# Sustainable Developments of Public Relations Industry in Macao: Perspectives of Non-Public Relations Leaders serve as Public Relations Professionals at Gaming and Hospitality Industry

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**Abstract**

After the liberalization of gaming industry in 2002, Macao has experienced a large number of business, social, and industrial changes during the past decade. During the early 2000 and before, most of the non-profit and for-profit organizations might not have any established departments and sectors for the purpose of public relations. The purpose of this study mainly aimed to understand the socioeconomic development of Macao during (2005-2015) has influenced the demand and importance of public relations professionals. The researchers have conducted interviews with 9 non-public relations leaders serve as public relations professional at hospitality and tourism industry for their perspectives and understanding of the current industrial dynamic in Macao. The study discovered three main themes about 1) the importance of public relations from the practitioners' perspective; 2) responsibilities and roles; and 3) requirements of contemporary organizations. The outcomes of this study may

able to provide a holistic pictures and recommendations for hospitality and tourism industrial leaders, private agencies and NGOs administrators to upgrade and re-consider their human resource planning and public relations management into a higher level.

**Keywords:** Hospitality and tourism, human resource planning, Macao, public relations,

## 1. Introduction

After the liberalization of the gaming industry in 2002, Macao has experienced rapid socioeconomic changes. A large number of foreign investors were attracted by the open market, bringing not only the gaming outlets to the city, but also more diversified entertainment, lodging, food and beverage, and MICE businesses. Behaving up-to-date in international trend is necessary for Macao to become part of the world in terms of marketing, technology, management and public relations skills. Public relations industry has become a significant professional field in the global scenario. Macao is not an exception as well. Public relations practitioners play an important role in distributing messages, lobbying and solving problems on behalf of their companies, clients and agencies. A primary purpose of public relations is to encourage symmetrical two-way communication, through a transparent dialogue between an organization and its publics (Broom & Smith, 1979), as well managing reputation and responding to crisis situations. Two-way symmetrical communication ensures that all parties have adequate information to make decisions of mutual benefit (Broom & Smith, 1979; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Eisenberg & Goodall (1997) mentioned that public relations professionals are expected to manage organizations' reputation as one of their main responsibilities and challenges. One of the tasks is publicity in regard to this responsibility, which helps organizations to build goodwill internally and externally.

Public relations work as an important role in hospitality and tourism industry, private agencies and NGOs as a way to enhance communication with their concerned publics. No matter for whom public relations practitioners work, their function ideally focuses on building relationships with diversified publics, such as media, community, investors, or employees, as well as maintaining a positive image that may result in better financial performance for organizations.

Public relations departments within the hospitality and tourism industry in Macao serve as communicational channels in order to respond to the public and media or collecting both positive and negative information in regard to the company. Building and keeping favorable relationships is one of the core tasks of public relations departments and sectors in the hospitality and tourism industry. This effort is not limited only to external stakeholders, but also with internal publics, such as top management and all levels employees.

Private agencies have been flourishing in Macao in the last years, as a way to provide support for others industries that may require outsourcing to accomplish public relations, marketing, and advertising goals. This business model serves as an intermediate mainly between the media and its clients and focuses especially on providing assistance in events organization, special occasions that may attract media attention, and as providers of communication services for small and medium companies that do not dispose of internal communications

departments. In comparison with internal departments of private organizations, these agencies share the same goal, since they are profit-oriented businesses.

### 1.1 Purpose and Significant of this Study

First, the purpose of this study mainly aimed to understand the socioeconomic development of Macao during (2005-2015) has influenced the demand and importance of public relations professionals. The researchers considered that it is important to establish a research that aims to describe the growth of the public relations field among the hospitality and tourism industry and the private agencies. However, during the above mentioned period, a large number of private agencies and numbers of hospitality and tourism organizations did not have an established department or sector for public relations. Therefore, many of the department heads, mid-level, and senior-level managers might co-serve as public relations professionals at the same time. Therefore, the outcomes of this study could increase and fulfill the literature gaps and applications for public relations professions in Macao.

Second, within the current literature review, there were no studies and reports concerning about the understanding of non-public relations leaders who serve as public relations officers at the hospitality and tourism industry in Macao. Therefore, the findings of this study could provide board understanding and recommendations for organizational leadership to re-consider about the structure and human resource planning.

### 1.2 Research Question

In order to understand the developments and trends of public relations industry in Macao, this research aimed to answer one research question: 1) how do non-public relations leaders who serve as public relations professionals make sense of their positions and roles at the hospitality and tourism organization?

Currently, not all organizations and companies in Macao have an established public relation department. A large number of public relations works and tasks are co-handled by managers and leaders from other departments. For example, room operational managers need to co-handle some public relations responsibilities with other leaderships. Therefore, this paper tends to collect information and opinions from non-public relations professionals about the overall developments and situations in the hospitality and tourism industry in Macao.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview of Macao's Socioeconomic Development

Macao has long be known as the "Monte Carlo of the Orient" since the gambling industry has become legal in the 1850s. Macao is situated on the west of the Pearl River Delta, with a total land area of 29.2 square kilometers, and it is the only city in China where gambling is legal. Since Macao has neither land for agricultural purposes nor natural resources, it depends on Mainland China for most of its food, water, and energy. The main economic source is thus based on tourism and gaming inputs (Cheng, 1999).

Since the 1990s, Macao has experienced rapid economic growth and tourism development.

With the liberalization of the gaming industry in 2002, the economic health of the city has reached levels never seen before. Macao SAR government has put a lot of effort and resources to develop leisure tourism encouraging foreign investment. Macao then saw the flourishing of dozens of tourism facilities, such as hotels, attractions, and infrastructures. The liberalization of the gaming industry has brought to the territory new gaming companies especially from the U.S. as the Venetian, MGM or Wynn Resorts, which began investing heavily in this sector with the construction of huge facilities (Ball, Horner, & Nield, 2007; Au, Tsai, & Ieong, 2009; Qi, Law, & Buhalis, 2013). In 2013, Macao had 33 casinos, of which the biggest is The Venetian Macao. 23 casinos are located on the Macao Peninsula and 10 on Taipa Island. Until 2016, more facilities will be opened in the Cotai Strip. The economic boom of Macao can be translated into numbers. Although Macao was hit hard by the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis and the global downturn in 2001, its economy grew approximately 13.1% annually on average between 2001 and 2006. In 2012 the city recorded the highest economic growth worldwide, with an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around 15 per cent (Ball, Horner, & Nield, 2007; Au, Tsai, & Ieong, 2009; Qi, Law, & Buhalis, 2013).

### 2.2 Tourism Attractiveness

Macao is a blend of Eastern and Western cultures due to its Portuguese history. Portuguese merchants settled in the territory in 1557, making Macao the first European warehouse on Chinese soil. Throughout its history, the city was attacked several times by other European powers, especially the Dutch, but the Portuguese manage their occupation, strengthening their presence with the construction of many European-style buildings around the city. Macao's special landscape and its mixture of Euro-Asian buildings are one of the main attractions for visitors from all over the world (Cheng, 1997).

Macao's tourism industry has developed rapidly as a result of two reasons. The first was the liberalization of the gambling licensing system, with an increase number of the casino operators, as we have discussed previously. The second was the implementation of the Individual Visitation Scheme (IVS) by the Chinese government in 2003, allowing a higher flow of Mainland Chinese to travel to Macao and Hong Kong. Within the last decade, visitors to Macao increased 143 percent from 11 million arrivals in 2002 to 28 million arrivals in 2012. The largest portions of tourists come from mainland China and Hong Kong. With the increasing number of visitors from other countries as well, many international hotels were established between starting in the 1980s. Until October 2013, Macao registered 99 hotels (DSEC, 2013a). One of the elements for attracting potential visitors to Macao could be effective public relations and promotions.

### 2.3 Socioeconomic Impacts

Macao enjoyed in the last decade an accelerated growth in tourism. Traveling has grown to be a way to achieve self-esteem, self-realization, and prestige (Feifer, 1986; Urry, 1990). The gaming and the tourism boom have deeply contributed to the city's socioeconomic development. The related impacts were usually categorized into economic, social and environmental impacts (Lee & Back, 2003), is divided into positive and negative. The social

impact is the most difficult to measure because it is difficult to separate social-economic from economic impacts. The first positive impact is the personal income improvement and the government financial improvement. The economic boom that has brought around 28 million visitors to the territory in 2012 has had an impact also on small and medium businesses, and all related tourism industries. The workforce is mainly composed of wholesale and retail, hotels and restaurants, real estate, and public administration. Due to the double-digit economic growth, the unemployment rate dropped from the record high 6.8 percent in 2000 to 1.8 percent in the third quarter of 2013. Casino gaming has contributed to Macao's gross domestic product significantly. Currently, around 70 percent of government's revenue comes from the gaming industry (DSEC, 2013b). Macao government receives a tax equivalent to 35 percent of the gross revenue from gambling operators. In the past decade, the government's revenue of gambling tax has increased 10 times from 7.765 million to 1.113.377 million. The personal incomes of Macao residents also increase because of the gaming tourism booms.

The second positive social impact is the urban landscape, infrastructure and public facilities improvements. Gaming tourism also quickens the construction of infrastructure and the public facilities such as the Light Rail Transit system (LRT) and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB). The LRT is now under construction and it aims to improve the transportation option between the Macao Peninsula, Cotai and Taipa Island. This approach will enhance the volume of tourists from the border gates and ferry ports to the casino operators in Cotai area. The HZMB project is expected to complete in 2015 and it will shorten travel distance between Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai. It will make more tourists visit Macao via Hong Kong's international airport.

The third positive social impact is the increase in the entertainment and recreation facilities. According to the Article 27 of Decree Law 16/2001 from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ, 2009), gaming companies are also required to pay 1.6 percent of their gross revenue to the Macao Foundation for cultural, social and economic development. Moreover, the legislation also requires gaming operators to transfer 2.4 percent of their gross revenue for the tourism, urban construction and the social security fund. The number of entertainment and recreation facilities has increased significantly such as the restaurants, bars, massage premises, sauna and karaoke. The MICE and the sports facilities have been developed because of the booming of gaming tourism industry. The last positive impact is the business opportunities for the local and foreign investors. As Hashimoto (2008) notes:

> As casinos begin to operate, they buy goods and services from the surrounding areas. Therefore, more businesses grow or develop to meet the increasing demands for products from the casino. Many businesses will spring up to satisfy the higher incomes of the new employees. New hospitality services, such as hotels, restaurants, and rental cars, begin there are more suppliers, both in gaming and hospitality that need hospitality services (p. 29).

The gaming tourism boom has brought out the large volume of visitors and workforce from the world. The high population density and the raise of the visitors enhance the profit of the small ventures such as the restaurants, pawnshops, retailers and the service industry. In

addition, it appeals to more local and foreign investors.

On the other hand, gaming tourism industry has many negative impacts in Macao. The first negative impact is the deterioration of the residents' quality of life. Gonzales, Lyson and Mauer (2007) associate casino gaming "with improvements in the quality of life in terms of the social and economic well-being of both local and non-local residents" (p. 87). However, the high price of property causes the residents difficult to buy houses and the business waste large cost on rental fees. The cost of living is increasing because the economic boom has brought out a higher inflation rate.

The second negative impact is the high rate of school drop-out. The high salaries offered by the casino industry make many youngsters abandon school, provoking a low level of academic qualifications in the society (Wan & Li, 2011).

The third negative impact is the prevalence of compulsive gambling that causes social problems (Wan & Li, 2011).

The fourth negative impact is a higher crime rate (Wan & Li, 2011).

The fifth negative impact is the uncontrolled urban development and reduced public leisure and green spaces. The increasing number of casinos has also provoked a shortage of land available for residential properties (Lima, 2009; Wan & Pinheiro, 2009).

The last negative impact is the constraints imposed on small business development. Gaming benefits business opportunities because of the increased number of tourists, but casinos and hotels also absolve a large portion of the local workforce with more attractive salaries. In addition to the high rental fees, small and medium businesses face now more difficulties to survive (Lima, 2009; Wan & Pinheiro, 2009).

## 2.4 High Demand of Public Relations Practitioners

As more international companies enter Macao and the city's businesses mature, enterprises are becoming more aware of the importance of public relations. There is no official data for the combined annual turnover of public relations companies in the city; the figures are hard to estimate because a big chunk of the contracts awarded go to Hong Kong firms as Macao lacks its own fully fledged agencies (Chan & Kuok, 2011).

MM Marketing Communications Consulting Ltd was one of the first Macao companies to offer public relations and communications services. It was founded in 1992 by Patricia Cheong and has clients here and abroad. Ms. Cheong says to Macao Business Magazine (Leit ão, 2012) the turning point for the industry was the liberalization of the gaming market and the influx of new casino operators. MM Marketing is in charge of public relations for Macao's G2E Asia, the biggest annual gaming trade show and conference in Asia. The firm is the only agency in Macao accredited by the Council of Public Relations Firms of Hong Kong.

However, international companies often rely on Hong Kong or global public relations firms to manage their affairs, even in Macao. One of the main reasons has to do with the lack of local qualified workforce in this field. According to Macao Business magazine (Leit ão, 2012),

local firms lack staff that are experienced enough or that have the right qualifications. Until recently public relations was seldom a priority for most Macao small and medium companies, but the increased perception of the benefits of a strategic communication plan to attract more customers and keep reputation has turned this reality. One of the reasons that many Macao companies and events use agencies based in Hong Kong is for their ability to get the attention of Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas media. Those companies and events rely on their in-house communications departments, which in several cases have been strengthened in recent years, to engage the interest of media in Macao. But there is scope for the industry's development, as standards rise, buoyed by international clients demanding better services and younger practitioners with higher qualifications.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 The Application of Qualitative Research Method and In-Depth Interviews

In order to address the research question raised in the introduction section of this study, the researchers used qualitative research method to gather and analyze data. Qualitative research focuses on context, is fundamentally interpretive, and employees multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The data collected through approaches, such as interviews, observations, personal experiences, and texts provides not only words, but a set of behaviors, feelings, attitudes, vocal and facial expressions, all interconnected elements that help the researcher to get a broader understating of the subject matter at hand.

In order to narrow down the meaningful information for this particular study, the researchers decided to employ semi-structured in-depth interviews, which are a common tool in examining a social phenomenon in great depth and detail (Merriam, 2009).

In-depth interviews are unique for six reasons. First, the use of smaller samples, as the report did not intend to make generalizations about our findings, the researchers concentrated in the richness of data provided, exploring the quality of data rather than quantity. Second, the responds from participants provided detailed background about the reason respondents give specific answers. Third, the responds from participants allowed for lengthy observation of respondents' nonverbal responses. Fourth, the responds from participants were usually long. Unlike questionnaires that may require only a few minutes to be completed, an intensive interview can last several hours and may take more than one session. In this study, the face-to-face interviews lasted between 45 and 68 minutes. Fifth, the interviews could be customized to individual respondents – in questionnaires, for instance, all participants were usually asked the same questions. Last, it could be influenced by the interview climate.

### 3.2 Participants

According to Creswell (2006), an effective phenomenological analysis usually collects data information from 8-25 participants. In order to meet the range of this suggestion, this study has conducted structured interviews with 9 public relations professionals based in Macao. All of the participants are currently employed in the hospitality and tourism industry. The researchers recruited all participants through email and letter invitations.  The interviews

were conducted during December 2016 to March 2017.

In order to collect effective and meaningful data information about the contemporary workplace environment, industrial situation and actual opinions from the public relations professional in the hospitality and tourism field, the researchers decided to invite 9 mid-level and senior-level professionals in Macau for the purpose of interviewing. The participants included 5 females and 4 males with at least an undergraduate degree. The following chart briefly outlined the biography of the participants for this study:

Table 1. Biography of participants

| Name (Pseudonym) | Years of Experience | Department | Title | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alice | 10 | Room Operation | Manager | Bachelor of Business Administration |
| Bill | 8 | Restaurant | Assistant Manager | Bachelor of International and Tourism Management |
| Cathy | 15 | Front Office | Senior Manager | Bachelor of Tourism |
| David | 18 | Restaurant | Director | 1) Bachelor of Sales and Marketing Management 2) Master of Business Administration |
| Eliza | 14 | Casino Operation | Director | 1) Bachelor of Management 2) Master of Business Administration |
| Francisco | 7 | Valet Operation | Assistant Director | Bachelor of Business Administration |
| Gill | 11 | Finance | Senior Manager | Bachelor of Tourism Management |
| Henry | 12 | Marketing | Senior Manager | Bachelor of Hotel Management |
| Iris | 14 | Marketing | Senior Manager | Bachelor of Event Management |

### 3.3 Analytical Procedure

General Inductive Approach was employed in this particular study. General Inductive Approach (Thomas, 2006) allowed the researchers to narrow down a large number of interview transcripts and information into meaningful themes in order to answer the research question. The researchers decided to employ General Inductive Approach due to the simple applications and limitations.

### 3.4 The Protection of Human Subject Information

The personal information of all participants must be highly protected. As some of the interview data information may involve with sensitive ideas and opinions, the researchers decided to provide each participant with pseudonym in order to protect the personal information. In addition, all the related data information must be locked in a password-protected computer. Only the researchers had the log-in information.

*3.5 Interview Language Use*

All participants were invited to participant in one semi-structured in-depth interview. They were allowed to express their ideas and opinions in either English or Cantonese. All Cantonese ideas and interview information were translated into English in order to report in this study.

## 4. Finding and Discussions

The researchers have interviewed 9 participants for this study in order to address our research question. The research question of this study is: 1) how do non-public relations leaders who serve as public relations professionals make sense of their positions and roles at the hospitality and tourism organization?

After an effective data analysis procedure, the researchers categorized 3 themes. These themes are: 1) The importance of public relations from the practitioners' perspective; 2) Responsibilities and roles; and 3) Requirements of contemporary organizations.

*4.1 The Importance of Public Relations from the Practitioners' Perspective*

From our 9 participants, 7 included in their definitions of public relations similar expressions: "a bridge between organizations, media and other publics"; "problem-solving function to keep organizations' reputation"; "organizations' image and reputation improvement", and "quickly and effectively responding to crisis through a planned communication effort." For instance, Bill said:

> Public relations means basically keeping beneficial relationships with concerned publics. For a company, it's important to have a good relationship with its potential customers in order to gain more business. Public relations helps companies on this issue because we focus on building and improving relationships, and maintaining a positive image with different publics and local and international media outlets.

Moreover, Cathy enthusiastically pointed out public relations is a very powerful function since it "can make a company to reach millions of people through publicity in the media." Both David and Eliza from the hospitality and tourism industry expressed that having an academic background is important, but it is the only desirable requirement for having this profession. As Amy said, it also depends on personal traits that may enhance the success of a practitioner:

> To become a successful public relations professional is not easy as it requires not only

academic knowledge of the field, but, more importantly, it depends on the personality and abilities of oneself, as well as the skills of how to deal with different people effectively, which are the knowledge you can only learn from the real-life experience and improve it by continuous efforts.

All participants considered that public relations is extremely important for all kinds of organizations – either profit-oriented or non-profit oriented – and believe that companies can take a great advantage of these professionals' abilities in developing relations with different stakeholders and in helping organizations to perform financially better. As Gill said:

> Public relations is really important for any kinds of organizations. These professionals do put much effort on press releases and on building relationships with key media representatives. They must also be familiar with the attitudes and concerns of consumers, employees, public interest groups, and the community in order to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.

In the same sense, both Francisco and Henry mentioned that nowadays more and more organizations have been recognizing the importance of public relations as a means to enhance their image, and have been interested in hiring public relations related services or even establishing internal departments that can keep an ongoing and planned communication campaign without budget and time limitations.

### 4.2 Responsibilities and Roles

In fact, all of the participants' responsibilities were not public relations. All of them serve as leaders in other departments but handle with public relational responsibilities. Even the workloads had been increased, none of them complained about the responsibilities.

Our participants, without exception, believed that the major professionals' responsibilities and roles are to create a channel of communication between their organizations and/or clients and the media, as well as the own organizations' promotion through a series of planned special events and crisis management. 7 participants referred that they routinely perform activities to communicate with concerned publics, such as press releases, fact sheets, media kits, press conferences, and interview arrangements with top management, while other 2 emphasized that their main responsibility is to work on their organizations' image and reputation, as a way to attract more customers, to make products and services memorable, and to promote a good word of mouth among satisfied customers. Cathy explained that:

> I think there are so many responsibilities to act as public relations professional.
> For example, to build and maintain a good relationship with media and public,
> to enhance company's image, reputation and promote products. These are the
> most common, but there is much more that can be done.

Besides, some other participants also pointed crisis management as the most challenging task in their careers, as Eliza exemplified:

> The most important task to act as public relations is to help companies solving problems. I don't mean here marketing or financial problems. But it's the image

problem. In such a competitive economy like Macao's, how to gain more business or customer's value are very important to a company in their sustainable development. Besides from service and products, reputation and branding are also the concerns to any company.

All participants agreed that their most common task is to put every effort on building a bridge between organizations and publics, even if they did not belong to the public relations department. About this, David pointed out:

> In fact, my organization does not have a department for public relations issues. However, as a part of the organization, I am more comfortable to serve as a part of it. In order to fulfill their traditional role of getting a company's message out to its audience, those who have completed their studies in communications and public relations may also be responsible for developing and running programs designed to keep the lines of communication open between company and organization representatives and their various audiences.

However, Eliza added more tasks:

> Public relations professionals have many roles, performing tasks in varying fields, such as event organization, because they have to organize events to attract media attention from time to time; speaking on behalf of the company like answering to media enquiries or writing press releases, or even providing assistance to promote a good working environment for employees at all levels. This is especially important for professional who need to work with other types of responsibilities.

*4.3 Requirements of Contemporary Organizations*

The researchers discovered that all of the participants believed newcomers should pursue essential training in order to have a successful performance in the field of public relations. 7 participants referred, for instance, that good communication skills, such as writing and speaking well, are the most important requirements. 8 participants also mentioned interpersonal qualities, such as confidence, being pro-active, friendly and sociable, and being able to adapt behaviors and manners to different professional and business contexts. As Francisco told:

> The people who want to be a professional PR need to be active, convincing, and persuasive and have a good personal image. Additionally, he or she also needs to have excellent writing and speaking skills not only in Chinese but also in English, because publics have been becoming more diversified and geographically dispersed.

Other 5 participants from hospitality and tourism industry mentioned those good manners are among the priority requirements, while only 4 participants believed that having a bachelor's degree in public relations, marketing, or other related field, may be also important to provide the theoretical foundation for the practice. "I think it's always desirable to hold a specific degree in marketing or in public relations", Eliza added.

There were 4 participants that considered that public relations should have a good command of as many languages as possible; other 2 participants pointed that working experience is a must, and 2 more participants said that people who want to join this profession should keep in mind that there are high levels of stress and pressure for results, so newcomers should be prepared to work overtime and to be able to keep a stable emotional behavior. Working in teams was another common requirement pointed by our participants.

In the context of Macao as an international tourism and leisure destination, participants in this study did not express any doubts about the important role public relations practitioners play in this effort. All participants mentioned that these professionals can contribute for a better image promotion, attracting diversified tourism markets and opening the scope beyond Mainland Chinese visitors. 5 participants said, for example, that the contribution of the hospitality and tourism industry practitioners in promoting Macao as an international destination has brought even more tourists to the region, what may provoke an endless cycle of a word of mouth that can benefit not only their own companies but the overall local economy.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

This research aimed to explore how the socioeconomic development in the last decade (2005-2015) in Macao has influenced the demand and importance of public relations professionals. According to the findings based on structured interviews with 9 non-public relations practitioners serve as public relations professional from the hospitality and tourism organization, the researchers could indicate that the practice of public relations has had a significant growth in the last decade as a result of the liberalization of the gaming industry and the consequent development of the tourism industry. The socioeconomic development has had a notable influence on this profession in Macao. Public relations is now considered as an important role in different kind of industries such as the hospitality and tourism industry and private agencies. Macao is now facing international competition, and a new business culture – brought to the region through the establishment of foreign organizations - has deeply influenced the local structures to embrace the importance of public relations in Macao, in order to survive to such fierce competition.

Although this research addressed the high demand in the profession of public relations, it also brought out the problems that this industry is facing, like swift changes in their working environment, challenges and limitations. Public relations professionals have been encountering different kinds of changes, as, for instance, the absence of potential public relations professionals in the field, and the resource for the public relations. Challenges at this moment may be summarized as the lack of human resources and specific knowledge of public relations, higher standards on the field, and more competition for resources among companies. All these problems have been limiting, in a certain way, the development of public relations in Macao. In order to meet up international standards of quality in this industry, the profession of public relations is required to use multi-functions regarding their job duties, leading them to be more flexible to match with the fast development of socioeconomic in Macao.

Further research, with a large number of participants, could be conducted to deeply analyze the influence of the socioeconomic development of the public relations professionals in Macao. Due to the limitations of this study, a fully preparation is highly recommended before starting with a similar topic. Other recommendations for further research include the following: continue to explore the socioeconomic changes in Macao and tie them more closely to global changes in order to have a fully analysis beyond the changes in Macao; find out the similarities between the global and local forces that affect the practice of public relations, and, lastly, to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods in the study to ponder the findings.

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