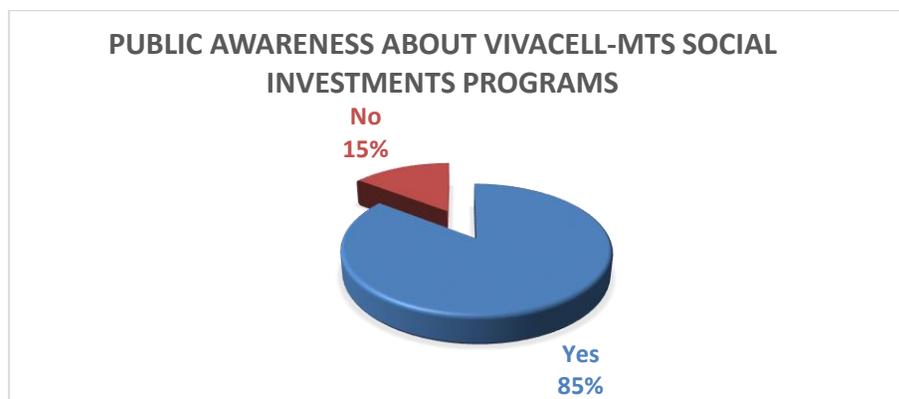
Figure 6 Number of Mobile Operator Users



This survey helped to measure the public’s understanding about CSR and its awareness about social investments programs implemented by VivaCell-MTS. In the result, 85% of respondents said that they have heard of the social investments programs (see Figure 7), particularly, the most common

investment that 66.6% of respondents chose to be familiar with was the house building projects implemented by the support of VivaCell-MTS in cooperation with Fuller house. Referring back to the results of the content analysis, community development (including projects of house building) had the highest frequency of mentions presented by the online media coverage. In addition to this, only 46.2% of respondents mentioned that they have heard of the concept of CSR. And 74% said that VivaCell-MTS is a socially responsible business.

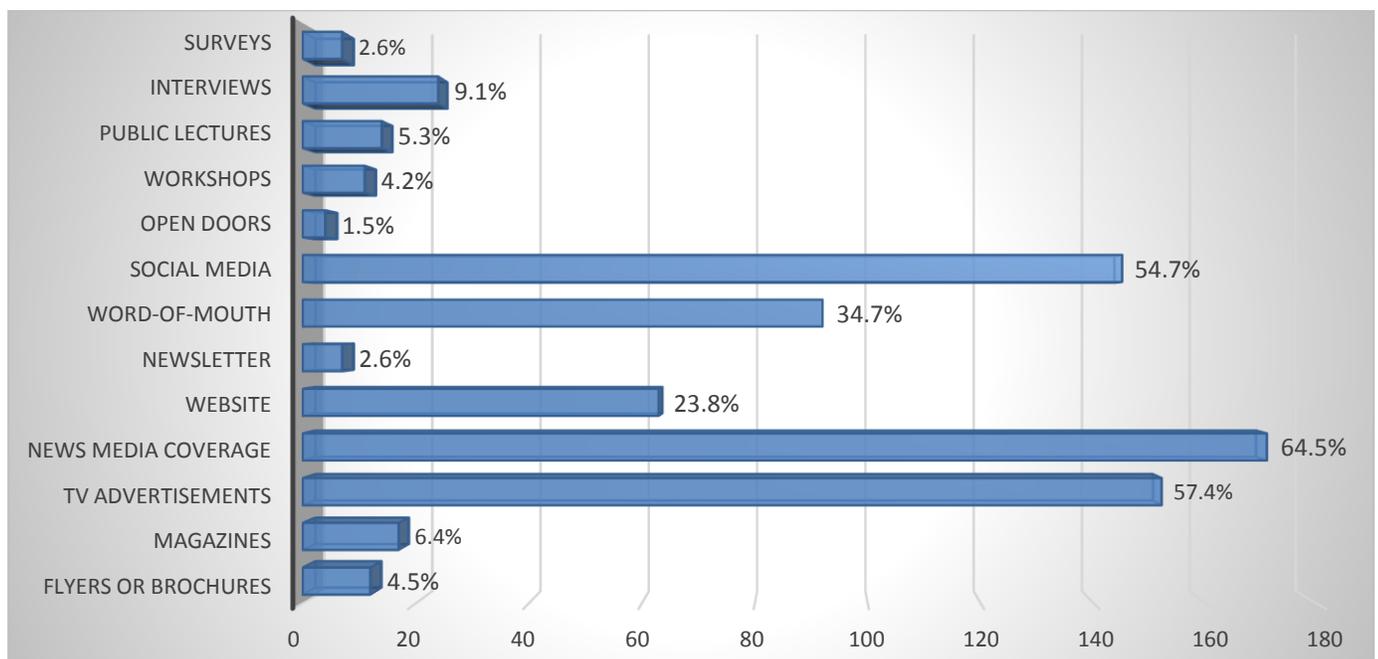
Figure 7 Public Awareness about VivaCell-MTS SI programs



To continue, for this study it was essential to explore the PR communication models, through which public gets informed of the social investments programs (for this particular question, the respondents were allowed to pick more than one answer) (see Figure 8). The survey results supported those of interviews, as well as to some extent to the content analysis results. In the result of the interviews, it was revealed that the priority by VivaCell-MTS PR unit is given to print, online and TV news coverage. In its turn, based on the survey results “News Media Coverage” is the leading communication source from which public gets informed of the social investments programs. The top list is followed by TV advertisements (57.4%), and social media (54.7%). To answer the second research question, VivaCell-MTS on a relatively bigger scale employs one-way communication model (e.g. public information) to portray itself as a socially responsible business through the distribution of social investments news. This model uses tools, such as press releases, website, brochures, magazines, advertisements, etc. However,

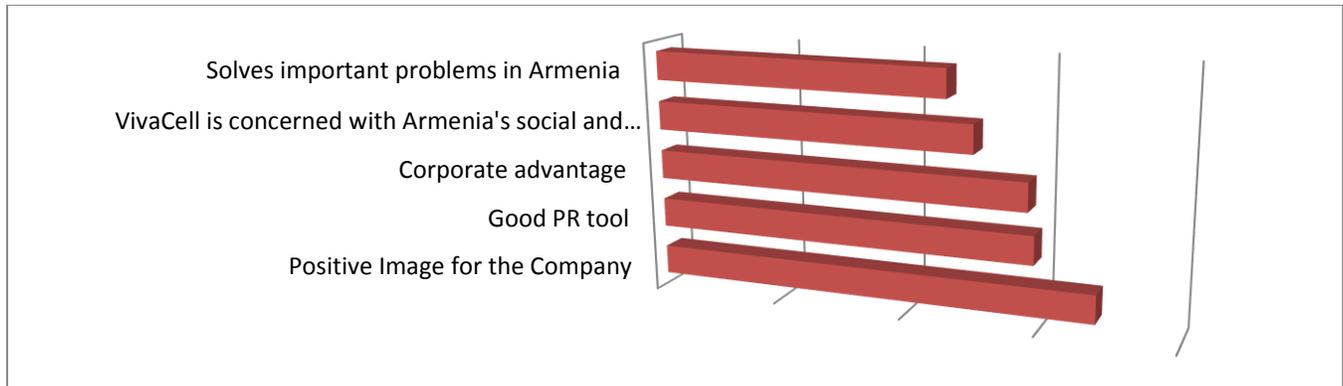
taking into account that 34.7% of respondents chose word-of-mouth as a source of information about SI news, some others chose open doors, workshops and public lectures, it can be assumed that besides putting a bigger emphasis on public information model as a part of one-way communication, the company also employs two-way communication. Particularly, the use of surveys is referred to “scientific persuasion” which is based on two-way asymmetrical communication model approach- the company with the help of a research gets into its customer’s mind in order to have a stronger ground for persuasion.

Figure 8 Communication Sources



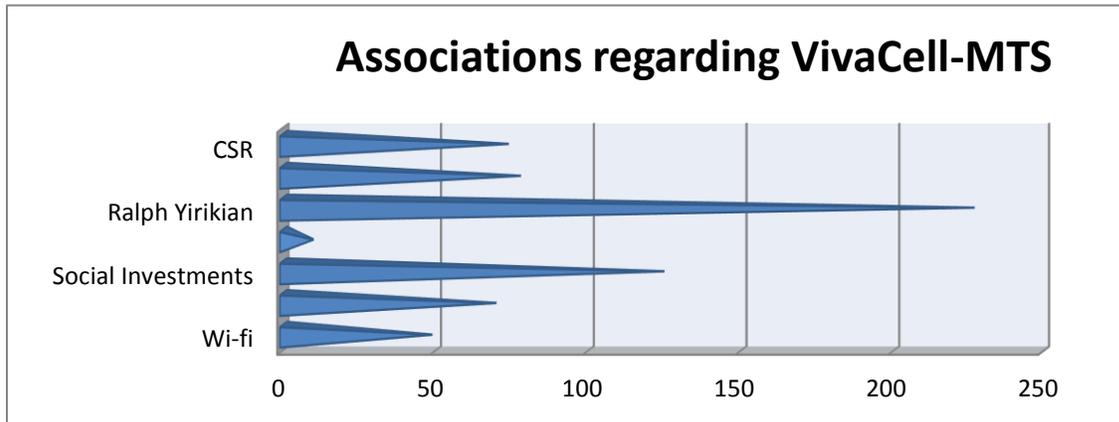
This survey helped to reveal the public perception and understanding on the reasons why VivaCell-MTS does make social investments. For the question “Why does VivaCell-MTS implement SI programs”, the response, which received the highest response rate, was “establishment of positive image” (67.9%), followed by “good PR tool” (59.3%) and “corporate advantage” (58.6%). (See Figure 9) So, based on the results it is seen that relatively higher respondents viewed social investments as a PR tool which positively affects the company’s image, thus, ensuring higher position among competitors in the market.

Figure 9 Public Responses on the Reasons for Making SI



This survey helped to identify the public recognition of three telecommunication companies' CEOs in Armenia. So, 91.3 % of VivaCell-MTS mobile operator users knew that Ralph Yirikian is the GM of VivaCell-MTS, 22 % of Ucom mobile operator users responded that they know that Hayk Yesayan is the GM of the Ucom and 29.1 % of Beeline mobile operator users knew that Andrey Pyatakhin is the GM of Beeline. The same survey showed that 91.1% of users of Ucom mobile operator recognized Ralph Yirikian as the GM of VivaCell-MTS, and 82.1 % of Beeline users recognized Ralph Yirikian as a GM of VivaCell-MTS. These results show that Ralph Yirikian is well recognized not only by its own users but the general public. Based on the results, the vast majority of respondents consider the presence of Ralph Yirikian as significantly important both for VivaCell-MTS, and for the promotion of SI programs. This was validated by the answers, according to which, the vast majority of the respondents agreed that Ralph Yirikian is an important PR asset for VivaCell-MTS, as well as that he creates a good corporate image and promotes VivaCell-MTS as a socially responsible business. This is supported by another result, according to which the highest response rate to the question of "public associations with VivaCell-MTS" received Ralph Yirikian (76.7 %). (See Figure 10)

Figure 10 Public Associations with VivaCell-MTS



To continue, a correlation (see Table 3) helped to identify the relationship between respondents' age and their perception about Ralph Yirikian as a tool for creating a good corporate image for VivaCell-MTS. In the result, it was found that the relationship was statistically significant. In other words, it turned out that in fact there was a significant relationship between the age group and their perception about Ralph Yirikian as a corporate image-maker. Pearson Correlation coefficient indicated that the correlation strength was negative. So, elder people said they disagree that Ralph Yirikian created a good corporate image for VivaCell-MTS, while younger people said they agree on the corporate image-maker role of Ralph Yirikian in the company: $r=-1.97$. $N=302$, $p=0.002$.

Table 3 Correlation

Correlations			
		What is your age?	Do you agree or disagree that R. Y. makes Good Corporate Image?
What is your age?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.197**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	302	253
Do you agree or disagree that R. Y. makes Good Corporate Image?	Pearson Correlation	-.197**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Due to time constraints, only five online newspapers' articles within 2015-2017 were analyzed instead of planned larger number of newspapers including print newspapers. Furthermore, due to time and resources limitations the survey was conducted through non-probability convenience sampling. However, for this reason this study used triangulation, combining three different methods for producing a valuable and objective content. Besides, while this study employed non-probability sampling, the sample size was sufficient (n 302); as such, many opinions would be taken into account.

To continue, interviews were planned to be conducted with stakeholders/beneficiaries of social investments projects in regional communities. Nevertheless, because of limited resources for transportation to regions interviews were conducted only in VivaCell-MTS headquarters in Yerevan. Further research should have included a larger group of interviewees, as well as a distribution of an internal survey among VivaCell-MTS staff and employees.

With this in mind, this study provides new perspectives about exploring the roles and opportunities of PR and CSR in other Armenian companies in the future.

Chapter VI—Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has explored the role of PR in CSR, in the frame of which VivaCell-MTS implements numerous social investments. In public relations, a key aspect of creating sustainable relationships and maintaining strong communication bonds between public and company is to be socially responsible. If the company is not responsible towards its public, then having a public relations strategy in the company becomes worthless. And in this process the communication bonds can't be created and maintained without the executive function of PR. The major role of public relations is creating a dialogue between the company and the public. It is important to acknowledge the fact that even though the society and organization are different systems, they both tend to influence one another. For this reason, socially responsible companies, such as VivaCell-MTS should start practicing two-way symmetric communication model as a core influencer in creating a dialogue with its society. As it was explored in this study, the company mainly utilizes one-way public information model, accompanied with the relatively little use of the two-way asymmetric model. In this study, the interviews revealed that PR is the primary source of communication, while social investments are a source for the content.

Furthermore, it was explored that in VivaCell-MTS there is a strong bond between PR and CSR specialists whose daily work is dependent on each others' activities. To support the results of the interviews, the content analysis of online media news found that the biggest part of the news constitutes the social investments programs rather than the business-related products and commercial news. Another important point that was revealed through content analysis, interviews and surveys was the appearance and essential role of Ralph Yirikian in the communication process of the company's messages to the public because of his great leadership, management and communication skills. This shows the existing commitment and responsibility by the company to establish trust and credibility among the public through Ralph Yirikian. So, in the frames of this study, it was explored that Ralph Yirikian is an important PR

value for the company not only in communicating company's social investments to the public, but also in reputation and awareness building for the company.

Referring back to PR models, today many companies are keen on communicating their activities to the public through public information model. However, the success of communication of business companies lies in developing two-way communication models. In the developing world, social media has the ability to provide both one-way and two-way communication. Thus, it can be one of the solutions for gradually shifting from one-way to two-way communication model because it will ensure a balanced dialogue, rather than an imbalanced monologue in communication between public and organization, especially in the developing era of social media where crowdsourcing has become of a crucial importance.

In summation, based on the result of triangulation, the first hypothesis that considered social investments programs to serve as a part of PR strategy is **accepted**. Finally, for fulfilling the responsibility of communicating CSR activities to the public, including the social investment programs, companies definitely need the support of public relations' practitioners. The practice of social responsibility has the power to solve public relations problems. Therefore, for the establishment of a dialogue, implementing social investments programs as a part of Public Relations strategy can become a bridge between the society and organization.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

To develop external reporting of social investments will lead one step forward for creating a dialogue between public and VivaCell-MTS. As stated in the literature review, communication about CSR can affect enormously the development of a relationship with the public. Through external reporting stronger ground for accountability will be created which is an important component of social responsibility. The external report section can be included in the annual social investments reports.

Recommendation 2

As the first company introducing CSR into Armenian market, the recommendation is to establish a “Social Response” online newsletter; this will bring all the companies exercising social responsibility in Armenia under one umbrella. The content of the newsletter can include CSR related content, events and latest trends. Vivid examples are “Business Respect”, “3BLMedia”, “Ethical Performance”. So, by joining efforts the more can be reached for the welfare of the society and companies’ advancement.

Recommendation 3

To upgrade the role of PR professionals within the company by involving them into the decision-making process. PR can have an executing role in the organization, which can make a long-term impact on the public-organization relationship maintenance. However, because of the lack of the decision-making power owned by PR practitioners in the company to make the organization socially responsible, their major function is limited to communicating whatever VivaCell-MTS does through one-way communication model. In order to let PR specialists become the bridge between the public and the company, they should start monitoring and reporting to VivaCell-MTS whatever public considers irresponsible by receiving their feedback. As mentioned in literature review the ultimate goal of two-way communication model is crowdsourcing. For this purpose, PR professionals can be often introduced as speakers and representatives of the company in different public and private events. So, this will not only shift the company’s communication approach from one-way to two-way communication model but it will also value the role of PR practitioners in the company. For this, they will need the support of the senior management.

Recommendation 4

To balance the quantity of content of social investments- and commercial-related news on online media, VivaCell-MTS should start diversifying and ordering the content. For this purpose, an agenda setting should be established in a PR strategy, newsworthy content should be developed for commercial-related news as well, and the order of news categories should be put in a regular sequence. So, instead of receiving information about multiple social programs one after another and then multiple commercial-related offers, the public will receive single news on social programs followed by single news on new offers or announcements and so forth.

Recommendation 5

The implementation of PR campaigns and public events related to social investments programs will have the public involvement, which will ensure a better dialogue and active participation. This will become yet another milestone for educating the public about corporate social responsibility and for creating long-term bonds with the society through two-way communication.

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Appendix I—Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your age?

- under 18
- 18-25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- over 55/

2. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Secondary Education
- High School
- Bachelor or equivalent
- Masters or equivalent
- PHD
- Other

4. Which of the following mobile service providers do you use? (Please choose all that apply)

- VivaCell-MTS
- Ucom
- Beeline
- Other

5. Please rate the following activities by VivaCell-MTS in terms of importance to you.

1Very Unimportant 2Unimportant 3I don't know 4Important 5Very Important

- Telecommunication services
- Philanthropy
- Internet

- Corporate Packages
- Tariffs and discounts
- Community Development

6. Do you know who is Hayk Yesayan? (If you know, please specify)

- No
- Other (Please specify):

7. Have you ever heard of social investments programs (in sport, education, environment, technology, regions, etc.) implemented by VivaCell-MTS?

- Yes
- No

8. Have you heard of any of the following programs? (Please choose all that apply)

- VivaCell-MTS provided computers to cultural and educational centers
- VivaCell-MTS provided scholarships to students
- VivaCell-MTS introduced Wi-Fi infrastructure in public libraries and educational institutions
- VivaCell-MTS provided internship programs for graduating students
- VivaCell-MTS support housebuilding in villages
- VivaCell-MTS provided housewarming and internet access in villages
- No, I have never heard of any of these

If you are answer is “No, I have never heard of any of these”, please skip to Question 11

9. From which sources did you get informed about VivaCell-MTS social investments programs? /

Please choose all that apply

- Flyers or brochures
- Magazine/newspapers/journal advertisements
- Television advertisements
- News Media coverage
- Website
- Newsletter
- Word-of-mouth
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Open Doors

- Workshops/Seminars
- Public Lectures
- Interviews
- Surveys/Opinion Polls/Questionnaire
- Other (please specify)

10. Why do you think VivaCell-MTS implements social investment programs in Armenia? Please choose all that apply

- VivaCell-MTS is concerned with Armenia's social and economic conditions
- It creates a positive image for the company
- It strengthens the company's position among competitors and attracts new customers
- It is a good PR tool for the company
- It is fashionable and has no significant impact
- It helps to solve important problems in Armenia
- All of the above
- Other (Please specify)

11. Do you know who is Andrey Pyatakhin? (If you know, please specify)

- No
- Other (Please specify)

12. Have you heard of the term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

- Yes
- No

If you answer is "No", please skip to Question 14

13. How would you define Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)? Please choose all that apply

- CSR is concerned with environmental issues
- CSR is an important Math analysis tool
- CSR is a form of company's self-regulation as a business model
- CSR includes philanthropy
- CSR is a PR stunt
- I cannot define it
- Other (Please specify)

14. In your opinion is VivaCell-MTS a socially responsible business?

- Yes
- No

- I don't know

15. Do you know who is Ralph Yirikian? If you know, please specify

- No
- Other (Please specify):

If your answer choice is "No", please skip to Question 17

16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Ralph Yirikian is an important PR asset for VivaCell-MTS.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

VivaCell-MTS has a good corporate image due to Ralph Yirikian.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Ralph Yirikian promotes VivaCell-MTS as a socially responsible business.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

17. Which of these do you associate VivaCell-MTS with? (Please choose all that apply)

- Wi-fi
- 4G
- Social Investments
- Red colour
- Ralph Yirikian
- Affordable communication
- Corporate Social Responsibility

- All of the above
- Other (please specify)

Appendix II— Interview Questions for semi-structured Interviews

1. What is the objective of having a PR strategy for a telecommunication company?
2. In which period of the company's existence was the PR strategy developed?
3. What is the role of PR specialists within the company?
4. What kind of involvement does Ralph Yirikian have in the PR mission of VivaCell-MTS?
5. As for a telecommunication company, what is the aim of implementing so many social investments programs throughout a year? How did the company decide on being the first in introducing the concept of CSR in Armenia?
6. What kind of relation does exist between PR and CSR in VivaCell-MTS?
7. What kind of role does PR play in CSR? And what is the relationship between PR and CSR specialists?
8. Do social investments programs form a part of VivaCell-MTS PR strategy?
9. How does VivaCell-MTS communicate its CSR-related activities to the public? And in general what is the company's communication approach/strategy?

Appendix III—Names of Interviewees

Vahe Isahakyan, PR Officer, Works at VivaCell-MTS since 2006

Anush Apresyan, PR Senior Specialist, Works at VivaCell-MTS since 2009

Narine Arustamyan, CSR Leading Specialist, Works at VivaCell-MTS since 2006

Irina Zhamharyan, CSR Senior Specialist, Works at VivaCell-MTS since 2005