

Managers in Human Service Organizations and their interaction with the Media

THE MANAGERS' EXPERIENCES

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION IN PSYCHOLOGY

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To Elin and Carl

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

SAMMANFATTNING

(SWEDISH SUMMARY)

Mötet mellan chefer och media inom Human Service Organisationer (HSO) har kommit att förändras. Journalister utsätts för allt mer konkurrens i medielandskapet och har ofta mindre tid på sig att utforma sina rapporteringar varför tillspetsade och förenklade beskrivningar blivit en del av deras vardag. Parallellt har medborgarnas krav på transparens kring HSO ökat, vilket bidragit till mediernas ökade bevakning av dessa verksamheter. Samtidigt har HSO ett allt större intresse för att synas i media. Medias kanaler har blivit ett viktigare medel för ett uppbyggande och bibehållande av varumärket. Dessa tre samspelande krafter; verksamheternas önskan om att synas, medborgarnas intresse för HSO och journalisternas allt mer ökade krav på att väcka intresse hos mottagaren har bidragit till att de chefer som leder HSO har mycket möten med media och att dessa möten är viktiga för verksamheterna.

Det övergripande syftet med avhandlingen var att studera svenska HSO chefer med avseende på deras erfarenhet av att möta media. Detta syfte ledde fram till följande mer specifika syften: (1) att identifiera förekomst och frekvens vad avser chefers möte med media, (2) att undersöka hur HSO chefer reagerar då media personifierar dem, (3) att studera vilken typ av stöd och strategier som cheferna får och erbjuds då de är talespersoner i möten med media, samt (4) att undersöka vilka faktorer som är förknippade med HSO chefernas self-efficacy som talespersoner.

Studie I var en kvantitativ studie som identifierade förekomst och frekvens vad gäller möten med media. Likaså kartlade studien HSO chefers strategier inför möten med media samt hur nöjda cheferna var med medias beskrivning av deras organisation. En enkät skickades ut till samtliga kommunala omsorgschefer i Sverige. Analyserna genomfördes genom deskriptiv statistik och Chi-2. Studie II var en kvalitativ studie och genomfördes genom semistrukturerade intervjuer med chefer inom hälso- och sjukvård samt kommunal omsorg som har erfarenhet av att kritiskt granskas av media. Likaså intervjuades personer i dessa chefers närhet. Studie II analyserades i linje med grounded theory. Studie III byggde på data ifrån intervjuer med samma intervjupersoner som Studie II, men där användes metoden tematisk analys. Studie

IV var en kvantitativ studie och genomfördes i form av en enkät som kartlade HSO chefers self-efficacy i möten med media. Dessa enkäter skickades till ledningsgrupper inom skola, kommunal omsorg samt hälso- och sjukvård.

Resultaten från Studie I visade att 45% av HSO cheferna mötte media en gång i månaden eller mer. Alla respondenter i Studie I mötte media minst en gång per år. Av dem var det 81% som hade erfarenhet av att vara under medial granskning. 20% av de svarande hade kännedom om att deras organisationer hade en organisationsgemensam strategi inför möten med media. Studie I visade att de chefer som upplevde sig ha stöd från den ledningsgrupp, de var en del av, eller verksamhetens kommunikationsenhet var mer nöjda med hur organisationerna porträtterades av media. Studie II pekade på att graden av reaktioner såsom undvikande, tunnelseende samt en hårdhet gentemot sig själv och andra stod i relation till graden av personifiering. Likaså beskriver informanterna i Studie II att graden av personifiering styrs av i vilken mån chefen själv, organisationen och media personifierar. Studie III visade även att graden av stöd som HSO cheferna fick varierade. Samtidigt beskrev de chefer som ingick i studien att de vare sig förväntade sig eller efterfrågade stöd i någon högre utsträckning. Vad gäller resultaten kring strategier i Studie III så var strategin sällan organisationsgemensam eller nedskrivet utan flertalet HSO chefer utformade sina egna strategier inför sina möten med media. Cheferna i Studie III strävade efter att inta ett öppet och proaktivt förhållningssätt i relation till media. Resultaten ifrån Studie IV pekade på att det finns ett samband mellan hur mycket erfarenhet cheferna har av att möta media och upplevelsen av self-efficacy som talesperson vid möten med media. Analysen genomfördes genom multipel regression.

Ett delat ansvar vad avser möten med media mellan chefen, chefernas överordnade, kommunikatör skulle troligtvis kunna minska graden av personifiering och förbättra förutsättningarna för att talespersoner känner sig tryggare i sina möten med media. Likaså skulle en organisationsgemensam strategi antagligen medföra att organisationen får en bättre överblick över strategierna i mötet med media samt att cheferna som är talespersoner i mötet med media blir mer nöjda med hur deras organisationer porträtteras.

PREFACE

This thesis was based on the following studies which will be referred to by their Roman numerals:

- 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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With all my love

A wonderful day in December

Maria Wramsten Wilmar

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INTRODUCTION

The activities of Human Service Organizations (HSOs) are attracting an increased amount of public interest, which is why the demand for insight into these organizations is also increasing (Tengblad, Berntson & Cregård, 2018; Johansson, Dellgran & Höjer, 2015). At the same time the news media (henceforth called just the Media, which includes newspapers, television, radio and social media) has become an important channel for the different organizations to use in their desire for increased visibility (Levay & Waks, 2006; Strömbäck, 2004; 2014). These forces combined have led to increased media exposure of the people managing and working in these organizations (Johansson et al., 2015; Norbäck & Targama, 2009). As an effect of the growing demand for transparency, HSO managers are more and more becoming public figures. Nowadays, big organizational changes as well as everyday situations may lead to exposure through headlines or other media items (Engwall, 2008). Several studies published show that public sector organizations are often under stricter scrutiny than other types of organizations, within for example the private sector (Engwall, 2008; Johansson, et al., 2015; Strömbäck, 2004; 2014).

The causes of this increased media attention for HSOs are diverse, but according to Runsjö and Nilsson (2009) contributing factors are:

- * these organizations are easier to look into
- * these organizations operate in areas of public interest
- * there are a wide range of information, both internally and externally
- * municipal enterprises are often used as a political playing field by different political parties
- * municipalities are often perceived as having authority, which it is the job of the Media to scrutinize

The expanding media landscape, including the Internet and social media, has brought with it an increase in competition, where the recipients' interests are to an increasing extent governing media focus. The lead times from event to publication have become shorter by the day and the conditions for a profound, more complex kind of journa-

lism are sacrificed in favour of oversimplified and incisive news items more appealing to the market (Strömbäck, 2004; 2014).

The Media today seems to have a great influence of the management of HSOs (Johansson, et al., 2015; Strömbäck, 2004; 2014). Simultaneously, the Media has become a very important channel for the HSOs and their opportunities for media exposure. The Media also seems to be a tool for employees to gain influence upon decisions made higher up in the Healthcare organizations. Initiators of media coverage, as well as sources of information, have frequently been HSO employees themselves (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Strömbäck, 2004; 2014).

According to the above reasoning the dynamics between the Media, the citizens and the organizations has been subject to change. Another change is the increase in so called personification. Hvitfeldt and Nygren (2008) define the term personification as an increased focus on individuals and their actions. In their opinion, the focus of media reports has shifted from general visions and ideas to what individual politicians are doing or saying to a much greater extent. In their opinion this shift has been spurred by the public wanting people and faces to connect to. Wendt (2012) also claims that up close, personal and intimate reports have gained greater focus. A person's morals, credibility and personal traits have become much more important. Hvitfeldt and Nygren (2008) argues that the line between the private and the public domain has been displaced. The Internet has also contributed to erasing those boundaries, with social media playing an important role in the increasing interest in the personal sphere (Wendt, 2012).

In the field of media studies the concept of personification is strongly connected to media logic. Media logic governs the conditions and prerequisites that the Media bases its work upon. According to Strömbäck (2014), one reason for this is that there is a surplus of information but a shortage of attention, which results in the Media needing to attract the attention available from the audience. Wendt (2012) describes a more market-led type of journalism, where the market decides the focus of the Media, and where the use of personification in a news article is a way of making the abstract more tangible and less complex for the audience, in order to entice them to receive the message. This means that the journalism no longer departs from what may be good for people to know, but instead to an increasing extent from different ideas of what the media consumers want (Hvitfeldt & Nygren, 2008).

Another part of media logic described by Strömbäck (2014) concerns the narrative techniques used by journalists to get and maintain the attention of the recipients. In addition to personification, journalists increasingly rely on incisiveness and simplification. Strömbäck (2014) maintains that the greater the possibilities are for using any

or all of the narrative techniques mentioned above, the more likely it is that the news item will be published. If journalism fails to attract an audience, it will not survive (Hvitfeldt & Nygren, 2008). According to this line of reasoning, the role of the Media in relation to the HSOs has changed. This raises important questions regarding if and in what way the HSOs have been keeping up with this development, and if and in what way the interactions with the Media leads to an increase in mental strain and unhealthy stress for the managers. The demands on HSO managers in their interactions with the Media are becoming increasingly complex and while the number of scientific studies regarding the sustainability of these interactions, they are now growing in number. One important question that has not yet been investigated, is in what way interactions with the Media affect the HSO managers? Other questions relate to the support and media handling strategies available to them during media attention.

HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Human Service Organizations (HSOs) is a term for organizations that in different ways work with people. Hasenfeld (1983) defines HSOs as “a set of organizations whose principal function is to protect, maintain, or enhance the personal well-being of individuals by defining, shaping, or altering their personal attributes...” (Hasenfeld, 1983, p. 1). The following section will provide an explanation of the description and explanation in HSOs, and their current management models.

DEMANDS IN HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

One aspect of characteristic demands for HSOs is that they are being governed by general, overall objectives of complex nature that were often very vaguely formulated (Tengblad, et al., 2018). These objectives then need to be interpreted and made concrete by the employees in order to be instrumental for their daily operations. One such vaguely formulated objective exemplified by Tengblad and colleagues (2018) is “good care”. Its meaning and definition is highly vague, which means that the rate of objectives met will be difficult to measure. However, Johansson and colleagues (2015) describe how the HSOs are increasingly striving for quantitative objectives that will simplify evaluation of the operations. This sometimes contributes to conflicting objectives, though, and qualitative aspects are often deemed less important in favour of simplified quantifications. This is a conflict which often gives rise to disagreements, both internally and externally, when following up the organizations’ operations (Johansson, et al., 2015). A lack of clear, quantifiable objectives in an organization makes it harder for the employees to know whether they are doing a good job or not. Vague qualitative objectives can also cause employees and managers to have differing expectations upon how the work is supposed to be done (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Johansson, et al., 2015; Levay & Waks, 2006; Pousette, 2001). This further contributes to an increased focus on tangible quantitative objectives. HSOs are publicly funded in Sweden, which means that there are several parties voicing opinions on how the work ought to be organized and paid for, forcing the HSOs to handle both internal and external expectations, with external stakeholders being for example citizens and the Media (Tengblad, et al., 2018).

Another defining demanding traits for the HSOs are having limited financial resources (Tengblad, et al., 2018) as well as the work also entailing a moral responsibility, as it commonly includes working with people (Hasenfeld, 1983). The morally correct line of action may be difficult to define clearly, as Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) meta-study showed that every assessment always involves a great deal of subjectivity alongside the quantifiable performance metrics. Pousette (2001) has shown that all employees need feedback on their work and in order to maintain a sense of security this need increases when the organizational objectives are too vague. Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) study showed the importance of the content of the feedback. Their results highlighted the importance of functional instead of relational feedback for performance.

Weibull and Holmberg (2010) have been conducting surveys exploring the confidence of the Swedish population in the Healthcare system. Their analysis shows that the rate of confidence is high, even higher than that in the Swedish Parliament, the government or in the daily press. But it also shows that the confidence has diminished since the 1990s. Between 15 to 20 percent of the population claim to have relatively little or very little confidence in the Healthcare system. According to Weibull and Holmberg (2010) the spreading of information, in which the Media plays an important part, has a major influence on people's confidence in the HSOs. Johansson and colleagues (2015) assert that nowadays the HSOs face increasingly challenging conflicts between the professional and ethical assessments of the HSO professionals and the desires and demands of politicians and HSO management teams to govern their daily operations. According to Johansson (2004), these conflicts may eventually include the public, who in cooperation with the HSO professionals may become an important force in the expected conflicts regarding the conditions and development of the organizations.

MANAGEMENT MODELS IN HSO

One organization model which has had great influence upon the HSOs is New Public Management (NPM), which aims to mimic the private sector based on a desire for effectivization and an organization with a clearer sense of management (Almqvist, 2006; Berlin & Kastberg, 2011; Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004). Johansson and colleagues (2015) show how NPM increases the use of standardized measuring methods and production standards for assessing efficiency, which replaces the different professions' quality assessments. This management model emphasises the importance of personal responsibility and it gives ample room for manoeuvre among managers, which facilitates demanding individual responsibility from each employee.

The individual, i.e. the citizen who is the client of the HSO system, is an important factor in this situation. The citizens ought to have the possibility to make demands and make their own choices on the market (Røvik, Andersson & Eriksson-Zetterqvist, 2008). Freedom of choice on a market also brings increasing demands upon the producers, in this case the HSOs (Rothstein, 2010). On a market with functioning competition, producers of goods and services that don't meet the customers' demands will not survive. In the case of over-establishment on a market the weakest operators will eventually perish.

NPM describes how an organization through an increase in competition and transparency can strengthen the position of patients and users (Almqvist, 2006; Berlin & Kastberg, 2011; Pollit & Bouckaert, 2004). This management model has been developed and implemented stepwise in the HSO system since the 1980s. The criticism aimed at the use of NPM in the HSO sector has been varying, but mostly focussed on the fact that HSO regards people oriented and not product oriented operations, and that the Healthcare system is dependent upon public funding and public regulation of its business. In addition to this criticism the working conditions for managers in the public sector have also been highlighted as different from the challenges facing managers in the private sector (Johansson, et al, 2015).

HSO managers have for example several other decision-makers above them apart from their own superior manager, quite unlike private businesses, where the hierarchical structures often are much simpler. Furthermore, politicians, superior managers and co-workers often have different expectations on how the manager ought to be executing his or her leadership in the public sector compared to the expectations they have upon similar managers in the private sector (Wolmesjö, 2005). In addition to this, their expectations can easily become conflicting (Skagert, Dellve, Eklöf, Ljung, Pousette & Ahlberg, 2008; Wolmesjö, 2005). Critics of NPM also claim that the public sector constructs a quasi-market where different service providers in the HSO system compete for the clients' (i.e. the citizens' money). Instead, they claim, the market principles ought to be serving the public good (Simonet, 2008). The advocates of NPM argue in turn that the production of the private sector is much more efficient than that of the public sector. The advocates of NPM presume that the relatively low efficiency rate in the public sector is the main reason for the funding issues of the HSO sector (Ankarloo, 2005).

Today the Healthcare services, that are part of the HSOs, are to an increasing extent being governed by value based management inspired by Value Based Health Care (VBHC) according to Porter (2006). In his opinion, value based leadership and management is aiming to achieve the best possible health outcome in relation to the

resources spent. But the ways to achieve this are many and the majority also demonstrate the difficulties of this organizational model, because the Healthcare system is so complex that it is difficult to provide conditions good enough in order for the business to be managed on the basis of VBHC (Nilsson, Bååthe, Erichsen Andersson & Sandoff, 2018).

MANAGEMENT

According to Yukl and Kaulio (2012), a manager is not necessarily also a leader, and a leader is not necessarily a manager, but this distinction is not made in this thesis since the HSO managers included practise leadership when they meet the Media. This section provides a summary of theories about leadership and group pertinent to understanding management in general and what is more specific for HSO management, in order to give a broader picture of the challenges facing HSO managers.

MANAGEMENT IN GENERAL

Many researchers have written about efficient leadership. Yukl and Kaulio (2012) are two of them and they suggests that good work performance requires a consensus on objectives and priorities within the work group and also within the organization as a whole. According to Bass, Bass and Stogdill (2008), each leader must work with his or her work group in order to achieve a common organizational identity, which makes each employee feel a sense of belonging. Thylefors (2016) emphasise that efficient leadership is essential, and that the leader has to have an ability to help people understand one another and to handle the disagreements that often arise in the workplace. According to Yukl and Kaulio (2012), internal communication is crucial and cannot be overlooked by the leader. Inadequate internal communication will lead to the use of external communication channels instead. Yukl and Kaulio (2012) maintain that ensuring good communication is crucial to the organization's success. Efficient leaders have constructive ways of dealing with disagreements, as well as an ability to inspire and strengthen their co-workers. Bass and colleagues (2008) emphasise the importance of the leader's ability to act together with and through the employees. In their opinion, an organization striving for a management style that includes the employees, by Bass and colleagues (2008) called transformational leadership, creates a sense of common aim has a better chance of handling difficulties and crises than if management is characterized by a stricter, hierarchical style. According to Bass and colleagues (2008), solidarity and joint forces add to the dynamic and flexibility demanded by an organization when faced with difficulties. Good internal communication contributes

to an organization unified in both prosperity and adversity, which increases the chances of creating a stable organization with secure employees.

In addition to the internal management perspective, Yukl and Kaulio (2012) also emphasise the importance of caring for the image of the organization that external parties develop. They highlight the importance of leaders learning to maintain good external relations, in order to strengthen and not weaken the organization's image, reputation and perception by others. Yukl and Kaulio's opinion (2012) on the importance of the leader's ability to care for external parties' opinion of the organization is shared by many other researchers. Thylefors (2016) and Alvesson (2013) describes among other things, how the presentation of an organization is becoming an increasingly important part of management work. Alvesson (2013) describes how managerial work of today to an increasing extent is governed by a so called representational or shop-window sense of logic, where the main focus is upon how the leader and the organization are perceived by others. According to Alvesson (2013), all organizations continuously strive to improve their reputation in the hope that this will lead to an increase in the public interest to become clients, subcontractors or investors in their operations. As a result of this kind of logic and dynamic the organizations easily develop structures based on perceptions of how things ought to be. The peril of this approach is that it may easily result in less focus being given to how things actually are.

Yukl and Kaulio (2012) also reverse the question of responsibility through highlighting the importance of the co-workers realizing their responsibilities too. In their opinion, leaders often have to shoulder too much responsibility nowadays, as a result of co-workers too often taking a step back and not shouldering their part. Yukl and Kaulio (2012) as well as Thylefors (2016) write that all employees must take their share of responsibility for organizational development in order for the organization to be able to face any challenges in the best way possible.

MANAGEMENT IN HSO

Several studies have shown that managers in the public sector perceive that the room for manoeuvre and decisions has grown smaller as an effect of politicians increasingly engaging in the question of how the HSOs ought to be organized (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Johansson, et al., 2015). In addition to this, the clients' position and demands have undergone changes too, which has led to greater expectations upon quality, transparency and availability (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Hasselbladh, Bejerot & Gustafsson, 2008; Levay & Waks, 2006; Zaremba, Lind, Ahlbäck Öberg & Widmalm, 2013). The management is to an increasing extent influenced by the public debate and the exposure of the operations, which in turn contributes to the public and opinion-forming

bodies to a growing extent influencing the daily work (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Levay & Waks, 2006).

The role of HSO managers has become increasingly complex with an unclear function and contradictory demands (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Johansson et al., 2015; Norbäck & Targama, 2009; Thylefors, 2016). Previous studies show that there are special conditions surrounding the work of HSO managers. It has been claimed that management and organization in professional organizations, such as Healthcare organizations, poses different demands than in their private counterparts. There may be conflicts of legitimacy embedded in the relations between the management and other professional domains (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Johansson, et al., 2015; Zaremba, et al., 2013). Substantial conflicts and tensions may also arise between different professional groups and the senior administrative management, which makes the role of the manager even more of a challenge (Choi, Holmberg, Löwstedt & Brommels, 2011; Tengblad, et al., 2018). Sometimes, the issue is overlapping sets of rules belonging to different spheres, for example professional systems and management systems. This challenging, and sometimes contradictory, role of the manager has sometimes been labelled a hybrid management role, with clinical discourses on the one hand and combined leadership and financial discourses on the other (Dellve & Wikström, 2009).

The organizational culture within the HSOs has also been described as entailing a rough leadership climate with little available support (e.g. Arman, Dellve, Wikström & Törnström, 2009; Skagert, et al., 2008). The stress levels experienced by Healthcare managers are related to both formal and informal demands, as well as strict regulations combined with a lack of support and possibilities for communication with their own superior manager (Arman, et al., 2009; Dellve & Wikström, 2009; Skagert, et al., 2008). The demands highlighted were, among others, the challenges of managing a growing workload with less resources, handling structural changes and their effects on the operations, being alone, a lack of direction and coordination and in addition to this also being loyal when it comes to making and implementing decisions (Skagert, et al., 2008). In a study involving the employees of the Västra Götalands Regionen (VGR) (Hultberg, 2010), half of the care unit managers (first line managers) and a third of the operations managers (second line managers) estimated that they have a low or limited level of control over their work. A third of the care unit and operations managers felt that they do have the support of their superiors in difficult situations in the workplace. Operations managers were the occupational category which experienced the least social support for their work among the two categories of managers (Hultberg, 2010).

HSO managers often have to deal with the Media (Tengblad, et al., 2018). The

amount of support available to these managers varies as they are often part of many different groupings based on their functional roles. The groups most strongly associated with the role of the manager are on one hand the management group that the manager him- or herself is the leader of and on the other hand the management group that the manager is a member of. How well these groups work has a palpable effect upon how secure a manager feels in his or her position (Hackman, 2002; Wageman, Nunes, Burruss & Hackman, 2008). Hackman (1990) argues that in a well-functioning group where all the members feel secure and everybody clearly manifests their shared responsibility, the members do not feel as vulnerable when called into question.

According to Hackman (1990) and Wheelan (2005) the feeling of shared responsibility and interdependency are two of the key factors differentiating between a well functional group from other groups, something Wheelan (2005) defines as a stage four group. Maslach and Leiter (1997) also relate the group's level of functioning to the degree of stress experienced by its members. They maintain that an organization creates better possibilities for achieving a more stable organization through aspiring to maintain responsibility on a group level instead of an individual level. A stable organization and work group in turn contributes to its members becoming more robust and resilient when faced with challenges. In the present study well functional group is defined as the degree to which a team cooperates in accordance with the fourth stage in Integrated Model of Group Development (IMGD), work and productivity (Wheelan, 2005). According to Wheelan (2005) a stage four team is characterized by:

- * a team climate with openness and cohesion
- * members with clear and common goals
- * who are clear about their roles
- * exhibit task interdependencies
- * leadership which is distributed among members
- * a mostly task-oriented focus

Wheelan (2005) has studied what it takes to create a well-functioning group. Just like Hackman (2002), she emphasises the importance of the organization that the group is part of supporting its development. An organizational climate beneficial for group development ensues when the organization rewards teamwork rather than individual performances and when the operations are run with a clear organizational commission and objective (Wheelan, 2016). High-performance teams are not looking for scapegoats, but instead share both success and adversity as a team, leaving less room for doubt and insecurity (Wheelan, 2016).

Hare (1952) pointed out that members of large groups have less time to speak than members of small groups and larger groups increases the members feelings that their opinions is not as important. Previous studies have also shown that team size has a negative relation to individuals work satisfaction, perceived well-being and a positive relation to absenteeism (Aubé, Rousseau, & Tremblay, 2011; Markham, Dansereau, & Alutto, 1982; Wegge, Roth, Neubach, Schmidt, & Kanfer, 2008).

Thylefors (2007) describes how organizations in the event of a crisis sometimes choose to sacrifice an employee at an “appropriate” level. “Appropriate” in this context means a person on a sufficiently high organizational level to satisfy co-workers and citizens, but at the same time not high enough to disrupt the power balance within the organization. She points out that through sacrificing one person, the focus shifts from the organization as a whole to one single individual. According to Thylefors (2007), this means that the organization as a whole escapes ending up being portrayed in a bad light. Instead, possible mistakes or negative changes are attributed to one or a few individual employees.

When feeling under pressure for one reason or another, people tend to try to place part of the responsibility outside of themselves. A lack of connection between the manager and the co-workers contributes, according to Thylefors (1999; 2007), to the manager being used as a projection screen, where the degree of projections is closely related to how well the persons know each other. One thing that may indicate that managers are often the object of fantasies or transferences from earlier events is that they are often described as either authoritative or yielding, rarely as something in between (Thylefors, 2007). In the same way, words like incompetent or arrogant are often used when employees are asked to describe their managers, which is another example of stereotyping. According to Thylefors (1999), a majority of the co-workers claim to have an unsatisfactory relationship with their superior manager. Only a third of the respondents claimed to have a satisfactory relationship with their superior manager.

The expectations upon the manager to take responsibility and take initiative may seem reasonable, but work groups who do not realize their part of the responsibility may be transformed into a dependent group putting all of the responsibility on the manager, which is completely unreasonable. In such cases, Thylefors (1999) notes, the manager becomes the projection screen of the responsibility rejected by the work group.

The fundamental attribution error is a theory about how people tend to explain other people’s actions by internal causes, such as their personality, which means that the origin of the behaviour comes from within, while we explain our own behaviour

by external causes, i.e. circumstances outside of ourselves (Ross, 1977). This cognitive error is labelled as fundamental, because this is something we all tend to do, judging mistakes made by others more linked to the person than those made by ourselves. A HSO manager, for example, who is considered having handled a downsizing or other organizational change within the organization in a faulty manner is often ascribed all the negative aspects of the change, disregarding the bigger picture. Was the manager given realistic chances of succeeding? What responsibility is taken by other parties within the organization who assigned the manager the task in question? At the same time, the managers themselves may also focus excessively on external causes, without valuing their own contribution enough. One reason behind this unjust model of explanation is that we all know the circumstances surrounding our own life and our own decisions, in contrast to the situations when we form an appraisal of other people. In situations when we don't know the person being appraised, we tend to ascribe the other person qualities that may explain their actions. The gaps in our judgement are filled by pre-existing frames of reference, which may lead to unsubstantiated opinions of other people. The less we know somebody, the more qualities we have a tendency to ascribe that other person. The chances are therefore substantial of us ending up with erroneous perceptions of people we do not know (Tetlock, 1985).

To achieve a sense of well-being in one's working life as a manager, they need adequate resources to meet the requirements in question. Examples of resources that have been identified as important, for example in the KART Study, are a high level of personal control, social support from colleagues and managers, role clarity, work process predictability, clear objectives and good leadership (Hultberg, 2010). The more resources available to a person, the easier it is to manage all working life challenges well and not develop as many stress reactions. Scarce resources on the other hand instead tend to lead to a larger amount of reactions.

SUPPORT AND STRESS

Several studies have shown that developing a high level of support available to managers in large HSO is a complex question. Many managers in HSOs describe experiencing a lack of both support and possibilities for trustful communication concerning the challenges of their everyday work. The reasons for these difficulties are multifaceted, but unfocussed management in addition to an unhealthy work load are two common explanation models (Bowling, Alarcon, Bragg, & Hartman, 2015; Tengblad, et al., 2018; Skagert, et al., 2008; Tengelin, Kihlman, Eklöf & Dellve, 2011). If work responsibility is transferred from the individual employee to a group or organizational level to a greater extent, the level of security and resilience in the individual increases (Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Resilience is the person's qualities and skills that allow the individual a healthy functioning within the context of high pressure (Connor & Davidson, 2003). One way of meeting the need for control may, according to Folkman and Moskowitz (2004), also be through clear and thorough organizational strategies contributing to raising the awareness among the employees of what is expected of them. Another aspect influencing stress levels is the ability to proactively be able to manage and develop resources before upcoming challenges. This gives a form of personal control which also diminishes the feeling of vulnerability when faced with challenges (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). This section provides a description of the complexity concerning support and stress among managers in the HSO.

SUPPORT AMONG MANAGERS IN HSO

Tengelin and colleagues (2011) study show that HSO managers often refrain from seeking assistance and support because of a fear that this may have a negative impact on their career development. A study by Arman and colleagues (2009) showed that Healthcare managers spend a relatively small amount of time with their own superior managers. Managers instead tended to choose to receive support from sources outside of the workplace, like for example mentors, colleagues from other organizations, family or friends, whereas support from their superior managers or co-workers was often lacking (Arman, et al., 2009).

House (1981) describe several types of support; emotional, instrumental, feedback and information. Emotional support consists of showing sympathy and concern, whereas instrumental support means giving aid in the form of resources such as money. Support in terms of feedback is information given with regard to how others handle their work. Information support is giving advice, knowledge and suggestions in order to help the individual receiving the support find solutions. Dellve (2013) compared the importance of different kinds of support in relation to manager endurance on the job. The results showed that the major influencing factors upon the managers' execution of leadership were their attitudes towards their managerial assignment and the support available to them in the workplace. The availability of emotional support is, according to Lindholm (2006), correlated with the level of exhaustion and stress experienced by the managers. The more support available, the lower the levels of stress experienced. Appraisal support, which may be given in the form of mentoring, has shown itself to have a good effect by contributing to strengthening the managers' self-confidence (Sandahl, Falkenström & Knorring, 2010). Furthermore, in a study which investigated what kind of support is most important when feeling under pressure, Kobasa and Puccetti (1983) as well as Bowling and colleagues (2015) show that support from one's own superior manager is crucial. There are also studies showing that the feeling of internal legitimacy is strongly connected to a person's resilience and health (Davydov, et al., 2010).

STRESS AMONG HSO MANAGERS

Stress and its consequences are a natural survival reaction in instances when an individual's resources are not sufficient to meet the demands at hand. The term stress is commonly used both to describe simple, temporary experiences of increased activation as well as more long-term, detrimental conditions. (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). In this thesis the stress construct is used in a wide sense, including both stressors and stress reactions.

Psychological consequences of stress are for example low-spiritedness, depression and cognitive impairments such as memory problems, a decreased ability to concentrate and increased difficulties in making decisions (Kahneman, 2011; McEwen, 1998). Physical consequences may be headaches, insomnia, respiratory tract infections, indigestion, muscle pains, high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases (Arnetz & Ekman, 2013; Kelloway & Barling, 2010; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Währborg, 2009). Facing stressful situations in a well-functioning way means handling the situation in a way that is both efficient and sustainable in terms of health (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). What actually constitutes good or bad ways of handling stress varies

depending on the situation and the individual (Kelloway & Barling, 2010). According to Folkman and Moskowitz (2004), using a combination of several different strategies is normally the best solution. A feeling of control, or the active acceptance of an uncontrollable situation, is important for people's health-related sustainability (Hu, Schaufeli & Taris, 2011). It rarely depends only on the individual's ability to handle the existing demands. Research literature from around the world show that organizations have vast possibilities for influencing the experiences of stress among their employees (Hu, et al., 2011; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Just like Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) as well as Maslach and Leiter (1997) describe that some individuals seem to have developed their ability to focus on what they can influence, but at the same time they also propose that the explanation for this increased resilience just as well may be found on an organizational level, i.e. that the employee is part of an organization that considers problems primarily as an organizational responsibility and not a personal one. Hardiness according to Lambert and Lambert (1999) refers to a way of maintaining mental health in stressful situations where keeping up high levels of performance under high levels of pressure is required. The term encompasses according to Lambert and Lambert (1999):

- * control – or the belief that the situations are possible to influence
- * commitment – or a sense of meaning
- * challenge – or a tendency to see change as an possibility for development

Skagert, Dellve and Ahlborg, (2012) conducted a study showing that among Swedish Healthcare managers 40 percent had resigned within a four-year period. Similar results were presented in a study performed by Stengård (2013) concerning Municipal Social Services, where 20 percent of the managers had resigned within a two-year period. The reasons behind the managers' resignations were multifaceted, but the explanations suggested and discussed in both studies were that HSO managers seemed to have inadequate conditions for successful management as well as deficiencies in their psychosocial work environment. According to Skagert and colleagues (2008), the most common perceived stressors among HSO managers are the following:

- * unclear expectations
- * conflicts of legitimacy
- * conflicts regarding objectives and values
- * loneliness

Many HSO managers expressed a strong feeling of being alone, and this was the aspect

they regarded as most difficult to deal with in their position as managers (Skagert, et al., 2008). Different tasks may be delegated to others, but there is no way escaping the fact that the ultimate responsibility always lies with the manager. Thus managers are often having to face difficult situations alone, in spite of the fact that increased support in questions of management and leadership would be desirable, both from the manager's and the organization's point of view. The absence of support, in addition to a lack of managerial support, may lead to increased stress levels (Dellve, Wikström & Ahlborg, 2006; Skagert, et al., 2012).

According to Duckert and Karlsen (2017), individuals having high levels of resources are helped by their own inherent ability to stand fast in the face of adversity, actually countering erroneous claims made by journalists, which gives the individual a sense of control. This resource strength is also partly external as managers have varying degrees of access to a network that can help and support the manager when needed in facing the media.

Karasek and Theorell (1990) describes the feelings of mastery is a concept for individuals sense of mastering their work tasks when the combination of work demands and work control is promoting growth. Feelings of mastery is a construct describing the effect of the right conditions, and it has similarities to generalized self-efficacy.

SELF-EFFICACY

The definition of self-efficacy is, according to Bandura (1997), a person's perception of their own ability to achieve a certain behaviour in a given situation in order to accomplish one's objective. Gist and Gist (2013) refers to an individual's perception of his or her capacity to perform a specific task. In this thesis the task is to meet the Media.

GENERALIZED AND SPECIFIC SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is typically used as a domain specific construct, meaning that an individual can have a high belief in the capability in one specific task – such as holding a speech – and low belief in the capability in another such as writing. Bandura (1997) argued that self-efficacy is a domain specific construct, which has shown to be influencing a variety of behavioural outcomes (Gist & Gist, 2013). However, beside task specific self-efficacy, the concept of generalized self-efficacy, i.e. one's estimate of one's fundamental ability to cope, perform, and be successful, has been studied. Earlier research has demonstrated that generalized self-efficacy is one of the most important predictors of work performance and work satisfaction (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Self-efficacy as a spokesperson towards the Media has to our knowledge not been studied before. There are some related concepts. Media self-efficacy (Hofstetter, Zuniga, & Dozier, 2001) has been coined as a concept describing how people process information acquired from the Media. It is about being a receiver of information, not as a sender or active spokesperson. Another related concept is leadership self-efficacy (Anderson, Krajewski, Goffin & Jackson, 2008)

Research shows that individuals with a low level of generalized self-efficacy more often give up when faced with obstacles, whereas individuals with a high level of generalized self-efficacy to a greater extent try to overcome any difficulties encountered. In a study on collective efficacy, i.e. team members shared beliefs in the team's capability to perform well, Watson, Chemers, and Preiser (2001) found that individuals' self-efficacy has a positive correlation with collective efficacy, which has a negative correlation with team size. The degree of self-efficacy affects how long a person is capable of handling recurrent obstacles encountered in their working life (Bandura, 1997). However,

if a person on different occasions in several situations experiences success in the efforts to master a specific task, this may lead to the perception of self-efficacy transferring from domain-specific to becoming more generalized in its character (Bandura, 1997). Earlier experience of a situation, especially when handled successfully, has an impact on self-efficacy in various fields (Bandura, 1997). Petersdotter, Niehoff and Freund (2017) found in their study of students studying one semester abroad, that this experience contributed to an increased general self-efficacy, i.e. one's optimistic self-beliefs to cope with difficulties and to perform challenging tasks (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). For example a short course for nurses on handling difficult communication situations achieved significant improvements in self-efficacy (Doyle, Copeland, Bush, Stein, & Thompson, 2011). Lastly, Bandura (1997) stated that experience of enactive mastery are the most important source of an individual's self-efficacy.

Watson and colleagues (2001) have studied collective efficacy, i.e. team members shared beliefs in the teams capability to perform well. Their study showed that individuals' self-efficacy has a positive correlation with collective efficacy, which has a negative correlation with team size, described earlier.

Self-efficacy as a spokesperson meeting the Media and journalists has to our knowledge not been studied before. In this thesis called Spokesperson Self-Efficacy (SSE). SSE is defined as: the belief in ones capability of acting as a spokesperson towards journalists (i.e. preparing a good strategy for the meeting, creating good conditions for communication, sending a clear message and stay calm during the meeting). Hence, SSE is a task specific self-efficacy influenced by the preference of Bandura (1997).

THE MEDIA IN SOCIETY

The role of the Media in society has in many ways undergone significant changes (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001; Weibull & Holmberg, 2010). In this thesis the Media is not investigated per se, but constitutes the context which the managers experiences. This section provides a description of the altered role of journalism and the context of Human Service Organizations for managers in HSOs.

THE CHANGED ROLE OF THE MEDIA

The role of the Media in society has undergone many changes in the modern era. In 2001, Djerf-Pierre and Weibull described the altered role of the Media, and divided the changes in media focus into four different time periods: Enlightenment (1925-1945), Reflection (1945-1965), Scrutiny (1965-1985) and Interpretation (1985-). During the Enlightenment period journalism had a major influence on the public, in contrast to the Reflection period when, according to the authors, the first and foremost task of the journalists was to reflect news as objectively and with as little bias as possible. In 1965, however, the Media focus shifted towards having more of a scrutinizing function and journalists were given the task of being spokespersons for the public to a larger extent (Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001).

Nowadays, the number of media channels has also increased substantially, as well as the rapid turnover of news reports through for example social media channels. News is spread faster and the lead times for journalists have become tangibly shorter, at the same time as there are many more parties reporting news than just journalists. Modern social media, allowing users to communicate directly with one another, is taking up an increasing amount of space in our society (Weibull, Oscarsson & Bergström, 2012). The Internet too creates increasing possibilities for anyone to voice their opinion (Pettersson & Pettersson, 2012). As a consequence of anyone, regardless of education, being able to start a debate in social media journalists are also to an increasing extent being governed by their audiences, the public. According to the SOM Institute (Weibull, et al., 2012) the confidence of the Swedish people in public broadcasting, especially the daily press and the non-commercial radio and TV channels,

is very high, whereas the confidence in commercial radio and TV channels as well as evening tabloids is somewhat lower. Morning papers are read primarily by the older and well-educated share of the population, whereas young people to a higher extent utilize social media, like the Internet.

In addition to the changes in the role of the Media, the time that people spend on consumption of different kinds of media such as TV, radio, newspapers and the Internet has increased. When looking at statistics for the consumption of TV and newspapers, the overall media consumption seems to have decreased, but when added to the use of social media and the Internet, the total exposure and consumption of news has actually increased. In 2013, on average 83 percent of the population watched TV and 77 percent used the Internet on a daily basis, whereas 66 percent read a daily paper and 67 percent listened to the radio daily (Strömbäck, 2014). As an effect of the increased use of social media the sharing rate of news has also increased. News in today's society often has a self-generating effect, as more and more Internet users choose to share the same news items. Nowadays, news is spread and edited at a much faster pace than before the Internet became an integral part of everyday life. This also increases the likelihood of the images being presented of the organizations that are the subject of our study becoming very fragmented (Grafström, Petrelius Karlberg & Windell, 2013).

Several modern scientists debate the power of media in today's society. Their opinions differ, but the majority agree that the Media does hold power over the public image of the operations that they report on. The power of the citizens is however also highlighted in connection to this (Levay & Waks, 2006; Strömbäck, 2014). Individual citizens may, through raising or preparing different topics for the Media, influence their agenda, which in turn influences the agenda of the audiences. However, many people familiar with this area, according to Strömbäck (2014), seem to agree on the fact that there is a mutual dependence between the journalists and the news sources. If an individual prepares a topic that is expected to raise interest among media consumers, the Media content in question may be influenced by the informant. The ever growing selection of media channels leads to an increase in competition among the various media and makes it harder for them to achieve profitability. The financial demands on the Media seem to take over ahead of the expectations upon journalists concerning their democratic and publicistic task. The increased market requirements have also given rise to increasing demands for fast delivery and news reports that manage to catch the audience's attention.

Tight deadlines lead to a negative connection between how complex and difficult a topic may be and the likelihood of it reaching the news, and vice versa, according

to Walgrave, Lefevre and Nuytemans (2009), there is a positive connection between how simple and cheap a topic is to present and the likelihood of it becoming news material. Strömbäck (2014) argues in line with Walgrave and colleagues (2009) that journalists are to a growing extent producing news that sells and the compilation of information often needs to happen very quickly. The need for preparatory work from a source is becoming increasingly important, for example building on a press release or an investigation made by a private citizen. Fewer and fewer journalists have the luxury of being able to familiarize themselves thoroughly with complex questions. A large share of the news has to some extent been simplified according to the Media logic of reducing the amount of information in order to attract people's interest through simplifications, incisiveness or personification. In cases where the Media are allowed to partake of material prepared by an informant, containing a message that is expected to attract interest, Strömbäck (2014) means that the likelihood of it becoming a news item increases. In 1972, McCombs and Shaw highlighted the ways in which the Media governs what is to be published, but they also emphasise that the increasing limitations of the journalists' time and resources contribute to enhancing the influence of the individual citizens upon the agenda of the Media. The citizens' agenda is governed by matters that they regard as important, whereas the Media to an increasing extent is governed by what interests the recipients, and accordingly also will sell. This is a progress which is ongoing (Walgrave, et al., 2009).

Both Walgrave and colleagues (2009) and Strömbäck (2014) suggests that the amount of the Media's messages that a recipient takes in and is influenced by stands in relation to the extent that the individual is searching for information. The individual's need for information is, according to him, dependent upon the degree of relevance of the information as well as the level of security in the individual. Relevance is achieved when the issue reported on is of interest to the receiver, whereas insecurity stems from the individual's need for more information on the subject. If the subject reported is important but the receiver feels a need for more information, he or she is, according to Strömbäck (2014), more strongly affected than in cases when what the Media reports does not feel as important, or if the receiver already regards him or herself to be well-informed on the subject. The role of the Media has undergone changes in other ways too.

Power, Scheytt, Soin and Sahlin (2009) studied how the Media to an increasing extent has come to govern organizational development. They point out that the reputation of an organization is completely dependent upon how the Media chooses to describe it. Together with his colleagues he has coined the term "reputational risk", which describes how images published in the Media govern an organization's development.

Power and colleagues (2009) also note that the managers' actions to an increasing extent are guided by risk minimization. Before making any changes or decisions, managers are to an increasing extent considering the external risks for how these changes or decisions may affect the image of themselves as managers and the image of the organization as a whole. In Power and colleagues' (2009) opinion, managers do not want to lose their good reputation in the Media, which is why the task of polishing the image projected has become an increasingly important part of the managers' work. Unlike Djerf-Pierre and Weibull (2001), Power and colleagues (2009) defines the role of the Media as scrutinizing. They considers that today's society has a scrutinizing character, where an increasing number of organizations perform evaluations, and are themselves evaluated, as a way of comparing themselves with each other, because they all want to be perceived as being the most successful. The criteria defining the most successful organizations vary, but the aim to meet these criteria governs a great part of managerial and organizational decisions.

This exposure of the organization is often double-edged. On the one hand, the organization is keen to appear in the Media, but on the other hand, what is written about the organization should preferably be along positive lines (Power et al., 2009). Any media exposure always carries a risk of negative publicity, and this act of balance has caused professional communication, i.e. the role of communicators, to grow more and more important. The role of the communicator within an organization has often been upgraded, and the use of external communication agencies has increased.

According to Strömbäck (2014), an increasing number of organizations have a desire to increase their visibility in the Media, but of course they also want to make sure that what is being written about them are the right things. Grafström and colleagues (2013) points out that the Media's function as a moral court of law sometimes wields more influence than actual reality itself. According to her, a lot of work is put into polishing the images presented of the organizations and as a result of this, good internal and external communication has grown increasingly more important. HSO matters engage a lot of people, which also contributes to these issues often being debated in the Media. HSO issues normally attract a great amount of interest, because the citizens that use these services are interested in how they are financially managed and how the operations are actually run. In the years 2000 and 2004, Blidook (2008) studied the Canadian elections in order to identify what issues were regarded as the most important ones during election periods. The results showed that questions regarding Healthcare and social services were by far the most important political issues. His study (2008) also showed that the Media had the power to influence the political debate through their news reports on issues concerning Healthcare and social services.

Blidook (2008) like Grafström and colleagues (2013) demonstrated that the Media's images of HSOs could be more influential than the actual situation within the organizations. The focus of the Media also became the focus of the politicians, in spite of the fact that the organizations would benefit more from focus being directed elsewhere. According to Blidook (2008), journalists tend to focus on what sells, and the politicians follow in order to gain more votes.

HSO MANAGERS AND THE MEDIA

Nowadays HSO managers have an increasing number of interactions with the Media. The initiative for these interactions may just as well come from the organization itself as from the Media (Tengblad, et al., 2018; Strömbäck, 2014). This section addresses the increasing interplay in existence between the organizations, society at large and the Media.

INTERACTING WITH THE MEDIA

Power and colleagues (2009) and Strömbäck (2014) state that modern media has a strong influence upon today's HSOs through affecting their decisions and their development. Decisions are sometimes not implemented because it would cause the organization to receive negative publicity. This interplay between the Media and the organizations, where the organizations adapt the presentation of themselves according to what they think that the Media will approve of, is referred to as media logic by many researchers. According to Blidook (2008) and Power and colleagues (2009), this media logic governs the decisions and priorities of the organizations. The interactions with the Media have become so important that the demands and expectations upon those facing the Media have increased substantially. An increasing amount of time and energy is spent on conveying the appropriate messages in the right way. Seemingly complex relationships and issues are replaced with simpler explanatory models, such as a single manager bearing the responsibility. The leader, Thylefors (1999) remarks, is put in a position where he or she becomes synonymous with the organization, which makes it much easier for the Media to report on the organization than if the news would concern a complex organization with unclear boundaries. According to Power and colleagues (2009) this way, the news becomes simpler, and hence also more interesting to news recipients.

Strömbäck (2014) argues that organizations strive to be transparent, but based on the fear of disadvantageous parts of the organization being exposed, most operations choose to omit some of the information, which is why researchers often talk of so called apparent transparency. Organizations spend an increasing amount of time and re-

sources on polishing the public image projected of them. According to Grafström and colleagues (2013), journalism is necessary in the democratic society, but the interactions are based on a social contract between journalists and democracy. Society needs the Media, but the interactions presuppose trustworthy journalism. Today's critical media have been described as the fourth estate, e.g. Strömbäck (2004). The first estate is the government, the second the parliament and the third the Media. Blidook (2008) describes how the medialized democracy of today's society governs the organizations' selection, rhythm and the content of what is being reported. The Media's projected images of the organizations are very hard to overlook nowadays.

Weibull and colleagues (2012) review developments from the last 20 years' point out that general interest in HSO matters has increased, both among the public and among the Media, which has contributed to the increase in interactions between the HSOs and the Media.

In Sweden, there is a tradition of openness and availability from the side of organizations in relation to the Media, and the most closely affected manager is normally the one responsible for any media encounters, as many organizations are not of the opinion that the interactions with the Media primarily ought to be handled by a communications expert (Levay & Waks, 2006). According to Arman and colleagues (2009) and Strömbäck (2014), the Media is to an increasing extent given the authority of defining and creating the image of what a good organization and a good leader is, which may trigger identity formation work within the organization as a result of the Media reports (Grafström, et al., 2013; Arman, et al., 2009). HSO often involve morally charged issues that can't be described in an easy and simple way. Even so, this is the way that HSOs are often described by the Media, with the images presented very often being one-sided. Managers exposed to media attention sometimes describe feeling that their superior management has chosen to let them, in their capacity as the most closely affected manager, handle all interactions with the Media as a way of protecting the organization. This is an approach that may contribute to the managers feeling that they are being used to protect the good name of the organization (Thylefors, 2007). Being used by the organization is one kind of experience, being a victim is an experience that indicates a feeling of a much greater exposure to the Media. Gmür (2002) describes the concept of media victim syndrome, comparing negative experiences with the media as a kind of trauma that could lead to long-term psychological distress.

Media logic, according to Strömbäck (2014), is a way of describing conflicts, problems and their solutions in a selling way. This leads to a difficult equation, both for the Media and for the organizations. The news reports cannot be too complex, but must at the same time provide sufficient information on the subject.

Several researchers and practitioners describe the importance of well-functioning internal communications, two of whom are Tannenbaum and Cerasoli (2013), who argue that regular, mutual feedback concerning the handling of group tasks may improve operational efficiency by 25 percent. The feedback must be related to any of the objectives that the group is aiming to meet. It must also be offered on a regular basis. Their conclusion is very similar to that of Wheelan (2003; 2005; 2016), who claims that groups work better when they, as a team, get their functional roles into shape in a constructive and systematic way. A well-performing group manages to handle both internal and external unexpected situations together.

According to Strömbäck (2004; 2014), organizations have developed an increasing interest in appearing in the Media, which has contributed to the increasing interface between the Media and the organizations. Managers coming from the private sector may perceive it as unfair to the organization when co-workers turn to journalists in order to influence the state of affairs. The tradition of turning to external parties is not as prevalent within the private sector. Instead, external communication is normally handled by a professional communicator (Choi, Sung & Kim, 2010). Many HSO employees, however, are aware of the fact that they may turn to external parties such as the Media in order to influence decisions, and as mentioned above they sometimes make use of these channels of communication when they feel that their opinions are not being heard (McNulty & Ferlie, 2002; Östergren & Sahlin-Andersson, 1998).

AIM

The general aim of this thesis was to study Swedish HSO managers with regard to the experiences of interaction with the Media. The Media is not investigated per se in this thesis.

This in turn led to the following specific aims and research questions or hypotheses for each study:

STUDY AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The aim of Study I was to outline the occurrences and frequency of Swedish HSO managers meetings with the Media. In addition, the aim of the study was to map out meetings with the Media where the Media were critical.

Research questions: How often do managers in HSO organizations face The Media and to what extent do they have a strategy for these encounters? To what extent do the managers experience being offered support in connection during media attention? Did the respondents feel that the picture painted by the Media was correct?

The aim of Study II was to gain a deeper understanding of how prolonged unfavourable media focus can influence the managers as a person and his or her managerial practise in the HSO.

Research questions: How do HSO managers perceive negative media attention and how do the interactions with the Media affect them as individuals and managers?

The aim of Study III was 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 at such times.

Research questions: In what ways do HSO managers handle media attention focused on themselves or their part of the organization? From whom do HSO managers seek social support when they are in contact with the media and from whom do they receive support?

The aim of Study IV was 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. The aim was also to develop a self-efficacy scale that focuses on the task of being a spokesperson towards the Media.

Hypothesis 1: Experience as a spokesperson correlates positively with spokesperson-self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 2: Being a member of an effective management team correlates positively with spokesperson self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 3: Being a member of a larger management team correlates negatively with spokesperson self-efficacy.

SUMMARY OF STUDIES

The sample, method and content of the four studies included in this thesis is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Overview of the four studies in this thesis

Study	Sample	Method	Content
I	144 Municipal Healthcare managers	Quantitative survey <i>Descriptive</i> <i>Chi square</i>	Occurrence and quality of media interaction
II	12 Hospital Healthcare managers 12 Municipal Healthcare managers 16 Other*	Qualitative interviews <i>Grounded Theory</i>	Individual consequences as a result of media attention
III	12 Hospital Healthcare managers 12 Municipal Healthcare managers 16 Other*	Qualitative interviews <i>Thematic analysis</i>	Support and strategies during media attention
IV	96 Respondents 12 Management HSO teams	Quantitative survey <i>Descriptive</i> <i>Multiple regression</i>	Spokesperson self-efficacy among HSO managers meeting the Media

*Other; superior manager, HR staff/communicator, subordinate/colleague, partner

In the thesis a clear delimitation was not to investigate the work of the Media. Neither have any managers in Study II and III been included for whom the reasons behind the Media attention have been suspicions of criminal activities.

Since the research questions guiding this thesis are chiefly concerned with the organization level, individual difference level questions regarding personality and gender are not in focus. However, possible gender differences were raised as a topic during the interviews all the same, but the results showed no clear differences between male and female HSO managers. The four studies are summarized in the following sections.

STUDY I

The sample in Study I was a census survey where all of Sweden’s Municipal healthcare managers within HSO were invited to participate. In total 268 questionnaires were sent, accompanied by a letter informing prospective participants of the aim of the study and that this study was conducted as part of a larger research project on managers and the Media. The replies were received in the form of posted letters. A reminder was sent to all the managers that had been invited to participate. In total, 144 filled out survey forms were returned, which produces a response rate of 54%. The respondents had worked as managers in HSOs for an average of 7.7 years. 65% of the respondents were women. Out of these 144 respondents, 117 had experienced being spokespersons while their organization was under critical media attention.

Table 2. Respondents in Study I

	Sent surveys	Respondent Men	Respondent Women	Sum/total
Municipal Healthcare	268	50	94	144

The survey contained questions on experience of media contacts, strategies, as well as questions about organizational support. The survey was comprised of both open and closed questions.

The data collection was made by a survey generated specifically for this study because there were no validated measures to be found on experiences meeting the Media. The questions which were tested as a pilot study were for example; how often does

somebody from the part of your organization for which you are the manager make statements in the Media? And; how often do you yourself make statements to the press? These questions were pilot tested on individuals with similar roles. These individuals were asked to read the questions and reflect on how they perceived them. Minor adjustments were made to the questions on the basis of their feedback.

The analysis included descriptive statistics of meetings with the Media, strategies and organizational support as well as chi square tests, and was processed using SPSS version 24.

The results of the survey in Study I show that Municipal HSO managers answering the survey do have interactions with the Media quite frequently. All of them stated that they make an appearance in the Media at least once a year. 117 out of all 144 respondents had personal experience of being their organization's spokesperson when the organization had been scrutinized by the Media. Out of those 117 respondents 32% stated that the Media normally report information and describe the organization correctly and objectively to a level of 80% or more. A roughly equivalent amount of the respondents claimed that the contents of the Media reports regarding their organization are accurate to a level of 40% or less. The majority, 54% of the 117 respondents were of the opinion that their organization was mostly described in a negative way. However, about a fifth of the respondents on the contrary thought that their organization was normally described in a positive way. The rest were of the opinion that their organizations were described in a neutral way.

When questioned about the existence of strategies, the respondents stated that it was common for their organization to have some form of strategy for their communications with the Media, but it was uncommon for this strategy to be officially documented. 20% out of the 117 respondents stated that their organization had a written-down strategy for interactions with the Media. A little more than half of the respondents reported that they had formed a strategy of their own, but that this strategy was neither documented nor shared with others within the organization. The content of the strategies that did exist was commonly clarifications of who was responsible for making statements, as well as how and when to make them, both internally and externally. For example, a common part of the strategy was to be well prepared, to be available for questions, and to strive for openness. Only 1% of the respondents stated having an attitude of avoidance as part of their media interaction strategy. Out of the 117 respondents 23% claimed having no strategy at all for their media encounters.

On the subject of support as a resource before and during encounters with the Media around half of the respondents claimed receiving support from their management group, as well as from individual subordinates and colleagues. 38% of the respondents

claimed receiving support from friends and family, and 35% said that they were given support from the communications department and from their own superior manager. Thirteen percentage mentioned the Human Resources department (HR) as a source of support before, during or after an encounter with the Media. Six percentage out of the 117 respondents stated having received support from other sources (not more closely defined). The ones who received a higher level of support from their management team or the communication department in connection with their media interactions reported a higher level of satisfaction with the way their organization was described in the Media. The lowest level of satisfaction with the Media coverage was expressed by those who had received a lower level of support in connection to media interactions.

STUDY II

The sample in Study II has been made based on the desire to mirror a possible variation in experiences of negative personified media attention, achieve variation between Municipal healthcare and Hospital healthcare as well as to provide geographical variation (between major cities, medium-sized municipalities, industrial municipalities, small towns and sparsely-populated areas). The definition of personification in Study II was that it is a construct describing how problems that arise within an organization are attributable to problems to do with the manager responsible and/or spokesperson. The managers participating in the studies have been identified through contacting human resources or communications departments, as well as through so-called snowball sampling (i.e. the participating managers have all been asked whether they knew of any manager colleagues who had similar experiences of media attention). In several instances a superior manager, the manager's HR contact, other persons within the management team, subordinates, communicators or partners have also been interviewed in order to complement the interviews with the primary informants. Study II required the initial selection to be made among people with experience of the subject area that was to be investigated, which is why all managers included needed to have some kind of experience of personally being in negative media focus in order to qualify for participation. In instances when the suggested manager did express an interest in participating in the study, this informant was then also asked if he or she knew of any other managers who might want to share their experiences of being the focus of media attention. In other cases the manager selection was based on somebody else's experiences of the managers' interactions with the Media as well as the respondents' own experience of personification by the Media.

The data collection was based on 24 HSO managers with experiences of negative media attention that were interviewed. Two of the managers were interviewed twice.

These two wanted to add some more information. In addition to this, 16 more interviews were conducted with superior managers, subordinates, co-workers, human resources representatives, communicators and/or the managers' partners. In total, 40 people were interviewed. Nine of these were interviewed a second time in their dual capacity of being acquainted with somebody else who had been the focus of media scrutiny. On ethical grounds, no further details on the selection of informants will be disclosed.

Table 3. Number of interviewees

	Focused manager male/female	Superior manager	HR/information specialist	Subordinate	Spouse	Total
Hospital Healthcare	10/2	0	2	4	4	22
Municipal Healthcare	7/5	1	2	2	1	18
Total	24	1	4	6	5	40

The collecting of data through semi-structured interviews was performed inspired by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). The interviews took place in a neutral location. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. The interviews all lasted from one to two hours and were always opened with the following statement being read out loud: *“The aim of this study is to study Swedish HSO managers’ experiences of interaction with the Media. For this study, the more specific aim is to gain a deeper understanding of how prolonged unfavourable media focus can influence the managers as a person and the managerial practise”*. After that, the interviews were opened with this question: *“Have you had any experience of being mentioned in the Media? Did you experience any personal focus during that media attention and if so, what was that like?”* The interview guide included follow-up questions, such as “if this is the case, what was it like?” as a way to enrich the data. This technique is in line with Kvale and Brinkmann

(2009) who argues for the importance of the researcher's follow up questions.

The Analysis was made by means of Grounded Theory (GT). When Study II was initiated, it was evident that there was no previous research on how HSO managers are affected by media attention, which was the initial research question. This was also the reason why GT, a qualitative, theory-constructing research method, was considered to be the most appropriate for this Study. The data had to be able to speak for itself (Glaser & Strauss, 2006), in order to create the possibility of forming a new theory relevant to the subject area, which is the entire aim of using GT (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 2006). GT encompasses both an inductive process (i.e. the formulation of hypotheses based on the data collected) and a deductive process (i.e. the investigation of whether the tentative hypotheses formulated based on the data collected are accurate or not). As a result, this method requires that the evaluation of the data collected (in this instance in the form of interviews) is done parallel to the selection, which may initially be an open selection, but one that becomes more selective as the preliminary categories are defined. The selection is then governed by the categories defined (Glaser & Strauss, 2006; Charmaz, 2006). Since the relevance of the data not is assessed beforehand when using the GT method, no data is discarded. Instead, all data collected is of relevance for the research theory being formed. Not until a saturation of data is achieved does the collecting stop. Core categories are then specified, which govern the further sorting and focussing of the data. This way, no data is lost along the way, which is an advantage when you don't know what results it will generate in the end (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). One of the many advantages of GT is that it provides a possibility to create a theory not pre-existing from the onset (Charmaz, 2006). It also provides possibilities for the informants to freely describe their experiences of being in media focus, using the semi-structured interview template as a starting point.

The results of Study II showed that insecurity with regards to their managerial role turned out to have an influence on the level of personification, and as a result of this also on the individual consequences for the managers. Whenever the managers had well-defined assignments and felt sure of which authority their position entailed, the level of security experienced was much higher. Whenever the managers in addition to this also showed an understanding of their role in society, they found it easier to handle the Media. In these instances, it was easier for them to separate their function as managers from themselves as individuals. In the instances when their role as managers was not as well-defined, the managers showed a tendency to connect any negative media attention to themselves as individuals rather than to their functions or their assignments to a greater extent. The results showed that the more solid their role as manager was, the lower the level of personification was perceived, both on an

individual and on an organizational level. The informants' accounts also showed that the Media wasn't always the cause of the personification. Instead, it could just as easily come from the organization itself, which through shifting the focus from the organization as a whole to the individual managers made them their designated spokesperson a scapegoat. The managers participating in Study II who perceived the personification as something negative described their managerial role as very draining and none of the informants perceived their position as being one that anyone could manage to stay in for very many years. The managers who were interviewed more than once did in fact change jobs in-between the interviews, to less exposed positions. One of the reasons they stated for this was that they were tired of feeling questioned and being in media focus.

The reactions described by the informants were common stress reactions such as avoiding social contacts and being very cautious in making decisions which could increase the Media attention further. The results also showed that several managers developed a tendency to become more and more demanding of both themselves and of others, as well as losing both the energy and the enthusiasm for their work. The managers themselves, however, often had great difficulty describing these reactions. Instead, it was primarily the people around the managers who did provide a more detailed picture of these kinds of reactions.

The data indicated that the level of reactions can be influenced by the level to which the manager him- or herself, the organization as a whole and the Media make use of personification. Whenever the managers perceived themselves as having sole responsibility and their organization did not make any effort to share this responsibility, the level of reactions in the managers tended to increase. If the internal personification was combined with external personification, the level of reactions increased even further. However, if the organizations instead chose to distribute the responsibility for media interactions more widely, the level of personification tended to decrease accordingly, as did the level of stress reactions among the managers.

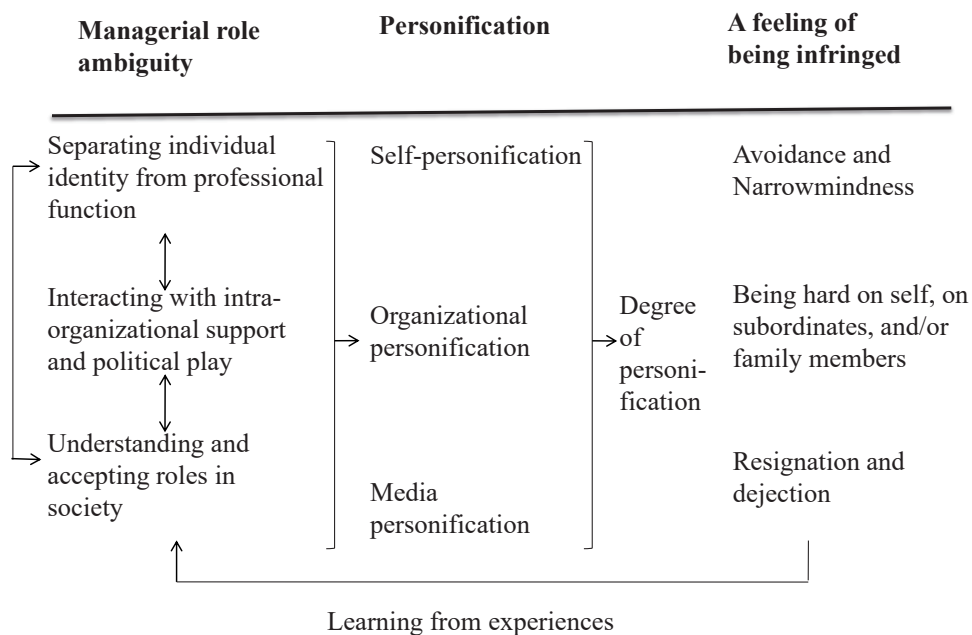


Figure 1. Connections between the level of personification perceived by the manager and the level of reactions

STUDY III

The sample and data collection for Study III was the same as the sample and selection for Study II. The informants were the same but different parts of the interviews were studied compared to Study II.

The analysis for Study III was performed through a thematic analysis. The reason for choosing a thematic analysis was the aim, which was to map the strategies and sources for support that the HSO managers requested and received during negative media attention. Thematic analysis has a bottom-up approach (Clarke & Braun, 2006). First off, the researchers read all material through several times before the coding begins. Then, a search for relevant themes and meaningful patterns is performed, before these are named and reviewed. After being reviewed all themes not contributing to the research question at hand are removed. The review may also, according to Clarke and Braun (2006), mean that new themes are identified and the existing ones are refined. The themes that you finally end up with are meant to create a thematic structure of the material that is of interest for the research. Different subcategories within each theme may also contribute with further nuances and may highlight different aspects within each theme. These categories are then named in a way that reflects their content. After this, all themes are exemplified through quotes that show the point of each theme clearly. Finally the finalized themes are compared to pre-existing research in order to

see whether earlier theories are confirmed or expanded upon based on the finalized themes of the study.

The results in Study III demonstrated that different ways of interacting with the Media influenced how well the managers assessed that these interactions went. As for any media handling strategies they were often created by the managers themselves and were rarely put into writing. One example of a strategy made up by the manager him- or herself was creating a PowerPoint presentation before meeting any media representatives, as a way of shifting the focus towards and increasing the clarity of the intended message. The majority of the managers, however, described having strategies that meant just trying to be as open and honest as possible. Whenever the managers did have an available media handling strategy that was established for the entire organization, they felt much more secure when meeting journalists, because they had a better notion of what was being expected of them. Some of the informants described organization-wide strategies recommending that the managers should meet the Media together with a communicator or somebody else from within the organization. These managers experienced their interactions with the Media as more positive than others. In cases where the manager and the organization chose an open approach towards the Media, several managers described thinking that this gave them better chances for achieving a positive outcome. If they in addition to this chose a proactive approach, instead of a reactive one, and worked on having a good relationship with the Media before any instances of media attention, this contributed, according to several managers, to even better chances of the manager in question feeling good about the outcome after meeting journalists. On the subject of openness, some managers expressed a desire for avoiding all media interactions altogether. The managers with no media training at all were over-represented in the group that would rather avoid the interactions altogether. None of the informants, though, regarded this a sustainable strategy. Instead, they thought that openness and availability was the best strategy to have in the long term. Another aspect of this issue was that many of the informants claimed avoiding the articles or news broadcasts resulting from their media interactions. The managers described this being a way of protecting themselves and claimed that they couldn't influence the result at that stage anyway.

The level of support offered and from where within the organization it came varied, but the results showed that the majority of the managers included in the Study neither expected nor received very much support when in media focus. In specific, the managers described the lack of support from the management group. Instead they experienced it as if they were left to handle the interactions with the Media all on their own. If they indeed were offered some level of support from within the organization,

this primarily came from individual colleagues or subordinate employees. Many of the managers turned to people outside of the organization that they already had a trusting relationship to instead. In some cases the manager's own superior manager also had experiences of being the focus of media attention, but this did not seem to have influenced the amount of support offered at all. The superior manager was still described as absent when it came to offering support during media interactions. The managers often felt unsure of the role of the human resources department, as well as of what they could expect from their communications department. Also, very few of the managers interviewed described that the communicator initiated any form of contact. Instead, they claimed that they were the ones contacting the communications department if they needed to be involved in any way. However, all the managers included in the study expressed that they would have wanted to receive more help and support from the organization's communications department.

The data showed that a proactive, open approach can improve the chances of positive interactions with the Media. If the Media encounters in addition to this are handled together with somebody else within the organization, this makes the managers feel safer, which in turn makes everyone involved feel more pleased about the outcome of the interactions.

STUDY IV

The sample in Study IV was made by snowball sampling as described earlier. All twelve management teams who were invited participated. The participating management team members came from a wide range of Human Service Organizations. Most typically they were leading primary schools, Municipal healthcare and Healthcare organizations

The data collection was made by the researchers, who meet all participants face-to-face at their management team meetings. The size of the management teams varied from 4 to 13 members, with an average of 8 members. In total, 96 individuals belonging to 12 management teams filled in and returned the questionnaire, for a response rate of 100 %. Data were collected through survey mapping that measures the level of group functionality, and the Spokesperson Self-Efficacy Scale of 12 HSO management teams.

All respondents were asked whether they have been a spokesperson in meetings with the Media. The analyses in Study IV are based on data from the 75 respondents who confirmed they have made this experience. Of these respondents, 66% were women. The average organizational tenure for the effective sample was 3.6 years.

Table 4. Number of management teams and respondents

	Management teams	Respondents	Experience being spokesperson (percentage of respondents)
Municipal Healthcare	6	42	32 (76%)
Elementary school	3	33	27 (82%)
Hospital Healthcare	3	21	16 (76%)
Total	12	96	75 (78%)

The respondents were asked how common it is for them to be a spokesperson for the organization in the Media. Their responses were on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 = *not that common*, to 3 = *very common*.

Group Development Questionnaire, subscale 4. Group development was measured by a 15-item scale (Wheelan & Hochberger, 1996) and is one of 4 scales in GDQ, scale 4 is measuring the occurrence of effective cooperation in a team and is validated as linked to stage 4 in the integrated model of group development; Work and productivity. The Swedish translation of the original questionnaire items has been part of several studies (Jacobsson, Rydbo & Börresen, 2014; Jacobsson, Åkerlund, Graci, Cedstrand & Archer, 2016; Wheelan & Jacobsson, 2014) and subscale 4 has also been used earlier as a measure of effectiveness of cooperation (Gren, Torkar & Feldt, 2017). Example items are: *The group gets, gives, and uses feedback about its effectiveness and productivity; The group acts on its decisions; This group encourages high performance and quality work.* Responses were given on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 = *never true for this group* to 5 = *always true for this group*.

Spokesperson self-efficacy meeting the Media. The definition of spokesperson self-efficacy during media encounters that were departed from in Study IV was; *the belief in one's capability of acting as a spokesperson towards journalists, creating good conditions for communication and sending a clear message.*

Perceived self-efficacy in handling media contacts was measured with a 5-item scale developed for the aim of this study. The questions were (1) *I can arrange a meeting with media that provides good conditions for me to get my message across* (2) *I'm sure I can feel calm during my meeting with the Media* (3) *I can create the conditions for a constructive meeting with the Media* (4) *I can prepare a good strategy for my meeting with the Media* (5) *I can be clear in my meeting with the Media*. Response options were on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 0%=*I don't feel confident* to 100%=*I feel very confident*. The scale showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$), and the questions formed a single factor in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), with factor loadings ranging from .77 to .95, which is above the recommended threshold at .75 for small samples (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014).

The analysis in Study IV was made by descriptive analyses, exploratory factor analysis and multiple regression analysis in IBM Statistics SPSS 24.

The results show a significant correlation between the frequency of media contacts and spokesperson self-efficacy ($r = .50, p < .01$). Pearson correlations, means and standard deviations for the study variables are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and correlations of the study variables

	M	SD	1.	2.	3.
1. Number of group members	8,00	2,66			
2. Frequency of media contacts	1,28	,69	,08		
3. GDQ 4	54,41	7,41	-,24*	-,09	
4. Spokesperson self-efficacy	6,4	2,07	,04	,50**	,01

N=75. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The results of the multiple regression analysis are reported in Table 6. The results of the multivariate analysis mirrors the bivariate correlations, in that frequency of media contacts was the only significant independent variable ($b=.50, p < .01$). The total variance in spokesperson self-efficacy explained by the model was 22%.

Table 6. Multiple regression analysis with spokesperson self-efficacy as the dependent variable. Standardized beta-coefficients

Independent variables	β
Number of group members	.01
Frequency of media contacts	.50**
GDQ 4	.05
R2 (adjusted)	.22

N=75. **p < .01.

ETHICS

The qualitative studies have been approved by the ethical board of the University of Gothenburg (EPN 743-11). Due to the content of both the interviews and the survey data being highly emotionally charged, trust has been a key issue in the information gathering process and confidentiality has been rigorously protected. Ensuring that all informants would feel secure has been vital.

In Study II and III all data used in both studies was transcribed verbatim by a secretary bound by a confidentiality agreement. In Study I and IV the respondents agreed to participate after being informed about the purpose of the actual study.

All participation was voluntary and participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The data from all four studies (in the form of tapes, transcripts and surveys) was stored in a locked document cabinet. All data stored was also anonymized.

DISCUSSION

This section will provide a discussion of the research questions and results mentioned above in relation to the theory and research presented in this thesis. The discussion is divided into: Contacts with the Media, Effects of being the focus of negative media attention, Support and strategies when meeting the Media and Self-efficacy when meeting the Media. Secondly, the section will provide: Methodological considerations, Conclusions, Practical implications and Future research.

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA

The aim of Study I was to gain a deeper knowledge about HSO managers' interactions with the Media; the frequency of media interaction and the HSO managers' experience of the interaction.

The results showed that the respondents experienced regular media coverage of the HSOs they worked for and 81% had experiences of dealing with the Media under critical media scrutiny. These results are in line with the findings of Johansson (2004) who found that tax-funded organizations frequently have meetings with the Media.

The respondents in Study I showed that they were more satisfied with how the Media portrayed their organization when they were supported by their management team or the communications department. Judging from this finding it might be the case that more respondents would have expressed greater satisfaction with the Media's portrayal of their organization (and perceived it as correct to a greater extent) if they had been better supported by their management team or communications department. Several studies, for example Lindholm (2006) and House (1981) show that support decreases the level of pressure experiences in demanding situations.

Previous studies by Duckert and Karlsen (2017), show that the managers involved in acting as spokespersons during media contacts often describe it as a lonely experience, and that support is a factor that curtails stress. The results from Study I showed that the most common sources of support was the management team, subordinates and colleagues.

Study I also indicated that a common documented strategy for meeting the Media is rarely in place. Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) claims that having a clear organizational strategy improves the possibilities for building resources for future challenges. Maybe a strategy where responsibility and support were included the communication department or the management team would make the managers more satisfied with how the organization was portrayed by the Media.

EFFECTS OF BEING THE FOCUS OF NEGATIVE MEDIA ATTENTION

According to the model in Study II (Figure 1) the level of reactions may be influenced by the extent to which the manager, the organization and the Media make use of personification which suggests the possibility of influencing the consequences of the Media interactions. A decreased level of personification leads to lower levels of reactions, which in turn influences the managers' behaviour. The results of Study II also show that managers with experience of being the focus of critical media attention find it difficult to describe the ways in which this has affected them. This was one of the reasons behind the researchers also choosing to include informants close to the managers, in order to complete the picture of any reactions exhibited. The people around the managers in question were accordingly given the possibility of providing a more detailed picture of the situation. As stress reactions have a tendency to become normalised by the individual experiencing them, they may be difficult to identify for the person affected (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

This result is in line with the studies on stress described by Maslach and Leiter (1997). The results of their study show that people find it difficult to describe their own reactions under pressure, as these reactions are easily normalised. Stress is a natural survival reaction in the face of danger, when the individual's resources are insufficient to meet the existing demands of their surrounding environment. Nowadays, it is a well-known fact that great and/or prolonged stress affects people in different ways (e.g. Arnetz & Ekman, 2013; Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Währborg, 2009), but the question is how much psychological stress the manager's experience during mass media attention. Skagert and colleagues (2012) have demonstrated that there is a relatively high rate of turnover among managers in Healthcare organizations. Within a four-year period, 40 percent of the managers had left their positions because of the inadequate conditions of their position and of their psychosocial work environment. Of course, the stress reactions manifest in the managers participating in Study II may also have been a result of other challenges coming from their position, and may not necessarily solely be a result of their interactions with the Media. The studies in this thesis have not investigated turnover among the managers as Skagert and colleagues

(2012). The results cannot tell if the managers leave their positions because of media attention. Never the less the included managers have a demanding working situation. Meeting the Media is one of the demanding tasks.

Wheelan (2005) describes how a well-developed group faces difficulties as a team to a greater extent. A manager who does not feel alone, normally feels safer, and a manager who feels safe has better chances of achieving good interactions with the Media (Grafström, et al., 2013). The respondents included in Study II did experience that they were left to handle media interactions on their own as they regarded this as being included in their managerial tasks.

Speaking about pressure and reactions in the individual, the individual's personality and resilience is often mentioned (Hultberg, 2010; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The more parties involved that make use of personification, irrespectively of whether they are internal or external, the harder it is for the managers to keep things at the functional level and not start to use personification too, i.e. see themselves as solely responsible. The higher level of resilience and the lower the level of personification, the fewer the reactions exhibited, which in turn affects both the manager and the organization (Grafström, et al., 2013; Duckert & Karlsen, 2017).

The managers included in Study II demonstrated a very high level of understanding of the importance of separating their functional role from their person. At the same time, it was very clear that only a minority of the managers interviewed in Study II could acknowledge the difficulties they had managing this separation successfully, both during and after their interactions with the Media. Several of the respondents in the study described how they, after some time in media focus, increasingly began to doubt their adequacy as managers and if they would cope with media scrutiny one more time

The surrounding people (for example superior managers, colleagues etc) in Study II described the managers as having a greater desire to be alone, both professionally and in private. Respondents described how they no longer wanted to take controversial decisions because of the risk being in the focus of media scrutiny again. This is along the lines of what both Duckert and Karlsen (2017) and Grafström and colleagues (2013) describe. They claim that the power of making decisions is affected by possible risks of negative publicity. The respondents in Study II preferred maintaining a low profile in the hope that the Media's interest would fade, rather than pushing forward and running the risk of becoming the object of even greater media attention.

Weibull and Holmberg (2010) claim that the dissemination of information, in which the Media plays an important part, has a major influence upon public confidence in the organizations. Levay and Waks (2006) describe how the Healthcare

system increasingly aims for transparency, in order to strengthen this confidence even further. The interactions with the Media seem to become more and more important, which is why the expectations upon the persons encountering the Media are likely to increase. Levay and Waks (2006) also show that the personification may be both internal as well as external. The level of personification is at its peak whenever both the internal and external forces make use of personification in connection to a news report. The results of Study II indicate that there is much to gain from working to stop the personification process internally. The managers of HSOs would probably benefit from increasingly standing united in their interactions with the Media, not least as the Media is gravitating more and more towards an increased use of personification as a means of simplification (Strömbäck, 2014). If the internal forces were to counteract the personification instead of benefitting it, this would probably also affect the level of security experienced by the managers. A secure manager in a secure organization is better than an insecure one and has a much better chance of presenting him- or herself in the way desired.

SUPPORT AND STRATEGIES WHEN MEETING THE MEDIA

Study III showed that few of the managers knew that their organization had a documented organization-wide media strategy. However, the question if the organization actually had an expressed strategy was not investigated. The managers in Study III also described a lack of support from their superior manager and communications departments even if their executive managers sometimes perceived the opposite. Some of the superior managers described that they had offered the managers support and that the managers had received it. This begs the question whether the result was an effect of the respondents' dissatisfaction with how the Media described their organizations, which in turn led to dissatisfaction with the level of support received? The results of this study do not allow for any evaluations of these components or answers to these questions.

House's (1981) describes different qualities of support; emotional, instrumental, feedback and information. The question asked in Study III was about support in general and not divided into different qualities. However, the managers had the chance to describe what they meant by support and what kind of support they would have appreciated. The managers in Study III did not describe that they received much of the support qualities mentioned by House.

There were examples where respondents had their own strategy and tried to maintain an open attitude in their dealings with the Media. This can be compared with Klijn, van Twist, van der Steen and Jeffares (2016) description of managers' approaches

to media relations. Based on their taxonomy, one could maintain that most of the managers in Study III were adaptors and communicators since they attempted to keep their meetings with the Media as transparent as possible. Also, the respondents maintained that they tried to be well prepared when meeting the Media which could lead to a greater sense of perceived control, and limit stressful experiences. Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) showed that clearly formulated organizational strategies contribute to the employee being clearer about what is expected of him or her can increase their sense of control which in turn improves their chances of proactively handling and building up resources to meet upcoming challenges (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

As House (1981) describes, support helps the individual to handle pressure and demands. The results of Study III showed that the managers interacting with the Media would like to share that responsibility, and they do feel more pleased with their meetings with journalists if they clearly know what is expected of them and if they receive some support during the process. The results of Study III also demonstrate that the managers do not seem to have reflected upon what they could expect from their own organization and its management, but instead they thought that all interactions with the Media were one of their own tasks. Not having a common documented policy or strategy for handling the Media may further reinforce the image of individual responsibility on the part of the individual HSO manager. Study III indicated that the HSO managers would accept support when it was part of an organization-wide strategy but found it hard to ask for support if it was not part of a preconceived plan.

The managers interviewed in Study III felt unsure about what support would be available to them if they asked for it, and many of them were also unsure of the role of the communication department. Some managers did not know what the communicator's job was and a few of the managers interviewed did not even know if the organization had a professional communicator.

Regarding the question whether they had asked for support, there were only a few examples describing managers having expressed such a need in conversation with someone from within the organization. Strömbäck (2014) as well as Grafström and colleagues (2013) describe how inadequate internal communication can lead to external channels being used for communicating instead. When these forces are in full swing internally, it may be even harder for the manager to seek internal support. The managers in Study III described that this may cause an increased level of insecurity concerning whom to trust within the organization. If the respondents also think that asking for support might be perceived as a sign of weakness, it becomes even harder to make that step, especially if it is not part of an organization-wide strategy. Eklöf (2017) describes this as dysfunctional social support as a context where you are offered

support but it comes together with blaming the receiver for needing it. This implies the importance of developing strategies with regard to social support, for instance to make it mandatory to receive support when meeting the Media.

The managers in Study III who were surrounded by an organization that regarded the interactions with the Media as a joint responsibility found it much easier to regard the interview with the journalist as an issue on an organizational level. Thylefors (1999) describes how the manager easily becomes a scapegoat and/or a canvas for projection and considers that unreasonable expectations are often aimed at the leader. If the manager then identifies with these expectations, the situation easily becomes unmanageable. This result can be connected to Duckert and Karlsen (2017) study based on interviews with managers dealing with the press while under critical media scrutiny. Their respondents also described feelings of loneliness when being confronted by the Media in these situations.

Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) underscore the importance of working proactively to create organizational predictability when faced with difficult challenges. The results of Study III indicate that an open, proactive approach to any media interactions could improve the chances of achieving positive encounters.

Wageman and colleagues (2008), among others, have pointed out the importance of a well-functioning management team. In agreement with other authors' knowledge on the subject, they claim that a group-oriented way of working benefits both the individual employees and the organization. Having support decreases the levels of stress experienced and that a low level of stress contributes to better health (Dellve & Wikström, 2009; Hultberg, 2010; Jacobsson, et al., 2014; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

Despite this knowledge, very few organizations still seem to realize the importance of joint responsibility. Instead of the entire management team regarding media interest as a joint responsibility, the problem is often unloaded onto a single individual. Maslach and Leiter (1997) also connect the group's level of functioning to the level of stress experienced by its members. They maintain that an organization striving to keep responsibility on a group level instead of on an individual level creates much better chances of achieving a stable and secure organization. More secure organizations and work groups in turn contribute to making its members more robust and resilient whenever their position is put under pressure. Wageman and colleagues (2008) have, in line with Yukl and Kaulio (2012) consider that any challenges ought to be faced together as a team, as this creates the best chances of maintaining good relations, both internally and externally. According to them, a leader does not have the same opportunities when working alone as when working in collaboration with the management team.

SELF-EFFICACY WHEN MEETING THE MEDIA

The result in Study IV indicated a positive relationship between degree of experience of meeting the Media and spokesperson self-efficacy and the importance of experience is also shown in other studies of self-efficacy, both with regard to general self-efficacy (Petersdotter, et al., 2017) and concerning task specific self-efficacy (Doyle, et al., 2011). This result partly contradicts Study II and III in this thesis. These studies did not indicate that HSO managers always feel more secure in their meetings with the Media because they had experience of the situation. The results in Study II and III showed that the feelings of being secure in the meetings with the Media could also go the other way. Negative experiences contributing to decreased security when meeting a journalist. However, Study IV has another inclusion criterion; the managers could refer to positive, negative or neutral media exposure. As Bandura (1986) stated; enactive mastery experiences are the most important source for individual's self-efficacy beliefs.

The result in Study IV indicated also a non-significant correlation between effectiveness in management team cooperation and spokesperson self-efficacy which is a surprising result since effective team work, has been shown to have significant correlations with several other output measures such as feelings of mastery (Jacobsson, 2013).

The HSO managers might not see the management team as a resource for support during meeting the Media. When a manager do not expect the management team to share responsibility or provide support in connection to interactions with the Media, the perception of how well the management group works is not important for the level of spokesperson self-efficacy. This was also the result of Study IV. Task interdependence is an important characteristic of effective team work, when work is carried out together as a team (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). But if meeting with the Media is seen as an individual task, implying low degree of task interdependence, the effectiveness of the management group becomes of lower importance with regard to managers' spokesperson self-efficacy. NPM addresses the personal responsibility, in contrast to shared responsibility or mutual interdependence. Maybe the influence of Value Based Health Care (VBHC) (Nilsson, et al., 2018) which is a new influential organizational model might influence matters in another way. No studies on VBHC in HSO in relation to personal responsibility seem to have been conducted yet, so it is unclear in what way this management model might affect the managers and their experience of the existence of support. One possibility is that VBHC and NPM could be of value in a complementary way for managers dealing with the media, as NPM gives quantifiable management by objective talking points to relate to, whereas a well-integrated VBHC

would probably give the manager a sense of security and control in describing the organization's actions and policies.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As with all research, the empirical studies included in this thesis have some methodological limitations that need to be addressed.

Self-reports – which the data in this thesis are based on – allow the researcher to gain an insight into the respondents' subjective world in terms of their feelings and perceptions. On the other hand, self-reports have limitations since the self-awareness differ among the respondents (cf. Perrewé & Zellars, 1999; Guba, 1981). However, since the aim was to study HSO managers with regard to their experiences of their interaction with the Media, the data is based on perceptions which would be difficult to study using another method than self-reports (cf. Perrewé & Zellars, 1999). Self-reports are entirely based on the respondents' own subjective judgements of events, which must be taken into account when interpreting these results (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). The perception of whether or not somebody is the focus of media attention, experience of personification, negative or positive, is a subjective one. Every manager included in the research material for this thesis decided on their own whether they experienced themselves as being in media focus or not. A selection based on a variety of articles, news items and letters to the press and assessed by the researchers in terms of personification might have led to a different result.

If House's (1981) different kinds of support; emotional, instrumental, feedback and information would be the framework to guide the questions asked in the interviews, it might have offered greater depth and nuance to our understanding of the managers' experiences. The question asked was if, and in that case from where support was forthcoming and asked for during critical media evaluation.

Study II and III are based on interviews with a semi structured interview guide. It is used to better understand individuals and their experiences through broad questions related to the areas of interest. Each interview was thus coloured by different follow-up questions depending on what the respondents chose to tell. The managers included in these studies had more or less difficulties to describe their reactions to the Media exposure. It might be an effect of the nature of the questions. The interviewer tried to be an empathic non-judgemental listener, but there is always a risk that the respondents to some degree say what they believe the interviewer wants to hear (e.g. Randall, Prior & Skarborn, 2006). An interviewer coming from the psychological field could have affected what the respondent chose to tell or at least our interpretations of what was told might have been affected by our background. The interviewer

may have influenced the interviewee as well through the manner of asking questions and filling in with clarifying inquiries. The interviewer in most of the interviews was a psychologist.

In the articles in Study II and III the citations are marked with manager, superior manager, partner, but not manager 1, manager 2 etc. This is a methodological limitation. All the differences among the interviewees were not highlighted. The depth of the results would probably have been enriched by it.

There is always a risk when involving partners (e.g. husband, wife) as was the case in Study II and III. They are often more focussed on the managers as individuals than as managers. Another aspect of this, mentioned by Duckert and Karlsen (2017) is that some managers chose not to involve their families as they feel a need to avoid the extra emotional load it would entail to cope with the family's possible worry and negative reactions to the situation as an additional burden to the negative media focus itself. This perspective has not been taken into account in any of the studies, which is a potential shortcoming of this thesis. The context in which the managers have been in media scrutiny in Study II and III is not described. This was a decision with regard to anonymity of the interviewees. Lack of context can be seen as a shortcoming. The understanding of the manager's situation might have increased with more context descriptions.

Overall, the thesis is about managers in the HSO. In Study I, it is Municipal Healthcare managers. Despite this, the title of the study is about HSO managers. In Study II and III, one group of managers came from Hospital Healthcare, the other from Municipal Healthcare. Finally in Study IV, the respondents are from Hospital Healthcare, Municipal Healthcare and Elementary school but the title is about HSO managers. It might be confusing, even if all included managers are from HSO.

The issue of the generalizability of results also needs to be highlighted. The response frequency of Study I was relatively low. One might ask which managers who choose not to answer. A larger number of respondents could have influenced the result. Furthermore, the respondents of Study I were managers in Municipal healthcare, so it might be more correct to speak of how often Municipal healthcare managers make statements to the Media and not the frequency of media encounters among all HSO managers. The inclusion criterion of Study II and III was that the managers perceived themselves as having the experience of being in a personified media focus. Other managers having the experience of the same media exposure might assess it differently, not experiencing it as personified media focus. The results can only show that those HSO managers who identify themselves as having experience of being personified might react and perceive not having support and strategies according to the results

of Study II and III. Study IV has other limitations when it comes to generalizability. A larger selection would increase the possibilities of identifying any similarities and differences between organizations and position levels. At the same time there were 100 percentage response rate in Study IV, which means that there is no need for speculations about those who refrained from participating.

As for all non-experimental design (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014) the issue of causality In Study I and IV is of relevance. Bollen (1989) proposed the following criteria for a causal relationship: association (there has to be a bivariate association between the two constructs), isolation (no other variables influence the relation between the variables) and direction (“the cause must precede the effect” p. 61). Regarding the criterion association, there were associations between the variables in both Study I and IV. The questions were many, they were of a sensitive nature and also relatively similar to each other. However, the criteria of isolation and direction are hard to ascertain. For example, it might be the case that managers with high levels of spokesperson self-efficacy in a higher degree are willing to meet the Media than managers with a low degree of spokesperson self-efficacy.

Different methods were adopted in Study I-IV in an attempt to extend the range of the questions and answers so as to develop as rich and nuanced a body of knowledge as possible in line with the aims of this thesis. The results of Study I-IV in this thesis have been reported to many HSO managers on several occasions within the research project, managers that was not included in the studies. The results have been confirmed in that context by participating managers on seminars and lectures.

CONCLUSIONS

The general aim of this thesis is to study Swedish HSO managers' experiences of interaction with the media. The Media is not investigated per se in this thesis. The results of the thesis indicate that the HSO managers have frequent encounters meeting the Media. Managers who had experience of being in negative media focus had a range of negative reactions, such as avoidance, indecisiveness and resignation and it might stand in direct relation to the level of personification.

The managers in the studies described a lack of support. In cases where the HSO managers did receive support, all support came from people they trusted, regardless their position within or if they came from outside the organization. This finding suggests that the organization, as a consequence has little control over the managers handling the Media. Increased support through a documented common strategy would probably be better for both the managers and the organization. The managers who felt they had support from the communications department or their management group were more satisfied with how the organization and the managers were portrayed in the Media.

The effectiveness in the management group did not affect the manager's spokesperson self-efficacy meeting the Media. But the more experience the managers had of meeting the Media the more self-efficacy they reported. Study I, II and III indicates that the management group could be a resource for the managers meeting the Media. The members of the management group could provide advices, share experiences and in some cases share the position to be the spokesperson meeting the Media. Study IV is based on the assumption that a management group which is well functional (i.e. are supportive, have cohesiveness and common goals) also have managers with a higher spokesperson self-efficacy. This was not shown in Study IV. A plausible explanation could be that the task of being a spokesperson is not shared but rather seen as an individual responsibility by the managers. If this is true, the question if the management group could be a resource of support in the studied context is yet to be answered because it is still to be examined if the managers share the responsibility of being spokesperson with the management groups.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results presented in this thesis point towards a possible need for revising both organizational practices such as media handling strategies, as well as management support available within the HSOs. Having good management support could maintain the organization's decision-making power during negative media attention. A strategy is also probably of importance when it comes to preparing and offering development of knowledge and skills more extensive than traditional media training to the managers.

This low level of involvement from others might influence the level of control that superior managers, management group and communication department have over the image of the organization put forward in the Media. It would probably give the organizations more of an advantage if all communication was based on a joint, well-established organization-wide strategy. The HSOs might, by defining an organization-wide media handling strategy and putting it into writing, as well as through taking joint responsibility, probably increase the possibilities for achieving more positive interactions with the Media representatives. Lastly, the effect of training and experience meeting the Media might be measured by SSE-scale developed in Study IV.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several aspects concerning the question of how the interactions with the Media may affect the organizations, as well as in what way an organization through providing support may minimize the effect upon the individual, the management group and the organization as a whole. More studies are clearly needed on the subject, preferably studies that are interdisciplinary and performed in collaboration with both journalists, The Media and organizational researchers. For example, more qualitative studies based on the results of this thesis would make it possible to reach a deeper understanding. Other implications for future research may be longitudinal quantitative studies which could explain the consequences in the long term of being in the Media focus.

Future studies might also focus on people around the HSO managers during media attention and their reactions and feelings. Individuals who work in the organizations in focus of the Media may react in similar ways even if they are not the direct subjects of media attention. It would also be interesting to compare other tax funded organizations or political organizations that are also expected to be transparent.

It ought to be in the best interest of all parties to work for a constructive development concerning the interactions between HSO managers and the Media, not least because both these parties are mutually dependent upon each other.

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APPENDIX

- 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>
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