

Original Research Article

An Empirical Study of the Effectiveness of Public Relation Campaigns of Rescue 1122

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ABSTRACT

This survey study evaluates the PR efforts and strategies of Rescue 1122 in informing people of their services and projecting and cultivating a positive image of Rescue 1122 in the minds of the public. The study used the Lindenmann Model (Lindenmann, 2003) of PR evaluation comprising of three steps: outputs, outtakes, and outcomes. The sample of 300 was randomly taken from the two towns of Lahore. Output was measured in terms of information disseminated regarding the services and facilities offered by Rescue 1122 and were found to be very effective. Majority of the people seemed to be aware of the systems, services and area of operation of Rescue 1122. The outtakes, referring to awareness, comprehension and attitude about 1122, were also found to be effective. The PR department is successful in convincing people that Rescue 1122 is a force of highly professional, competent, and committed people. They have achieved the desired level of comprehension and have shaped positive attitudes in the public very efficiently. The outcomes, referring to the changes in behavior of the people and positive image of Rescue 1122, were successfully achieved. However, the PR efforts were unable to convince people of saving ICE numbers in their cell phones.

Introduction

An informed public is the best way to get support for emergency and rescue services. Public information is generated through the process of creating awareness about the roles and responsibilities of available service organizations among the public. The PR efforts therefore, must take initiatives to increase the level of public information by improving knowledge and awareness and thereby changing people’s attitudes and behaviors related to the value and significance of organization as well (America’s Fire and Emergency Services Leader: Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2014– 2018).

The function of professional public relations (PR) is to create understanding. Unlike advertising, which is used to generate awareness and promote sales, public relations aim to change attitudes. The PR efforts lead individuals towards exactly what should they believe regarding a particular organization, service, or a company. Mostly, public relations techniques are adopted to educate people about new public services, and in order to introduce new lifestyles. The British Institute of Public Relations define it as “a deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics” (Jethwaney & Sarkar, 2000; Grunig, 2005). From the above definition two basic tenets of PR can be inferred: first that it is “the planned and sustained effort” pointing that PR campaigns or efforts are well planned and a continuous activity. Secondly, its purpose is “to establish and maintain mutual understanding”, which means ensuring clear understanding between an organization and its publics, as many publics groups of people are involved (Onyiengo, 2014, p. 2).

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Therefore, the purpose of Public Relations campaigns and strategies is to educate the people about new public services, identify, establish, and maintain mutual understandings between and organization and its various publics. (Baines, Egan, & Jefkins, 2004).

The Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) is the largest emergency humanitarian service of Pakistan with infrastructure in Pakistan. Rescue 1122 is the most efficient and professional rescue service in the whole south Asian region. It includes emergency Ambulance, Rescue & Fire services and Community Emergency Response Teams. It is at par with any international similar rescue services and known for world's shortest average response time of 7 minutes. It covers all 36 districts of Punjab province with population of over 80 million (Rescue 1122, 2015).

The objective of Rescue 1122 is not just to provide the emergency victims with the basic right to timely emergency care but it believes in "saving lives and changing minds". The basic goal of the Service is "development of safer communities through establishment of an effective system for emergency preparedness, response and prevention" (Rescue 1122, 2015). Rescue 1122 is striving to create safer communities by implementing the Community Safety Program. This program involves capacity building of organizational capacity building and training of citizens in life saving skills. In order to accomplish these objectives informed and engaged public is essential. The involvement of people in the process is done through effective public relations. The public relation efforts aware and educate people of the importance of the knowledge about taking the right decision and doing the right thing in emergency situations of any kind.

Therefore, it is important to look at the success of organizational public relations' efforts of Rescue 1122 in creating clear understanding and awareness for its services. The perception of organization public relationships plays a very essential role in measuring the effectiveness of public relations campaigns and programs evaluation at the level of organization as well at and at the societal level (Grunig, 2005). The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Rescue 1122-public relationships on its organizational reputation from the perspective of the service beneficiaries. This study checked the success of the PR campaigns at several stages that include people: awareness, comprehension, attitude, and behavior towards the Rescue 1122 services. The image and reputation of the organization in public perceptions was assessed in terms of its quality of services and proficiency.

## **Literature Review**

As Public relations have evolved and recognized as a specialized field it demands a comprehensive and effective way of measuring its value. Broom et al. (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997) describe public relations as creating and sustaining an organization's relationships with its publics. Since the recognition of the public relations as formal activity Public relations professionals and researchers have been struggling to develop measures that would establish public relations' effectiveness or added value (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Assessment of Public relations effectiveness is important because it is directly linked to the perception of organizational image among its publics (Radford & Goldstein, 2002; Dozier, 1990; Fairchild, 2002; White & Blamphin, 1994). Public relations activity often face indistinct (Murray & White, 2004) and multi-faceted problems, so cannot be measured adequately by any single method (Macnamara, 2002; Cutlip & Broom, 2006; ; Gregory & White, 2006) In short, due to the absence of a single standard way to measure the effectiveness of public relation efforts practitioners often have to select from an array of different methods and models to assess and demonstrate their effectiveness (Gregory, 2001; Pohl & Vandeventer, 2001; Walker, 1994; Watson, 1997) further, the practitioners often fail to fully utilize available methods and unable to understand how they might be applied.

Considering that the scholars do not use any single methods of evaluation to demonstrate performance of public relations. Studies have found that public relations evaluation methods mainly focus on media analysis and lack

any other relevant (Magne, 2004) measures that validate program effectiveness. (Macnamara, 2002; Walker, 1994, 1997). Researchers say that such trend may be due to the tangible evidence that media analysis provides of the public relation achievements (Gregory, 2001; Pieczka, 2000).

During the last decade influence of other business research approaches came upon PR planning, research and evaluation. Approaches such as Key Performance Indicators (KPI) shifted emphasis on the development of communication strategies more closely related to organizational objectives rather than outputs from communication activity (Kaplan & Norton, 2006b) such as the effects of media (Zerfass, 2005). Still, measuring program effectiveness in terms of impact on public's perception and behavior is currently increasingly emphasized and is becoming a preferred method (Phillips, 2001; Watson T., 2001).

Lindenmann (2003) emphasizes that PR campaigns effectiveness is determined by "the success in changing consumer and opinion-leader awareness, understanding, retention, attitude and behavior levels". In other words, quantifiable changes in awareness, knowledge, attitude, opinion, and behavior levels that occur as a result of a public relations program or campaign are the measure of its effectiveness. According to Lindenmann, the PR measurement and evaluation instead of measuring PR as a total entity should measure the effectiveness of certain specific PR activities. therefore, Lindenmann's PR evaluation model, commonly known as Three Yardstick Model, comprises of three stages of research and evaluation - *outputs, outtakes, and outcomes*.

*Outputs* refer to the immediate and apparent results of a particular PR program or activity. Outputs means the amount of exposure that the organization receives. In media campaigns, outputs are the total number of stories, articles, or placements that appear in the media and assessment of the overall content that appeared. White papers, talks given, specific messages created, or specific positioning on an important issue are included in public relations outputs. Regardless the form, the quantity and quality of outputs are measured and evaluated for their content. PR Output measure determine to what extent the target audience groups actually received the messages directed at them, paid attention to them, understood and/or comprehended the messages, and how much they retained the messages and able to recall them. The output measurement is message recall and retention. It measures whether the messages in our brochures, booklets and related PR programs and activities make enough of an impression on the recipients, and were the embedded messages memorable and can be recalled. The final unit of measurement at the outtake level is the level of attention and possible immediate response. Did the recipient respond positively to the messages? Did the recipient look for more information, for example, by going to a website?

*Outtake* for all the PR activities or events such as the distribution of a brochure or a booklet, the placement of announcements on websites, or the delivering of a speech it is important to assess what the intended recipients "takeaway" from the effort. The outtake measurement is understanding and comprehension. To assess whether the messages communicated make sense to the intended recipients? Were they able to decipher them and put them into appropriate context?

PR *outcomes* measure refers to assessing whether the messages communicated have resulted in any opinion, attitude and/or behavior changes on the part of the intended recipients. Positive image can be an achieved communication effectiveness outcome.

The research questions leading to these objectives were formulated in line with the three-step model of Lindenmann Model of output, outtake and outcome. The results and findings of each research question are discussed below.

- a. How much basic information people have about the Rescue 1122 service?
- b. Are people aware of the services and facilities provided by the Rescue 1122?

- c. Do people comprehend that they can rely on Rescue 1122 in case of emergency?
- d. Do people have positive attitude towards Rescue 1122 personnel's professional competence?
- e. To what extent have people adopted the actions recommended by Rescue 1122?
- f. Do people have positive image of Rescue 1122?

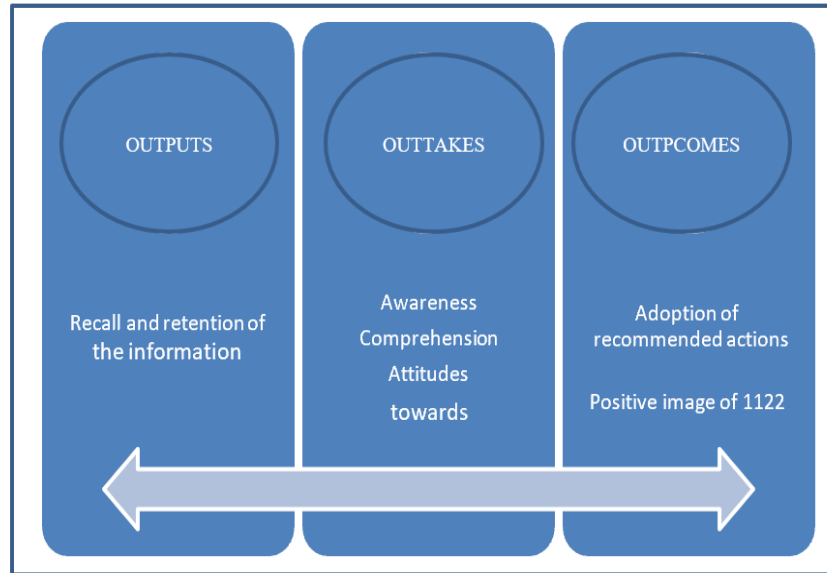


Figure 1: Lindenmann's Model for Evaluation of PR effectiveness

Figure 1: Lindenmann's Model for Evaluation of PR Effectiveness

## Methodology

In this study output refers to the basic *information received* by the public disseminated by Rescue 1122 PR department for the consumption at individual level. It includes the basic information such as when can you call 1122, under what kind of emergencies you can call it, what area is covered by 1122 service, in case of emergency who can reach you first, availability, range of services, and area of operation of Rescue 1122, etc. It is measured in terms of and the extent to which these messages are retained and recalled by the targeted audience.

Outtakes measures refer to the *awareness, comprehension, and attitudes* of the target audience due to the Rescue 1122 services PR efforts. *Awareness* means the cognizance of the facilities and quality of the Rescue 1122 services offered to the people. Awareness is measured in terms of toll-free call, trained personnel, connected with government hospitals, definitive care, and free services. *Comprehension* is measured as understanding the Rescue 1122 services as reliable service at par with the international standards with committed personnel. *Attitude* is conceptualized as having an impression of Rescue 1122 as a competent, efficient and trustworthy service. *Outcome* measures are defined as the positive image of Rescue 1122 in the public and adoption of the recommended actions. The operationalization of the measures of outputs, outtakes, and outcomes are as follows:

### Received information

The received information in this study refers to the recall and retention of the messages sent by Rescue 1122 PR campaigns for general public. The information received is checked by set of five questions that included; "Do you think Rescue 1122 can reach your mentioned location?", "Who will reach your first in case of emergency out of the given services?", "What do you think is the geographical range of Rescue 1122 services?", "In which situations

may you call Rescue 1122?”, and “At what time can you call Rescue 1122?”.

#### *Awareness*

The level of awareness about Rescue 1122 services was assessed by set of five items; “Can Rescue 1122 helpline be called even with insufficient balance”; “Is Rescue 1122 linked with government hospitals?”; “Is Rescue 1122 personnel fully trained?”; “Will Rescue 1122 provide acute medical care and transportation to definitive care?”; and “Is Rescue 1122 a free service?”. The responses were assessed on a 5-point scale i.e. always, often, sometimes, seldom, and „never.

#### *Comprehension*

Comprehension of the quality of the Rescue 1122 services was assessed by three items on 5 point Likert Scale. The items are; “Rescue 1122 personnel are fully committed to their jobs”; “Rescue 1122 provides services of international standards”; and “In case of emergency, one should call 1122 first for immediate help”.

#### *Attitude*

Comprehension was assessed by three items including; “Rescue 1122 can be called at any time without any fear of personal or material damage”; “Rescue 1122 personnel is trained and can operate under any circumstances”; and “Rescue 1122 will arrive on scene of emergency as quickly as possible”.

#### *Behavior change*

The desired outcomes in the behavior of the public after these PR efforts are assessed by the extent of adoption of two measurable actions by the target audience. The two measurable recommended actions are; “Have emergency contacts saved on your phone”, and “Give way to all Rescue 1122 ambulances and rescue vehicles”.

#### *Positive Image*

The ultimate outcome of all PR efforts is a positive image of Rescue 1122 services in the minds of the public. The positive image is measured by a single question; “Overall, how would you rate Rescue 1122 on the scale from very poor to very good”. The responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from ‘very good’ to ‘very poor’.

## **Results and Discussion**

In order to evaluate effectiveness of Rescue 1122 emergency service PR campaigns’ survey of Lahore was conducted the by distributing 300 questionnaires, through random sampling method, comprising of 27 items. The questionnaire comprised of 17 items in addition to the basic demographic information items including; age, gender, education, and income level and primary source of information about Rescue 1122 service. There were six dependent variables; information recall and retention, awareness, comprehension, attitude, behavior adopted, and positive image. The response rate was 92.33%; out of 300 questionnaires, 277 participants responded. The male/female ratio of the respondents was 70: 30 percent, respectively. The survey was conducted in a middle-class town of Lahore and from the head of the families therefore, most of the respondents turned out be well educated. Among the total respondents 11.6% (n=32) were above Master Level; 41.2% (n=114) were Masters; 35% (n=97) were graduates; intermediate 10.5% (n=29); and 1.8% (n=5) were matric only. Their income spectrum ranges between less than Rs. 50,000 to between 150,000 -200,000. The 72.6% of the participants fell in the minimum income group according to our scale; 20.2% came in the bracket of Rs.50, 000-100,000; 6.9% had the income between Rs. 100,000-150,000; and only 0.4% (n=01) had the income relating to the maximum range i.e., Rs. 150,000-200,000.

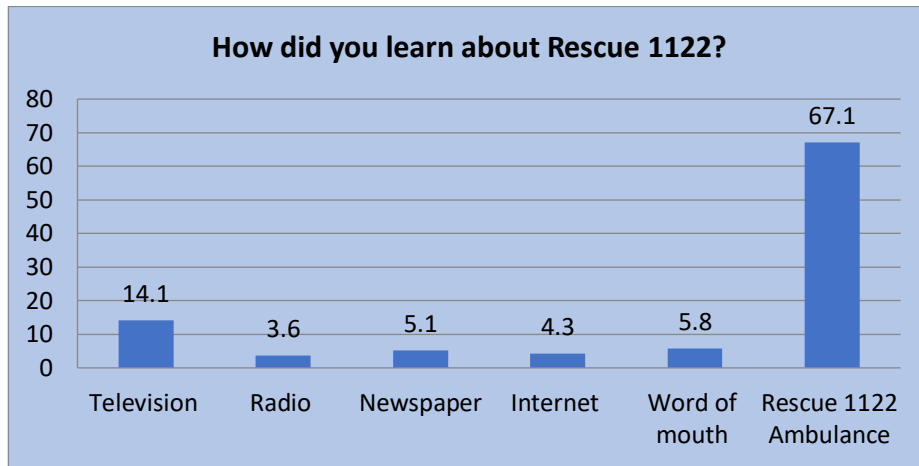


Figure 2: How did you learn about Rescue 1122?

The responses to the question; “How did you learn about Rescue 1122?” revealed that majority of the people came to know about Rescue 1122 services by seeing their Ambulances on the roads.

**Research question1: How much information people have about the Rescue 1122 service?**

The information disseminated by the organization, directed towards the individuals is the *output* stage in the Lindenmann model. The attention and reception of information through assessing recall and retention was checked by a set of questions. Almost all of the participants responded positively when asked whether they know about Rescue 1122 service. Only 3% people did not know about the Rescue service.

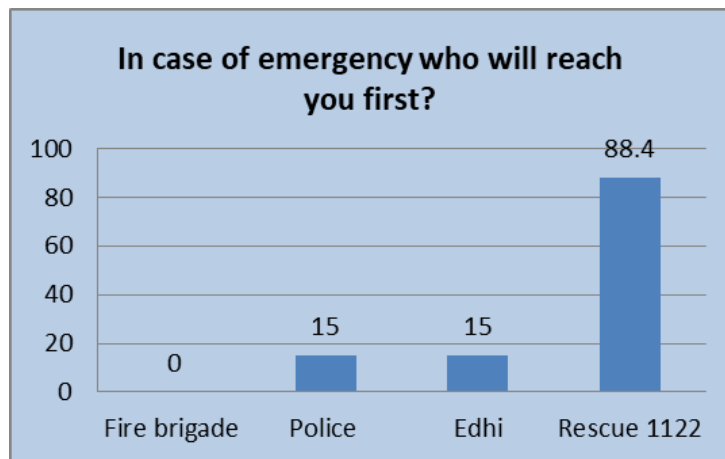


Figure 3: In case of emergency who will reach you first?

In response to the question “In case of emergency which of the following will reach you first?” most of the respondents, 245 out of 277, thought that Rescue 1122 would reach first. This reflected the public confidence in the service.

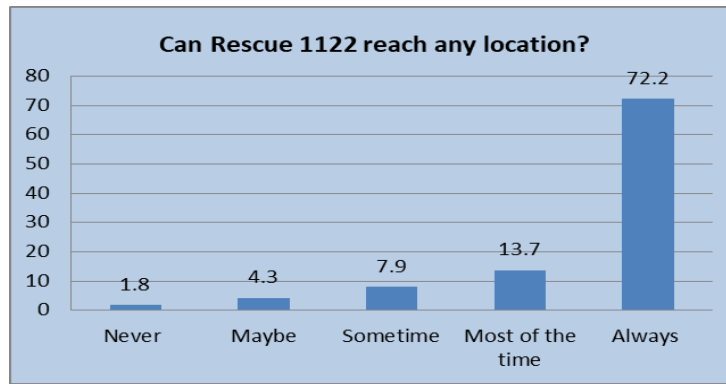


Figure 4: Do you think Rescue 1122 can reach any location?

Similarly, when asked the question, “Do you think Rescue 1122 can find and reach your exact location when you call for help?” Participants trust that Rescue 1122 personnel would be able to locate their emergency location as strong as their belief and confidence in their ability to reach them first. Fewer than 15% were uncertain that Rescue 1122 would be able find them.

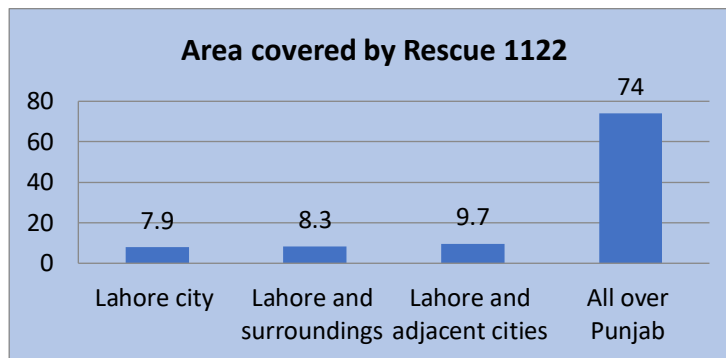


Figure 5: What are the areas covered by Rescue 1122?

Majority of the participants were found to be aware that rescue 1122 is available in all districts of the Punjab. A quarter of the people believed that the service was limited to the city of Lahore and surrounding motorways while an equal amount of people thought it extended to the adjacent cities as well.

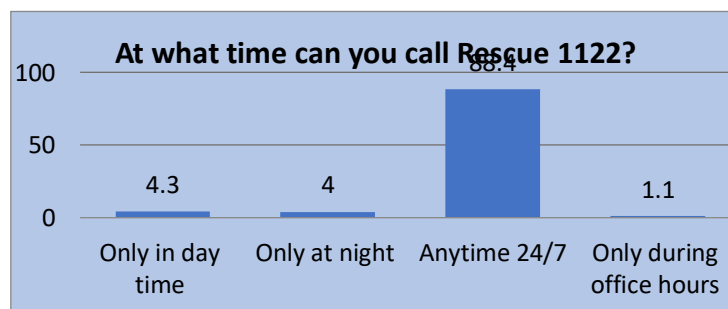


Figure 6: When can you call Rescue 1122 for help?

Again, in response to the question to check the knowledge about the timings at which Rescue 1122 can be called for help it was found that majority of the participants knew that the service is available 24/7 and can be called anytime. Very few were unaware of this and reported that the services can be availed within some specific timing.

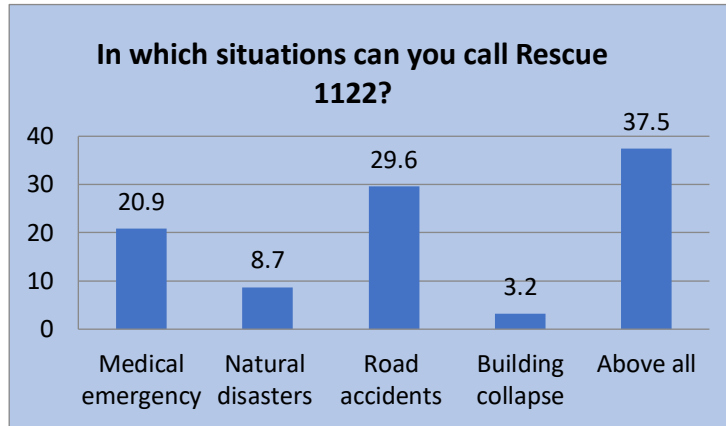


Figure 7: In which situations can you call Rescue 1122?

When asked in what circumstances they can call Rescue 1122 the common impression among the participants was that it is a service helpful in case of road accidents. Others believed it is reserved for medical emergencies only. Less than half of the participants were aware of the fact that the service deals with all kinds of emergency situations. Very few related the service to building collapse and natural disasters.

**Research question 2: Are people aware of the services and facilities provided by Rescue 1122**

The *outtake* measures include awareness of the facilities and services offered by the Rescue 1122 service. The awareness was assessed by a set of questions encompassing all the major features of Rescue 1122 other than basic information.

**Awareness**

By summing up all the items a new consolidated variable of Awareness was created. The summary of awareness was visually depicted in the following figure 5.7.

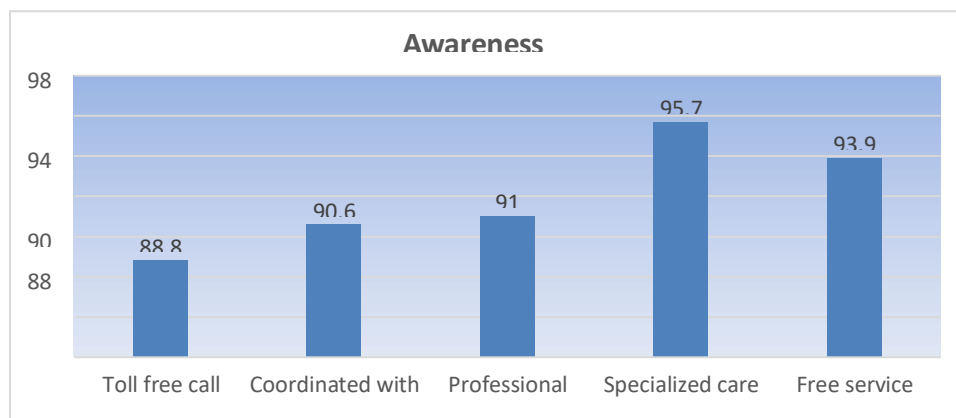


Figure 8: Percentage graph of the items for Awareness



The internal consistency and reliability of the items was good; Cronbach alpha  $\alpha = 0.767$ . The descriptive statistics of the items used to measure the awareness are shown in the table 5.1.

Awareness	Mean	SD	N
1. Toll free call	4.176	.671	.671
2. Coordinated with government hospitals	5.229	.608	.696
3. Fully trained personnel	5.141	.608	.695
4. Specialized care	6.225	.489	.742
5. Free services	6.201	.345	.781

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Awareness about Rescue 1122 services*

The correlation between the various demographic variables and awareness was checked. Age was found to be positively and significantly correlated with the awareness that was  $0.218^{**}$ . Gender and occupation seemed to have negative correlation,  $-0.132^*$  and  $-0.136^*$  respectively, with the awareness about the related to the services of the Rescue 1122.

For further analysis of the nature of the correlation between the significant demographic variables and awareness about Rescue 1122 services t-test was run between the two. It was found that young people were more aware of the services and when seen between the two aware age groups 21-35 and 36-50 years the later was the most significantly and positively aware of all the others; ( $t = 3.59$ ,  $df = 276$ ,  $p < .005$ ).

The PR strategy seemed to work well because majority of the respondents were aware that the Rescue 1122 services are absolutely free and meant for public service. A large number of people knew that Rescue is linked to all government hospitals present in Punjab and their personnel is fully trained and can provide out-of-hospital acute medical care. The people have faith in the Rescue 1122 personnel's ability to discern the nature of injuries and transport patients to hospitals which can provide them with specialized care. The study found that young people had more information relating to the services and facilities offered by Rescue 1122 as compared to older people. Overall women seemed to be less informed about Rescue 1122.

***Research question no.3: Do people comprehend that Rescue 1122 as reliable and trustworthy service?***

The next variable of *outtakes* is comprehension. It is related to the participants' deeper understanding of the Rescue 1122 services. It is assessed by set of questions exploring how reliable participants deem it in terms of professional standard and commitment.

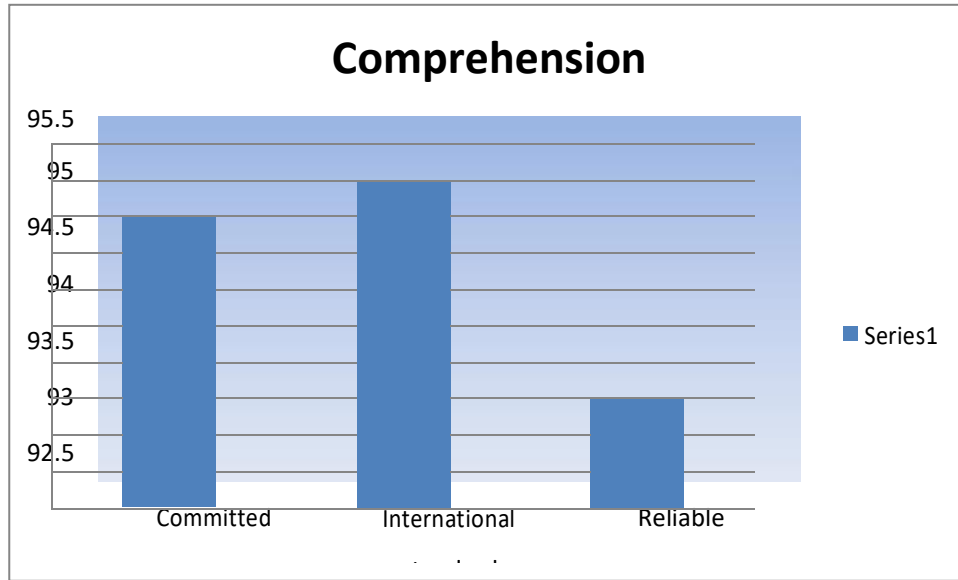


Figure 9: Percentage graph of the items for Comprehension

The internal consistency and reliability of the items included in the assessment of the comprehension was excellent; Cronbach Alpha  $\alpha = 0.840$ . The descriptive statistics of the items used to measure the comprehension are shown in the table 5.

Comprehension Items	M	SD	N
Fully Committed personnel	4.66	.670	277
At par with International standards	4.59	.660	277
Reliable	4.57	.765	277

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Comprehension about Rescue 1122 services

The correlation between the various demographic variables' comprehension was checked. The age and education, was found to be positively and significantly correlated with the comprehension with values 0.234\*\* and 0.309\*\*, respectively. Monthly income seemed to have negative correlation, -0.124\*, with the comprehension about the related to the services of the Rescue 1122.

For further analysis of the nature of the correlation between the significant demographic variables and comprehension about Rescue 1122 services t-test was run between the various age groups. It was found that people between the ages of 36-50 years had the best comprehension of the Rescue 1122 services compared to all other groups. Moreover, the Tukey Test showed that metric and intermediate group level of education had better comprehension about Rescue 1122 as compared to master and above level of education group.

Summing up, the study found that people see Rescue 1122 as a reliable and competent force. Age and education seemed play a significant role in comprehending the importance of Rescue 1122 services. Middle-aged and educated seemed to understand the value of the services of Rescue 1122. People seemed to have understood that they can rely on Rescue 1122 to help in case of any emergency and the service should be contacted immediately in case of any emergency. It reflects good PR that majority of people perceive the personnel of Rescue 1122 as well-trained and committed to their work. People have faith that the quality of the services provided by Rescue 1122 is at par with international standards.

**Research question no.4: Do people have a positive attitude towards the trustworthiness, competence, and efficiency of Rescue 1122?**

The findings of the study suggest that in general people have positive attitude toward professional competence of Rescue 1122. The professional competency was measured along three aspects of the services that is, trustworthiness, competence, and efficiency.

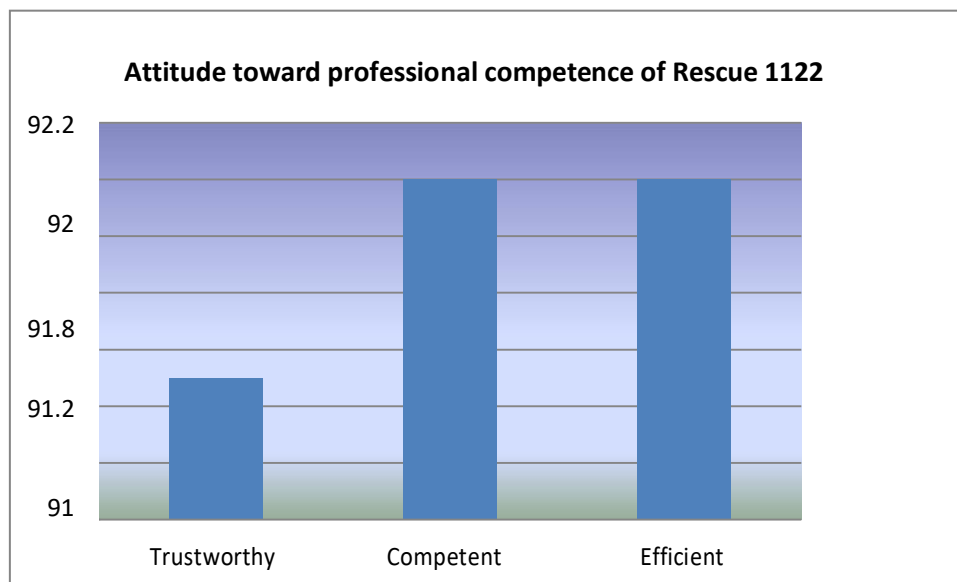


Figure 10: Percentage graph of the items for Attitude

The internal consistency and reliability of the items included in the assessment of the professional competence was good;  $\alpha = 0.724$ . The descriptive statistics of the items used to measure the attitude are shown in the table 5.10.

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the respondent’s Attitude towards Rescue 1122 services**

Professional Competence items	Mean	SD	N
Trustworthy	4.3466	.77723	277
Competent	4.3610	.65910	277
Efficient	4.5957	.75832	277

Majority of the people were found to trust the force and were confident that they can call them without any fear of social, physical or material harm. They also appeared to believe that Rescue 1122 is an efficient and competent force. It is the reflection of good PR strategies of Rescue 1122 that people have no doubt that Rescue 1122 personnel are disciplined, have a highly professional attitude, and can be depended upon in case of emergency. The data shows that students and government employees tended to be more positive towards Rescue 1122 as compared to private employees and businessmen. Women seemed to have more trust in Rescue 1122 than men.

**Research question no.5: To what extent have people adopted the actions recommended by Rescue 1122?**

The study has found that adoption behavior towards the two the recommended actions include that is, to give way to ambulances on the road and to save emergency contact number (ICE) in their cellphones, was not as expected.

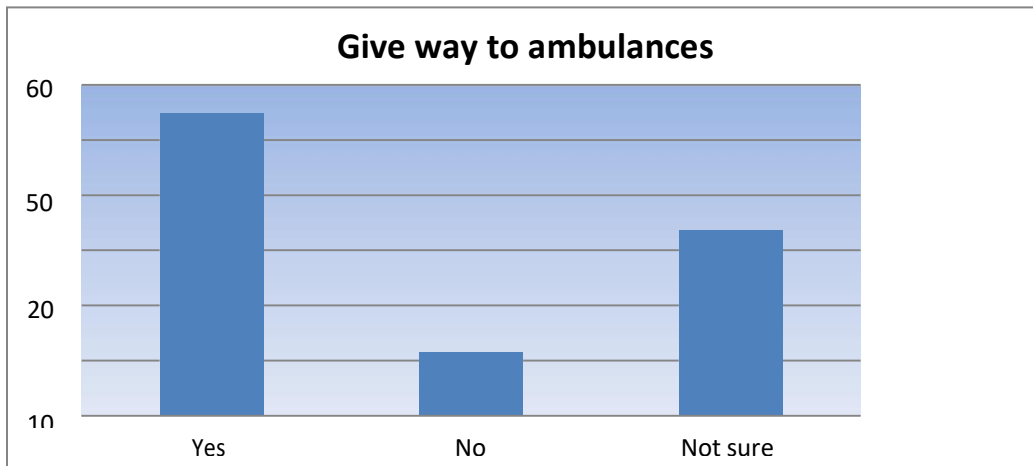


Figure 11: Percentage graph for giving way to ambulances

The most anticipated behavioral change was that people would give way to ambulance was 54.9% answered affirmatively by just little more than half of the respondents (54.9%). The rest of the people were either not sure of doing it all the time (33.6%) or simply did not care about it and replied as 'no' (11.6%).

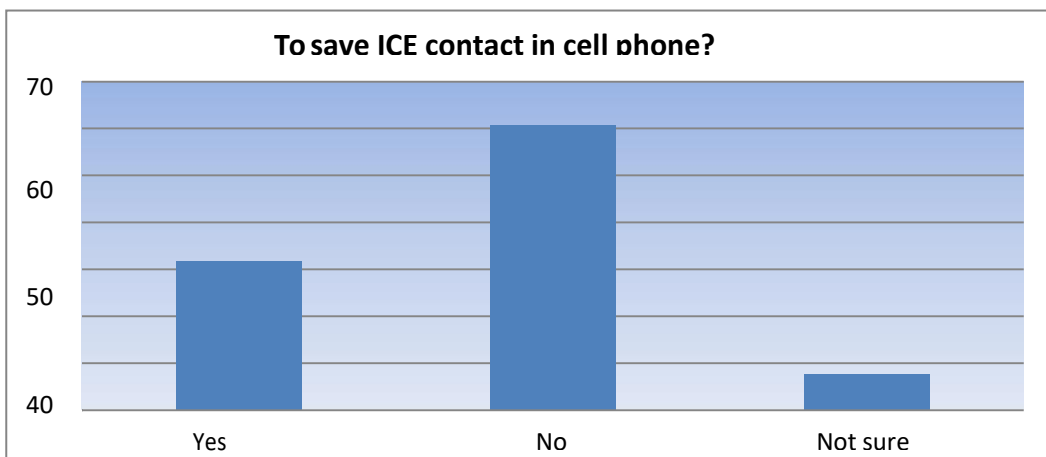


Figure 12: Percentage graph for ICE contact saved

When asked whether they have saved an emergency contact number (ICE) in their cellphones a considerable number of respondents (60.6%) answered negatively, 31.8% said they had saved an emergency contact number in their phones while 7.6% were not sure.

The data shows that people do not usually save ICE numbers in their cellphones however, majority of the people claimed to give way to ambulances; the former appears to relate to the self while the second appears to relate to others. It shows that the people have little sense of self- preservation and understanding of the concept of self-worth, which could be the result of the overall lack of education in Pakistan. The reason for the considerable number of people claim to give way to ambulance probably because they perceive the action to help others.

The PR targets should also include creating of the importance of self-care and self-worth which could lead to better civic behaviors among the people. People should understand that saving ICE numbers does only benefit them but also saves their dears one and emergency services from undue trouble.

**Research question no.6: Do people have positive image of Rescue 1122?**

The study has found that an overwhelming number of people hold a positive image of Rescue 1122 force. The positive image was measured by asking a single question; “Overall, how would you rate Rescue 1122 on the scale from very poor to very good” participants were overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-five percent of them stated that they absolutely agree that Rescue 1122 is a good service.

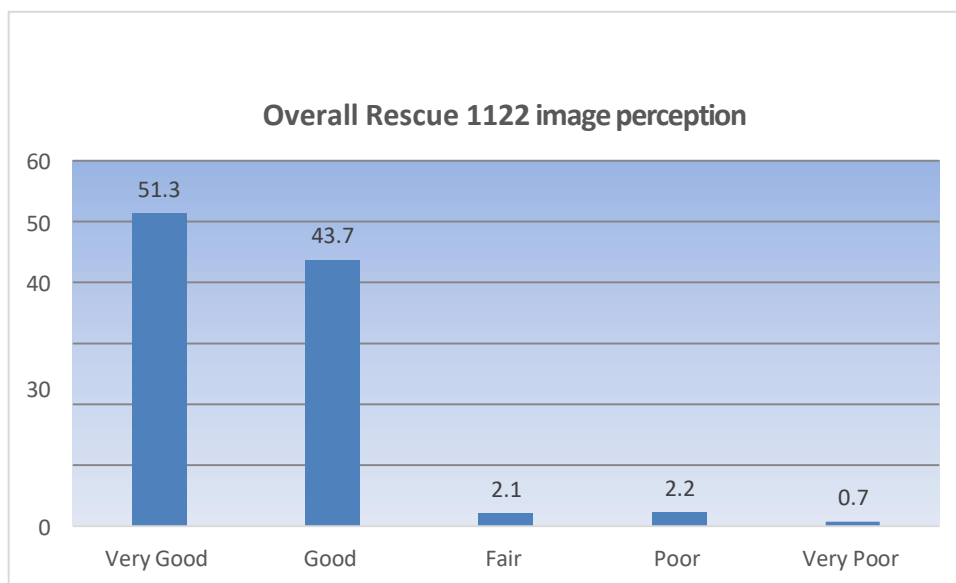


Figure 12: Percentage graph for overall ratings of Rescue 1122

**Conclusions**

This study concludes that the PR efforts and strategies of Rescue 1122 have been very effective in projecting and cultivating a positive image of Rescue 1122 in the minds of the public. The study used the Lindenmann Model of PR evaluation comprising of three steps: outputs, outtakes, and outcomes. Output was measured in terms of information disseminated regarding the services and facilities offered by Rescue 1122, and were found to be very effective. Majority of the people seemed to be aware of the systems, services and area of operation of Rescue 1122. The outtakes, referring to awareness, comprehension and attitude about 1122, were also found to be effective. The PR department is successful in convincing people that Rescue 1122 is a force of highly professional, competent, and committed people. They have achieved the desired level of comprehension and

have shaped positive attitudes in the public very effectively. The outcomes, referring to the changes in behavior of the people and positive image of Rescue 1122, were successfully achieved. Participants hold a positive view of the service. However, the PR efforts seem to be not very successful in convincing people to save ICE numbers in their cellphones.

### Limitations of the study

There were three big limitations of the study. The first limitation was that the data was collected from only two towns in the city of Lahore. Secondly the sample size was small due to the constraint of time and budget. Thirdly the study was confined to basic information about Rescue 1122, it could have been extended to other aspects of the organization such as post- ambulance phase.

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