

Managers in Human Service Organizations and their interaction with the Media
The managers' experiences

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Avhandlingen för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i psykologi, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsstyrelsen vid Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligas försvaras fredag den 010219, klockan 10:00 i sal F1, Psykologiska institutionen, Haraldsgatan 1, Göteborg.

Opponent: Professor Kristina Westerberg, Umeå Universitet

Föreliggande avhandling grundar sig på följande artiklar:

- I. Wramsten Wilmar, M., Jacobsson, C., Dellve, L., Ray, J., & Låstad, L. HSO managers meet the Media: on the frequency of Media contacts, the use of strategies and the quality of media outcomes. *Submitted for publication*.
- II. Wramsten Wilmar, M., Ahlborg, G., Jacobsson, C., & Dellve, L. (2014). Healthcare managers in negative media focus: a qualitative study of personification processes and their personal consequences. *Journal of BMC Health Services Research*, 14(8), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-14-8>
- III. Wramsten Wilmar, M., Ahlborg, G., Dellve, L., Tidefors, I., & Jacobsson, C. (2017). Swedish Healthcare managers and the Media – a study of strategies and support during mass media attention. *Scandinavian Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.16993/sjwop.18>
- IV. Jacobsson, C., Låstad, L., & Wramsten Wilmar, M. (2018). HSO managers Spokesperson Self-Efficacy (SSE) when meeting the Media. *Clinical and Experimental Psychology*, 4(3), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2471-2701.1000198>



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Abstract

The combination of three forces; the Human Service Organizations' (HSOs) desire for visibility, the citizens' interest in the HSOs and the increasing pressure upon media actors to attract the interest of the audiences have all contributed to a situation where HSO managers nowadays have more interactions with the Media than before. The general aim of this thesis is to study Swedish HSO managers' experiences of interaction with the Media. This in turn led to the specific aims: (1) to outline the occurrences and frequency of HSO managers meetings with the Media and to map out meetings with the Media where the Media was critical, (2) to gain a deeper understanding of how prolonged unfavorable media focus can influence the managers as a person and the managerial practice, (3) to study how HSO managers handle media attention focused on themselves or their organizations and the kind of strategies and support they seek and receive, and (4) to examine HSO managers' self-efficacy as spokespersons towards the Media and its relation to experience of meeting the Media and what role the dynamics of their management teams play. Study I was a quantitative study based on a survey mapping the occurrence and quantity of the HSO managers' media interaction. Study II and Study III had a qualitative research approach based on interviews; in Study II grounded theory and Study III thematic analysis were applied. Study IV was a result of a questionnaire mapping experience of meeting the Media, management team functioning and spokesperson self-efficacy. The results from Study I showed that 45% of the managers meet the Media on a monthly basis or more often. All respondents stated that they speak to the media at least once a year. 81% had experiences of dealing with media scrutiny. 20% of the respondents stated that their organization had a media strategy. When the managers did receive support from the communication department or the management group, the managers in Study I were more satisfied with how the organization was portrayed by the Media. In Study II, the managers' personal and managerial practice consequences varied in line with the extent to which the managers themselves, the organization and the Media attributed individual responsibility. The amount of support and from where within the organization the support was offered in Study III varied and the managers tended to strive for an open and proactive strategy in relation to the Media. Study IV showed that experience of media interaction was associated with a higher degree of spokesperson self-efficacy. The functionality of the management group did not have any significant relationship with the managers' spokesperson self-efficacy. A shared responsibility concerning meetings with the Media between the managers, the superior manager, the management team and the communication department would probably decrease the level of personification and increase the prerequisites for the managers to feel psychological safety in their meeting with the Media. Involvement from these parties might influence the level of control over the image of the organization put forward in the Media.

Keywords HSO Managers, Media Interaction, Media Scrutiny, Personification, Spokesperson Self-Efficacy, Strategies, Support, the Media