

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION



STUDY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN BUILDING UNIVERSITY IMAGE:

THE CASE OF BULE HORA UNIVERSITY

BY

CHALA ASFAW

JUNE 2019

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Advisor

AMANUEL GEBRU (PhD)

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION**

JUNE 2019

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA

DECLARATION

I, Chala Asfaw, declare that this thesis study of public relations Practices in building University Image; the case of Bule Hora University entitled my own original work. And it has not been presented in any other University, at least to my knowledge. All the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged. I have carried it out independently with the guidance and suggestions of the research advisor.

Chala Asfaw

(The Researcher)

Signature

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Chala Asfaw, entitled: Study of Public Relations practices in building University Image: The Case of Bule Hora University and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic Communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Approved by the Board of Examiners:

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Examiner_____ **Signature**_____ **Date** _____

Advisor_____ **Signature**_____ **Date** _____

Chair of the Graduate School

ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

First and foremost, my gratitude goes to the Almighty God who has given me life, good health and ability to undertake this Master's course.

I wish to thank my advisor Dr. Amanuel Gebru who has been a patient tutor and a source of inspiration. I am greatly indebted to him for his sharp critique, unending encouragement and guidance during this thesis.

In addition, my thanks also go to my wife Meklit Ashagire and my kid Amen Chala for their patience, understandings and encouragements during by MA thesis.

Last, but not least I would like to thank the respondents from Bule Hora University Top management, Public relations staff and academic staff for being interested to voluntarily participate in this study.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BHU	Bule Hora University
E.C	Ethiopian Calendar
G. C.	Gregorian calendar
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
PR	Public Relations

ABSTRACT

This study examines the practices of relations in building university image; the case of Bule Hora University. Then the objective of this study was to identify to what extent the PR department of Bule Hora university is engaged in image building, self-auditing and follow up, what image building practices are used by the public relations of Bule Hora University and to establish how to use the university's Public relations practices and its activities serve the vision and mission of the university. So to accomplish this objective and come up with the findings, the study employed qualitative research methodology. Accordingly primary data was collected through, FGDs and individual in-depth interviews. In this study, purposive and snowball sampling methodology were adopted. The target groups for this study were the academic staff, public relations staff and Management staff of Bule Hora University. Secondary sources like empirical literature and other documents were used to include the relevant data and strength the study. Concerning the data analysis mechanisms all conversations and discussions were recorded in two languages, Amharic and English. The Amharic version was translated to English Language. The findings demonstrate that Bule Hora University uses different public relations practices in building organizational and university image. Among this public relations practices the university uses the practice of making media relations, panel discussions, two-way communication styles, fast and productive, establishing effective relations with the university publics and using university website as best public relations strategies. The roles of these PR practices in building university image are attracting the university internal and external publics and stakeholders. Also the finding shows that the PR department of the university is highly engaging in image building by self-auditing, follow up and self-assessing in the situations for its effectiveness. Finally, this study suggested that the challenges and weaknesses of public relations in building the university's image. Among this limitations ;lack of enough skilled human power who are acting as public relations practitioners, unrelated field of study with the subject of public relations and budget problems.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study that examines the key concepts under the study. These include using public relations strategies in building the image Bule Hora University and it was followed by statement of the problems, research questions, and objectives of the study, limitation, significance and organizations of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

The formal practice of what is now referred to as public relations dates back to the early 20th century. In the relatively brief period leading up to today, public relations have been defined in many different ways; the definitions often evolve around the changing roles in the field and profession and technological advances. Good public relations require communication skills, expertise in dealing with all media and the principles of persuasion. As a public relations practitioner, we should know when and what to communicate; this involves analysis, judgment, decision making power, counseling and planning (Seitel, 2001). Public relations in its modern form originated from the United States of America (Seitel, 2001) and the developmental history is first discussed with reference to America. Then after an overview of international development follows which include most African countries. Among the African countries Ethiopia is one of the country that apply Public relations strategies for different purposes and in different government and non- government organizations.

In addition to this; public relations is all about maintaining relations with the public. Here, it is the corporate organizations that feel the need to maintain, enhance and foster good relations with their prospective publics in order to succeed. According to Herbig and Milewicz (1993), corporate reputation is formed as a process that gathers the judgments over time of the various groups who interact with the firm. Public relations are progressively more about communicating convincingly with key persons who affect business results, such as media analysts, policymakers and policy persuaders, customers and shareholders. It is a significant component in supporting the supremacy and value of an organization's brands to all stakeholders.

Additionally, public relation is defined as an applied social and behavioral science which measures, evaluates and interprets the attitudes of the various relevant publics. Moreover, having a good relation is the most important factors to build a good relation with companies various publics, Kaul (1988, P.14). Also Belch and Belch, (2003, P.564) suggested that the public relation is a management function which evaluates public attitude, identifies the publics and procedures of an individual organization of action to learn public understanding and acceptance. Public relation (PR) is an effort to inter policies and programs of an organization with the objective to establish a bridge of understanding and good will between organization and its publics (Banik, 2002, P. 39). Nevertheless, there is no single organization that containing around the world that is not affected by rapid changes caused by global competition, customer's pressure and development of information technology. Therefore, the magnitude of public relations activities may differ due to size and nature, no matter what the philosophy , strategy and method is a like whether it is to the global understanding to escalate relations with in the firms and its customers, agent's employees (Black, 2004,P.3).

As the scholars recommend their views about the roles of public relations strategy in building university's image, it is important to use the public relations properly in order to build sustainable organizational image in the mind of its publics and stake holders. Therefore organizational image is an important issue for many institutions including higher education in being a competitive environment that requires higher quality of educational services. Organizational image can defined in many ways by the scholars who study more about it. For example, the organizational image refers to the natural, spontaneous, or the resulting image of the expectations and the exchanges that the people have with the organization (Giangrande 1995). In turn, Guedez and Osta (2012) consider that the organizational image of a university refers to the image perceived by its external public and internal public who are according to their experience, interests and ideas carry out a rational, cognitive and emotional assessment of the characteristics and attributes of the institution. In addition to this; image is defined as the sum of the beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of an object. From a practical point of view, the image could be institutional or organizational. The institutional image is built as a group of people work to create an institution with regard to its objectives, working methods, the treatment they receive from the employees, which in conjunction turns into an institutional image that will indicate what the organization are. Finally, image is a strategic category of modern business,

scientific and expert consensus about that exists. To become a factor of institutional excellence, the image has to be of a good quality, like positive, stable, clear, viable and capable of generating growth and development of their vision. Strategy of public relations as a part of strategy of corporate communication needs to have an especially big role. In fact, besides all aspects of communication activities like; management communication, marketing communication and different concepts of organization communications. Therefore Public Relations strategy has the greatest influence on organizations' image.

In general Public relation is very important in every educational institution. Because, it is believed that the strategic tools applied by public relations could be used to build healthy relationships and image with the publics and the rumors about the university. In total the main objective of this study is evaluating how public relations strategies play roles in building university and organizational image by applying it properly.

1.2. Background of the study organization

Bule Hora University works to provide quality education, conducts problem based researches, gives demand driven community services and enhance leadership and good governance. The university aspires to be a center of excellence in mining, animal production as well as indigenous knowledge researches and one of the recognizable universities in Ethiopia by 2025 G.C.

Higher education and training institutions are expected to be at the forefront of the development and transformation efforts of a nation. They have the responsibility to make multidimensional contributions to the achievements of a nation in terms of boosting the economy, democratic system and good governance. However, Ethiopian higher education has made limited contribution in the realization of such objectives in its history. This may be attributed to several factors; one of the most important is being low coverage. In the past, higher education was not given due attention; its curriculum was not relevant to the country's problems and its capacity was not commensurate with the country's trained man power needs both in quantity and quality (Ministry of Education, 2010). Recognizing these deficiencies, the Ethiopian government has been making efforts to expand higher education so as to contribute more directly to the national strategies of economic growth and transformation.

Bule Hora University (BHU) was, therefore, established to play its part in the national efforts of bringing quality and excellence in teaching-learning, research, community services, administrative functions like good governance, connecting the development of cultural and natural resources with technology and its applications. The foundation stone was laid by H.E Dr. Adehanom Haile (Deputy Minister, Higher Education Affair), the then representative of State Minister, Ministry of Education and H.E Mr. Abadula Gamada, the then President of Oromia Regional State, on 28 November 2008 G.C. The university was officially established by proclamation N^o213/2011 (2003E.C.) as one of the Ethiopian government higher education institutions (HEIs). Bule Hora University is located 470 km south of Addis Ababa in Bule Hora town, West Guji Zone, Oromia Regional State. Currently, Bule Hora University comprises eight Colleges and One School, namely college of Engineering and Technology, college of Informatics, college of Natural and Computational Sciences, College of Health Sciences, college of Agricultural Sciences, college of Business and Economics, college of Social Sciences and Humanities and School of Law. In addition to this the university has fifty eight departments (58), five hundred sixty seven teachers (567), twelve thousand students and one thousand eight hundred fifty administration employees.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The image of any organization is important to provide service for the people and its development. Many organizations spend a lot of money for restructuring and maintaining image to build and retain public trust. Image building by organizations cannot only be conducted through the media. It needs the support of public relations practices effectively to develop the feeling and perception of the publics and the stake holders towards the organization. In addition to this organizational image is very crucial for its daily success. Because of this many scholars raise ideas and revealing their findings concerning the contribution of public relations practices in building the university image. For example; Black (2004, p.5) explains in his books of public relations, public relation recognize a long term responsibility and seeks to persuade and to achieve mutual understanding by securing the willing acceptance of attitudes and ideas. Under modern conditions no government, industry, company or any organization can operate successfully without the cooperation of its publics. These publics may be both at home and overseas, but mutual understanding will be a potent factor for success in every case (ibid).

Oghojafor et.al (2012) say that the world today is tyrannized by call for effectiveness, and as a result workers, managers, departments and organizations are always under pressure to be effective. Because of this, the studies globally have documented that excellent practice of public relations can greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of an organization. In their excellence study, Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier (2002) suggested that public relations can provide the value to an organization by identifying the strategic publics that develop because of the consequences that organizations and publics have on each other by using symmetrical communication programs to develop and maintain quality relationships with these strategic publics. In spite of this, public relations practitioners have continued to struggle to define the role and place of PR in organizations and its contribution to the organizational performance L. Grunig et al (2002). As these three writers explain their views about the strategies of public relations that is important for building organizational image is asking both the effectiveness of public relations department and public relations practitioners in order to bring more effective organizational performances.

Grill (1997) states that many universities have set up PR units for the purpose of enhancing communication with their publics. In concurring claims, Hirsch & Weber (1999) also say that universities generally look to public relations units to manage crises, boost rankings, increase donations, and carry out a variety of other tasks. However, Bruning & Ralston (2001) assert that the practice of public relations at most universities has been relegated to a single office concerned primarily with managing institutional reputation.

The scholars and many other studies are suggesting that the university should use public relations practices properly in building university image. As different studies indicate the Universities should develop the experiences of using public relations strategies and practices effectively in order to build the image of their institutions. The University under study was been in the problem of improving its organizational image. Because of this the university couldn't attract the internal and external publics of the university. So to solve this problem the scholars and different sources are recommended that the higher education should use public relations strategies in building their organizational image. So the universities image is very important and can be effectively built and sustainable through using public relations practices. Therefore the reason that the researcher formulates the research questions to study about is to identify how to use public relations practices in building the university image. Because the university is under

the complains and rumors of its publics. For these complains and rumors who is the responsible one, how PR is practicing to solve this problem, in what way the university image can built and how to establish the public relations practices in building the university image is stated under this topic as the statement of the problem for this study.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What kind of Public relations practices Bule Hora University uses in order to build

Organizational image?

2. In what way the PR department of the university engaged in image building, self-auditing and follow up?

3. What are the roles of public relations practices in building organizational Image of the University?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

This study is based on one general objective and three specific objectives

1.5.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to find out how Public relations practices are used by the university to build image.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify to what extent the PR department of the university is engaged in image building, self-auditing and follow up

2. To examine what image building practices are used by the university public relations department

3. To establish how to use the university's public relations practices and its activities serve the vision and mission of the university

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in a number of ways. Among the ways that it is significant; first, it can assist the one who wants know more about the role of using public relations practices in building university image. Additionally it will support the researchers by being a bench mark for further study about public relations practices in building the universities image. Also the outcomes and results of this study will have potential value to understand public relations practices in creating the organizational image in higher education. Finally, this study can be the source of data for some others who seek more knowledge about it.

1.7. Scope of the Study

This study is delimited by the research title called; study of public relations practices in building university image; the case of Bule Hora University which is found in Ethiopia. In this study the researcher assessed the public relations practices, the best way of practicing public relations in building the university image, how to establish to use the university's public relations practices and its activities serve the vision and mission of the university, what kind of PR practices the university uses in image building and finally the weaknesses and challenges of the University's public relations in image building.

1.8. Limitation of the Study

The researcher faced many limitations during this study. Among these limitations some of them are; during the data collection period from the field, the respondents couldn't be available on time, knowledge gap of respondents with the issue under study and some of them are them are refusing to be audio or video recorded during data collection. For all these limitations the researcher was been ready and managed them strategically. The problem of refusing video and audio the researcher persuade them that it is needed only for the purpose of this study and confidentiality will strictly kept. For the knowledge gap of the respondents the researcher gives all directions of information flow.

1.9. Organization of the Study

This research is presented in five chapters. The first chapter incorporates the background of the study, Statements of the problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and significance of the study. In the second chapter, review of related literature has tried to set the frame work of the study. In the third chapter, major methodology techniques will be implemented through the research work. The fourth chapter will exclusively present and discussed the findings and finally the last chapter has ended up by conclusions and forwarding some recommendations about this study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature on how public relations have been used with specific reference to image building of higher education institutions. The review includes academic, policy and legal literature on image building so as to redeem and maintain the public confidence in the university. It looks at global status of public relations activities with specific reference to image building. Also this chapter will look over the following topics with its definitions by referring literatures deeply. It will explain about the meaning and definitions of public relations, background of public relations, definition of organizational image, definition of organizational image of a university, components of organizational image of a university, importance of organizational image, building image using public relations, communication and organizational image, the role of public relations, tools of public relations, challenges of public relations and finally it looks at how communication can be used in building government institution image and the theoretical frame of this thesis will be interpreted in this chapter.

2.1. Meaning and Definitions of Public Relations

The definition of Public relations is given by different scholars in different ways. Among the definitions that are given by scholars some of them are raised as follows. Public relation is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest and execute program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance (Belch and Belch, 2004, p.23). According to these two scholars public relations is a communication management which measures and mediate the public's opinion and organizations interest with their stakeholders and public. Under this public relations function is about the mutual understanding between an organization and its public as well as giving the management functions like planning, coordinating, managing, analyzing, decision making and staffing in communication process of one organization.

Additionally, Banik (2004, P.5) define public relations as it is a tool, which we use to creating 'belongings' and winning employee's cooperation, building good will, furthering mutual interest and overcoming public misconceptions. As this scholar give the definition of it; public relations

is the strategy which is important for creating belongings and winning the organizations employee's unity, building image, extending mutual interest and overcoming misunderstanding about the organization by its publics and stakeholders. Public relations is a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends (Cutlip et al., 2006). This definition highlights the need for PR to be involved at the management level, as well as the essential nature of the relationship between organizations and stakeholder groups in order to establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation.

2.2. Background of Public Relations

There is a disagreement among historians and intellectuals on when Public Relations was first practiced, who practiced it first, and where it was practiced originally. Traditionally, Americans have claimed that they invented Public Relations; but Chinese scholars have pointed out that Chinese rulers practiced something resembling contemporary Public Relations more than 5,000 years ago. Even though the first rudimentary practice of Public Relations may have begun thousands of years ago, it has been an occupation only for about 100 years. It is recently emerging field of study; however, it has developed from an occupation into a profession in many countries. That is, Public Relation has been something that people did to earn a salary; but it has not been a discipline for which they studied to prepare for the work. There was no formal education in Public Relation (The International Public Relations Association, 2003). From this opinion we can understand that the public relations was practiced as the source of income for many years in different world's countries. In addition to this before long period of time public relations was not given for learners as profession but for the sake of earning salary.

Research practices on public relations in the African continent is for the most parts resolve and disintegrated, a huge extent of it accomplished on specific aspects of practice in distinct nations. There are few investigations that endeavour to regard Africa as an entity and from communication viewpoint. According to Solomon (2000), a practice more or less resembles modern public relations is believed to have been started in 1960's in Ethiopia. In fact the emergence of the practice of modern public relations in the country came as a result of the establishment of the Ministry of Pen in 1940's. Then media organizations such as Radio, News

Agency and Television services were organized and administered under the ministry of Pen. After serving for some time, the ministry was replaced by the Ministry of Information and tourism in 1950's with similar task of administering the media organizations in addition to carrying out the responsibility of culture and tourism related issues.

Later in 1960's when the Ministry of Information replaced it, the responsibility of leading the media organizations was also transferred to the new ministry. The head of government public relations, around the final years of Emperor Haile Selassie, explained the practice at that time as routine occupied by activities, for example, gathering information and convention. At that time the public relations strategies practice was unbelievable to promote the country and building agreement. The practice of public relations was started to take shape during the 1960's continued for years without any change in form and content. The major purpose of the public relations then was merely serving the interest of the ruling class. As the public relations at those times were so unprofessional, it was unable to respond to the situations arising in those times. One incident that can be mentioned to substantiate the failure was the case of the devastating famine that occurred in 1974 Solomon (1998). Nothing was known to the nation as well as the whole world about the fatal famine. It seems that the system was convinced the story would remain untold forever; so it opted to focus on working how to hide instead of trying to manage the crisis.

Though it is not possible to find out when modern public relations have begun in Ethiopia; there is a belief that it might have been in 1960s (Solomon, 1998, p.20). Prior to this period, the beginning of newspapers since 1900's provided advertisement space for business organizations together with the introduction of printing press, telecommunication and the rail way by Emperor Minilik II (MoI, 2003). Now days, public relation activities are mainly considered as hub of developmental activities; thus, in each government offices, there is public relations office. Among these offices, the government universities in the country have opened offices for public relations practices which aimed to promote and report the day-to-day teaching learning, research, community services and technology transfer issues to the internal and external publics. Finally this study will investigate how public relations strategies play its role in Government University in building university image by taking Bule Hora University in focus.

2.3. Definitions of Organizational image

Image is very essential for the success of every government and private organizations to provide their service and products for their stakeholders and customers. This very basic thing for organizational success; image is interpreted and defined by scholars differently from time to time.

Organizational image is defined by (Arpan et al., 2003) as the sum of the quality of products and services produced, activities organized and successes achieved by an organization since its establishment until present day. This scholar's view refers that the organizational image is defined as the reward which is gained from the quality of that organization's services and products provide for their publics which is organized and achieved the success of that organization starting from its establishment. Organizational image does not only develop based on tangible and physical elements related to appearance, but it is also affected by visual, auditory and behavioral elements. Additionally the organizational image is a complex construct based on the perception of the public or personnel of an organization that carries out a differentiating and comparative appraisal of its characteristics (Gunalan & Ceylan, 2014). To build organizational image; it is difficult, because the perceptions of the publics of the organizations are different and comparative to each other. The image is formed for the people or for the public of the organization as a result of the interpretation that they make out of the information or disinformation of the organization (Toto & Garcia, 2012). Means this, image is formed and build based on the information the publics and stakeholders of the organization have and not.

Also, Polat (2011) defines the organizational image as the vision, representation or impression that the people form in their minds based on the information or data of an organization obtained through the interaction they have had with the elements or components of the organization. Image is firstly formed in the mind of people by having vision, representation and impression through communicating and maintain positive image. In other way (Helgesen & Nettet, 2007) organizational image is presented as the corporate image, perceived external prestige, corporate reputation, and corporate identity, among others. In general organizational image is the beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of an organization.

2.3.1 Organizational Image of the University

Organizational image of a university is very crucial for every higher education in order to create good perception about the institution in the mind of its internal and external publics and as well as its stakeholders. Organizational image of a university is defined by the scholars in different ways. Among those definitions some of them are the following.

Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) define the organizational image of a university as the perceived image that the public has of a higher education institution according to their ideas, interests and personal experiences. Under this definition, the person linked to the university does a rational and emotional assessment of the tangible and intangible attributes of the institution. Means this; the organizational image of a university is refers that the perceptions of the publics and stakeholders of a university they have about the university. In turn, Guedez and Osta (2012) consider that the organizational image of a university refers to the image perceived by its external public (public and private organizations, graduates, governmental institutions) and internal public (students, instructors, administrative and services personnel, among others), who, according to their experience, interests and ideas carry out a rational, cognitive and emotional assessment of the characteristics and attributes of the institution. As this definition organizational image of a university is based on the feeling, attitudes, beliefs and information the internal and external publics they have.

2.3.2. Components of organizational image of the university

There are many parts of organizational image of a university. Among those components some of them are stated by the scholars. Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) point out the presence of two components of the organizational image: functional and emotional. The functional component is related to the tangible characteristics of the organization that can be easily measured, in turn, the emotional component is related to psychological aspects such as feelings and attitudes toward the organization as a result of experiences and the processing of information of attributes that contribute to the performance of the organization. In this statement the component of organizational image of a university is divided in to two. One is the functional image and emotional image. The former one is a component that measured easily based on physical

characteristics while the later one is formed by psychological aspects. According to these authors, the ideal image of a higher education institution considers four factors (cognition, evaluation, activity and strengths) and eleven components: reliable, warmth, active, friendly, liberal, reputation, attractive, developing, young, modern and open.

2.3.3. Importance of Organizational Image

The organizational image is important for the organizations that want to be competitive and guarantee their permanence in the market in the short, medium and long term, with a growing demand for their products and services. The importance of organizational image is justifying with the evidence of many scholars' studies at different areas of study.

The image perceived by the public and stakeholders of an organization, as well as by the employees, directly affect the performance of the organizations (Druteikiene, 2011). According to this scholar the image of one organization is perceived by its publics and stakeholders. During they perceived the image of that institution by their followers in good manner they can build image of that organization. After they build good image of their company; they have great chance of acceptability and trust on their products and services. Additionally in the higher education institutions, the organizational image is an important factor to attract and retain the best students, instructors and employees (Helgesen and Nasset, 2007). The university with best image attracts many of the students, teachers and other employees. Therefore, according to this scholar's view; organizational image has great influence for the attractiveness of the institutions for all of that organization community and other publics. In the case of the students, the image of an educational institution is important for the realization of their studies and to attract other students (Brown & Mazzarol, 2009). Students will be very loyal for the university with good image because it is important for their study dreams realization.

In regard to the instructors and the personnel, the image of the educational institution is fundamental as it generates emotional ties, that creates a response as well as positive performance, and it creates a greater commitment, involvement and cohesion in the personnel (Treadwell & Harrison, 1994). Under this; organizational image is important factor to create and encourage instructors and another employees to generate fundamental feelings that connect with positive performance about the institution.

2.4. Using Public Relations in Building Image

Most of the organizations today place heavy emphasis on externalities such as marketing, branding and image management, and lesser attention on internal communications (Chong, 2007). As Chong suggests that many of the companies are pay more attentions for their organizations image in order to build and branding their services and products before their publics and stakeholders. Additionally according to Pickton and Broderick (2005) image is the perception of the company by its publics. The authors emphasized that an organization have many images, but not just one, because each target audience is affected by its own interest and contacts. Clow and Baack (2007) stressed that strong company image, which took years to build, may be destroyed in just a few weeks or months by negative publicity and events. Therefore the role of public relations in building strong company image is very essential. Wells et al., (2005) mentioned employee relations, media relations, corporate relations, financial relations, public affairs and community relations as types of relations that public relations professionals of an organization deal with. Dortok (2006) concedes that building an image and a relationship for an organization, it is crucial to pay more attention to employees as they are considered one of the most trusted information sources of an organization. Also Ledingham and Bruning (2000) further indicated that communication becomes a vehicle used by an organization to initiate, develop, maintain and repair mutually productive relationships.

2.5. Communication and Organizational Image

Organizational image is unthinkable without communication. This is because to talk about organizational image communicating effectively is a must. Additionally public relations practitioners are applying their professional responsibility by communicating. In every organization to build image; it is necessary to use communication as a tool. Rajshekhar et al (1994) pick out communication as the best means through which companies can make this image and maintain it. Consumers use different sources of information to form their impressions about a company. Because of such diversity, companies need to always be on the alert as to the right medium to use and the best things to do. Using communication and choosing the right channels of communication for the sake of alerting the publics and stakeholders of that organization in order to build the institutions image is only possible by the means of communication. Grey and Balmer (1998) suggest that even the names of the companies is enough to communicate its goals

and may even determine the rate of sales and how competitive a firm can get in the market. From this scholar's opinion the researcher suggests that the company name can give a sense for the publics to have organizational image. So the name of the company is supposed to have the power of communicating about it effectively. Reddi (2000) defines public understanding as a phase where the public information is current practice of establishing and maintaining goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. Public opinion and understanding of a particular issue has become the key factors for the success of any organization. Under this; the way of making relationship of the organization with their publics and stake holders is communication. Through effective communication we can establish and maintain good relationship of our organization with the publics. Additionally, communication is the essential thing that is important to grasp the opinion and feeling of the publics of one organization in order to successfully accomplish their goals.

2.6. Theoretical framework

In order to process its daily activities the university should do with some strategies to improve its image especially its relationship with the media and its people's skill and as well as its publics. Additionally all who attempt to solve the problem make recommendations and predict the future, need theories and model of public relations as a starting point and concepts. Theory provides a model for the practice of public relations. This study was mainly, informed by three theories and two public relations models. The excellency theory, legitimacy theory and agenda setting theory. The study also was framed by two public relations models; Public Relations transfer Model and two way symmetrical model.

2.6.1. The Excellence Theory

The excellence theory is the first general theory of public relations (Lindeborg, 1994). The theory specifies how PR makes organizations more effective, how it should be organized and managed in order to contribute for organizational effectiveness, and how to determine the monetary value of public relations (Grunig, 2002). From the scholars elaboration we can say that the excellence theory has great potential in structuring effective organizations. Effective organizations are very strong in keeping their organizational reputation because of they are doing every activities carefully. Because of this they have positive relations and perceptions'

with their publics especially concerning their service and products. Then their services and products become accepted by many publics and they have good organizational image. In addition to this also (Grunig, 2002) explains again about this theory by saying the excellence theory first explains the value of PR to an organization and the society in which it operates. This value is based on the quality of relationships an organization has with its stakeholder and publics. The theory asserts that in order for PR to make a contribution in an organization it must be part of strategic management. According to this theory, for an organization to be effective it must solve the problem and satisfy the goals of both the publics and stakeholders. Organizations must identify their various publics who are affected by the decisions taken by the organization or those who want the organization to solve a problem important to them. To sum up the excellence theory is essential to see this research through it, because it is all about organizational effectiveness and the relationship of the organization with their publics and stakeholders.

2.6.2. Legitimacy Theory

For public relations practitioners to be effective in establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders, it is necessary to understand and negotiate many environmental influences on the organization that impact its survival. Institutional theory suggests that organizational survival depend not just on material resources and technical information, but also on the organization's perceived legitimacy.

Organizational legitimacy is a summative reflection of the relationship between an organization and its environment. Legitimacy theory is defined and explained by many authors. Weber (1988) stressed the importance of legitimacy with his belief that legitimate order guided social action. Weber states that legitimacy theory is important in organizations by legitimate order of social actions. Organizations are found in environment and established by social divisions. Therefore according to Weber (1998), legitimacy theory is used to order and guiding the actions of social in the organizations. Schuman (1995, p.574) defines organizational legitimacy as the generalized perception and assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable and appropriate within a social system. According to Schuman legitimacy in organization is all about the perception and assumptions of the entity act to be desirable and appropriate with the social system.

Maurer (1971,p. 361) points out that legitimation is the process whereby an organization justifies to a peer or superordinate system its right to exist; that is to continue, import, transform, and export energy material or information. In this definition legitimacy is a process that the organizations prove to mediate and separate the right system to exist; that is to continue, import, transform and export the energy material and information.

Additionally Hooghiemstra (2000) looks at the image of a company through the legitimacy theory. According to this theory, the survival of a company is dependent on the extent to which the company operates within the bounds of the society. This means that companies that do not seem to affect their immediate publics in a positive manner may be set to leave the market sooner than later. Norms of society are gradually changing; companies need to depend on corporate reporting (communication of its activities) to prove that they are changing with the changing environment. Corporate reporting, in this case, will have to be geared towards self-laudatory, which will show the stakeholders what the firm is doing for the environment like reducing pollution, maintaining quality, sponsoring events close to the hearts of the people. In general the concept of legitimacy theory is important in analyzing the relationships between the organizations and their environment to build effective relationship in building organizational image.

2.6.3. Agenda setting Theory

The Agenda Setting theory was developed by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw. It suggests that the media is good at telling us what to think about. For example; if there is a hurricane in the US, the media tell us about it, then we all feel affected even though it does not affect our lives directly. Also the media have great potential to set the agenda by the choices the gatekeepers (editors) have made. This theory describes the ability of news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda, McCombs, (2002). It means that if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as important. Additionally agenda setting theory is about the influence of mass media on the public focus attention who and what people are thinking about. It examines the media effect on the perceived importance of issues held by public. So through this theory we can grasp the attention of the university publics by using media regularly to encourage them to follow the news of the university.

2.6.4. Public Relations Transfer Model

Public relations transfer model was propounded by Frank Jefkins in 1988. According to Nweke (2001, P.53), this model is an antidote against some negative developments in organizations. Jefkins (1988) cited in Nweke (2001) expatiates that when the negative situation is converted into positive achievements through knowledge, the result predictably, is the primary objective of public relations practice understanding. Under this public relations transfer model is about eliminating the negative rumors around the organizations. Rumors and complains are coming from the mistake's and problems the organizations committed and as well as simply defamation by different competitive parties. So to delete these negative developments happening in the organization the solution is simply using public relations transfer model.

Nweke (2001) elaborates that when the negative situation is converted into positive achievements through knowledge, the result predictably, is the primary objective of public relations practice understanding. This model explains how practitioners can use and apply public relations tools and strategies towards changing hostility among an organization's target publics to sympathy so as to be in a better position to convert prejudice into acceptance, develop interest when there is apathy and then, be able to communicate effectively to achieve knowledge where there is ignorance. From the foregoing, it means that organizations can use Jefkins' public relations transfer process model to win the goodwill of the public so as to reduce crisis. Through communication, the public relations practitioner can convert the four negative attitudes of the public into four positive attitude; ignorance to knowledge, hostility to sympathy, prejudice to acceptance, apathy to interest. Since this study about building the university image there is previously the problem with the organization under study. The source of these problems can be the negative perception fabricated towards that organization. So to eliminate this negative perception about the university the solution is using this public relations model in order to build the organizational image.

2.6.5. Two-Way symmetrical Model

This model to its proponents Grunig and Hunt (1984) states that two-way information dissemination process between an organization and its publics. According to Grunig and Hunt two-way symmetrical model is about the circulation of information from the organization to the

publics and from publics to organization. The organization in turn notes, works on and responds to the public's feedback and gets the actions taken across to the public again. Companies that adopt this communication model often act as socially responsible organizations. In this model, public relations has the great potential to promote and inform the organizations to its publics and customers. During this; the publics, stakeholders and other people are begin to feel and think about that institutions services and products. Therefore this two way symmetrical public relation model is preferable to build the image of the university under study by applying it properly.

2.7. The Role of Public Relations

Public relations play many roles in any organizations by performing different activities. The roles of public relations are elaborating by different scholars. The concept of roles is rooted in structural-functionalist theory and refers both to the acts performed by people in certain positions within an organization as well as their relationships with people in other roles (Bivins, 1989). Therefore, the role of public relations is not only measured by the activities applied by PR profession, but it needs both the activities and positions of the practitioners including the relationships they have with other peoples. In turn Dozier (1992, p. 328) proposed that practitioners roles are key to understanding the function of public relations and organizational communication. According to this scholar the role of public relations is explained by the practitioners of public relations mainly as the key actors. According to Reddi (2000), public Relations play a critical role in building the reputation of a company based on its vision, mission, goals and performance. Under this public relations can play great roles in building the image of the organization to accomplish its vision, mission and goals. Stroh (2007) says that public relation is used to build and enhance healthy relationships between an organization and its publics, it is vital to recognize that many cross-disciplines have been integrated to build a theory of public relations in terms of relationships and relationship management. This idea strengthens the view that public relations is a communication process that maintains mutual benefit for both an organization and its public.

Additionally Kotler and Mindak (2000) argued that public relations play a greater role in academia. Public relations in the university play the role of promoting the university, creating effective relationship with the university publics and with the university, remove the negative rumors and building the sustainable organizational image.

According to National School of Public Relations Association (2010) educational public relations function or practice helps improve the programs and services of an educational organization. Educational public relations programs therefore assist in interpreting public attitudes, identify and help shape policies and procedures in the public interest, and carry on involvement and information activities which earn public understanding and support. National School of Public Relations Association (2010) further mentioned the following as the functions and practices of educational public relations: counseling media's liaison communications planning, publicizing students and staff achievements, community relations liaisons and information station.

According to Jobber (2001) one of the functions of public relations is to manage misconception so that unfounded opinions do not tarnish the image or operations of the organization. Under this public relations have the potential to manage the misconception of the organizations their publics and stake holders. Well et al (2005) also asserted that public relations functions are designed by planners to make changes in the public's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to a company, brand or organizations. In general public relations strategies is very essential for building university and organizational image, initiating developing strategy and managing communication in the university and this indicates that public relations is a basic function of a current university's management. On the other side the public relations strategies is playing the crucial roles in building the organizational image. From begging the basic public relations strategy is refers that the designed plan of PR activities to accomplish the organizations goal by communicating about the organizations with its publics. For this the indicator is the scholar's view towards the definitions of public relations. For example, Taylor and Vasquez ,(2000) state that the public relations strategy is the integrated plan that is designed to achieve the organizational goals by creating mutual understanding between its publics.

2.8. Tools of Public Relations

Palmer (2005) emphasized that a wide range of public relations tools are available and suitability of each tool depends on the promotional objective. Belch and Belch (2001) echoed that public relations uses a variety of tools including special publications, participation in community activities, fund-raising, and sponsorships of special events, advertising and public affairs activities to enhance an organizational image. Well et al., (2005) also described categories of

public relations tools and stressed that the tools are best suited to create awareness of an organization and its services depending on the amount of control the company has in its communication. The tools are described as controlled (e.g. House ads, Public service ads, Publications, Photographs, Displays, exhibits), uncontrolled (e.g. News release, Press conferences, Talk and interview shows, Public service announcements) and semi-controlled (e.g. Electronic communication (web sites, chat rooms), Special events and sponsorship, Word of mouth).

Lancaster (2005) states that companies that use television as a medium of communication stand the chance of achieving a high level of impact on their customers or public due to its visual nature. The author observed that during a television program, individual's explanation regarding issues relating to their companies could be supported with either products or footage of the company's participation in a sponsored event. This, the author argued, has the ability to erase any erroneous impressions about such companies.

Clow and Baack (2007) also argued that the internet could be used as a major tool of public relations to help combat negative word of mouth. Khalil (2004) also asserted that the explosive growth of mobile computing and wireless networks has helped educational institutions stay at the forefront of the changing world. Also the internet has many benefits in the academic cycle as it provides around the clock access to global sources of information and the website provides a faster, broader reach for public relations practitioners to publish company press releases, background information, introduce new products or services and provide promotional information for an organization. Therefore, the internet has become an invaluable tool for teaching, learning, and research. In their study, Wright and Hinson (2010) found that face book and the website were the most current media used for public relations message. Therefore; organizations must be vigilant and realize the power of the Internet and website and what it can do to an organization's reputation.

2.9. Challenges of the Public Relations

Like all forms of marketing communication, public relations also comes with its special challenges. An investigation into the literature reveals that the major problems faced by the public relations unit of many organizations are lack of qualified personnel, operational space, recognition and budget (Bruning and Ralston, 2001). Jefkins (2000) argued that the ideal

structure of the public relations department should be independent and directly responsible to the chief executive officer (CEO). Grunig et al., (2006) also asserted that integration of the public relations functions into other areas means that the functions cannot be managed strategically. Thus, if the public relations officer is placed in any other department, its functions will be strictly limited. Therefore, the public relations officers in an institution, if accorded the needed recognition they deserve by management, a seat will be reserved at corporate boardroom tables for their involvement in strategy development (Nakra, 2000).

Bruning and Ralston (2001) also wrote that the practice of public relations at most universities has been relegated to a single office concerned primarily with managing institutional reputation. By this assertion, one could say that public relations functions or practices will be limited in accomplishing its objectives especially in private universities which rely solely on internally generated funds to run the affairs of the institutions. Similarly, Heskov and Piroek (2003), on the other hand, postulate that higher educational institutions need to develop public relations capacities to build proactive public relations departments. This will require recruiting qualified staff and training them to perform their tasks in order to improve the image of the institutions. In addition to the scholars view also in our country there are many challenges of public relations to apply all the activities in organizations for different purposes.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research method and design which was suitable for this study. It also provides an outline of the sampling size, sampling process, data collection instruments, data analysis and presentation method and ethical consideration.

3.1. Research Design

The research design helps the researcher to answer the research questions effectively and also serve as a guide to choose the appropriate data required for the study. This study used qualitative research approach and descriptive research design to find out views on how public relations contribute in building organizational image. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) explain that descriptive research design is a process of collecting data in order to test and answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study. The researcher set out deliberately to describe profile of persons, events, situations or occurrences.

3.2. Research Method

Before directly explaining the tools and methodology for this study; it is important to write the scholars views about the research methodology as the follows. Tull and Hawkins (1984) explain that a research method offers a guideline which is used for the specification of procedures for collecting and analyzing the necessary data to identify a problem in order to solve the problem at hand.

There are two types of public relations research methodology; qualitative research and quantitative research. The purpose of qualitative research is to provide a rich, in-depth understanding of how certain people think or feel about a subject. Qualitative techniques can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The methods allow a researcher to view behavior in a natural setting without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research (Wimmer et al, 2011).

Qualitative research method includes the following techniques like, observation, interviewing, diary keeping, analysis of existing documents, photography, videotaping, and so on. Qualitative research method puts the researcher in the middle of the topic under study. This means that, through his/her personal observation, the researcher can get firsthand information about the issue under study. Qualitative research involves only a few cases, but they are examined in great detail. Qualitative research method mainly includes interview, focus group discussion (FGD) and content analysis. Additionally, according to Opoku-Amankwa (2009), research investigations that are primarily seeking non-numerical forms of data are called qualitative method of research. Researchers, who use a naturalistic approach to investigate people's feelings and beliefs, opinions, or ways of life, find qualitative data in variety of sources and are interested in appreciating the meanings attached to them. In general the researcher prefers to use the qualitative research methods which includes in depth interview, focus group discussion and content analysis.

In this study the researcher prefers to use the qualitative research method because of it is regarded as more appropriate for the study title and the basic aim of this study is to describe and explain the roles of using public relations strategies in building university image, from the perspective of the study population. Based on this the researcher decide to use qualitative research method by applying in-depth interview, focus group discussion and content analysis.

3.3. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used for interviews, FGD and content analysis. To provide essential context for purposive sampling method, the researcher tried to review different scholars view as the follows. Yin, (2011,P.11), defines purposive sampling as the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions. Based on this scholar's view the researcher can select the respondents based on the deep information they have with the subject of the study. In turn, Patton (2015) provides the following description of purposeful sampling: the logic and power of purposeful sampling assume in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. The rich information issues can provide the deep understanding about the study.

3.3.1. Sampling Size

Population is the total number of subjects, people, concepts or phenomena the researcher is interested in studying or researching about. Therefore Bule Hora University has many populations. Among these populations public relations department are twelve in numbers, administration staffs are one thousand eight hundred fifty, academic staffs are five hundred sixty seven and students are twelve thousand. Additionally this university has eight colleges and fifty eight departments. But the selected population for the study is; public relations department, administration staff and academic staff of Bule Hora University, because of the researcher believes that they have direct knowledge and understanding about the study. Among fifty eight departments, ten of them are found under social sciences and humanities. The researcher prefers the staffs of the college of social science and humanities purposively for data collection, because they have direct knowledge of public relations. The selected population from academic staff is; Journalism and Communication department, English language and Literature department, sociology and social work, Civic and ethical Studies. From each department two respondents were purposely selected as the representative for their departments as focus group discussion one by being eight in numbers and from the university management the selected populations are the top management of the University.

3.3.2. Sampling Process

In this study, non-probability sampling was used because the study sought to explore certain relevant and accessible artifacts for more in-depth analysis of a particular group which is the government institutions in Bule Hora University. Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they were selected. The purpose of the sampling is to secure a representative group which will enable the researcher to gain information about a population. Rubin and Piele (2005) explain that non probability sampling allows exploring certain relevant and accessible artifacts for more in-depth analysis. Non probability sampling does not allow generalizing to other groups or situations, but it is valuable for studying particular groups of people. According to Opoku-Amankwa (2009), purposive sampling is an intentionally selecting respondents or elements for a study based on certain characteristics or qualities to meet the needs and requirements of a study.

3.3.3. Snow ball and Purposive Sampling

Snowball sampling or Chain-referral-sampling of a hidden population begins with a convenience sample of initial subject, because if a random sample could be drawn, the population would not restrict as hidden. This initial subject serve as seeds, through which wave 1 subject is recruited; wave 1 subject in turn recruit wave 2 subjects; and the sample consequently expands wave by wave like a snowball growing in size as it rolls downhill. Since the study of this research is public university the populations are very broad and it is difficult to control them. So this is the reason that makes the researcher to prefer the referential snow ball and purposive sampling. The researcher was used the snowball sampling to select the academic staff for the first focus group discussion. Purposive sampling was applied for the academic staff of the university only to select the departments who were participate in the study, but the individuals who were came from the department were chosen by their head departments because the researcher wasn't know more about them that have experience of PR knowledge and for this reason the snowball sampling was applied. Additionally when come to the staff of public relations the researcher select the director purposefully, but the other eight participants were selected by their director based on their experience toward public relations knowledge by snowball sampling method. Based on this the researcher was formulating two focus group discussion that contains eight members each and conduct three interviews that contains one members each and in total nineteen in members.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, data was collected through the use of focus group discussion, content analysis and semi-structured interview which enabled the researchers to address the objectives of this study and the language of data collection for this study is Amharic and English. Finally the Amharic version is translated to English.

3.4.1. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research method and data collection technique in which a selected group of people discusses a given topic or issue in-depth, facilitated by a professional, external moderator. Focus group discussion (FGD) is also referred to as group interviewing, which is essentially a qualitative research methodology. It is based on structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews and it offers qualitative researchers the opportunity to

interview several respondents systematically (Babbie, 2011). Also this method serves to grasp the participants' attitudes and perceptions, knowledge and experiences, and practices, shared in the course of interaction with different people. The technique is based upon the assumption that the group processes activated during FGD help to identify and clarify shared knowledge among groups and communities, which would otherwise be difficult to obtain with a series of individual interviews.

FDG allows the investigator to ask both the participants' shared narrative as well as their differences in terms of experiences, opinions and worldviews during such 'open' discussion rounds. Different researchers argue that Focus Group Discussion is the most commonly used type of data generating tools in qualitative research design. One of the advantages of FGD is that tremendous data can be collected from many people in a short period of time. According to Wimmer et al (2011, P.134), FGD responses are often more complete and less inhibited than those from individual interviews. One respondent's remarks tend to stimulate others to pursue lines of thinking that might not have been elicited in a situation involving just one individual. FGD is applauded and widely used in recent times mainly because of its strength of convenience, economic advantage, high face validity, and speedy results (Krueger, 1988). Under this FGD is appropriate to save our time, economy and has great power to convenience and receive fast results. Based on all these importance of it; the researcher is preferring to conduct semi-structured FGD by offering eight respondents from public relations department and eight respondents from academic staff. Totally sixteen respondents are selected for focus group discussion for this study.

3.4.2. In-depth Interview (Semi –Structured Interview)

According to Wimmer and Dominic, (2011), Intensive or in-depth interview gives a wealthy of detailed information and provides more accurate responses on sensitive issues. This means an in-depth interview gives the researcher a chance to explore deeper into the issue and gather accurate data, based on the respondent's response. In turn Opoku-Amankwa (2009) defines interview as useful tool for finding out individual opinions, ideas, values and beliefs. As this scholar suggestion the in-depth interview is a research method which is suitable to grasp the idea and feeling of the individuals about the subject in simple way. According to Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive

individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. For instance, selected respondents can be asked about their thoughts, opinions, perceptions, experiences and expectations about an issue or event which is of research interest.

Additionally it further helps the researcher to be able to make important observations as to carries out the interview. In this study, the researcher employed semi- structured interview in order to get flexibility in raising follow up and probing questions. In the semi-structured interview, open-end questions will apply in order to understand interviewees' subjective view about the issues under study. Under this research method the researcher will conduct the interview with two University top management and one public relations department director as key informants.

3.4.3. Content Analysis

Content denotes what is contained and content analysis is the analysis of what is contained in a message. Broadly content analysis may be seen as a method where the content of the message forms the basis for drawing inferences and conclusions about the content (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). Further, content analysis falls in the interface of observation and document analysis. It is defined as a method of observation in the sense that instead of asking people to respond to questions, it takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of communications. A number of definitions of content analysis are available. According to Berelson (1952) content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Krippendorff (1980) defined content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. As Weber (1985) it is a research methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text.

In general, content analysis is all about making valid, replicable and objective inferences about the message on the basis of explicit (clear) rules. The material for the content analysis can be letters, diaries, newspaper content, folk songs, short stories, and messages of Radio, Television, documents, texts or any symbols. Based on the evidences scholars raise concerning about content

analysis the researcher was analyzing the messages of one magazine and one newspaper the university publish to build the university image.

3.5. Data Analysis Method

In this study, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussion and Content analysis. Data collected will analyzed manually. The in-depth interview and FGD will recorded by notes taking and transcribed, data collected was grouped according to the questions asked; issues of similarities and dissimilarities of the questions and answers was compared and emerging themes searched for. The emerging themes will discussed in relation to the research objectives of this study.

3.6. Participants

The participants of this research were public relations department staff, academic staff and university top management of the university under study.

3.7. Socio-demographic characteristics of the study Participants

The data for this study were collected from different individuals and groups. Since the raw data is very important for this finding success. It consist focus group discussion and individual interviews. Focus group discussions are divided in to two. The first is academic staffs eight in numbers and the second one is public relations staffs of Bule Hora University which contain eight members and totally sixteen in numbers. Additionally there are divisions of interviews that include three members. In total the participants are nineteen. Focus group discussion and interview parts are coded in order to keep the individuals confidentiality. Focus group discussion one is coded as FGD1A and Focus group discussion two is coded as FGD2B and interview part was coded as informant one, informant two and informant three (**I₁, I₂ and I₃**).

Table 3.1 Focus Group Discussion participants Profile

Name of group	Number of group member	Educational background	Sex status	Place	Code
Focus group discussion I	Eight	Five MA and three BA	All are male	BHU	FGD1A
Focus group discussion II	Eight	Seven BA and one diploma	Seven male and one female	BHU	FGD2B
Total	Sixteen	Eleven BA, five MA and one diploma		BHU	Two FGD

Table 3.2 Interview Participants Profile

Name of Interviewees	Number of Participants	Position Status	Sex	Place	Code
Interviewee I	1	University President office Head	Male	BHU	Informant ₁
Interviewee II	1	Research and Academic V/President	Male	BHU	Informant ₂
Interviewee III	1	PR Director	Male	BHU	Informant ₃
Total	3	-	3	-	-

3.8. Ethical Consideration

Consent of the University Management under study and the people who perform public relations duties were sought through a written letter before collecting data for this study. Personal details of the respondents were not included in the interview to assure anonymity. They were also assured of confidentiality that this study was strictly for academic purpose. A copy of the findings of this study will be given to the university and University public relations department after approval. This will serve as evidence of the academic use of the information they provided. It will also guide the various persons who act as public relations practitioners in the selected government institutions to intensify their public relations activities to increase the goodwill of their institutions.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Public Relations definition and concept

This research finding refers that there are different definitions of public relations based on the data collected from the informants and scholars. Also the study explain how the PR practitioners conceptualizing it in their daily activities. Among this definition some of them are; public relations are a means by which the university interacts with the publics and other local communities for accomplishing certain tasks. So public relations is the science and art which is very important to interacting the internal and external publics and the other communities around the university. Under this, public relations play a great role in facilitating different stages to relate the university with its publics in order to accomplish its vision and mission. Additionally the public relations department of the university under study is conceptualizing public relations as it is the bridge of interacting stakeholders and people whom their concern is with the university. To support this finding with the scholar's view earlier in chapter two of this study it was explained that public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest and execute program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance (Belch and Belch, 2004,P.23).The researcher generalize the definition of public relations as it is the means of interaction made by the organizations with its publics in order to be accepted by them and management functions that assess the university publics attitudes and identify the policies of an individual with the public's interest.

Additionally in the organization PR activities are taking place in different ways. Depending on the vision and mission of the university public relations is conceptualized as it is a tool that the university uses to create bridge of interaction between the university and its publics in building the organizational image and also the backbone of the organization because of it is acting as the eye, ear and mouth of the University. In addition to this, the finding indicates that the public relations is well communicator, issue analyzer and making media relations to inform the happening of the university to the publics. Also the scholars elaborate this idea by stating that good public relations require communication skills, expertise in dealing with all media and the

principles of persuasion. As a public relations practitioner, we should know when and what to communicate; this involves analysis, judgment, decision making power, counseling and planning (Seitel, 2001). Additionally the practice of public relations is more about creating the link for the university with the society and promoting it in building organizational image and as well as considering PR as it is more about communication management. In addition to this the informants elaborating that as;

PR is every part of the organization. Because it is working the job of documenting the information about the university to inform the publics what is going on daily and as well as the way of collecting the information from all directions of the university compound to inform the community and university publics. In general Public relations is the way of interacting, creating bridge for the university with its publics, preparing the tool of promoting the university and image building, disseminating the information for the communities and other stakeholders in order to inform them what is really happening in the university(FGD2B Participants, 2019).

Based on the data of FGD2B, the public relations is an art of documenting information daily in order to disseminate it for the publics on the needed time and working different activities of image building. So sum up public relations is the way, method and instrument that Bule Hora University uses for the purpose of image building, communication management, developing relations of the university with the local communities, internal and external publics and stakeholders in order to promote the university more.

4.2. The specific functions of PR in serving the organizational vision and mission

This study indicates that there are different specific functions given by the public relations in the university in order to realize the organizational vision and mission. In Bule Hora University the PR practitioners are employed on different job description based on the position they have and these PR practitioners are performing different activities separately in addition to their regular jobs to success the university's vision and mission. So the specific functions those public relations perform to meet the university vision and mission is acting as the diplomatists because they build mutual relations with many organizations and the university publics.

Public Relations is the functions of performing the activity of building the organizational and university image, building public confidence on the university service delivery, publishing different materials like magazine and brushers, preparing panel discussion and facilitating different stages in the university specifically. There is also another functions performed by public relations to meet the university vision and mission like contributing every necessary activity for the development of the university. Additionally by considering the vision, mission and core values of the university public relations practitioners are working the job of investigative activities for the success of the university's vision and mission by informing the community, stakeholders, internal and external publics of the university. Also in public relations department or directorate there are different job responsibilities and the public relations practitioners again perform different activities based on their professional duties (FGD1A and FGD2B participants, April, 2019).

To support this finding the researcher inserts the scholars view as the following. According to by Reddi (2000), public relations play a critical role in building the image of a company based on its vision, mission, goals and performance. This means public relations have great potential in building organizational image and the public confidence on university accomplishing the organizational vision, mission and goals. Additionally Stroh (2007) says that public relations is used to build and enhance healthy relationships between an organization and its publics, it is vital to recognize that many cross-disciplines have been integrated to build a theory of public relations in terms of relationships and relationship management.

From the above the researcher explain the specific functions performed by public relations to success the vision and mission of the university that PR is contributing professional support for the university image building, building effective relations with the university publics and the stakeholders and committed more in building the university image. Additionally the finding show that there is another function of public relations. PR staff of the university under study is making relationship by using PR strategies with NGO, national and international organizations and different universities for the sake of sharing good experiences that help to develop the experiences of PR practitioners in building the university image. The university public relations department is working the activities in cooperation to successfully building the university

image. In general the public relations of Bule Hora University performing the activities of serving as a liaison between the university and their students by disseminating information and organize meetings in order to solidify the relationship between the university and their students, managing the notice boards in the university and managing the university website specifically and performing all the necessary activities related with their profession to meet the university vision and mission by giving its functions of counseling, planning, analyzing and decision making.

4.3. The Image of Bule Hora University

The data of this indicate that the image of the university under study was weak for different reasons before months. Since the objective of higher education institution is performing the activity of teaching and learning, it is must to focus only on learning and teaching, research and community service activity rather than offering political issues. But in Bule Hora University the students were following different political ideology and protesting to the University. Then the situations of learning and teaching process has started to fail due to of smooth relationship between the students and university management because the university management couldn't control the situations on time. Again there is the problem of providing effective services for the students, the dormitory of the female and male students is not demarcated clearly. Therefore, these problems results in bad perception in the mind of the publics and minimize the image of the university even if the university is working hard to build organizational image. In addition to this Interviewee (Interviewee1) elaborates the situations like this;

Even if the university is fast growing in the side of learning and teaching process; but because of it was recently established and young university, there are some difficulties and challenges like lack of peace and security, unethical activities like robbing the university properties, weak university leadership and students protesting to the university management. This decrease the image of the university. But currently the university is on the right track in building organizational image by using public relations strategies and currently the image of our university is better.

Based on this the researcher generalize about the image of Bule Hora University as it is not effective because of it is recently established, lack of peace and security in the university compound and weak leadership styles of the university management. But know the university

image is in the middle level as this research finding shows. Also currently there is the hope to build effective organizational and university image because the university management and public relations department are working hard collaboratively in building the university image effectively by using public relations strategies. Additionally the data collected from the newspapers and magazine's shows that the university was been in the crisis of managing its organizational image because there were many unethical issues. But currently the university is showing the progress in building its image by working in collaboration with the university management and public relations office.

4.4. Importance of the University Image

Organizational image is very important for the success of daily activities and customer attractiveness by the organizations. So the image of higher education institution is important for creating smooth learning and teaching environment. In this study there are many importance of the university image interpreted.

Organizational image is very important for any organization in order to successfully delivering the services and products. But particularly in the cause of the university, image is important for positively teaching and learning process, teachers and students attraction. If the image of the university is good there is also good feeling and confidence on it. After the publics develop the confidence on the institution there are the opportunities of attracting everybody who are interested in our university. Therefore if we build our university image effectively we have also good acceptance from the publics. Because of our university couldn't built effective organizational image we couldn't strive, change, excellence, making relationships with other universities to share good experiences and fail to attract teachers and students effectively. But if the image of our university was built in good manner there is the opportunities of successfully strive change and excellence, build effective relationship with other universities, provide community services, attracting students and teachers, building the confidence of the publics on the university (FGD1A members, April 15, 2019).

To strength the informants idea more, (Helgesen and Nessel, 2007) stating; the organizational image is an important factor to attract and retain the best students, instructors and employees as

well as very essential for the organization effectiveness, success and customer attraction. Additionally, Guedez and Osta (2012) consider that the organizational image of a university refers to the image perceived by its external and internal publics who are according to their experience, interests and ideas carry out a rational, cognitive and emotional assessment of the characteristics and attributes of the institution and very essential for its development. Also the organizational image of a university is important for the correct functioning of a higher education institution. In general the finding is showing that the University image is very crucial in attracting students, instructors, and employee to be winner in every situation that challenges the organization to be competitor and gaining the acceptance in the market.

4.5. Public relations practices and roles in building the University image

There are many contributions of the public relations activities and roles in building the university image. This finding shows that PR is serving as the ears and the eye of the university. Because of this the public relations activities can improve or build the image of the institution by succeeding its vision and mission by playing the roles of disseminating the information about the university with its real improvements for the internal and external publics and local communities in order to build their good perception concerning the university. Also the research data show that PR activities are very essential in building the institutional image by meeting its vision and mission by working hard. Additionally as the data reflect, PR activities play the role of improving the organizational image by preparing different panel discussion with administration, academic staffs and students in order to inform them what is really going on in the university by establishing different mechanism. Also the informants elaborating again on the roles of public relations in building the university image.

By using PR strategies, it is exactly possible to build the image of the institution by considering the vision and mission of our University. Additionally by using PR activities we can improve bad image of the university to good image by doing more and more on the weaknesses of the university that minimize its image. From this we can understand that the responsibility of public relations is to create effective relationship and persuading the publics by telling them what is really changed in the university about the points of rumors that minimize the organizational image. Therefore the PR activities of our university improve the university image by initiating the publics through using public

relations strategies. In other way Public relations activities can build the university image and it can be the reason to defame the university image. This means if public relations practitioners are working hard by using public relations strategies we can say exactly public relations activities improve the image of the university by looking after the vision and mission of the University (Interviewee₁, April 19, 2019).

Under these public relations and its practitioners play the role of gathering and broadcasting the information about the university through different media like social media, broadcast and print media and preparing different stages to facilitate the situations that give the opportunities for the publics to talk about the university freely. So public relations has the role of making media relations, conducting the discussion stages and building the effective relationship with the university publics in building the university image.

By another side public relations activities are essential in building the university image by informing the publics about the vision and mission of the university in the method of communicating more about the university to improve the institution's image by developing and creating the bridge in order to increase the relationships with its internal and external publics as well as the other part of stakeholders. So after the public relations effectively doing on mutual understanding the image of the university will improved respectively. What I want to add again is; our Public relations play great roles in building the image of Bule Hora University by performing different activities like cooperating itself with others for doing the activities of image building and also it plays the role of initiating or encouraging the publics to think and understand about the University for the reason of creating awareness. This means PR play the roles of creating mutual understanding with the university internal and external publics to improve the university image. In general our PR play the roles of facilitating, arranging and preparing different panel discussion with the university stakeholders and publics by maintaining the bridges between the university and its publics (Interviewee₁, April 19, 2019).

Additionally FGD2B informants said about the role of public relations in building the university image” we use PR to disseminate information and communicate with our stakeholders and this can be effective through effective public relations. Our main goal is to get prospective students

and public. We must also talk about our products, the courses we offer and other packages that will make prospective students show interest and join us.”

Also the interviewees (Interviewee₂ and Interviewee₃, April, 2019) explain the role of public relations like this. They said that “Public relations are relevant in achieving the goals of this university because the public relations practitioner communicates and markets the institution. Our market, which consists of prospective candidates, always seeking for information and public relations is very relevant in giving the necessary information to these prospective candidates which will benefit the university at the end.” Under this, the role of public relations in the university is promoting, introducing, preparing and covering events and achieving the university vision, mission and objectives. In addition to this the study uses different data by quoting the sources clearly. The quote is like the following.

Public relations is very important in achieving organizational goals because there is the need to have effective communication between the internal and external publics, as well as the stakeholders. Public relations also ensure effective messaging to achieve objectives. Proper public relations practice ensures when and how messages should be given out and the messages themselves are framed in order to communicate and achieve certain objectives. Again, public relations is relevant because it ensures consistency in messaging and also Public relations make sure that information that is communicated is in line with the thought of the institution which it represents and no chance is provided for other conflicting information (Interviewee₃, April, 20, 2019).

To sum up about using public relations practice effectively in building the university image; PR play the roles of communicating effectively about the university to strengthen how to build the links with the communities, building bridges between the university and its publics, watching the current issues about the university, have the potential to communicate more about the research, community service, learning teaching process takes place in the university with their improvement, creating smooth relationships with the university’s internal and external publics and making media relations for the purpose of informing the society and the university publics about what is going on in the university in the processes of building the university image. So

through this role of public relations Bule Hora University is building its organizational and university image, even if it needs more effectiveness as the study revealing out.

4.6. Using PR practices in building the image of Bule Hora University

This research finding is elaborating how to use public relations practices in building the university image and identifying the types of public relations practices that the university under study uses in building the university and organizational image. The public relations practices that Bule Hora University apply in building the university image is; first gathering the public opinions about the university, working on it by giving effective feedback and giving appropriate answers by informing them through different media channels. So the first PR strategy that the University uses in building the organizational image is making follow up of the public opinions and reporting it to the university management especially about the area of public rumors and complains concerning the university.

The other public relations practice applicable in building the university image is working strongly by taking into consideration the job of creating effective relationship in order to build the bridge between the university and its publics. Soon the relationship of the university with its public's increases there is the opportunities to convenience the publics about the improvements coming in the university. Then the university publics and other stakeholders simply begin to know more about the university and decide to perceive positively all about the university working situations. Through this mechanism we built our university's image (Inteeviewee₃, April, 20, 2019).

According to the above data show the public relations strategies the university under study apply in building the organizational image is preparing different stages of discussion like giving short term training for certain part of the communities and university publics, making media relations, preparing panel discussion, following the public opinion about the university and bringing the solutions for the problems and complains about the university. This public relations strategies are suitable in building the University image by building the confidence of the publics on the university. Additionally the data indicates that there is another public relations activity the university uses in building the organizational image.

The public relations practice we use in building the university image is encouraging two way communication styles. In this communication method the public relations practitioners create and facilitate the opportunities of receiving the weaknesses of the university from the publics and again telling them what and how the university is doing daily activities and after there will be the feedback for the complains and rumors coming from the publics about the improvement of the university image (Interviewee₁, April 19, 2019)

According Interviewee₁, two ways communication model is very effective public relations practice that Bule Hora University uses in building organizational and university image. In this communication model there is the chance of exchanging the ideas between two parties freely because it offers to talk and hear more about the university. Additionally there is the flow of information from the university and again from the publics. During there is the free flow of the information between the university and its publics, there is the opportunities of understanding each other. This model is known by the name of two-way symmetrical model in public relations discipline. To relate the informant's idea with the scholars view concerning two-way symmetrical model the researcher prefers Grunig and Hunt (1984). They state that two-way information dissemination process between an organization and its public is important PR strategies in building the university image. According to Grunig and Hunt, two-way symmetrical model is about the circulation of information from the organization to the publics and from publics to organization. The organization in turn notes, works on and responds to the public's feedback and gets the actions taken across to the public again. In this model, the university public relations practitioners use the opportunity to promote and inform the organizations to its publics and customers. During this; the publics, stakeholders and other people are begin to feel and think positively about the institution's services and products.

Based on above raised PR practice the researcher generalizes it as the university is using the public relations model of two way communication models in building the university image. Also another public relations practices that the university uses is applying different roles in building the organizational image. This role includes being skilled enough in communicating effectively and creating effective relationship between the university and its publics; since one of the main responsibilities of public relations is communicating more and more to build great input in the

mind of the publics about the university. Then the people began to develop trust on the university's services and products and finally the university and organizational image is built through this foot step. So as the this study data clearly explain about the role of public relations practices in building university image; one of the best alternative and golden opportunity for the university under study is using the styles of effectively communicating and developing smooth relationship of the university with is publics in order to grasp the attentions of the publics, local communities and university stake holders by telling the fact of improvements coming in university through using different media. Again, public relations gives the functions of planning and facilitating the stage of discussion with the university board committee, religious institution representatives, Aba Gada, local communities and the university publics in order to create awareness and sharing information about the university. Then the people immediately start to appreciate the university. This is the key activity the public relations strategies play in building the organizational and university image by presenting and communicating on the part of the university weaknesses area and the part of publics complain with the coming improvements as this finding explain.

The other public relations practices our university uses in building the organizational image is the practice of fast and productive approach which is important in creating the link with the local communities, national and international organizations. This public relations activity is the strategy that plays great roles in building university image by creating sustainable and quick relationship with the university publics and other communities. Also it is productive in building the university image in the short period of time because it is fast and fruitful in convincing the publics of the university. So the role of this public relations practice in building university image is facilitating stage in very attractive manner with in a short period of time with good result of building the organizational and university image. Relating with fast and productive strategy of public relations the department of public relations is initiating the university Management to provide community services effectively and then after the people are begin to develop their positive confidence on the service of the university and organizational image become improved through this mechanism (Interviewee₂, April, 19, 2019).

The public relations activities create the link with different national organizations to share good experiences from them that can be great input for the university development. Hence through this public relations practice the university has good relationship with local governmental organizations, federal government organizations and with senior universities. After the linkages become developed the university starts to ask different support from these national organizations. During this the university become introduce its self to all these organizations and finally strengthened in building its organizational image through the mechanism of creating effective relationships with different governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Also internationally the university has relations with international universities and embassies to exchange the technologies of learning and teaching process through the website, social media and other media. Therefore, these activities are implemented by University and reshaped by the department of public relations by using the strategies of public relations and the university. In general, all these linkages are basically built through public relations practices of Bule Hora University. Under this again the researcher ask questions the informants to reflect what roles public relations practices play in building the university image.

The PR practices that we use in building our university image is working and covering every events and activities in cooperation of theme sprit, making media relations with different media organization, establishing relationship with the university publics in order to talk about the university, preparing different meeting and panel discussion with local, internal and external publics to inform them what is really done in the university, publishing different print materials like brusher, billboard and annual magazine that explain how to build the university image by considering the vision and mission of the university (FGD1A participants, April 15, 2019).

In another way the other informants are clearly explaining how and what kind of public relations practices the university is using in building the organizational and university image. These practices include establishing relations with more media organizations, buying more air time from media organization, conducting panel discussion and providing community services.

The public relations department of Bule Hora University is also using the practice of making media relations in building the university image. This public relations practice is very important

in building the university image. Because it promotes the university to introduce itself in different mechanisms on media organizations. During the university using the different media channels the people have gained the opportunities of understanding what is going on in the university. After the people and publics of the university attention is grasped there is the chance to tell them more about the university's vision, mission and the activities the university is doing currently especially the coming improvement to build its image. For this reason the university is using the media organizations to inform the publics more about it. But there is the weakness of using it regularly as the research data explain. Even if there is the weakness in using these public relations strategies Bule Hora University (BHU) has the experience of using it in building university image. Additionally Bule Hora University is using the public relations practice of conducting different panel discussion with different part of the people because of it is very important to create smooth relationship between the organization and its publics as well as stakeholders. During the panel discussion is conducted the people become well informed about the organization and begin to build their confidence concerning the organizations services and products. Additionally panel discussion is important for the university to build its image through self- introduction about itself and what will be done by the university. Therefore because of the importance of panel discussion is a lot, the university is using this public relations strategy in building the university image as this study shows.

The FGD1A, members stating, other public relations practice that Bule Hora University is using in building organizational image. It is the activity of providing community services effectively. Since one of the university objective is providing community's service Bule Hora University is also providing the community services for the sake of building its organizational image. During the university is providing community services more of the publics become understood that the activities done by the university are good and important for the communities. Then as the different community service are provided for the society more, the people are begin to think about the university in positive manners. Therefore by providing community service properly our university is building the university image. The responsible body in building university image in BHU is all the university publics in general by contributing individual's contributions; but in particular public relations department of the university is responsible in building the university image by using and applying the public relations practice.

Additionally, this study explores the public relations practices the university uses in building the university and organizational image. Among these practices one is the practice of using social media. By using social media like Facebook the department of public relations is building the image of the university and organization by posting different activities happening in the university daily by informing the audiences in the help of internet. Then the audiences will understand the improvement correctly because PR department has social media reporter and the reporter is disseminating the information by gathering and editing it through Facebook. During they post different news about the university on social media the page followers are reading and understanding what is really done in the university. If complains and rumors are coming through social media, they collect it and do more with the university management about that rumors and complains to bring back the right feedback on it. Additionally for the local communities and the university publics they prepare panel discussion to invite them to observe and understand the coming improvements in the university directly.

Also the researcher continues to ask the follow up questions about the role of public relations practices and what kind of it the university uses in building organizational image. They explain like this;

The public relations practices the university uses in building the university image is the strategy of making media relations. Through the strategy of media relations the department of PR is facilitating and performing certain issues with different media organizations in building the university image. Based on this strategy the university has made media relations from time to time with different important issues about the university in order to touch the ear and heart of the publics by the main messages about the vision and mission of the university to build the organizational image. In short the university has relations with media organizations like Fana broadcasting corporate, OBN and EBC in sending different news and program about the university but which is not effective (FGD2B participants, April 16, 2019).

Additionally, the study investigate another PR practices applicable in building the university image. This practice is preparing different training that create awareness for the university publics in building university image process. In the training PR play great role by telling about the

university like learning and teaching, research and community services. By using this practice the PR practitioners are conveniencing the publics to feel good about the university. This training is given indifferent phases with different part of the publics to discuss about the university. On this training there are many agendas of discussion about the university. This agenda of training make the participant to create mutual understanding with the university. So if the relationship between the organization and its publics become effective there is the opportunity to understand and feeling good about the university. Therefore, by using this public relations strategy Bule Hora University is building its organizational image.

In addition to this, there is another PR practices the university uses in image building. That is, using newspapers as a tool in building the university image. Means this public relations play its role by publishing different materials like magazine, newspapers and brushers in building the university image. For this reason the researcher analysis quarterly published newspapers that is published by the university public relations. This newspaper contains very important messages that are good in sharing the information for the readers. To explain the public relations roles relating with the issue of using newspaper, here is the draft received from it that shows how PR playing the roles of building the university image.

Our university is working hard in improving the way of learning teaching process, providing effective community services, conducting research and establishing effective relationship with the university internal and external publics. For this the indicator is previously the university was been in the crisis of peace and security, corruption and passive university leadership. But know our university is improving all this problems and currently our university has smooth relationship with its publics, local communities, strength its leadership style and controlling corruption. So know the university has built its image gradually (Quarterly published newspaper, January, 2018).

To generalize it, the finding is explaining the key roles of public relations practices and it's kinds in building university image. This includes, applying two-way symmetrical communication model in order to exchange the information about the university for the publics and from the publics to the university to tell them the information about the university, creating effective relationship with stakeholders, local communities, internal and external publics, conducting

different panel discussion with the people on planned agenda, making media relations, creating linkages with national and international organization to share good experience from them and preparing different training with different part of the communities and university publics in building the university image.

4.7. Public relations tools in building the university image

Bule Hora University public relations department uses different public relations tools in building the university image by applying them in different mechanisms as the study show. These PR tools are magazine, newspapers, radio, television, internet, panel discussion, social media and University website. The public relations department of the university under study uses radio and television channels as the public relations tools in building the university image by using them to broadcast the happening events in the University. In this cause the department of public relations is gathering, writing and sending the news for the media organizations like OBN, Fana and EBC. Additionally the university is using these media to report for the publics about research symposium and other issues. The scholars also support the idea of using radio and television as public relations tools in building the organizational image. For example Lancaster (2005) states that companies that use television as a medium of communication stand the chance of achieving a high level of impact on their customers or public due to its visual nature. From this author the researcher observes that during the organizations use a television and radio program, individual's explanation regarding issues relating to their companies could be supported with either products or footage of the company's participation in a sponsored event and there is the capacity of grasping the public's attention.

The other public relations tools the university uses in building organizational image is panel discussion. Panel discussion is very important and it is the main PR tool that the university uses in building the university image: The department of public relations conducts different panel discussion at different times on different topics to discuss about the university working situations and improvements on the previous problems with the university internal and external public, local communities and stake holders. After panel discussion is conducted the publics and local communities start to belief about what the university is doing. Additionally there is the scholar's view that supports this finding. Well et al., (2005) also described the categories of public relations tools and stressed that the tools are best suited to create awareness of an organization

and its services depending on the amount of control the company has in its communication. As this author view the public relations tools like panel discussion, public meeting and advertising are very simple to control the messages transfer through it. So the university is using this public relations tool in building the university image by persuading the participants about the goal, vision and mission of the organization and the participants began to perceive the university positively in good manner. Then the image of the university became improved and built through this way.

In addition to this, the university public relations uses social media as the tool of public relation in building the university image. Bule Hora University has the social media account of Facebook and there is the reporter for this media and the information the university is posted on this social media. Then the page followers reflect their ideas on the issues posted through Facebook and the department of public relations collect the comments and report it for the university management if it is complains concerning the university. Through process the university management replies the feedback by the channel of this social media in the help of internet. Then the followers will build their confidence on the university service delivery and other issues. Clow and Baack (2007) also agree that the internet could be used as a major tool of public relations to help combat negative word of mouth concerning the organization's services and products. Also Khalil (2004) also asserted that the explosive growth of mobile computing and wireless networks has helped educational institutions stay at the forefront of the changing world. So the internet and social media has many benefits in the academic cycle as it provides around the clock access to global sources of information and the website provides a faster, broader reach for public relations practitioners to publish company press releases, background information, introduce new products or services and provide promotional information for an organization.

In another way the University is using its website address in building the university image by using it as the information channels. As the staff of public relations and university management said the other public relations tools we use in building the university image is using University website address. By using our university web address we publish much information that is very important for the one who want to read and know about the university. Then other PR tools public relations department uses in building the university image are annual magazine and brushers. As the researcher analyze these two PR tools; there are different ideas on it that contains

many reports and messages about what the university is working from the perspective of learning teaching, research, community service, building organizational image and the improvements of the university. Public relations department is also using the annual magazine in building the university image the tool of public relations.

The university is providing many services for the community. Especially it provides many community services like constructing water project, health care center and conducting different researches that solve many social problems. Also our university is offering different training for the local communities how use their natural resources. By doing these and the other activities the university become thankful and accepted by the local communities, internal and external communities (Annually published Magazine, June, 2017)

From the Annual Magazine message we can understood that the university public relations is using magazine as a tool of public relations in building the university image. In addition to this the university is conducting different panel discussion with the publics in building the university image. On the forum and panel discussion the university is discussing with different part of the society. During forum and panel discussion the organizer and facilitators are public relations department. So the public relations practitioners are using this panel discussion and forum as the tool of public relations in building the university image by discussing with the participants. In general the university is using radio, television, panel discussion, social media, print media and university's website and internet as the main public relations tools in building the university image.

4.8. The way of Practicing PR to enable the public to build confidence in the university

Before a few months Bule Hora university image was perceived as it wasn't good by the university publics, individuals, government bodies and stakeholders. For this reason the confidence of the publics concerning the university was in confusion as the study show. So the researcher asking the informants by saying what is the best way of practicing public relations to enable the public to build confidence in the university? Five respondents elaborate it;

To build the confidence of the publics on the university as public relations practitioners the best way we use to practicing public relations is working effectively on the part of public rumors about the university by informing them on the right time in order to create awareness by using different media. Additionally the public confidence can be built by preparing different stages of discussion with concerned bodies for the reason of talking about the university issues with them and to improve the negative confidence of the publics about the university. This is effective when the public relations practitioners of the university should develop the culture of using public relations strategies to create effective relationship with the publics and then the publics will understand what the university is doing that help to build the university image. Therefore the department of public relations in our University is practicing public relations to enable the publics in building their confidence on the university by applying public relations strategies effectively in order to exchange necessary information about the university especially about improved situations in the university.

According to the informants suggestion the public confidence can be built by preparing different meeting with the publics and other part of the society in order to enforce their feeling to know and think more about the coming progress in the university. Then the publics will begin to feel good about the university and to substitute the bad image by good image. For this the solution is only working hard by using all public relations strategies to erase the problem that makes university to have bad image. This was been success by hardworking of public relations in collaborative with the university management. So as the negative things begin to improve the publics will begin to build their confidence on the university. Also the informants added the way of practicing public relations to enable the public to build confidence in the university.

The other best way of we practicing public relations to enable the publics in building the public confidence in the university is using agenda setting approach. In agenda setting process the public relations practitioners practice using different media to encourage and enforce the publics to ask and think more about the university. Also our university public relations practitioners organizing the stages with university publics and stakeholders. By this approach the societies are starting to hear what our university is working. Then the publics become encouraged to hear about the university by hearing the information through different channels. So agenda setting approach is one of the best methods to

practice public relations to enable the publics to build their confidence on the University (FGD2B members, April, 2019).

To integrate the ideas of the respondents with the scholar's view about agenda setting and how it is important in building the university image the researcher is using some scholars idea. The theory of agenda setting is describing about the ability of news media to influence the publics to talk and encouraged to think the topic of discussion through different media, McCombs, (2002). Therefore as this finding shows the practice of Bule Hora University public relations department to enable the public to build confidence in the university is using agenda setting method of practicing public relations.

The researcher summarizes the respondents and the scholar's view together that the best way of practicing public relations by the university under study to enable the publics to build their confidence in the university is using public relations strategies, teaching the publics about the university based on the tangible situations and changes coming, establishing smooth relationship with the publics by preparing different stages like panel discussion, media relations, preparing different meeting for deeply discussing about the university and applying agenda setting approach.

4.9. Public relations Practitioners in Building University Image

Under this the data indicate that to what extent the PR practitioners of the university is engaged in image building, self-auditing and follow up. So the public relations practitioners of Bule Hora University is struggle in building the university image by using public relations strategies and scarifying their professional skills and using their more times in addition to regular working hours. The department of public relations practitioners is also working hard in the activities of building the university image even by missing their lunch time. This shows that how much the public relations practitioners are committed in building the university image. Also the informants are addressing their idea by saying the public relations practitioners of Bule Hora University is struggling more and more till their professional skills allowed for them in building the university image. Additionally each of the public relations department PR practitioners are strongly charge their responsibility by being punctual and honestly working hard to build the university image. This means the practitioners are working every necessary activity by respecting all the working hours and honestly serving the university by recharging all professional responsibilities.

Additionally, the Public relations department practitioners of Bule Hora University is struggling more in building the university image by using the practices of public relations. This refers that the public relations practitioners are strongly working every activity on the right time for the success of the university's vision and mission especially in building organizational and university image. Also the public relations practitioners are active enough in covering the happening events and necessary situations take place in the university in order to inform the publics. In addition to this public relations department and its practitioners is using different mechanisms to self-auditing, analyzing and assessing the community's comment, weaknesses and other issues concerning the university with strong follow up and tolerance to improve the organizational image. Also the public relations department of the university is engaged effectively in image building by establishing good communication with the university internal and external publics and stake holders. Finally the public relations department practitioners of the university is struggling by engaged in image building of the university by following up the university situations, self-evaluating and assessing the university's accomplishment.

4.10. The Challenges and Weaknesses of PR in building University Image

The public relations of the university under study has many challenges and weaknesses in building the university image. Since the public relations activities are more focus on building the relationship of the university with its internal and external publics, the challenges that face the PR practitioners and department are a lot. Among the challenges that face public relations in building the university image one is the problem of professional experiences to perform the activities of public relations successfully. This refers that some of the PR practitioners of BHU are not experienced in PR profession and they couldn't perform effectively the job of public relations. If the situations of the university are changing from time to time in building the university image it also needs skilled human power and good experience to control every situation. So this problem is challenging the public relations in building the university image.

There is also another challenge of Bule Hora University public relations in building the university image. This challenge is the difficulty of public relations practitioners who are coming from unrelated field of study. This challenge is very difficult in practicing public relations without enough professional skills. This means some of the practitioners are coming from another field of study to practice public relations and they are not effective by practicing public

relations in building university image. As this study indicates the other challenge of public relations in building university image is the challenge of lacking good awareness about the necessity of public relations in building the university and organizational image. Because of the awareness of the people concerning public relations functions in building university image is weak public relations can't perform the necessary activities in a deep encouragement. Additionally, the other challenge of public relations in building the university image is the challenge of lacking enough budget. Without budget it is difficult to do every activities appropriately. The reason for this problem is university management. As the finding elaborates the source of this challenge is the university management. Means this the university couldn't allocate enough budget for the department of public relations. So to practice public relations in good manner there is the problem in building the university image effectively. In general the public relations of Bule Hora University is challenged by the budget problem, lack of experienced practitioners, staff turnover, work loading and lack of performing public relations activity in a good manner.

In another way as every organizations are strongly performing their jobs effectively there is also the weaknesses by another side. So relating with this, the public relations of the university under study has different weaknesses. Among these weaknesses some of them are; the university administration awareness is low in the necessity of using public relations in building university image; in case to encourage the staff of public relations, low professional experiences of PR practitioners. Additionally the other weakness of public relations in building university image is the weakness of creating regular and effective relations with different media organizations for sake of disseminating information about the University for the Society. This means the public relations of Bule Hora University is not effective by creating media relations purposefully for building the university image. Also the department has the weakness of promoting the university effectively. The informants are also stating about the weaknesses of public relations by saying promotion is not simply posting something on the social media but it needs professional skills like gathering, writing, editing and disseminating the information through different media what is really happening in the university especially about the improvements. But the PR staff of Bule Hora University has the weakness in doing this activity.

In addition, to this there is also the problem of instability of effective leader of public relations department of Bule Hora University. Most of the time, head of the staff is changed from time to time. Because of this the things become difficult for the next coming leader of the department. As the things are changed the working styles will changed and changing of the situations will be the challenges; the challenges become the weakness of the department. In another way in the department of public relations there is the weakness of actively participating to cover the different events happening in the university. Since they are PR practitioner it is must to participate actively in covering events happening in the university. Also the department has the problem of effective planning to cover something actively. Planning is very important thing obviously, but there is the problem of effective plan to cover the events. Non planning activities result the work load and for the reason of work load there is the opportunities of staff turnover.

In general the public relations has the challenges of skilled enough human power, better work experience with the subject of public relations, unrelated educational background with public relations, lack of enough awareness from the university about the necessity of public relations in building the university image and budget.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSION

From the beginning this study was implementing three research questions and three objectives. These three objectives are to identify to what extent the PR department of the university is engaged in image building, self-auditing and follow up, to examine what image building practices of Public relations practiced by Bule Hora University and to establish how to use the university public relations practices and its activities serves the vision and mission of the university. On the study, semi-structured interview, focused group discussions and document analysis were used to measure the finding. The study has shown that the public relations strategies are very relevant in building the university image. It was revealed that public relations practices contribute many roles for the institution in the sense that public relations ensure effective communication between the internal and external publics of the institution during image building. Public relations also ensure effective messaging to achieve objectives and goals set by the institutions. Public relations practice makes sure when and how messages should be given out and the messages themselves are framed in order to communicate and achieve certain goals and objectives of the institution.

The university under study faced in the problem of having good image. Because there was the problem of using public relations practices effectively in its previous time. But as this study has shown currently the university public relations practitioners are working effectively by applying the public relations practices and strategies then successfully building the university image; but which is not effective still. Also as this study has shown; public relations give the functions of creating effective relationship of the organization with its publics in building the public's confidence on the university services and working situations. The study also revealed that the university image is very important for the purpose of attracting students, instructors and employees. Also it was to dig out the roles of public relations in building the university image that PR was being the eye and ear of the university by achieving the organizational goals and objectives. Additionally the study has shown the kinds of public relations practices that Bule Hora University uses in building the university image and to what extent the public relations is

struggling and engaging itself in image building by carefully self –auditing, assessing and follow up in the situations during organizational image building. As study has shown Bule Hora University uses different public relations practices in building the university image. Besides this, PR practices; conducting media relations, panel discussions, two –way communication styles, fast and productive approach, establishing effective relations with the university publics and using university’s website.

Finally this study was revealed the lack of effective professional skills of PR practitioners, unrelated field of study with the subject of public relations, staff turnover and budget problems as the challenges and weakness of public relations in building the image of Bule Hora University.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

So far under the finding part of this study, the detail roles of public relations practices in building the university image the case of Bule Hora University were given. As a result, due attention need to be given by the public relations department and management of Bule Hora University the researcher draws the following points from this study as the recommendations.

The public relation’s practitioners of the university under study are recommended to try their best to update themselves in professional skills of public relations in order to practice the activities of public relations effectively. Even though the PR department is trying to make efforts to create common understanding between the university and its publics, it couldn’t take the image of the university up to the desired level in the minds of majority of the publics, stakeholders and local communities. Hence, being responsible for ensuring sustainability of the University image, the department should work aggressively with media especially by buying air time from the media organizations to enhance the organization’s image level to a higher level, which have been judged as medium by the respondents. Additionally it is better if the University will employ the skilled enough human power for the PR department who is hired in public relations discipline to practice public relations with great feeling and effective abilities in building the university image.

Since the public relations is working for building the university image; it is must to give more attentions for the department of public relations in order to strengthen it, in every necessary step. But the university management couldn't give more attentions for the department. So this finding is suggesting that, it is better if the university Management will support and give sustainable and strong follow up by allocating enough budget and supporting needed material demand for their effectiveness in watching the university and organizational image. Also this study is recommended the University management to prepare different PR professional training and good experience sharing for the sake of effectively capacity building and encouragement of public relations department and practitioners to focus more in the activity of building the university image.

Additionally, the study reveal that the public relations department of Bule Hora University has the problem of effectiveness in making media relations. Since media have great potential in conveniencing the publics; it is must to use media more and more in building the university image. But there is the weakness in making effective media relations with different media organization. So it is better if the department will make effective media relations with different media organizations in building the university image effectively. Also the researcher observes that the public relations department of Bule Hora University has the problem of planning how to cover the daily activities. So it is better if the department will propose smart plan that shows how to cover the daily activities respectively. Also the university doesn't have community radio since community radio has the capacity to inform the publics what is going on; in the university. So establishing community radio is very important in building the university image. Therefore, it would be good if the university will establish community radio. Finally, it is better if the public relations department and the university management will conduct research to innovate and adopt the new public relations strategies and practices to build the university image effectively.

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APPENDEXES

APPENDIX I

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

FGD QUESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC STAFFS OF BHU

Welcome and thank you for coming to this focus group discussion. Each of you has been selected to participate because your point of view is important for the researcher. The purpose of this focus group interview is to determine your ideas and opinions about. There are some rules I would like to mention before we start. Everything said and done is confidential and will not be used outside the room except for the purposes of this research; every statement is right; please do not hesitate to disagree with someone else; but do not all talk at once.

Firstly we will shortly introduce ourselves to each other

- 1 .For how long do you know this institution?
2. How could you Explain Bule Hora University? What do you know about it?
3. What do you think are the weaknesses of this University? What do you think are good measurement to improve these weaknesses? How?
4. What are the problems do you think are there in this Campus? What do you think is the source of these problems and who is the responsible body to solve these problems? How?
5. What do you think about the image of Bule Hora University? What it looks like?
6. What is the difference between the desired image of Bule Hora University and the current image?

7. What are the best strategies to build the image of the University? Which department is responsible for the issue of image building of the University as you think? How? What kinds of jobs they have to do to build this image?

8. What are the weaknesses of the department of public relations in this university to build the university image did you observe?

9. How can public relations department of this University be strengthened in this institution?

10. Do you have any additional opinion about the issues of discussion?

APPENDIX II

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

FGD QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS STAFFS OF BHU

Welcome and thank you for coming to this focus group discussion. Each of you has been selected to participate because your point of view is important for the researcher. The purpose of this focus group interview is to determine your ideas and opinions about. There are some rules I would like to mention before we start. Everything said and done is confidential and will not be used outside the room except for the purposes of this research; every statement is right; please do not hesitate to disagree with someone else; but do not all talk at once.

Firstly we will shortly introduce ourselves to each other

1. What is your day-to-day role in this organization?
2. Define public relations within the context of your organization. How do you conceptualize it?
3. Whose responsibility is it to look after public relations for the organization? How are decisions made that pertain to public relations strategies and initiatives for the organization?
4. What are the specific functions performed by the public relations practitioner in this institution to meet the vision and mission of the University?
5. What other functions do you think it is appropriate for the public relations practitioner to perform?
6. How could you explain Bule Hora University for yourself and for others?
7. What do you think about the image of Bule Hora University? What it looks like?
8. What is the difference between the desired image of image of Bule Hora University and the current image?

9. Do PR activities help in improving or building the image of an institution by meeting its vision and mission? How?
10. What could be the best way of practicing Public Relations to enable the public build confidence in the University?
11. Do you think that using public relations strategies is important in building this University image?? If yes, How and what kind of public relations strategies do you use to build university image?
12. What role does PR play in building the image of Bule Hora University?
13. What are the Public Relations strategies that your department uses to build organizational and University image?
14. What are the tools of Public relations you use to build university image? How?
15. To what extent public relations department is struggling in building university image by using those Public Relations Strategies?
16. What are the challenges of public relations practitioners and your department is face to practice PR activities successfully in order to meet the university's vision and mission? How can these challenges be improved?
17. What do you think are the weaknesses of Public Relations department?
18. How can public relations be strengthened in this institution

አባሪ II

የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ሰራተኞች መጠይቅ እነዚህ ቃለ መጠይቆች የ "የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ስትራቴጂዎች እንዴት በ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ውስጥ እንደሚተገበሩ ለመገምገም ይጠቅማል። የቡድን ውይይት የውይይት መድረክ (FGD)

በቅድሚያ እራሳችንን እርስ በራሳችን ማስተዋወቅ እንችላለን

ወደዚህ የትኩረት ቡድን በመምጣት እንኳን ደህና መጡ አመሰግናለሁ። የእናንተ መምጣትና አመለካከታችሁን ማንፀባረቅ ለጥናቱ እጅግ በጣም አስፈላጊ በመሆኑ ምክንያት እያንዳንዳችሁ በመሳተፍ ተገቢውን ሁሉ እንደምታደርጉ ባለሙሉ ተስፋ ነኝ። የዚህ የትኩረት ቡድን ቃለ-መጠይቅ አላማዎች ስለእርስዎ ሃሳቦች እና አስተያየቶች ላይ ለመወሰን ነው። ከመጀመርዎ በፊት እኔ ማውራት የምፈልጋቸው አንዳንድ ህጎች አሉ። ሁሉም የተናገሩት እና የተደረጉ ነገሮች በምስጢር የተያዙ ናቸው። ከዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ በስተቀር ውይይቱ ከክፍሉ ውጭ ጥቅም ላይ አይውሉም። እያንዳንዱ ቃል ትክክለኛ ነው። እባክዎን ከሌላ ሰው ጋር ላለመግባባት አያመንቱ። ነገር ግን ሁሉም በአንድ ጊዜ ባለመናገር እንድትተባበሩኝ እጠይቃለሁ።

1. በዚህ ድርጅት ውስጥ የዕለት ተዕለት ተግባርዎ ምንድን ነው?
2. በድርጅትዎ ውስጥ ካለው ሁኔታ አንፃር የህዝብ ግንኙነትን ጽንሰጋሻብ እንዴት ትገልፀዋለህ?
3. ለድርጅቱ የህዝብ ግንኙነትን የማን ሀላፊነት ነው? ለሕዝብ ግንኙነት ስትራቴጂዎች እና ለድርጅቱ የተደረጉ ውሳኔዎች እንዴት ይወሰናል?
4. በዩኒቨርሲቲው ውስጥ የተቀመጠውን ተልዕኮና ራዕይ ለማሳካት የህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያ ያደረገውን አሠራር እንዴት ይገልፁዋል?
5. ለሕዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያው ማከናወን ያለበት ሌሎች ተግባራት ምንድነው ብለው ያስባሉ?
6. ቡሌ ሆራ ዩኒቨርሲቲን ለራስዎ እና ለሌሎች እንዴት ማስረዳት ይችላሉ?
7. ስለ ቡሌ ሆራ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ምስጢር ምን ያስባሉ? ምን ይመስላል?

8. በተፈለገው የቡል ሆራ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ምስል (ገጽታ) እና አሁን ባለው ምስል (ገጽታ) መካከል ያለው ልዩነት ምንድነው?

9. የስርዓተ-ፆታ ክንዋኔዎች የራሱን ራዕይ እና ተልዕኮ በማሟላት የአንድ ተቋም ምስልን ለማሻሻል ወይም ለመገንባት ያግዛሉ? እንዴት?

10. የህዝብ ግንኙነቶች በዩኒቨርሲቲ ውስጥ መተማመን እንዲገነቡ ለማድረግ ከሁሉ የተሻለ አማራጭ ምን ሊሆን ይችላል?

11. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስትራቴጂዎችን መጠቀም ይህንን የዩኒቨርሲቲውን ገጽታ ለመገንባት አስፈላጊ እንደሆነ ይስማዎታል? እንዴት? አዎ ከሆነ, የዩኒቨርሲቲ ምስልን ለመገንባት ምን ዓይነት የህዝብ ግንኙነቶች ስትራቴጂዎችን ይጠቀማሉ?

12. የቤል ሆራ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ምስልን በመገንባት ረገድ ሚና ምንድን ነው?

13. የአካባቢያዊ እና የዩኒቨርሲቲ ገጽታ ለመገንባት መምሪያዎ የሚጠቀመው የሕዝብ ግንኙነት ስትራቴጂዎች ምንድን ናቸው?

14. የዩኒቨርሲቲ ገጽታ ለመገንባት የሚጠቀሙት የመንግስት ግንኙነቶች መሳሪያዎች ምንድን ናቸው? እንዴት?

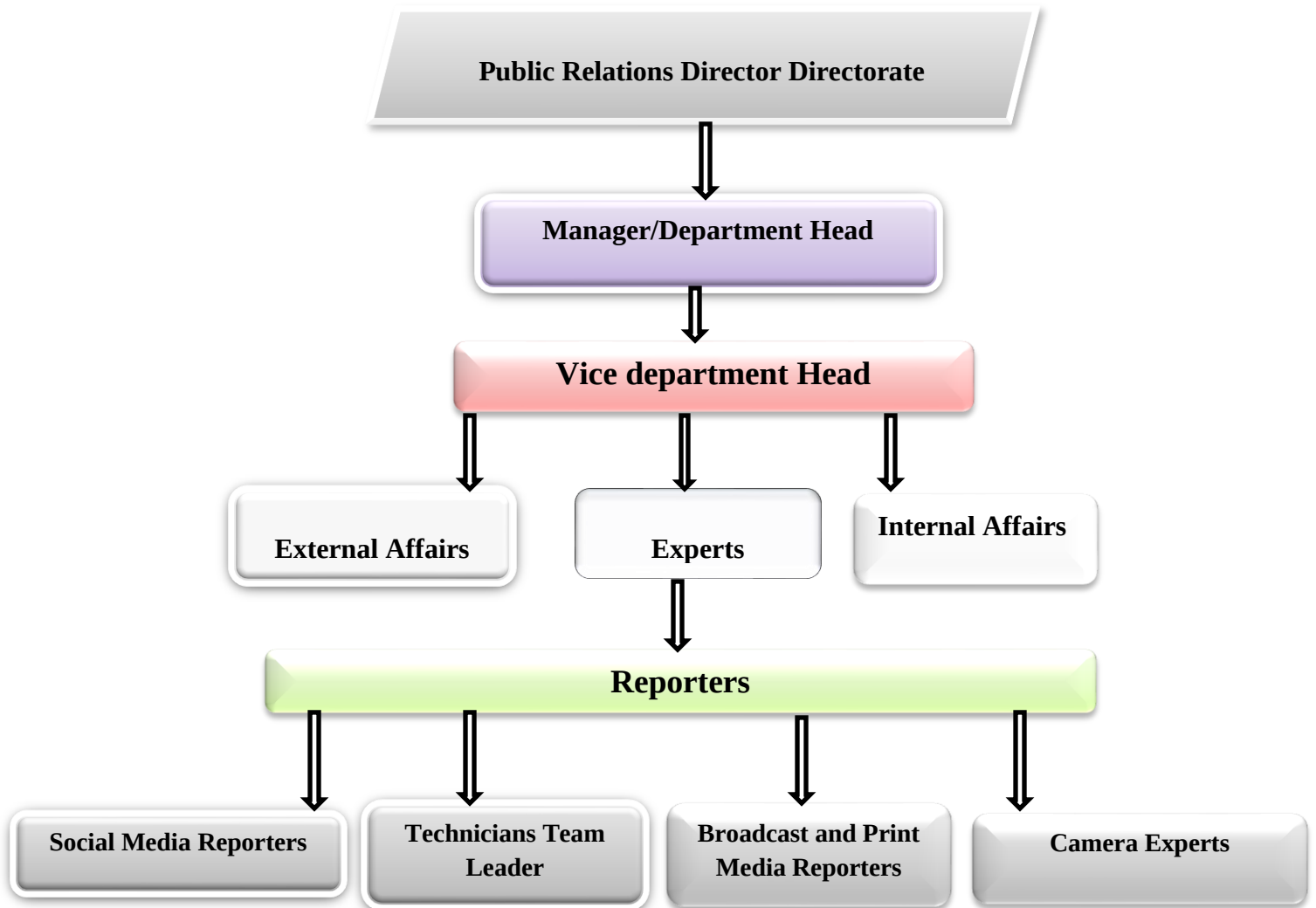
15. የህዝብ ግንኙነት መምሪያ የዩኒቨርሲቲ ምስልን በመገንባት የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስትራቴጂዎችን በመጠቀም ምን ዓይነት ትግል እያደረገ ነው?

16. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያዎችና መምሪያዎ የዩኒቨርሲቲውን ራዕይ እና ተልዕኮ ለመድረስ በተሳካ ሁኔታ ተግባራትን ለመፈጸም ምን ዓይነት ችግር ይገጥማቸዋል? እነዚህን ችግሮች እንዴት ማሻሻል ይቻላል?

17. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍል ድክመት ምን ይመስልሃል?

18. በዚህ ተቋም ውስጥ የህዝብ ግንኙነት እንዴት ሊጠናከር ይችላል?

Organizational structure of Bule Hora University Public Relations Department



APPENDIX III
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT STAFFS OF BHU

Welcome and thank you for coming to this Interview discussion. You have been selected to participate because your point of view is important for the researcher. The purpose of this interview is to determine your ideas and opinions about. There are some rules I would like to mention before we start. Everything said and done is confidential and will not be used outside the room except for the purposes of this research; every statement is right; please do not hesitate to explain your opinions freely.

Firstly we will shortly introduce ourselves to each other

1. For how long do you know this university?
2. How could you introduce Bule Hora University for others?
3. There are different rumors and complains concerning Bule Hora University; what do you think can be the part of these rumors and complains? What are the sources of them?
4. What do you think about the image of Bule Hora University?
5. Do you think that University image is important? How?
6. What is the difference between the desired image of image of Bule Hora University and the current image?

7. Which staff is responsible to build image of the University as you think?
8. What is the best strategy of public relations should use to build the image of Bule Hora University?
9. What are the activities the university management performs to build the University image?
10. How the university management and public relations department do together in improving the university image?
11. How the University management and public relations department are working together to realize the University vision and mission?
12. How the University management support public relations department in every necessary steps to perform its daily activities effectively?
13. To what extent the PR department of the university is engaged in image building, self-auditing and follow up?
14. What do you think is the weakness of Public relations department?
15. How can public relations department of this University be strengthened in this institution

