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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIZATION

IN PUBLIC RELATION AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

**ASSESSING THE PRACTICE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION: IN THE CASE
OF ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES GROUP**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY, GRADUATE OF
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Group**

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**A thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University, Graduate of School of Journalism and
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Communication.**

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DECLARATION

I, the under signed declare that this study is my own work and has not been presented in any universities, and the all the sources of materials used for the study have been fully acknowledged.

Declared by: Boja Deyase Bekele

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Addis Ababa

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AAU: Addis Ababa University

CCO: Chief Communication Officer

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

COVID: Certificate of Vaccination Identification

EAE: Ethiopian Airports Enterprise

EAL: Ethiopian Airline

EALG: Ethiopian Airlines Group

E-mail: Electronic mail

ET: Ethiopian

HR: Human Resource

IT: Information Technology

MRO: Maintenance Repair Overhaul

NISS: National Intelligence Security Service

PR: Public Relations

SLA: Service Legal Agreement

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Science

VIP: Very Important Person

VP: Vice-President

WHO: World Health Organization

WWW: World Wide Web

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was assessing the practices of Corporate Communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group. It is through the activities of Corporate Communication that company contact with its customers. Knowing its immense value, many organizations of the world have been practicing for their Corporate Communication activities. The researcher selected this topic because of the passion with it and personal experience. In addition to these, the topic is relevant and interesting to study. Thus, the aim of this study was assessing the practices of Corporate Communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group. To achieve this objective cross sectional descriptive data analysis was collected from 121 employees of the departments Integrated Marketing Communication, Sales Promotion and Corporate Communication. Accordingly, researcher based on strong synergy they have to provide detail information genuinely in a proper way selected these departments randomly and purposively. Hence, responses were carefully analyzed. This study employed mixed method of research approach in order to answer research questions. For the successfulness of this study, the researcher utilized various tools of data gathering techniques. Accordingly, structured interview were carried out with the managers of Ethiopian Corporate Communication Department based on their knowledge and experiences they have. Thus, interview was recorded and additional notes were taken. In addition to this, company's website was also visited. Accordingly, from the document analysis the study was used annual reports, magazines as well as public relation tools like press release, brochures. This study is also carried out by observing the relationship of Corporate Communication Department with other units of Ethiopian Airlines Group. The finding indicated that Ethiopian Airlines Group employees were very much aware of the importance of Corporate Communication in their day-to- day activities. Primary data gathered from the interviews; the target audience were the managers of Ethiopian corporate communication department. Secondary data gathered from the company's social media platforms were (Face book, Tweeter, LinkedIn, and YouTube) and monthly digital publication. In addition to these, this study also concluded based on the Corporate Communication tools employed, the challenges encountered, and the perception of managers and practitioners towards the practices of Corporate Communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group. Moreover, frequent assessments about Corporate Communication practices shall be made. Finally, recommendations were forwarded for the betterment of the practices of Corporate Communication Department in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

Keywords: Concept of Corporate Communication, public relation, stakeholders, Ethiopian

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Communication: Any process in which people share information, ideas, and feelings that involves not only the spoken and written word but also body language, personal mannerism, and style any that add meaning to a message. Hybels and Weaver (2001).

Stakeholders: The people and organizations whose have attitudes and actions have an impact on the success of the company. Goodman, (2000).

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This part of the study incorporates background of the study, problem statement, Objective of the study, scope of the study, research questions, limitation of the study, and significance of the study. The study also includes the organization of the paper and ethical consideration.

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) (ET) is a government owned company found in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, with its head office located at Bole International Airport. Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) is the flag carrier of Ethiopia. During the past seventy plus years, Ethiopian has become one of the continent's leading carriers, unrivalled in Africa for efficiency and operational success, turning profits for almost all the years of its existence. Operating at the forefront of technology, the airline has also become one of Ethiopia's major industries and a veritable institution in Africa. It commands a lion's share of the pan African network including the daily and double daily east-west flight across the continent. Ethiopian currently serves 127 international and 22 domestic destinations operating the newest and youngest fleet. Ethiopian is a business enterprise committed to the basic objective of providing safe, reliable and profitable air transport services for the passenger and cargo as well as other aviation related services. The airline renews its pledge to further develop its total network with continued emphasis on interconnecting Africa and linking it with the rest of the world. Ethiopian is committed to the provision of quality service to its customers. In order to ensure this, the airline will strive to maintain a highly trained, motivated and dedicated workforce and enhance its internal capacity in various fields.

Since its launch in 1946, Ethiopian has been a pioneer in African aviation industry. It has maintained an excellent reputation under the various governments that have ruled Ethiopia over the years. The airline's first scheduled flight was to Cairo from Addis Ababa, with a stop in Asmara, Ethiopia, and occurred on April 8, 1946. Weekly flights to Djibouti and Aden were added later. Connecting the country with the outside world was more of a priority than developing an internal route network, though a route between Jima and the capital was added.

The company was renamed Ethiopian Airlines in 1965 as its ownership structure changed from corporation to share company. It continued in its role as a leader in the continent's aviation industry. Schools for pilots and mechanics were established at the Bole Airport to train personnel from Africa and the Middle East. The fast-growing airline ended the decade with more than 2,000 employees. (Ethiopian Fact Sheet 2011).

Ethiopian Airlines now called Ethiopian Airlines Group as the result of merging with Ethiopian Airports Enterprise in 2018 G.C with the motto of “Bringing African Together and Beyond.” Besides, to providing passengers’ service the company also operates in hospitality and another services world widely. The company with its name Ethiopian has seven different business units in it. These are Ethiopian Cargo and Logistic services, Ethiopian Maintenance Repair Overhaul, Ethiopian Aviation Academy, Ethiopian International Passenger services, Ethiopian Regional services, Ethiopian In-Flight catering services and Ethiopian ground services. (Ethiopian Airlines, 2021).

Communication is a product of the ways in which corporations, such as human beings, are a legal personality, maintain their assets. Especially in recent years, the differentiation in the habits of doing business of institutions has made the importance of communication skills and corporate communication management efforts for corporations with legal personality undeniable. (Oskay'in, 1999).

The company’s corporate communication makes the Ethiopian brand more accessible and relevant to a wider audience as well as driving traffic to the website and boost loyalty among current Ethiopian customers. Corporate Communication delivers the company’s strategic message to all its audiences, customers and potential companies, shareholders, employees, and regulators. These communications create and preserve the company’s brand and help everyone move in concert with the company’s mission.

The department uses various means of communication mechanism to reach its customers like press release, press conference, website, newspaper, Television, internet, e-mail correspondence, letters, face-to-face communication, outlook, telephone conversation and etc. In addition to these, the department also should keep the public informed about Ethiopian Airlines through local and international media. Currently, the department is organized under the managerial level, and it has teams in it with various roles and responsibilities. This thesis is set to assess the practice of corporate communication of Ethiopian. Like other departments in

Ethiopian, Corporate Communication also assesses different information by its own way. Ethiopian corporate communication was established as an independent office since 1998 under the Director Advertising and Sales Corporate Communication with the aim to improve brand awareness and unifying marketing and advertising into a brand identity that remains consistent across distinct media channels. Since its establishment with ten employees, Ethiopian corporate communication was categorized under two team leaders reporting to the manager. They are also responsible to handle CEO's message. Ethiopian has a corporate communication that solely responsible for all kinds of communication internal and external including local and international media as well as its employees at the headquarter and overseas.

Then, in 2012, Corporate Communications Department was restructured under the VP Corporate Strategy, Communications, and Alliances. Currently, the office is restructures under VP Ethiopian Holidays and Integrated marketing and named Group PR and corporate communication.

It is through communication that an organization contacts its customers, suppliers, and other elements both internally and externally. Ethiopian Airlines also put forward the corporate value to its employees and managements, which guides their behavior in all company's activities and transactions. It is clearly known that the existence of corporate communication is an imperative to an organization's growth and progress in today's time and age. Most organizations maintain a separate and full-fledged Corporate Communication department. This department manages various communication activities, needs and strategies both internally and externally along with its stakeholders.

The department is also responsible in maintaining reputation of the organization and its management relationships with potential and existing stakeholders and government affairs. As it is becoming known, corporate communication has been an important aspect of communication to achieve the objective of the organization. This thesis is set to assess the practice of corporate communication of Ethiopian Airline because it is through corporate communication that an organization contacts its customers.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Boudah (2011:485), a research problem could be described as the challenge which the researcher has experienced knowledge and interested in finding out its root causes

and possible solutions. On the researcher outlook in Ethiopian Airline, there is a problem of clarification by using corporate communication activities focusing on problems like the limitation of corporate communication services provided by the department, shortage of manpower, mistrust from the journalists and a problem of using complaints as an improvement to maintain a good relationship with its customers both internally and externally as well as with the stake holders. Dissemination of information is crucial to know about the where of the organization and to get feedbacks from the due to government involvement of politics: frustration. However, even the public, journalists were not getting information of the organization freely. The limitation of information creates miss understanding between the organization and the public. Late reply of the information from the department to the media officials, corporate communication activities are not as satisfactory as it is expected to be.

No matter how tremendous benefit corporate communication has and inevitable it is, its practice in Ethiopian Airlines Group is still a lot of work to be done. The researcher suggested that much more effort has to be done for the betterment of the entire corporate communication activities in Ethiopian Airlines Group. As a gap, this study did not explore the utilization of corporate communication tools in a deep and separated manner. This in fact confirms that the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group requires more exploration and investigation in order to communicate properly and conveniently with its customers.

Recently, Ethiopian Corporate Communication department is striving tremendously to increase its services in multiple demands from the customers. These and other factor causes a need for paying attention to the practice of corporate communication than ever before. Thus, with all these understandings, the researcher views that it would seem to be the right time to assess the corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group to analyze the gaps and provide directions from the perspectives of corporate communication strategies. Moreover, it is also necessary to investigate what the function of corporate communication has brought in Ethiopian Airlines Group as well as employees and managers' reflection towards the implementation. Hence, this study would fill the gap and add knowledge by dealing with the activities of corporate communication that shows how corporate communication tools should be utilized and integrated to convey a clear and consistent message. As far as the researcher's knowledge and experience is concerned, there is no earlier study regarding the activity of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group. Hence, this research indicated a

solution for such and related substantial questions. Ethiopian has the outlet named 'Ethiopian weekly' through which the internal communication transmitted to the employees from the higher management. In this regard, the employees have no chance to reply to the managers. There is no way that employees or individuals can communicate back on a certain issue. It's rare to see articles fostering the internal communications among employees. Even if there is a progress in recent days, this outlet usually focuses on specific areas and contents that might meet only the communication interest of one side of the communicating bodies. Generally, this study tried to see problems and the practices of Ethiopian Airlines PR, focusing on the techniques and strategies used to communicate internally, with the public and Medias. From this, the researcher concluded that information only flows from the top managers to employees. The communication flows from one side only. Therefore, this study assessed the current practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

1.3 Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following basic questions;

- ❖ What are corporate communication tools employed in Ethiopian corporate communication department?
- ❖ What are the roles of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group?
- ❖ What are the main challenges of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group?
- ❖ What perception do the managers and practitioners of the department have towards the practices of corporate communication activities in Ethiopian Airlines Group?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of this research is assessing the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airline Group.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are;

- ❖ To assess corporate communication tools employed in corporate communication of Ethiopian Airlines Group
- ❖ To investigate the role of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group
- ❖ To investigate the challenges of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group

- ❖ To identify the perception of corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group managers and practitioners have towards the activities of corporate communication

1.5 Significance of the Study

Ethiopian Airlines authored 'vision 2025' that expected to make the airline to be strong competitor in Africa and in the world. To materialize the vision and objectives of the organization, effective communication is imperative. The major important of this paper is to assess the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airline Group. This study strengthens the overall communication activities and improves daily practices. The study also helps bring new PR trends that are practically effective and suit the company. Besides, to this, it increases the awareness of the role of corporate communication among departments, which have direct, or in direct interrelation with corporate communication activities.

This study helps the student researcher;

To create good opportunity to change the theoretical aspect of the research into the practical one

- ❖ Helps the company to improve its corporate communication practices and forward better services to its both internal and external customers
- ❖ Uses as a secondary data for another researcher
- ❖ It also provides reasonable solutions for the identified problems

1.6 Scope of the study

This study is limited to the assessment of the practice of corporate communication of Ethiopian Airline, which is located at the head office around Bole. Although the airline is providing passenger and cargo services in different parts of the world, the scope of the study was specifically delimited to the internal and external customers as well as the stakeholders.

1.7 Limitation of the study

This research faced some limitation during the study. As the company is government owned, policies and information related to the weakness and gaps might not be perceived positively from the management side. As far as a certain research work is concerned, it is important to mention the limitations the researcher may encounter. The main challenge encountered during the data gathering was not getting the managers of the department in their office. Accordingly, the student researcher had experienced certain limitation while conducting the study. Among others, the following are the major limitations encountered.

- ❖ Difficult in interviewing higher Ethiopian corporate communication managers due to the strict internal policy of the company and the findings of this study might not be perceived positively from the management side. However, I did my best to convince those who suspected this study might result bad brand image. It would probably hard to assure them that it would rather help all of us , practitioners in the field , develop our professional skill and come up with better and efficient practices, since the study relies not only Individuals‘‘ thoughts, but also on existing theories and practices of corporate communication.
- ❖ Access to corporation data in required depth was not possible due to confidentiality policy of the corporation and the department
- ❖ Lack of previous research in the field of the corporate communication discipline
- ❖ Some respondents were also unenthusiastic to express their views blatantly.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

This study organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction that encompasses background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance, scope of the study, and limitation of the study. The second chapter

presents the review of related literature, concept and definition of corporate communication, the role of corporate communication, corporate communication and public relations, corporate communication and stakeholders, types of corporate communication, tools of corporate communication, challenges, and structures of corporate communication. In addition to these, the theoretical frameworks of the study were also incorporated. Chapter three focuses on the research methodology, research design, research approaches, source of data, Population and sample size determination, sampling frame, sampling techniques, and methods of data collection. In addition to these, validity of the study and ethical consideration were also incorporated whereas the fourth chapter states data analysis and interpretation, the respondent's rate, demographic factors of the respondents, data analysis and findings. Finally, chapter five concentrates on major findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is a collection of principles and values that should be followed while doing human affairs. The ethical considerations make sure that no one acts in such a way that is harmful to society or an individual. Ethical considerations play an essential role, especially in research. To keep the formality, firstly the researcher took a permission letter from Addis Ababa University. As far as researcher's knowledge and experience is concerned, respondents were incorporated in the study based on their free. Accordingly, the researcher clearly discussed with the concerned bodies of Ethiopian Airlines Group to get permission for collecting data regarding issue under study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This part of the paper deals with different literatures issues under the study. Accordingly, the concept of corporate communication, the role of corporate communication, corporate communication and public relations, corporate communication and stakeholders, types of corporate communication, challenges of corporate communication, tools of corporate communication and structure of corporate communication of an organization under study were also evaluated. In addition to these, the theoretical frameworks related to the study were also incorporated. In general, both published and unpublished documents were also evaluated.

2.1 Concept of corporate communication

Different scholars define corporate communication from different perspectives. Van Riel (1955) defines corporate communication as the integration of three components.

The first element is a management communication which refers to managers' communications to their employees with the purpose of developing a shared vision of the company within the organization aiming to establish and maintain trust in the organization's leadership; to initiate and manage change and to empower and to motivate employees. The second component is a marketing communication that comprises of all forms of communication that support sales of goods or services. The third element is external organizational communication initially referred to as a public relation, but now sub divided into activities such as public relations, public affairs, environmental communication, labor market communications, investor relations, and internal communications.

According to Grunig & Hunt 1984, Corporate Communication is defined as,

A management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with stakeholders' groups upon which the organization is dependent. It was known as corporate public relations and was the responsible of the public relations department of the organization. Earlier writings on corporate communication were from journalism, and it

focused more on persuasive messages to create mutual understanding between organizations and their respective stakeholders.

Corporate communication is the methods by which large and medium size companies are communicate with customers, stakeholders, and employees. Even though in corporate communication department, external and internal activities must separate, as they both require a different approach to manage them Corporate Communication seeks to ensure that the "sum of the perceptions that different audiences have and set a person or an institution over time" are favorable. In addition, it aims to ensure that those perceptions are not only impromptu ideas without substance, but instead identify attributes that Corporate Communication managers highlight to influence the decision-making of stakeholders. (Ritter, 2013: 135).

According to Varey (1998), Corporate Communication is explained as,

The sharing of messages within the transformation process of the enterprise, and it includes giving and taking order and directives, generation, dissemination and interpretation of performance data and task instruction. The external communication messages are shared between members and representative of the environment in the form of promotional messages via mass communication media and inward in the form of market information. The medium of communication is dependent on who is the receiver (stakeholder).

Accordingly, the student researcher has found the followings,

Ethiopian Corporate Communication Department employs various means of or mechanisms of communication tools to reach its respected customers within the country and world widely. These communication tools are press releases, press conference, e-mail, chat box, bulletin board, portal page, outlook, fact sheet, telephone communication etc. They are the platform designed to create smooth communication between the organization and its customers as well as the stakeholders. Ethiopian corporate communication department plays the critical in keeping or maintaining the company's great reputation and image. This department is regarded as the core of the organization, which keeps the smooth flows of relevant information between the company and its internal and external customers as well as the stakeholders.

In Tench and Yeomans, (2006:540) corporate communication is defined as a set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favorable point of view among stakeholders on which the company depends. It is the message issued by a corporate organization or institute to its audiences such as employees, media channel, partners and the public.”

The broad field of corporate communications cannot be precisely defined. In principle, the measures are too diverse and overlap with many other areas of a company, such as marketing. In principle, however, corporate communication encompasses all communication that a company conducts. This can be found both internally, in the way employees are addressed, and externally, if business partners, customers, or media (as in PR) are the addressees.

Van Riel’s (1995) integrated corporate communication model illustrates corporate communication in organization. Van Riel defines corporate communication as follows:

“An instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favorable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent.”
(Van Riel 1995, p.26).

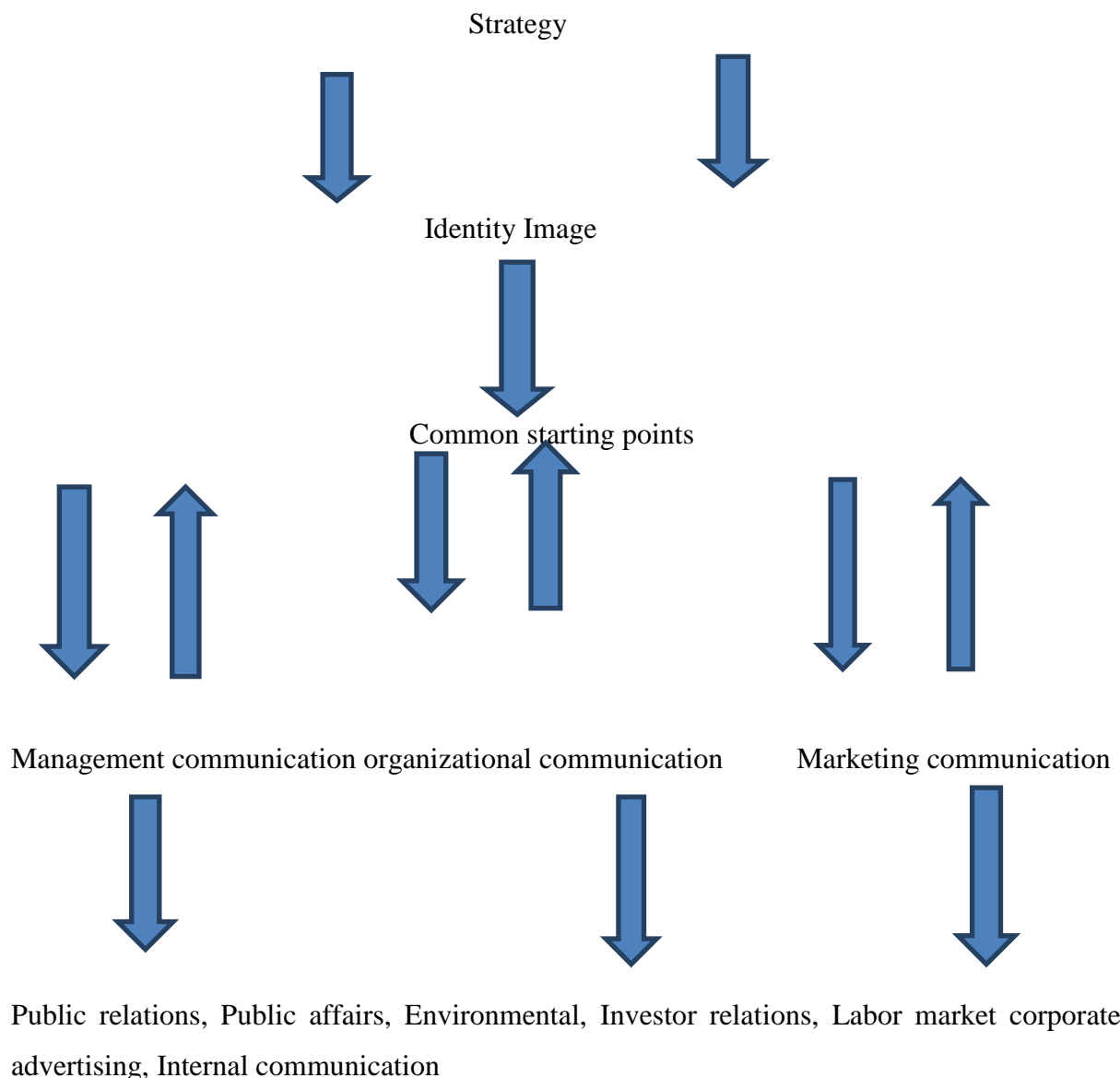


Chart 1: Van Riel (1995), Corporate Communication Flow

Corporate communication has become an increasingly important purpose in business organizations. Communication is very crucial in this era. Corporate communication is a vital management function and strategic tool in developing competitive advantage. Corporate communications must maintain an excellent reputation to ensure the organization's continuous growth in future. Depending on organization, corporate communication can include various tools ranging from marketing communications to management communications. (Goodman, 2000).

Hence, corporate communication is necessary for all company in order to communicate effectively with both employees and the external audiences. This study is designed to assess the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines Group. Hence, this part of the study reviewed the theoretical aspects that incorporate the concept of corporate

communication and related literature, the role of corporate communication, structure of corporate communication, public relations and corporate communication, challenges of corporate communication, tools of corporate communication, corporate communication and stakeholders, and description of an organization.

Review of literature is the documentation of a published and unpublished work from sources of data in the areas of specific interest to the researcher. It contains a critical analysis and the integration of information from various sources as well as consideration of any gaps in literature and possibilities for future research. In addition, provides the background and context for the research problem. It should establish the need for the research and indicate that the writer is knowledgeable about the area. (Wiersma, 1995, p.406).

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the study

The theoretical framework is the structure that can contain a theory of research study. The theoretical framework describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. Moreover, it uses for further investigation about the importance of corporate communication. Abend, Gabriel, (2008).

The theoretical framework is the frame a researcher uses to interpret data or evidence. Theoretical frameworks are often used to confirm a gap in knowledge and to provide a justification for conducting a study. A researcher could think of a theoretical framework as being the way to delineate the “why” or the “how” of a study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p.13).

As far as the researcher understanding is concerned, a selective theory needs to be employed based on the objective of the study. Theoretical framework of this study was assessing the practice of corporate communication that guides all ideas discussed here. In this research, the importance of corporate communication practices expressed in a title is also essential to explore. It is also likely determined how the managers and employees utilized corporate communication of Ethiopian Airline Group. These theory guides as a complete theoretical framework regarding the problem presented in statement of the problem as well as the research questions.

2.2.1 Stakeholders theory

Stakeholders' theory is central to the good governance of corporate communication. They are categorized as internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders are people that have direct relationship with the organization. The internal stakeholders can be employees, managers, and share- holders of the organization. External stakeholders are people or groups that do not directly work with the company but can be affected by the actions of the company. They are customers, competitors, suppliers, governments and the like. Stakeholders are the theory of organizational management and business ethics that addresses the morals and Values in managing an organization. (Freeman, 1984).

According to Phillips et al. (2003), stakeholder theory is not a comprehensive doctrine. Rather, it is a theory of organizations that does not even cover all the moral questions relevant to a business context, let alone the rest of the moral world. Stakeholder theory, like most theories, is a tool to better describe and act in a complex world.

2.2.2 Excellency theory

Excellence theory helps the public relation department to form the best conducive method to send the message across. It all depends on the company's policies, at the current situation and its target audience to whom the message needs to be sent and how they could establish the fruitful relationship with the company. The excellence in the communication process also helps to reduce the cost and give good returns. (Berger, 2007, p. 232).

Effective organizations are very strong in keeping their organizational reputation because of they are doing every activities carefully. Due to this, they have positive relations and perceptions with their publics especially concerning their services and products. Then their services and products become accepted by many publics and they good organizational image. This valued is based on the quality of relationship has with its stakeholders and publics. This theory asserts that in order for corporate communication to contribute in an organization it must be part of strategic management.

According to this theory, for an organization to be an effective it must solve the problem and satisfy the goals of both the public's and stakeholders. Organizations must differentiate their

various publics who are affected by the decision taken by the organization or those who want the organization to solve a problem important to them.

Tyma as presents excellence Theory as,

“A critical inquiry paradigm in which public relations through a new lens Critical praxis via the “excellence theory” and demonstrates that this theory is not only normative but also allows for the creation of spaces accessible by otherwise marginalized publics by the public relations practitioner while still following the principles of ethics in an organization. It is an answer to the critic’s version that such theory no longer holds relevance in today’s social, political and corporate realities and demonstrates its effectiveness in present scenario.”

The excellence theory has evolved into a general theory of public relations as a strategic management function, and ongoing research now is adding concepts and tools that public relations professionals who serve in a strategic role can use. The Excellence theory is a general theory of public relations that “specifies how public relations makes organizations more effective, how it is organized and managed when it contributes most to organizational effectiveness, the conditions in organizations and their environments that make organizations more effective. J.Grunig (1960).

2.2.3 System Theory

Different scholars have defined system theory from different perspectives.

One of the predominant theoretical lines of thinking underpinning much of public relations practice is the systems theory. The theory states that mechanical, organic and social systems (including organizations) can be defined by their interactions with their environment. (Gregory 1999: 266).

Systems theory is hence theoretical perspective that analyzes a phenomenon seen as a whole and not as simply the sum of elementary parts. The focus is on the interactions and on the relationships between parts in order to understand an entity's organization, functioning and outcomes. Its premise is that complex systems share organizing principles which can be discovered and modeled mathematically. The term came to relate to finding a general theory to explain all systems in all fields of science. Bertalanffy (1968).

According to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006) public relations' essential role is to help organizations adjust and adapt to changes in an organization's environment. Organizations depend on their environments for several essential resources: customers who purchase the product or service, suppliers who provide materials, employees who provide labor or management, shareholders who invest, and governments that regulate.

According to Grunig, and Dozier 2002, system theory has the power to focus on relation in the public relations profession. This theory always assumes that organizations are the product of the components within them. Before a large organization can be created, strong parts must be created. The work that organizations do in the field they are engaged in is the result of adapting and adjusting the internal components. Organizations have recognizable boundaries, inside that Grunig, and Dozier state that the systems perspective emphasizes the interdependence of organizations with their environments, each internal and external to the organization.

Systems theory views communication as a system binder, crucial for the survival and growth of organization. Binding the subsystems together facilitates internal stability and control. By binding the total system to the external environment, communication promotes organizational growth and goal attainment. More specifically, systems theory is a framework to analyze or describe any group of things that work together to produce some result. The basic idea behind Systems Theory is, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." An easy example of this is baking a cake. If you were to lay out all of the ingredients of a cake, you would not have a cake. Instead, you would have the ingredients of cake.

2.2.4 Conceptual Literature

A conceptual framework is not merely a collection of concepts but, also construct in which each concept plays an integral role. A conceptual framework lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them. Conceptual framework is tool researchers use to guide their inquiry; it is a set of ideas used to structure the research, a sort of map that may include the research question, the literature review, methods and data analysis. Researchers use a conceptual framework to guide their data collection and analysis. It is perceive the conceptual framework as functioning as a way to focus and set boundaries for the study, especially for qualitative researchers. Miles and Huberman (1994).

A conceptual framework is the researcher's synthesis of literature on how to explain phenomena. It maps out the actions required in the path of the study given the previous knowledge of other researchers' point of view and observations on the subject of research. (Regional, 2015).

This study conducted on the assessment of the practices of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines Group. In addition to these, this paper explains the way in which this conceptualization can lead to an appropriate methodology, embodying research design, philosophical approaches, methods and techniques. The paper goes on to discuss how conceptual frameworks can assist in understanding provide theoretical clarification; provide focus on the methods and assist in evaluation and interpretation of study.

2.2.5 Empirical Literature

Empirical literature review explores past studies in view of attempting to answer specific research questions. The work of empirical literature review focused on empirical results obtained from different studies at different times and from different organizations. In philosophy, empiricism is a theory that states that knowledge comes only or primarily from sensory experience. It is one of several views of epistemology, along with rationalism and skepticism. Empiricism emphasizes the role of empirical evidence in the formation of ideas, rather than innate ideas or traditions. In philosophy, empiricism is a theory that states that knowledge comes only or primarily from sensory experience. It is one of several views of epistemology, along with rationalism and skepticism. Empiricism emphasizes the role of empirical evidence in the formation of ideas, rather than innate ideas or traditions.

Empirical research is an important method of systematic investigation because it gives the researcher the opportunity to test the validity of different assumptions, in the form of hypotheses, before arriving at any findings. An empirical literature review is more commonly called a systematic literature review and it examines past empirical studies to answer a particular research question concerned with the exchange of experiences, knowledge, emotions and thoughts between subjects that integrate with the aim of producing senses, creating symbolic universes and systems of internal and external significance that contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives." (Ulloa et al, 2015: 292).

2.2.6 Machine Theory

A theory can illuminate an aspect of your communication so that you understand the process much more clearly; theory also can hide things from your understanding or distort the relative importance of things. We consider a communication theory to be any systematic summary about the nature of the communication process. In machine theory, employees have little freedom, tasks are subdivided into parts and roles are standardized. Communication in this arena is only necessary to instruct employees how to complete their task, is downwards from management and is mainly in written format, providing information that reinforces management's control. Management in this kind of company focuses downward communication and discourages horizontal communication between groups of employees.

2.2 The role of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airline

In a digitally connected world, corporate communication is one of the key factors that determine whether companies thrive or fail. The importance of sound corporate communication cannot be ignored. Powerful communication helps keep employees working efficiently and gives potential customers ample chances to learn about a business' products and services. Corporate communication facilitates executive meetings, the process of informing the media or stakeholders about the latest news. As they grow, all companies realize the importance of a communications team that can handle external requests from the media and customers. Organization needs to communicate effectively with their employees. It sounds simple, but the reality is less so. At the most basic level, you must communicate well at the right time. Thus, employees know what is expected of them and what is happening in the organization. (Tkalac and vercic, 2012).

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected through new forms of communication, the role of corporate communication is to help organizations understand how to effectively deliver their message to key audiences. The core task of corporate communication practitioners is building, maintaining and protecting the company's reputation. In companies where role of corporate communication is not understood, communication practitioners feel undervalued, and their decision-making processes are compromised and senior managers feel powerless, as they do not understand the company's environment and how these events can affect company's operation and profits. It helps organizations to explain their mission, combine its many visions and values into a cohesive message to stakeholders. (Cornelissen, J. (2004).

Accordingly, Ethiopian Airlines Group of corporate communication department managers' responsibilities involve the coordination of balance between internal and external customers, dealing with corporate communication issues such as introducing company usefully to the media or special events, organization of conference, show and exhibition, production of marketing materials, production of press release, marketing research and evaluation etc. All these responsibilities are necessary to establish corporate identity, corporate culture, and brand equity through internal and external media. Ethiopian airline's corporate communication strongly believes that, understanding functioning of corporate communication is very essential and empowering for organization. This understanding allows the managers and the practitioners to lead the events of corporate communication and to identify the opportunities for communication engagement with stakeholders in a company.

According to Schimid and Lyczek, (2006:8) modern standard of corporate communication is understood as a centralized management of overall company communication dealing with numerous stakeholders aiming at achieving the highest reputation. Corporate communication provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date treatment of the subject including the criticality of function strategies and activities involved, and how it can be managed and organized properly.

Corporate communication delivers the company's strategic message to all its audiences, customers and potential companies, shareholders, employees, and regulators. These communications create and preserve the company's brand and help everyone move in concert with the company's mission. Consequently, these situations made the field of corporate communication more important for the organizations. (Van Riel 1995).

As per the managers of the department's believe, Ethiopian corporate communication has role and responsibilities,

“To create favorable association around the organization and create a positive reputation both within the organization and externally. They are also a duty of managing company's website, monitoring what customers and clients are saying about the company on social networking websites and responding to inaccurate posts or requests for information and make the Ethiopian brand more accessible and relevant to a wider audience as well as boost loyalty among current Ethiopian customers. In addition to these, this department is also

having a task of producing newsletters, magazines, brochures, and other printed materials designed for the public.’’

2.4. Corporate Communication and Public relation

Corporate communication and public relations are the managing of relationships with public groups. It is all about managing relationships by informing, persuading, dialogue, and negotiating and is considered as an important tool of the organizational management. Corporate Communications and Public Relations are two divisions that work closely together with nearly identical target audiences and communications. Both are reliant on one another to position a company in the views of its stakeholders, clients, and customers. They involve written and oral communication and all of them have the basic objective of creating a positive image of the company in the eyes of different stakeholders. Corporate communication includes communication with employees, investors and the executive team. PR tasks relates to communication with the public and the media. Public relation is relatively a narrow one compared to corporate communication. Recently, public relation is considered to be one of the components of corporate communication. It encapsulates the functions of public relations. PR and corporate communication must be on the same page and creating a common message. (Cornelissen, 2008, Goodman& Hirsch, 2010).

Kyung-ran Kim, August, (2007:165) has differentiated corporate communication from public relation in the following ways,

‘‘PR and corporate communication are relatively the same, though their objectives and tactics are often quite different-conflicting even. They are the proverbial kissing cousins of communication, and just as public relations creatively promotes the favorable image of its client to the public, corporate communication adheres to the complicated by laws of compliance in both internal and external communication, promoting the integrity of a corporation with very little room for creativity. Public relation is a necessary tool for corporate communication. Although the corporate communication is very often identified with the public relations, corporate communication definitions describe its role in the company much more widely. Public relation is a necessary tool for corporate communication even though they are different, and both are heavy hitters in any company’s success.’’

2.5 Corporate Communication and Stakeholders

Good communication is an essential to many business successes. Thus, an effective corporate communication function keeps an organization and many different stakeholders informed and engaged, explain and promote business strategy, protect and develop reputation.

Rindova & Fombrun 1999 has described the relationship between corporate communication and stakeholders as follows,

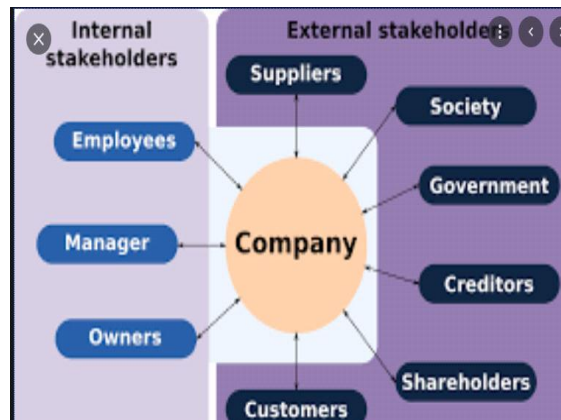
“The company can create competitive advantage by socializing its stakeholder to its own culture and use communication strategy to form long-term relationships with the stakeholders in shaping the organization’s image and reputation. Moreover, corporate communication is an important factor for the strategic management to gain a competitive advantage in corporate setting. Therefore, corporate communication is important tools and activities for disseminating corporate strategies for the companies.”

Corporate communication is described as a management function that offers a framework and vocabulary for the effective co-ordination of all means of communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintain favorable reputation with stakeholders’ groups up on which the organization is dependent. This implies that stakeholders are significant for the success of corporate communication activities. Corolosen (2008:254).

As per the interviewees’ response,

“The airline in general is committed to the highest standards of integrity, behavior and ethics in dealing with all its stakeholders. Ethiopian’s corporate communication department is playing its crucial role to maintain autonomy functions of all stakeholders such as immigration services, customs, NISS (National Intelligence Security Service) and others to ensure all the services according to global standards. Thus, the main objective of all these stakeholders is to provide a globalized standard service to the customers. Therefore, customers are the most important focus for all these service providers. In line with this, this synergy creates common direction to improve services by eliminating waste and redundant activities.”

Figure 1: Company and its stakeholders



Source: Own survey,2022

According to Goodman, (2000) stakeholders are described as the people and organizations whose attitudes and actions have an impact on the success of the company. They can be also defined as anyone who has a stake in the organization's success. These include vendors, customers, employees, and executive of the organization. The stakeholders include employees, labor unions, suppliers, customers, business partners, investors and shareholders, the local community, government authorities and regulators. Different stakeholders have different interests, attitudes, and priorities.

Corporate communications reaches out to all the stakeholders of the company. As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, Ethiopian corporate communication department has strong relationship with the stakeholders can be viewed from two perspectives: inside and outside.

Inside Relationship

- ❖ Coordinates with area offices pertaining to media and media relations
- ❖ Coordinates with areas offices pertaining to sponsorship and community relations
- ❖ Coordinates with all concerned departments of the airline pertaining to media inquires
- ❖ Coordinates with areas offices pertaining to facility visits of journalist
- ❖ Coordinates with areas offices pertaining in-house publications and with all airlines' staff and all the concerned department
- ❖ Coordinates with corporate finance to provide editorial support in the preparation of the airline's annual report

Outside Relationship

- ❖ Establish good relationship with airport security, embassies, Ministry of foreign affairs and government communication
- ❖ Develops and maintains effective relationship with exhibition and trade fair hosts, hotel operators/owners to ensure smooth handling of events
- ❖ Builds and maintains effective rapport with domestic and international media
- ❖ Maintains effective contact with government and industry groups
- ❖ Maintains effective relationship with organizations and diplomatic missions
- ❖ Responsible to manage, plan, design and produce corporate events in a timely manner
- ❖ Proactively use corporate and sponsored and events to promote Ethiopian image to the public and gain much publicity locally and internationally
- ❖ Builds up goodwill by replying timely to customers' request
- ❖ Ensures company messaging is consistent and clear

2.6 Types of Corporate Communication

Essentially speaking, every communication sent out by the company to internal or external audiences is the job of corporate communications. A company can apply its corporate communication strategy in practice in many ways. Both internally with employees, as well as externally, the most diverse possibilities can be found to use enterprise communication effectively. We distinguish two types of corporate communications: internal communication and external communication. Both are very different in content, tone, approach, and tools. That is why different departments within a company usually handle them.

According to Castro (2007: 17), Corporate Communication:

“Is divided in two: Internal Corporate Communication and External Corporate Communication; the first works in the conception and development of corporate culture, that is, the ideas and qualitative concepts that defines the organization whereas the second is responsible for managing the company’s image to offer to the market or society. In both cases, cooperation is the key to achieve profitability objectives.”

2.6.1 Internal Corporate Communication

According to Welch & Jackson, 2007 Internal communication is conveyed to employees and stakeholders that have an interest in the production side of the business. It may include company's mission statement, information contained on the company's intranet, trainings and seminars. It takes place within company, between management, employees, executives, etc. Internal communication does not have a commercial intention. Internal communication is divided into different types that solve a specific task within the organization, change communication, crisis communication, top-down/bottom-up communication, peer communication, and culture communication. Effective internal communication promotes the engagement process between the organization's managers and employees, and this is crucial in achieving organizational objectives.

Figure 2: Internal communication of the employees



Source: Ethiopian Airlines corporate communication employees , 2022

2.6.2 External Corporate Communication

As its name implies external corporate communication is the communication between the organizations and the outsiders. It is conducted through personal visits, telephones and postal services. The external communication can be conducted through acknowledgments, enquires, meetings, conferences and notices. External corporate communications are those messages meant for the consumer of the goods or services the company produces.

2.7 Tools of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group

The corporate communication work is unthinkable without proper utilization of corporate communication tools such as magazines, press release, email, press conference to communicate their publics. It is safe to say that corporate communications can make or break business success. That is why a company's corporate communications department plays a crucial role. It sends out the right and relevant messages, formulated in the best possible way, through appropriate channels that will reach the intended audience and elicit the desired action. Modern corporate communication depends on a two-way and strategically planned communication based on most advantageous use of tools and functions of internal and external communication of the company. A company can apply its corporate communication strategy in practice in many ways. (Zerfa, (2004:46).

Ethiopian corporate communication has explained the tools the department is using to reach its audiences as follows,

“Information regarding to Ethiopian airline to be released to the public, through various communication channels should be done in a consistent, accurate and timely manner. Communication to the public through press releases or social media outlets including via the Ethiopian weekly promotes the overall image of Ethiopian and strengthen the public's confidence both in defensive and offensive manner. Ethiopian corporate communication employs various communication tools to reach its customers and interoffice correspondence. By using a combination of emails, chats, internal blogs, and postings, and in-person team meetings to spread the word, regularly promoting resources ultimately encourages employees to invest in their own personal and professional development through the organization itself.”

Press Release

A press conference is an important tool of public relations. The primary role of corporate communication is to manage a company's reputation and help build public consent for its enterprises. The goal of PR is to develop and maintain goodwill with most, if not all, of its publics. Failure to do so may mean loss of customers and revenues, time lost dealing with complaints or lawsuits, and loss of esteem. A company's publics change constantly. Well-

executed public relation is an ongoing process that molds good long-term relationships and plays an important role in relationship marketing and integrated communications.

Cornelissen (2000; 122) has explained press release as the locus of communication where research measures the effectiveness of transmission. The authors added that it is a mechanism to communicate as a transmission process in which message travels across a space from one point to another. On the other hand, merely measuring the number of news releases obtained does not accurately reflect the channel's effectiveness.

According to David p.2009 press releases are defined as,

“The most efficient way to communicate your news to the press, and a great way disseminate your message exactly the way you want. Make sure that your news is worthy before launching into the release writing and distribution process. Fluffy news only wastes your time, as well as that of the reports; you are sending it to make your company look less credible in the eyes of the publication. Keep in mind that you should know your audience before you distribute your news to them. Not every publication and writer should get everyone of your press releases. Determine who should be on your distribution list based on the type of news you are announcing. New hires announcements should only to editors at your local paper”

Accordingly, as per the interviewees' response, Ethiopian Airlines Group utilizes press release is an announcement to describe photos of events, products in use, flight commencements, new appointed executives can lend credence or interest to a dull news story. Photos should be high quality and need little or no explanation.

Bulletin boards

Companies use exhibits to describe the organization's history, present new products, show how products are made, or explain future. Exhibits are often prepared for local fairs, colleges and universities, and trade shows. Internally, Ethiopian corporate communication department utilizes the bulletin boards to announce new flight, job openings, announcements, new products, meetings, promotions, construction plans, promotion, condolences, and recreation news to employees.

Face book

Ethiopian airlines group corporate communication communicates more efficiently on its Face book page to uplift its accomplishments and meet its online publics in a wide range. Face book as tools has profoundly changed the communication ways and how people interact with their online community. The use of social media networking with their online community. Face book is an essential social networking site that can help connecting with the public to address different issues. In this case, EAL uses its Face book page efficiently to disseminate information on time.

Press conference

From the experience of the interviewees the usage of press conference stated as follows,

“In Ethiopian Airlines Group, the press conference is a tool used in business situations, in cases of major breakthroughs or emergencies. It also announces that the story is felt to be important, and this may lead to broader, more thoughtful coverage. It is used in cases when a press release cannot cover all issues or when it is necessary to counter the possibility of negative impressions being formed.”

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Mesfin Tasew remarked,

“We are very pleased to launch a new passenger service connecting Lomé with Washington DC. The U.S. is one of our most important markets due to the presence of a large African community and the growing business and tourism ties with Africa. The new flight further enhances the air connectivity between Africa and the U.S. and helps in fostering the economic, trade, tourism, and diplomatic ties between the two regions. Going forward, we will continue to tap into opportunities for growing our services to more destinations in the U.S.”

Table 1: Ethiopian Airlines flight display to Chicago

Flight number	Frequency	Departure airport	Arrival airport	Aircraft type
ET 0516	Mon, Wed, Sat	ADD	LFW	B787-800
ET 0516	Mon, Wed, Sat	LFW	IAD	B787-800
ET 0517	Mon, Wed, Sat	IAD	LFW	B787-800
ET 0517	Tue, Thu, Sun	LFW	ADD	B787-800

Source: Ethiopian Airline’s Fact Sheet, 2022

Currently, Ethiopian Airlines is operating flights to Chicago and two airports in New York in addition to its services to Washington DC.

The managers of Corporate Communication department strongly believe that Ethiopian Airlines Group utilizes the press conference as a tool of communication to reach the publics in cases of major breakthroughs or emergencies. It also announces that the story is felt to be important, and this may lead to broader, more thoughtful coverage. The department's major aim is to manage a company's reputation and help build public consent for its enterprises by using this tool. Failure to do so may mean loss of customers and revenues, time lost dealing with complaints or lawsuits, and loss of esteem. A company's publics change constantly. A well-executed public relation is an ongoing process that molds good long-term relationships and plays an important role in relationship marketing and integrated communications. Companies often call press conference when they have significant news to announce, such as the introduction of a new product or advertising campaign. Although used less often by organizations and corporations, this form of delivery can be very effective. The topic must be of major interest to a specific group before it is likely to gain coverage.

Websites

According to Doug.N,2007 website is described as the most internet technology for corporate communication practitioners, permitting organization to display text, visual and sound files using computer servers and browser software on personal computers. The web provides the decentralized delivery of information using human computer graphical interfaces to facilitate access. Organizations use websites for a variety of marketing, human resource, and other management functions. It helps to create brand awareness, showcasing your brand to prospective customers and establish your image by letting the audience to know who you are and what you represent.’’

As per the interviewees, reply Ethiopian utilizes its website to provide reliable information to the consumers, which helps in setting the company's goals and mission and vision. This platform incorporates the major happenings of the company. It helps the company to promote its products and services, especially for customers who rely heavily on the Internet to learn everything about a company. This plat form consist various company contents such as ticketing and reservation, online booking and online check-in, baggage services, and the like. This feature will enable passengers to easily process their travel need.

Magazines

Magazines, publication usually issued daily, weekly, or at other regular times, that provides news, views, features, and other information of public interest and that often carries advertising. Magazines serve us the latest happenings in different parts of the world through a network of correspondents and news agencies. Currently, the magazine has been brought to the readers after the printed version of the magazine was stopped in a vibrant digital format. Magazines are an in expensive way to enhance class work by providing the basis for studying different subjects from basic literacy to the highest level of critical thinking. They are a good source of information and more colorful and made with quality papers but are restricted to selected topics to satisfy their readers. Mc Mane, (2001).

As per the managers of corporate communication department statement regarding to the magazine,

“Ethiopian Airlines Group utilizes selamta magazines to reach its customers in flight. It is an Amharic word which stands for ‘Greetings’ in English. This magazine has been in service for many decades. Selamta, the magazine of Ethiopian Airlines, is an excellent publication providing an array of coverage as diverse as the airline and the regions it serves. Magazines have been the most conventional and popular medium of conveying local, regional, national and international news to the readers.”

Ethiopian Airlines Group employs Selamta magazines to reach its customers in flight. The magazine has reached for reading with attractive design and various topics coverage in partner with INK Global, a trusted travel media company. The select digital magazine has a multi-fold purpose, on one hand, it will bring contemporary contents, articles, and destinations that can inspire many to be attached to whilst they can enjoy flying with the company. On the other hand, it creates an asset for ET where it can use to generate revenue.

E-mail

Ethiopian Airlines Group sending and receiving email has its own rule and procedures. Accordingly, any e-mail must have leading in its subject as either ‘FYI’ or ‘Call for Action.’ Email senders must significantly limit or restrict copying people who are not relevant for the subject of the email. If copying is necessary, then reason must be indicated why copying was

needed and this reason must be indicated in the subject of the email. All email must be answered within the same day unless time zone difference. Email sender must recognize the time difference between sender's location and respondent's location.

As Thach (1995) strongly agrees on his side,

“The principal feature of using e-mail as a research tool is the speed and immediacy it offers. An almost instantaneous dialogue between researcher and subject can be arranged if desired. However, this speed also lends e-mail a certain ephemerality that may compromise its effectiveness as a research tool. E-mail messages can be deleted as quickly as they were sent and unlike the standard mail questionnaire or interview the respondent can discard e-mail at the touch of a button.”

According to Valente, 2005 Fact sheets are described as the evidence that persuade the audience to the organization point of view. Fact sheets can be about an organization, a program within the organization, a subsidiary, an event, an issue, a sponsored program outside the organization, equipment, processes, etc. Because fact sheets are brief documents, they must have a narrow focus among a variety of background materials used to enhance the organization and educate the organization's publics.

Outlook

It is a platform designed for Ethiopian airlines Group employees as one of a communication tools. Through this means of communication tools, Ethiopian can reach each other within the department and outside of the department as well. However, this platform could not benefit all the employees of the company. This hinders the others not to get an access to various company related news. They get the information related to the company from the third party. Hence, in general, this platform could not participate the whole employees equally.

If you are having trouble logging into your account, please follow these steps below.

- ❖ **Step 1** To login to your Ethiopian airlines outlook login account, open this guide in a new window. You will be able to follow along with the steps while seeing them!
- ❖ **Step 2** Log in by entering your login details for Ethiopian airlines outlook login. This information will be given to you upon sign either up or from an authorized representative of the website.

- ❖ **Step 3** After receiving a "successfully logged in" message, you are officially connected with Ethiopian airlines outlook login!
- ❖ **Step 4** Ethiopian airline outlook sign in may have trouble accepting your login credentials. We recommend following these systematic instructions to help solve this issue.

Telephone Communication

Scholars examined uses and users' characteristics of mobile communication as well as the effects of mobile media on everyday life. Most studies used quantitative methods such as survey of the general population. The telephone offers more personal touch, allowing businesses the opportunity to integrate real-time two-way communication with customers.

Cooper and Schndler (2003:335) has explained telephone communication as,

“A medium can be highly effective for arranging interviews and screening large populations. They also mention it as a medium to obtain receiver perspectives or feedback. The authors stress that this is specially the case with the widespread computer assisted telephone interviewing and other computer administered telephone survey methods.”

Technology has become such a vital part of our lives that we find it difficult to envisage life without our smart phones or having information at the touch of a button. We all know how important communicating with customers is to a business and how difficult it would be to operate without a reliable phone system. For business organization like Ethiopian Airlines Group, it is also crucial to follow a proper technique when having telephone conversation as it is an essential tool to achieve goals in a phone call as either senders or receipts. Hence, Ethiopian corporate communication department applies this type of communication technique to get the most out of its communications in business strategies.

Brochures

Brochures are a brief description of an organization or product in the print format. It introduces the organization, its various functions and other details. Accordingly, Ethiopian Airlines Group utilizes brochures to inform its employees various information when needed.

Ethiopian Weekly

Ethiopian airline Group is one of the fastest growing airlines in the world. This growth is manifested in various ways, which includes the accelerated increases in the number of employees. With a current workforce of over 20,000 permanent employees, it is critical to ensure employees continued and full alignment and engagement to ET's vision, mission and values. It is in recognition of this that the Employee Engagement section was set up over three years ago. Ethiopian corporate communication department uses this mode of communication, as it is very important and effective.

Accordingly, the interviewees of this study elaborated Ethiopian Weekly as one communication tool as follows,

“Ethiopian Weekly is its’ employee’s newsletter. Employee of the company plays a critical role in the contribution for it. Ethiopian announces its company news, recognitions, celebrations, celebrations, weddings, graduations, new births etc. via its Ethiopian Weekly. As one of foundation of engagement is effective communication, Ethiopian weekly, as one communication portal, has been providing with information regarding Ethiopian, employees, the aviation industry as well as other relevant news for the three years plus. Furthermore, if you missed any of the news on ET weekly, you could access it on Ace News, Bulletins, Press Releases, and announcements posted on our Ethiopian Weekly portal page.”

Accordingly, the researcher found that Ethiopian Airlines Group corporate communication department utilizes the tools to reach its both internal and external esteemed customers in general for various purposes. Ethiopian airlines group uses the traditional as well as the modern mode of communication tools. Ethiopian corporate communication managers explained that department uses both traditional and modern communication mode of communication. Accordingly, Ethiopian corporate communication uses written paper based as a mode of communication and invested on IT to fulfill its objective to build a paperless company.

2.8 Challenges of Corporate Communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group

If corporate communication fails to be part of the measuring system, it can continue to be unimportant and not worth paying attention. This is aptly summed up in the familiar statement, “What is not measured does not get managed.” Rensburg & Ferreira, (2004:21).

According to the interviewees, one of the main challenges of Ethiopian Airlines Group in general and the corporate communication department was the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic disease. After the announcement of WHO the virus as a global pandemic, it is expected that the virus can spread to any country. No country was remaining immune from the virus in today’s highly interconnected world. As it is globally happened, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the economy of the whole countries all over the world in general and in Ethiopian in particular.

In contemporary period, many airlines were encountered with the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic diseases. But Ethiopian has kept its business afloat with diversification strategies and agile management, continuing operations by shifting its focus to cargo, hotel and Maintenance Repair Overhaul businesses without laying off employees or making any pay cuts. It implemented a cost leadership strategy to reduce expenditure while maintaining quality and efficiency. The credit for this goes on the one hand, to successive Governments of Ethiopia which have recognized the airline’s valuable contribution to the country’s economy and, on the other, to the airline’s Management and Staff who, down the years, have become well known for their professional manner and personal integrity. However, we were remaining committed in our precautionary measures with more concerted effort. Ethiopian Airlines Group has been successfully implementing the preventive measures.

Ethiopian Airline’s precautionary measures to protect passengers and staff include digitalizing all its operations for a safer airport experience. In collaboration with other airlines, airport operators and aviation regulatory bodies, Ethiopian is determined to recover soon with the effective practice of safety measures to boost passenger confidence.

The main objective of this study is assessing the practice of corporate communication in the case of Ethiopian Airlines Group. As per the data gathered, small number of participants

conducted due to COVID 19 protocol that hinders the researcher to get more employees at the same time. The pandemic has forced the airlines to ground their fleets, costing them billions in lost revenue every month. In addition to these, the virus caused dramatic global decline in passenger and air cargo demand. Airlines are cutting their own costs, but this is not enough offset the revenue impact. The pandemic has changed the airline industry economically and socially. In this regard, Ethiopian Airlines Group continuous its operation without gaining any support from the government and in finances.

Accordingly, the top managers did not give prior or equal intention as the consideration given for other core department in the company on their opinion because of these grounds the experts did not successful at the level of their knowledge what they can perform in their corporate communication activities.

Accordingly based on the data gathered the student researcher found that, some media were not welcomed properly as they are to be for an interview with higher management. Most of the time, the information that the journalists intended to gather are disclosed and this is due to the department's fear of the media not to defame company's image and reputation. In doing so, this creates mistrust between the two parties. Furthermore, it is not just as easy for journalists to get relevant information from higher management officials, and it takes a time for approval.

Based on the data gathered, the interview of the department has put the relationship between the company and the media as follows,

“The airline industry is fast adapting and utilizing social media technology as competition in the industry is fierce, quality service at low cost becomes common place and they are seeking new and innovative ways to sustain competitive advantage. Assumption and diagnostic tests were done, and, in the end, trust was found to be dominative determinant of effectiveness of social media usage by Ethiopian Airlines while perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were found to have positive significant association towards effectiveness of social media usage by Ethiopian Airlines Group.”

There might be many challenges that have an influence the practices of corporate communication activities of any organization. According to Habana & Cooper (2003:383) recommended the following challenges should be considered prior to any corporate

communication activities implemented. These activities are; setting corporate communication objectives, identifying the company target group, Identifying the appropriate corporate communication tools, Activities shall be identified, and Setting standards

2.9 Structure of Corporate Communication in Ethiopian Airline

Corporate communications are the entire set of activities concerned with sharing company communications with both internal and external stakeholders to create a favorable point of view and a uniform image of the company on all channels. Essentially speaking, every communication sent out by the company to internal or external audiences is the job of corporate communications. It is the pattern of communication network in which top leaders or managers communicate to the person closed to them. Then the message is communicated in downward direction in hierarchy. It is a pattern of communication network in which a person can communicate with immediate superior and subordinate in hierarchy. (Ulloa et al., 2015: 292).

According to the interviewee, Ethiopian Airlines Group Corporate Communication is structured under Integrated Marketing Communication to communication elements such as social media, audience analytics, digital sales, and advertising. The Group Structure allow all the fully owned companies to pursue shared long-term vision and common planning platform while they provide high quality global standard services to their mutual customers.

Ethiopian Airlines Group Corporate Communication managers assert that,

“Ethiopian Airlines Group corporate communication established as an independent office since 1998 under the Director Advertising and Sales Corporate communication to improve brand awareness and unifying marketing and advertising into a brand identity that remains consistent across distinct media channels. Then, in 2012, corporate communications department was restructured under the VP corporate strategy, communications, and Alliances. Currently the office is restructures under VP Ethiopian Holidays and Integrated marketing and named Group PR and corporate communication.”

The corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines Group faces challenge of social media management, and the activities of corporate communication are going well as it is needed to be due to structural issues and workload. Hence, it became essential to review

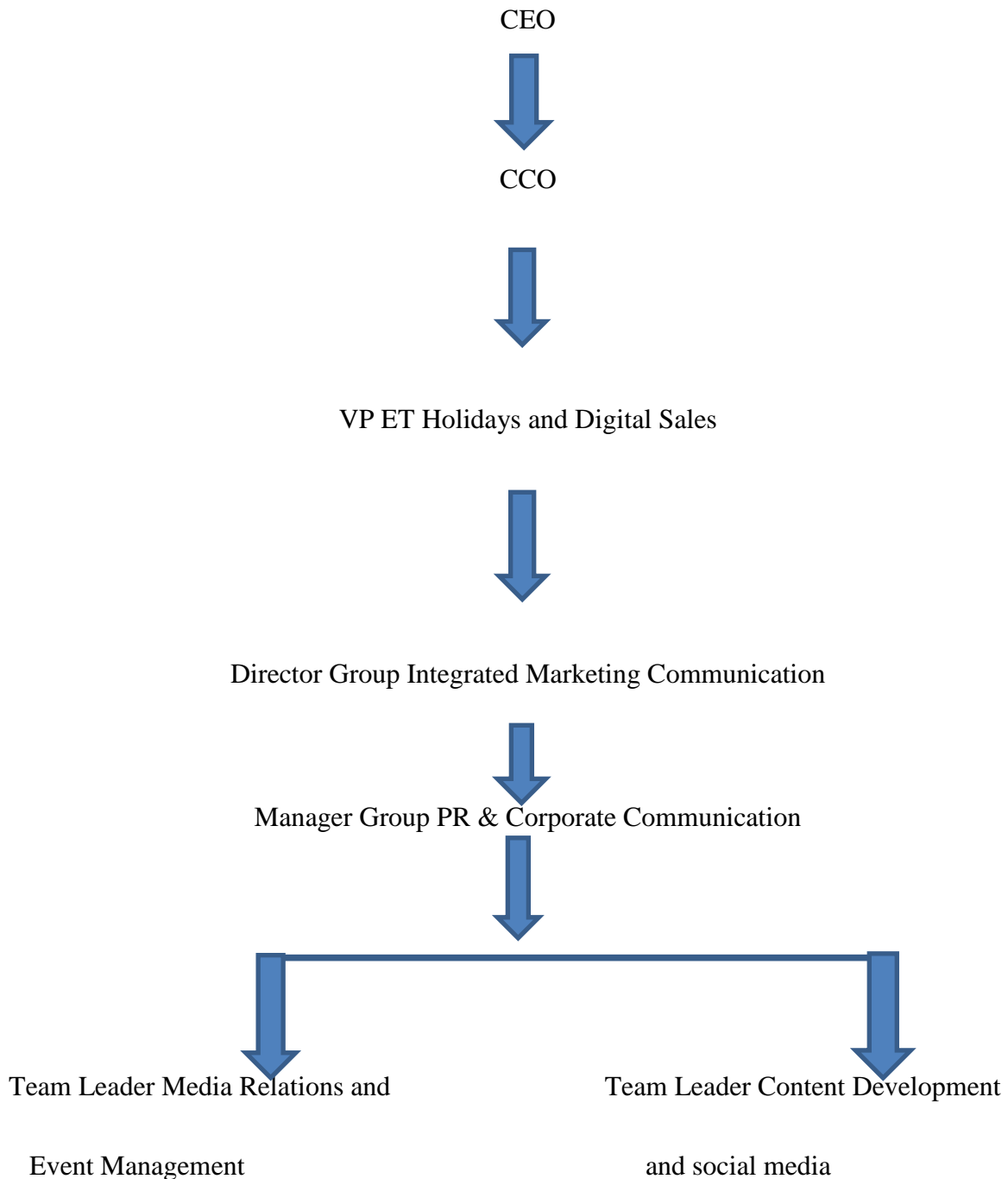
the existing structure under this department and establish Team leader social media & content Development and Team leader Media Relation & Event Management in order to strengthen the social media administration by merging all area marketing pages and managing centrally all Ethiopian Corporate Social media accounts as well as implementing integrated corporate and business PR activities to protect the brand image of the company 24/7 by producing stories and quality communications materials that can build the image of the company. Ethiopian Corporate Communication has divisions with their role and responsibilities.

Team Leader social media& Content Development is established under Group PR and Corporate Communications who oversees all our social media efforts can help us to improve the management of Ethiopian Corporate Social media accounts as well as protect the brand image of the company 24/7. Closely monitor the day-to-day activities of the team as well as to guide the team in collaboration with the manager and other interrelated departments. The other main task of the team is producing quality communications materials and publications such as Press Releases, talking points, interview responses, corporate messages, CEO messages, scripts and other contents.

Team Leader Media Relations and Event Management are established under Group PR and Corporate Communications and the main objective of the team is working closely with media to get maximum coverage in promoting different Ethiopian products and services. That includes lobbying media to give coverage for Ethiopian in different events and occasions as well as producing programs and inviting media to produce stories that can build the image of the company. In addition to these, the team is responsible for arranging different corporate events. Also, facilitate different support activities of the office such as facilitating visits, processing security pass, issuing invitation letters, assisting journalists during video shooting and interview. Organizational communication structure looks at the pathways in a message system to see where interactions happen and who talks to whom. A formal communication system exists which uses official channels to give messages between organizational positions. Depending on a company's management structure, communication can flow downward from the top of the organization, upward from the lower ranks, horizontally among peers or diagonally among departments. The structure of the organization's communication networks dictates the methods and speeds by which ideas flow among managers and employees.

Chart 2: Structure of Corporate Communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group

The Structure of Group PR and Corporate Communications Department in Ethiopian Airlines Group



Source: Ethiopian Airlines Group Corporate Communication Department Structure, 2022

2.10 The Significance of Corporate Communication Department in Ethiopian Airlines

Group

In a digitally connected world, corporate communication is one of the key factors that determine whether companies thrive or fail. The importance of sound corporate communication cannot be ignored. In companies where the importance of corporate communication is not understood, communication practitioners feel undervalued, and their decision-making processes are compromised and senior managers feel powerless, as they do not understand the company's environment and how these events can affect company's operation and profits. Understanding an effective functioning of corporate communication is very essential and empowering for organization. This understanding allows managers and practitioners to lead the events of corporate communication and to identify the opportunities for communication engagement with stakeholders in a company.

Understanding an effective functioning of corporate communication is very essential and empowering for organization. This understanding allows managers and practitioners to lead the events of corporate communication and to identify opportunities for communication engagement events of corporate communication and to identity opportunities for communication engagement with stakeholders in a company. Powerful communication helps keep employees working efficiently and gives potential customers ample chances to learn about a business' products and services. Corporate communication facilitates executive meetings, the process of informing the media or stakeholders about the latest news. As they grow, all companies realize the importance of a communications team that can handle external requests from the media and customers. Organization needs to communicate effectively with their employees. It sounds simple, but the reality is less so. At the most basic level, you must communicate well at the right time. Thus, employees know what is expected of them and what is happening in the organization. (Tkalac and vercic, 2012).

Ethiopian airlines group put forward the corporate value to its employees and management, which guide their behavior in every company's activities and transactions. The company expected its employees to use them in the day-to-day activity, because, according to 2025 growth strategy of the airline, these are the means to achieve the below mentioned stated vision.

- As an Airline, safety is the first priority
- Ethiopian airlines is the high performance learning organization
- Act in a boundary less fashion
- Be intolerant of bureaucracy
- Zero intolerance to difference and inefficiency
- Always search for and apply the best idea regardless of their source
- Demonstrate integrity respect to others, condor and team work
- Be result oriented, creative and innovative

According to Towers Watson study companies with highly effective communication practices enjoys more higher than total returns to shareholders compared to organization with poor communication. According to him, here are the five reasons why corporate communication is important for organization's success.

Enables transparency

Effective communication creates a sense of transparency. Employees are more likely to buy into the company culture when they know what the company is about. It builds a sense of trust. Employees are more likely to feel that they are a part of the bigger picture when managers communicate clearly with them.

Minimizes miscommunication

When company communication is a mess, the chance of miscommunication is high. If co-workers assume everyone has the same information as them, some people may be left out of the loop. This miscommunication can lead to mistakes and reduced productivity.

Improves employee engagement and productivity

A recent review showed that 90% of the executive leaders believe that employee engagement is a vital element in business success. This promotes a valuable sense and meaning to their job and encourages them to perform better. Additionally, they inspire and encourage their colleagues to do the same.

Helps build corporate identity

Corporate communication is generally acknowledged as the best possible method of building long-term corporate identity. A well-articulated and consistent corporate communication strategy along with larger advertising and PR campaign reinforces a positive image about the company.

Attracts top talent

From a recruitment standpoint, effective corporate communications can help an organization to bring aboard the best talent (<https://www.5wpr.com/new/corporate-communication/#Attracting-the-Best-Talent>).

Most importantly, corporate communication enables your entire workforce to make a unified and massive contribution to your business success.

CHAPTER THREE

3. INTRODUCTION

This section of the study incorporates different concepts such as research design, research approach, data sources, population and sample size, sampling frame, sampling technique, methods of data collection were assessed. In addition to these, validity of the study as well as ethical consideration was also incorporated.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which the study conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. It refers to the overall strategy that the researcher integrates different components in a coherent and logical way. It optimizes the validity of data for a given research problem.(Kothari (2004:31).

Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding inquires of different kinds. The research design is descriptive in its nature, and it is mixed approach. The major purpose of descriptive research is to describe the as it exists at present. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. (Kothari (2004:2).

Document analysis is a social research method, is an important research tool, and is an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation, the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. To seek convergence and corroboration, qualitative researchers usually use at least two resources through using different data sources and methods. The purpose of triangulating is to provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility Corroborating findings across data sets can reduce the impact of potential bias by examining information collected through different methods. (Bowen, 2009).

According to Creswell (1994), the descriptive method of research is to gather information about the present existing condition. Accordingly, the data were described and summarized in tabular and percentage form to assess the practices of corporate communication in the organization under study. The main objective of this study is assessing the practices of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group.

3.3 Research Approaches

A research approach is a plan of action that gives direction to conduct research systematically and efficiently. All research must involve an explicit, disciplined, and systematic approach to find out most appropriate results. Quantitative research uses statistical, logical and mathematical techniques to generate numerical data and facts. Whereas qualitative research is research that develops understanding of human and social sciences to find the way people think and feel. (Creswell 2009).

Hence, the objective of this study is assessing the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group. Accordingly, this study employs the combination of the two types of research approaches due to the two are complementary to each other and the nature of the study which targets to assess the practice of corporate communication in maintaining the reputation and image of Ethiopian Airlines Group. As far the study is concerned, researchers typically select the quantitative approach to respond to research questions requiring numerical data, the qualitative approach for research questions need textural data, and the mixed methods approach for research questions want both numerical and textural data. Valid and reliable outcomes are obtained through well-designed mixed methods.

Mixed methods design can integrate and synergize different data sources, which can assist to study complex problems. Mixing the two methods might be superior to a single method as it is likely to provide rich insights into the research phenomena that cannot be fully understood by using only qualitative methods. Mixed methods research is often used in the behavioral, health, and social sciences, especially in multidisciplinary settings and complex situational or societal research. In recent trends mixed methodology research is carried out on qualitative and quantitative accepts by collecting data, analyzing, interpreting and inferences. The key concepts in this mixed methodology research is simultaneously study about the measurable units (quantitative) and attributes (qualitative) variables. By using this mixed methodology we can draw a valid conclusions based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Therefore, the study or research becomes more reliable. (Poth and Munce, 2020).

Many research questions cannot be fully answered by either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Mixed methods studies use both qualitative and quantitative components and can be a good approach to explore your research question more fully.

Hasse-Biber (2010) reinforces the necessity and significance of mixing qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and put forward five benefits:

- **Triangulation:** triangulation is the employment of the two different methodologies to study single research topic or problem. This helps the researcher to come up with thorough and textured results from the research process. Most importantly, mixed methods research combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research to answer the research questions. Mixed methods can help to gain a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study, as it integrates benefits of both methods. It is essential to know the general procedures of collecting data in qualitative and quantitative research because mixed methods research involves collecting both forms of data. Mixed method research or the use of multiple methods for assessing the validity and reliability of research data have been called between-method or cross- method triangulation.
- The second one is the issue of complementarities: numerical results or narratives alone do not help the researcher to gain the full understanding of the issue under study. Thus, the two methods can be complimentary to each other.
- The third benefit of mixed research methodology is that it helps the development of research project and creates a synergy where the result of one method will inform the other method and help to produce matured conclusion at the end of the research process.
- The fourth one is mixed method could initiate another course of study because the findings could raise questions or contradictions.
- The fifth and the last one is expansion, the detailed and thorough findings of the research could encourage further study in the area and help the knowledge development.

The above points reinforce the importance of employing mixed methodology to generate textured and sensible results of a research process. Distributing questionnaires to the employees of Ethiopian corporate communication, Integrated Marketing Communication, and Sales Promotion departments counting, and adding the responses to the question help to find out the data.

Mixed-methods research is a research methodology that incorporates multiple methods to address research questions in an appropriate and principled manner that involves collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting both qualitative and quantitative data sources. (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

3.4 Data Sources

Different types of data can be useful in different scenarios. This study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source is the main source of data for the study. It was collected by distributing questionnaire and conducting interview. Primary data refers to the works of research or raw data that has not been interpreted. They are the first data sources for the researcher.

According to Douglas, 2015, there are different methods used to gather information. These methods fall into two categories, i.e., primary, and secondary data. As the name suggests, primary data is collected for the first time by the researcher while secondary data is the data already collected or produced by others. Primary data sources include surveys, observations, questionnaires, personal interview etc. On the other contrary, secondary data sources includes publications, websites, books, journal articles, magazines, internal records etc. At present, many secondary data are being collected and archived by researchers all over the world for research that are becoming more widespread (Andrews et al. 2012).

According to Wilkinson, Joffe and Yardley, 2004 secondary data was collected by reviewing of related literature such as academic books, magazines, newspapers, journals (articles) and different manuals. Someone else collects secondary data for his primary research purposes, which provide basic research principles. The researchers who have limited time and resources, they can use the secondary data for their research. Someone else collects secondary data for his primary research purposes, which provide basic research principles. For the collection of secondary data, the researcher used both published and un-published data. Most of the secondary data are collected from scholarly sources or reliable news sources, improving the accuracy and trustworthiness of this study. Secondary data was obtained from brochures, magazine, internet, annual sales report, reference books journals, articles; previous research works and Companies written documents that help the researcher to increase the knowledge in the topic under study. Therefore, this study results have of high validity. (Andrews et al. 2012).

In addition to these, the researcher utilized this data source in order to enhance the effectiveness of the study. Accordingly, the researcher contacted the respondents personally, telephonically or through mail. This method takes a lot of time, efforts and money but the data collected are of high accuracy, current and relevant to the topic. The researcher employed an unstructured questionnaire. Hence, the student researcher has visited the company's manuals such as magazines, books, articles, and fact sheets. In addition to these, Survey questions, in-depth semi-structured interview, document review and observation were also the major source of data for this study.

3.5 Population and Sample Size Determination

The full cases from which a sample is taken is called the population. For some research question, it is possible to collect data from an entire population as it is of manageable size. For all research questions where it would be impractical to collect data from entire population, sample will be selected. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

The population of this study is the employees of corporate communication of Ethiopian Airlines Group. Due to the managers of the department are responsible bodies with the issues and activities of corporate communication, the researcher selected them purposively for an interview. Similarly, the respondents were relevant participants to obtain information regarding to the topic of the study. Hence, by having the targeted samples, the programmed questionnaire was distributed to the employee of the corporate communication, Integrated Marketing Communication and Sales Promotion department and semi-structured interview was held with the managers of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

Sample size determination is a scientific task that needs to perform with proper care (Zikmund, 2010). Accordingly; the researcher utilized Yamane Formula to determine the sample size for a given population. A representative sample size with level that is 96.8% was selected. This study employed purposive sampling technique with the employee of corporate communication department; integrated Marketing Communication and Sales Promotion were selected since they deal directly with customers. In addition to these, one can directly or indirectly benefit from the other or uses ones products and services. Accordingly, the population of these three departments is 125. The sample size is determined by using Yamane's formula (1967).

Where: N= Total population size,

n= the sample size/required sample size

e= is the level of precision (sampling error that can be tolerated which is 5%).

Assumption: A 95% confidence level, and e=+5%

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$= \frac{125}{1 + 125 * 0.05^2}$$

$$= \frac{125}{1.450}$$

$$= 96$$

$$= 96$$

Thus, 96 respondents are selected to gather relevant data to complete the research work.

3.6 Sampling Frame

The target population of this study was the employees and managers of corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines Group. Thus, data was gathered from selected employees, management groups, corporate communication officers and key officers to answer some of the research questions mentioned in the study. In other words, the organizers of the inquiry purposively choose the units of the universe for constituting the small mass representative of the whole. In this study, to ensure representativeness, the participants for the interview were selected by using a non-probability form of sampling to select the interviewees. Hence, the researcher selected the respondents to get detail information genuinely in a proper way. A self-structured survey questionnaire was implemented through descriptive study. Accordingly, the respondents were invited to complete a prepared set of questionnaires for this study.

In purposive sampling method, the researcher has the highest authority of selecting samples from the whole population. The information was gathered strategically & the documents were selected purposely to triangulate the interview, documents and the questionnaire. The judgment of the representativeness of the sample is important. The selection of samples in purposive sampling depends on the capability of a subject depends on capability in responding to set questions that are relevant for the study. Because in this type of sampling items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher which has the relative advantage of time and money.

Kothari (2004)

Accordingly, the sampling frames of this study are the Ethiopian Airline's corporate communication, Integrated Marketing Communication and Sales Promotion departments. Based on this, the researcher distributed the survey questionnaire to the employee of these departments. In addition, the researcher found that these three departments of Ethiopian airlines group have a strong synergy in building company image and reputation. As far as researcher knowledge is concerned, one can benefit from other's services and products.

3.7 Sampling techniques

Non-probability sampling is one of the methods in which some parts of the population have a zero chance to be selected. In other words, under non-probability sampling the organizers of the inquiry purposively choose the units of the universes for constituting the small mass representative of the whole. It requires selecting individuals or group of individuals that have deep understanding and knowledge on the profession and subject matter. (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

This study employs purposive sampling method of non- probability sampling to select interviewees because of the nature of the study which is qualitative. Here under, the researcher clarifies how the research was undertaken and what techniques were employed to assess the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

Accordingly, data were analyzed via descriptive data analyzing techniques. The primary data collected through survey questionnaire were analyzed with descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) like the table and percentages. Accordingly, there are a few missing values on demographic information. These values are found to be insignificant and therefore cannot affect the reliability of the study.

3.8 Methods of data collection

According to Creswell (2014) data collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. There are many different data collection techniques and each one can be administered in multiple different ways.

Thus, these helped the researcher to procure more reliable and valid information because these instruments compliment to each other and help to produce valid and reliable results. Accordingly, the researcher selected the techniques that can be best suited to answer the research questions. Hence, the best-suited instruments to collect data for this study were observation that is to observe the practices and activities of corporate communication. In this stage, the student researcher identified the appropriate techniques that were relevant and valid to the study.

Based on the research objectives, the interview questions were primarily prepared. Then, the interviews were conducted and the responses were properly taken and organized later. During all the interviews, the researcher relied on taking note, rather than audio tapping. On the average, the interviews took 45 minutes per interviewee. Finally, the interviews were interpreted and analyzed.

3.8.1 In-depth interview

An unstructured in-depth interview was designed to discover underlying motives and desires of respondents of the study. This technique of collecting data studies with small sample size and it is important to get detail information. Unstructured interview are in-depth interviews where the researcher tries to understand an interviewee's perspective on a situation or issue. It is important not to bombard the interviewee with too many questions so they can freely disclose their thoughts. (Dawson, 2019).

Accordingly, in the case of interview, the researcher firstly contacts with the interviewees to set an appropriate schedule. Then, the interview conducts face-to- face interaction with the top managers of Ethiopian Airlines corporate communication department. Thus, the researcher conducted a pre-planned interview with the managers of the department and received valuable responses. Another thing to keep in mind is that the interview will be recorded. This is to ensure that there is no interruption. In addition to questions and interview, corporate communication department's structure related documents such as regulations, guidelines, strategies, and the likes were examined. Thus, in-depth individual interview was selected among the others to gather rich and factual information about the study. Besides, to these data collection instruments, additional data were also collected by referring to different documents or via company website. Having taken all these vital perspectives into consideration, a comprehensive qualitative in-depth interview was applied in this research to find out

communication practices and their implications interview was applied in this research to find out communication practices and their implications in Ethiopian airlines group of corporate communication department.

3.8.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are one of the most used research instruments employed in research. It can be administered either in face-to-face situation, by telephone, to a group, sent to individuals in a mailed self-administered format. In survey questionnaire, open-ended and a well-structured question were also included as a part of the questionnaire. (Macnamara, 2002:31).

As far as it is concerned, the researcher followed steps to distribute the questions to employees of Ethiopian Airline group. Accordingly, as to questionnaire, unstructured questionnaires type was distributed to 125 Ethiopian Airlines employees. Then as per the procedures, the responses of the respondents were carefully analyzed accordingly. Thus, this study intends to assess the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airline group, staff members and managerial groups.

3.8.3 Observation

Observation, as the name implies, is a way of collecting data through observing. It is a methodology in which an event or series of events is observed in its natural setting and recorded by an independent researcher. A researcher has opportunity to get closer to the field of research while retaining the position of an outsider or a guest (Kostera, 2007).

Accordingly, the researcher has detached himself without any attempt on his part to participate in the interaction process with the group being observed. Hence, in the first place the researcher prepared a meaningful survey questionnaire and analyzed them carefully. To understand something in its natural setting, the researcher recorded the interview session without any bias for comments. In addition to these, the researcher concerned himself an outside actor without any involvement in the interaction process. Accordingly, the researcher observed the emotions and feelings of the practitioners and leaders while conducting the interview. This study explained the data analysis technique employed to achieve the objective of the study. Accordingly, the researcher found that synergy of corporate communication department with other units of Ethiopian Airlines Group during the time of collecting,

analyzing and interpreting the data. Hence, the researcher observed each departments of Ethiopian airlines group uses one another's products and service in order to strength relationships among themselves. In doing so, the researcher have frequently observed the strong relationship among these three departments for the successfulness of this study. Hence, this several time of observation by the researcher helped the success of this study. In addition to these, the researcher observed the hierarchical problem of the corporate communication department created confusion among the employees and it could not give better opportunity for the employees to grow within the company.

3.8.4 Document Review

Documents can be examined for immediate content, changing content over time and the values that such changing content manifest. (Somekh and Lewin, 2005:35). This helps the researcher to compare to their practice and analyze the issue from different perspectives to get the full picture of the issue under investigation. Any documentary material that adds value in answering the research questions will be assessed and analyzed. Accordingly, the researcher reviewed the *selamta* magazine of Ethiopian Airlines group in this case and any documentary material that adds value in answering the research questions were appropriately assessed and analyzed. Through this magazine, Ethiopian airlines corporate communication department can easily get in touch with its beloved customers. In sum, document review is significant to achieve research objective one and thus employed in this study. Ethiopian avails this tool for its customers in order to refresh themselves during their long journey.

3.9 Validity of the study

Validity explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation. It is to measure what is intended to be measured. Validity of research can be explained as an extent at which requirements of scientific research method have been followed during the process of generating research findings. Validity is the extent to which research results can be correctly interpreted and generalized to other population. Validity is a compulsory requirement for all types of studies. Validity in research is alarmed with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings. Oliver, (2010).

Accordingly, for the accuracy of the findings as well as convincing readers about the issue under study, the researcher employed the following validity strategies as intensively as

possible. In the first place, the researcher employed triangulation strategy using different data sources of information. Concerning this, the researcher employed, an in-depth interview, document analysis and observation methods of data collection. Accordingly, themes were established on the basis of uniting the aforementioned sources of data from participants. Thus, utilization of several data collection instruments was employed by the researcher to enhance the validity of the findings of study. Furthermore, in order to enhance the truth-value of the findings, the researcher conducted a follow-up interview with participants using probing questions regarding integrated marketing communications. The researcher also offered an opportunity for two of the interviewees to comment on the entire analysis process and findings. In addition, the researcher tried to use thick description on each thematic elements of the study in order to augment to the validity of the findings. Accordingly, the researcher tied to intensively describe particularly interviews conducted with participants. Lastly, in order to achieve or enhance trustworthiness of the study, the researcher further employed peer examination or review strategy. In so doing, doctoral students of AAU particularly in the department of sociology and language studies offered their constructive comments for the researcher on the entire thesis work. Accordingly, their marvelous comments were indeed subversive and enabled the researcher to go deeply through the nuances in the study.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is a collection of principles and values that should be followed while doing human affairs. The ethical considerations make sure that no one acts in such a way that is harmful to society or an individual. It refrain people and organizations from indulging in vicious conduct. Ethical considerations play an essential role, especially in research. Accordingly, to keep the formality, the researcher took a permission letter from Addis Ababa University. Furthermore, the researcher clearly discussed with the concerned bodies of Ethiopian Airlines group to get permission for collecting data regarding issue under study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIO

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation, discussion, and analysis of the data collected during the survey. It explicates the findings of the issue under study based on the data obtained through mixed method of data collection approach were also incorporated. Regarding to the study, five principal themes have been identified based on the research questions gathered from an in-depth interview, document analysis, and personal observation. Accordingly, the first theme deals with the role of corporate communication followed by the second theme, which discusses about the utilization of corporate communication tools. The third theme focuses on the challenges of the practices of corporate communication while executing in Ethiopian Airlines group and lastly, the staff's perceptions towards the practices of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group are incorporated. Subsequently, an intensive analysis on the collected data has been made considering to attain and fully respond the identified specific objectives of the study.

4.2. Respondent's Response Rate

Table 2: Respondents' Profile

Questionnaire	Returned	Returned %
Distributed	Questionnaire	
125	121	96.8%

As depicted in the above table, out of the 125 questionnaire distributed 121 were returned which makes the response rate 96.8%. Thus, the response rate is highly acceptable to carry out analysis and generalize on the study. On the other hand, some respondents were missed filling the specific questions, which resulted in the missing responses that make the response rate of the specific question below 121.

4.3. Demographic factors of the respondents

The following table shows the respondent's profiles for providing background information about the respondents.

Table 3: Respondents' profile

	Factors	Categories	Response no	%
1	Sex	Male	73	60.3
		Female	48	39.7
2	Age	18-27	36	29.8
		28-37	29	24.0
		38-47	31	25.6
		48-57	25	20.7
3	Educational Status	First Degree	81	66.9
		Above first degree	26	21.5
4	Work experience	Less than 1 year	12	9.9
		1-4 years	25	20.7
		5-8 years	60	49.6
		More than 9 years	24	19.8
5	Current Position	Management	13	10.7
		Middle Management	11	9.1
		Officer	97	80.2

As displayed on the table 4.2, concerning the gender distribution of the respondents, among total respondents 73(60.3%) are males whereas 48(39.7%) are females. This response rate shows the male respondents are significantly high when compared to their female counterparts. From this, it can be said that the corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group should participate the female employees in the activities to achieve the company's objective.

The age distribution among respondents shows that 29.8% of them were between the age of 18-27 followed 25.6% were between 38 and 47 years and 24% were between the age of 28 and 37 whereas, those between 48 and 57 were 20.7% of the study participants. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents, which is 53.8%, are below 38 years indicated that staffed with young employees who can contribute more to the achievement of the company objectives. Hence, from this the researcher found that the young employees with a fresh energy could produce something better for the organization in its successfulness of corporate communication activities. In general, this research found that the corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group has an employee who has an ability to work in a busy environment, ability to communicate both verbally and in writings.

Respondents' profiles regarding their educational status revealed that most of the respondents are first degree holders which accounts 81(66.9%) and 26(21.5%) are diploma/ certificate respondents are above first-degree holders respectively. Based on this, all the respondents academic status reveals that they have a capability of understanding and answering the questions provided to them. Thus, from this study the researcher found that such ample years of working experience is adequate to reply to various issues regarding to the activities of corporate communication.

In addition to these, the practitioners of corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group were recruited with the recommendation given from the higher management of the company. Accordingly, these practitioners were selected based on their educational status they had during their stay at Ethiopian higher education.

Based on table 4.2 regarding to the working experience in the number of service years, the sample populations were mainly dominated by seniors with service of 5-8 years, which accounts 49.6% of the total respondents. The 25(20.7%) serves 1-4 years, 24(19.8%) for more than 9 years and 12(9.9%) less than a year. From this, the researcher observed that the employees of corporate communication, Integrated Marketing Communication, and Sales Promotion could perform the corporate communication activities by their own independently with the highly working experience they have.

4.4. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the type of analysis of data that helps describe, show or summarize data. It is one of the most important steps for conducting statistical data analysis. Descriptive techniques often include constructing tables of and means, methods of dispersion such as variance or standard deviation, and cross-tabulations or "crosstabs" that can be used to carry out many disparate hypotheses. These hypotheses often highlight differences among subgroups. For most, this study employs a cross-sectional research design whereby the respondents were interviewed only once to assess their perspectives of the variables. A cross-sectional study looks at data at a single point in time. The participants in this type of study are selected based on particular variables of interest. The benefit of a cross-sectional study design is that it allows researchers to compare many different variables at the same time. We could, for example, look at age, gender, income and educational level in relation to walking and cholesterol levels, with little or no additional cost.

A table of means by subgroup is used to show important differences across subgroups, which mostly results in inference and conclusions being made. When we notice a gap in earnings, for example, we naturally tend to extrapolate reasons for those patterns complying. High degree of objectivity and neutrality of the researchers are one of the main advantages of Descriptive Analysis. The reason why researchers need to be extra vigilant is because descriptive analysis shows different characteristics of the data extracted and if the data does not match with the trends then it lead to major dumping of data.

Descriptive statistics are ways of summarizing large sets of quantitative (numerical) information. Descriptive analysis is considered to be vaster than other quantitative methods and provide a broader picture of an event or phenomenon. It can use any number of variables or even a single number of variables to conduct a descriptive research. This type of analysis is considered as a better method for collecting information that describes relationships as natural and exhibits the world, as it exists. This reason makes this analysis very real and close to humanity as all the trends are made after research about the real-life behavior of the data.

Standard deviation (or σ) is a measure of how dispersed the data is in relation to the mean. Low standard deviation means data are clustered around the mean, and high standard deviation indicates data are more spread out. Low standard deviation means data are clustered around the mean, and high standard deviation indicates data are more spread out. A standard

deviation close to zero indicates that data points are close to the mean, whereas a high or low standard deviation indicates data points are respectively above or below the mean. The standard error tells you how accurate the mean of any given sample from that population is likely to be compared to the true population mean. When the standard error increases, i.e. the means are more spread out, it becomes more likely that any given mean is an inaccurate representation of the true population mean.

The main advantage of Likert Scale questions is that they use a universal method of collecting data, which means it is easy to understand them. Working with quantitative data, it is easy to draw conclusions, reports, results and graphs from the responses. Likert scale surveys are best when you use it for asking a series of questions that revolve around one topic. Because when you ask questions that are relevant for a particular topic, it becomes easy to report the data when you want to analyze results from a few questions. The descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations) of the respondent scores were computed. Analysis done by comparing the mean scores and deviations among the respondents to measure the current status of Ethiopian Airline corporate communication by using the mean value under each observable variable. The reason for using descriptive statistics is to assess the practices of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airline by the employees.

The analysis of this study was done by using descriptive statistics; from these, the researcher used the mean score of each variable. The main reason for using this measurement was to demonstrate the average responses of respondents for each question that included under each dimension of the predictor variable. The interpretation made based on different measurement scales intervals or ranges. Accordingly, the mean scores are 4.51-2.50 moderate and 1.00-1.50 is low (Poonlar Btawee: 1987) as cited by Hailu (2013).

4.4.1. The role of Corporate Communication Department in Ethiopian Airline Group

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Promoting partnership, good-working relationships with journalists and media representatives.	121	4.87	.718
Managing and arranging conferences, seminars, exhibitions and meetings.	121	4.90	.539
Editing and reviewing press releases to local, regional and international press when it is requires.	121	3.97	.180
Creating corporate communication policies and procedures	121	4.87	.340
Establishing and building a mutually beneficial relationship with stakeholders	121	3.93	.359
Improves brand awareness and unify marketing communication elements	121	5.00	.000
Protect the brand image of the company 24/7 by producing stories and quality communications materials that can build the image of the company.	121	4.93	.359
producing programs and inviting media to produce stories that can build the image of the company	121	4.80	.600
Responsible for arranging different corporate events.	121	2.35	1.256
Facilitate different support activities of the office such as facilitating visits, processing security pass, issuing invitation letters, assisting journalists during video shooting and interview.	121	2.20	.600
Working closely with media to get maximum coverage in promoting different Ethiopian products and services.	121	3.90	.396
Producing quality communications materials and publications such as Press Releases, talking points, interview responses, corporate messages, CEO messages, scripts and other contents.	121	3.83	.373

As shown on the table 4.3, the respondents were requested to answer the questions related to the significance of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines and how it is doing.. It is depicts the summarized average (mean) score of the employees' perception regarding the role of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airline. Accordingly, twelve questionnaires were prepared to be responded by respondents on likert scale of 1to 5. It shows that the average score for the improvement brand awareness and unifying marketing communication element is 5.0 and a standard deviation of +0.00. Furthermore, Ethiopian airline's corporate communication department in producing programs and inviting media produce stories that can build the image of the company is at a moderate level, which is a mean value of 4.80 and standard deviation of.600. Thus, from this the researcher concluded that even the corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group have moderate level in its producing

programs and inviting media to produce stories in order to build the image of the company there should be a lot to be done.

The importance of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines group in editing and reviewing press releases to local, regional, and international press when it is needed is at higher level which has a mean value of 3.97 and a standard deviation of .180. Thus, from this it can be said that the Ethiopian airlines group corporate communication department plays a vital role in editing, reviewing press releases to local, regional, and international press when it is required.

The importance of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group in managing, arranging conferences, seminars, exhibitions and meetings is at a medium level that is a mean value of 4.90 and a standard deviation of .539. Accordingly, the researcher found that the corporate communication of Ethiopian airlines group should improve more its managing, arranging conferences, seminars, exhibitions and meetings.

The corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group is responsible to facilitate different support various activities of the office such as facilitating visits, processing security pass, issuing invitation letters, assisting journalists during video shooting and interview is at low level which is a mean value of 2.20 and whereas the standard deviation of .600.

The Ethiopian corporate communication department is also responsible to promote partnership, good working environment with journalists and media representative. It is at a medium level with a mean value of 4.87 and a standard deviation of .718. Hence, the corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group should give a special attention in promoting partnership with journalists and other media representative in order to create smooth working relationships. The Ethiopian Airlines group corporate communication department has very high with a mean value of 4.87 and a standard deviation of .340 in creating corporate communication policies and procedures. From this, it can be easily concluded that the corporate communication of Ethiopian Airlines group intensively focuses on the activities of the rule and the regulations.

The corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group is at a medium level with a mean value of 4.85 and a standard deviation of .338 in providing services clearly to its internal and external customers. Accordingly, from this the researcher concluded that the

corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group need to be more focused on providing various services clearly to its customers (internal and external) in order to boost a strong relationships. In general, the role of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group was evaluated based on survey questionnaire distributed to the employees. Thus, this statistical evidence depicted that the role of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group is at a moderate level.

4.4.2. Challenges of Corporate Communication Department in Ethiopian Airline Group

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
The ladder or structural issue of group corporate communication	121	2.49	1.126
The communication between the employee and higher officials of the company is transparent.	121	3.54	.847
Communication in the organization follows its hierarchy	121	3.73	.447
Corporate communication is an independent from any influences	121	3.63	.485
The corporate communication tools are effectively used in the organization	121	3.97	.180
Services provided by corporate communication department were adequate and enough	121	2.35	1.256
The corporate communication department provides promotion to its employees as per service legal agreement Ethiopian corporate communication	121	2.00	.000
Ethiopian corporate communication practitioners works independently	121	3.83	.373
The utilization of corporate communication tools in the organization	121	3.83	.373
The social media management and PR activities are as satisfactory	121	2.50	.1.119
The corporate communication department utilizes a culture of employee engagement in the communication activities of the company.	121	3.32	.951
The employee of the company expresses their ideas and opinions without any fear	121	3.83	.373

Based on the table above, the respondents were requested to reflect their ideas and opinion regarding to the challenges of corporate communication is facing. Based on this, the researcher found that Ethiopian Airline’s corporate communication department is facing a high challenge. A summarized average (mean) score of the employee’s perception of the minimization of corporate communication challenges were also displayed. Accordingly, they were asked twelve questions which provided by 121 respondents on a likert-scale of 1 to 5. From this, the

researcher concluded that the average score for the corporate communication tools effectively used in Ethiopian Airlines group is 3.97 with a standard deviation of .180. The corporate communication of Ethiopian Airlines group is at low level in ladder or structural issue of the department that has a mean value of (92.49) and standard deviation (1.126). Furthermore, the communication between the employee and higher officials of the department is reflects at moderate level which is (3.54) of the mean value and .847 standard deviation. Thus, from this the researcher concluded that the communication between higher management of the company and its employees should be transparent and participate the practitioners in decision-making process of corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group.

From the descriptive statistics performed using the data collection related to the challenges of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines group is at the lowest mean value. It is observed with a mean value of 2.49 and a standard deviation of 1.126 regarding to the structural issue or problem of Ethiopian corporate communication department. From this, the researcher has observed that there is a great weakness or gap of the corporate communication department in adjusting its customer. The other challenge observed by the researcher is the department's status in providing promotion to its employees as per the service legal agreement of the company. Accordingly, the corporate communication of Ethiopian airlines group in providing promotion to the employees is at low level with a mean value of 2.00 and a standard deviation of .000. From this, it can be concluded that the Ethiopian Airlines group corporate communication department need to be given special attention to its practitioners and promote the employees as per the service agreement of the company.

4.4.3 The Practices of Corporate Communication in Ethiopian Airlines group

Descriptive statistics			
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
The corporate communication department works on protecting airline's reputation and image	121	3.50	.502
The corporate communication department makes effort to maintain common understanding between the company and its customers.	121	4.00	.000
The corporate communication department have a strong synergy with other departments of the company	121	4.32	.951
How do corporate communication tools help the company to reach its audiences?	121	1.83	1.070
How do managers and practitioners perceive the overall activities of corporate communication?	121	2.68	.951

From the descriptive statistics performed using the data collection related to the practices of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group, the highest mean value observed. From this, the researcher concluded that, Ethiopian Airline's corporate communication department has a strong synergy with other department of the company with the highest mean value of (4.32) and a standard deviation of .351. Thus, it can be easily concluded that the Ethiopian corporate communication department works closely with other department of Ethiopian like Integrated Marketing Communication, Sales Promotion, and Human Capital Management. Accordingly, each department of the Ethiopian airlines group have a strong energy with each other and one can directly or in directly uses one another's services and products. In addition, corporate communication department makes effort to maintain a common understanding between the company and its customers (4.00), and the department works on protecting the airline's reputation and image (3.50). Thus, the researcher concluded that the mean replied with (3.5) implies that respondents were agreed with those propositions. However, regarding to the utilization of corporate communication tools to reach the audiences (1.83) and the managers and practitioners perceive the overall activities of corporate communication (2.68) the majority of the respondents were not agreed with these propositions. Thus, as per the descriptive statistics by using the data collection related to the practices of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines group the managers and as well as the practitioners of the department perceives the practices of corporate communication as an imperative, effective, and positive in order to achieve company's objective. From this, the researcher concluded that even if the Ethiopian corporate communication department is at a medium level in the minds of its managers and practitioners there is more works to be done.

Accordingly, this study describes how variables measured and explained to achieve the objective of the study. Transcribing all the data collected was the first step of the process. Then, based on the research questions, data was categorized in a way that they give meaning and be convenient to the data analysis. Accordingly, data was analyzed based on thematic way of data analysis. The main objective of this study is assessing the practice of corporate communication in the case of Ethiopian Airlines group head office. Survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were employed under the mixed approaches as the research methods to collect the necessary data and information based on the mentioned research questions.

4.5 Data Analysis and findings

This is the second part of this chapter that deals with the presentation analysis and interpretation on the assessment of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines group. In line with this, the corporate communication managers and officers explained about the Ethiopian airline's corporate communication activities related to the interest of its customers and the external public. Thus, the analyses of all items were identified in the study and the responses presented, analyzed, and interpreted. Finally, all the gathered data summarized and analyzed by using descriptive statistics method in which the raw data interpreted quantitatively. Furthermore, qualitative data analysis and interpretation was used on the data obtained from conducted interview with managers and officers as well. In this case, the corporate communication managers and officers explain about the mechanisms that the department is employing on making relationship with the public like press releases, press conferences, outlook, websites, magazine, internet, E-mail correspondence, letters, bulletin boards, Et-news, through telephone and face-to-face communication.

Nowadays, the utilization of social media is very high. It is commonly known that Ethiopian Airlines group utilizes various means of communication to reach its respected customers. Ethiopian Airlines group is popular for adapting new technologies, training its employees and allowing its customers take advantage of the new technology adapted to benefit the airline in reducing overheads and gaining a much closer access to target consumers. Regarding to the use of social media the managers of corporate communication department said that Ethiopian uses face book both English and Amharic as its most popular means of communication tools to reach its customers locally and internationally. They also believe that this platform not only to convey our messages but also receive the feedback from our customers. Ethiopian Airlines group encounters various complaints and comments across all over the world. The airline has social media presence through platforms like Face book, Twitter, Instagram, telegram, LinkedIn, and you tube. It uses them for different business objectives such as customer care addressing requests and feedback in real time.

The interviewees said that we have more than 2707281 face book followers (both Amharic and English), 623,000 twitter followers, 167,586 LinkedIn followers, 94,057 Instagram followers, and 40,923 telegram followers. What is more, we have our own website page, and you tube channel as well. In general, the researcher found that, the data collection procedure was involved the researcher's self-managing hardcopies to the respondents. The data analysis paid

a great attention to the practices and challenges observed in the department. Accordingly, this data clearly indicated that the level of the participation of corporate communication practitioners in decision-making is at low level. Hence, the practitioners of the department could not participate in the decision-making process of top-level management.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Findings

The findings indicated that the corporate communication has remarkable functions in the overall activities and for the success of policy and strategies of the company. Moreover, the policy, strategy and the performance of the organization are aligning with corporate communication activities like in reputation, identity, stakeholders' relation, and corporate social responsibilities.

- There is a scarce of two-way communication with the stakeholders as well as employees. In case of communication with the practitioners, managers of the department were not clear and transparent to them to express their opinion without any negative consequences.
- The practitioners fear of demotion and dismissal from the work prevents them not to practice the corporate communication activities as much as they can. They believe that the airline is doing its best to serve both its internal and external customers as well as harmonize its relationship with the stakeholders.
- As far as researcher's findings reveal, instead of promoting the practitioners, department's managers or the personnel from higher management position assign the employee from another division or department with their interest and recommendations.
- The dictatorship nature of the company, the practitioners' fear of not asking for the hierarchical issue or problem of the department.
- Organizational communication structure looks at the pathways in a message system to see where interactions happen and who talks to whom. A formal communication system exists which uses official channels to give messages between organizational positions.
- Depending on a company's management structure, communication can flow downward from the top of the organization, upward from the lower ranks, horizontally among peers or diagonally among departments. The structure of the organization's communication networks dictates the methods and speeds by which ideas flow among managers and employees. Typically, organizational communication

travels throughout a business's employee sector on one of two paths: an informal or formal communication network. The type of network used typically depends on the information being shared and the role of the employee who is sharing that information. Then the message is communicated in downward direction in hierarchy. It is a pattern of communication network in which a person can communicate with immediate superior and subordinate in hierarchy.

As the findings reveal Ethiopian employees are very clear about the benefit of communication, almost all agree on the desirability of communication but majority of employees are not communicating well. This indicates that Ethiopian should have intensive communication training program to better use the utility of organizational communication.

5.2 Conclusions

The student researcher reached on the following conclusions after the completion of analysis of the employees' respondents.

The data collection procedure conducted by the researcher was by self-administering hard copies to the respondents and employed descriptive analysis to evaluate the data on employees' perceptions towards the activities of corporate communication.

- Data collected from the employees of Ethiopian Airlines showed that the level and rate of the corporate communication department with its both internal and external customers is somewhat medium. According to the data shows the airlines communicates with its both customers and as well as its stakeholders by using some kinds of communication mechanisms or tools such as press release, social media, magazine, radio, and internet.
- The corporate communication of Ethiopian has a function in clarifying the company's strategic issues by using different communication tools and on the reverse to accumulate the reaction and opinion of the customer to address their interests.
- Based on the data have been collected, the corporate communication department is taking a corrective action on handling customers complains and comments as an input for solutions of the airline's problems and the department is trying its best on protecting the airlines reputation and image as well.

- The corporate communication department is responsible for assisting the organization with its stakeholders' relations. Communicating regularly with stakeholders and creating a positive understanding can help you build effective long-term relationships with key groups. A strong relationship brings a range of benefits. Communicating with customers can put you in a strong position when customers are making purchasing decisions. A business's stakeholders typically include its investors, staff, suppliers, and customers. These parties are key to a company's success because they can help the business move towards common goals and provide financial support. Therefore, a stakeholder communication plan is necessary for an efficient operation. Through good communication with a client or stakeholder, you can gain a greater understanding of their objectives and overall goals, enabling you to review and adapt how you support to deliver this.
- Hence, the department is expected to conduct communication activities to disseminate organizational messages that can improve the organization in all aspects.
- Furthermore, the researcher have experienced that some media houses were not welcomed properly and given relevant information on time.
- The managers of the department strongly believe that they are responsible for the effectiveness of the corporate communication activities that they perform on a day-to-basis.
- Hence, as the result of these, the managers of the department have realized that they need to develop a culture of employee engagement in the communication activities of the company. This due to that the researcher of this study strongly believe that the organization with the highest level of employee engagement have employees who have a good idea of how the organization is performing.

5.3 Recommendations

The aim of the thesis was to assess how the practices of corporate communication can be made more effective. To evaluate the effectiveness and improvement of corporate communication, particular study was developed to illustrate how and should be improved corporate communication department from the perspective of Ethiopian's corporate communication managers and employees.

Based on the above conclusions and overall research findings the following recommendations are given for the improvement of Ethiopian Airlines corporate communication's practice:

- Ethiopian corporate communication department is trying to make efforts to maintain common understanding between the airlines and its customers as per the respondents' reply.
- Thus, the corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group should build a good rapport between the company and its customers.
- The researcher suggests that the corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group must be responsible to customers' complaints and provide remedies as soon as possible.
- To solve communication problems cited by the respondents, the airline is needed to provide latest information to the public and its customers on current issues that might affect the customer through magazines, leaflets, brochures, its websites, etc....
- It is recommended that the corporate communication department should be transparent to the practitioners to encourage them to express their ideas and opinions without any fear.
- The department needs to keep up its practice of welcoming comments, complains and suggestions.
- Ethiopian should manage a diverse workplace, to ensure that they effectively communicate with employees.

Accordingly Ethiopian airlines group should practice the followings for its employee

- Respect cultural and racial differences in the workplace.
- Be professional in conduct and speech.
- Refuse to initiate, participate, or condone discrimination and harassment.

- Avoid race-based or culturally offensive humor or pranks.
- Meanwhile, Ethiopian airlines group corporate communication department must give quick responses for comments, suggestions, and complains received from the customers in collaboration with other related departments.
- Thus, corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group must be responsible to customers' complaints and try to provide remedies as soon as possible.
- Ethiopian corporate communication department's structure should properly adjusted company's hierarchical structure enables practitioners to coordinate communication activities to build and protect company's reputation with their strong moral and thus, the practitioner's issue should be gain special attention.
- Thus, the researcher recommends that the Ethiopian airlines group of corporate communication department should give special attention to the employees those who have no access of using these communication tools.
- Accordingly, the managers should communicate effectively to the employees in a positive, careful manner and actively listen to them.

The Manager of Corporate Communications lead the organizations communications team, develop, and implement internal and external communication strategies for the organization to ensure that unified, consistent, and positive messages define and promote the corporate identity and mission.

- The managers of the department strongly believe that the communication tools should be conducted and used efficiently and effectively.
- Thus, Ethiopian airlines group should practice proper performance appraisals of the employees, evaluate the current staff, determine the promotion method, establish the, requirements for promotion, announce the promotion opportunity, evaluate and interview candidates. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, companies must promote deserving employees in timely intervals.
- It is recommended that Ethiopian airlines group of corporate communication department should take into consideration to the performance measurement and promotion procedures of the employees as per the rule service legal agreement.
- The Ethiopian corporate communication department must adopt the right tools for their work force size, and operational needs.

- The higher management should implement two-way form of communication with its employees to foster a better communication strategy. , the organization's employees and higher management officials should be consistent with regard to organizational communication.
- Finally, the airlines need to keep up on its entire corporate communication activities to that can fulfill the interest of its customers and the stakeholders.

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Magazines

Selamta magazine complimentary copy of Ethiopia airlines passengers

Websites

www.ethiopianairlines.com

APPENDIX

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATION AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

This study is entitled to assessing the practice of corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines group. It is conducted by Boja Deyase in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master of Degree in Public relation and strategic communication at Addis Ababa University. Its main objective is assessing the practice of corporate communication in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

The study incorporates a questionnaire to obtain the respondent's perception and views regarding the practice of corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines Group and how it is doing. In addition to the questionnaires, structured interview was conducted with managers of corporate communication department of Ethiopian Airlines Group.

Appendix A

Addis Ababa University

Graduate school of Journalism and Communication specialization in PRSC (Public Relation and Strategic Communication)

Assessing the practice of Corporate Communication: as a case study in Ethiopian Airline Group

Dear, Ethiopian Airlines Group Staffs,

I am a master student in Public Relation and Strategic Communication at Addis Ababa University, conducting my thesis research in assessing the practice of corporate communication as a case study in Ethiopian Airlines.

The purpose of my research is assessing the practices of the corporate communication department in delivering the required level of communication services and recommending the possible solutions. This study contained a questionnaire to obtain the respondent's perception and views regarding the practice of corporate communication department in Ethiopian airlines group and how it is doing.

I invite you to complete my questionnaire, which related with the practice of corporate communication in the organization. This questionnaire has two sections. Accordingly, the background information of the informants and the role of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

Note: Please don't write your name

Please read the instructions carefully and answer the questions in the order they are presented.

If you are encounter any problems or if you would like to discuss with any aspects of the study, please don't hesitate to contact me at any time through the following address. My contact details are below, and I am too much glad to answer any questions that you may have.

bojadeyas@gmail.com or 09-19-87-17-37 or 09-85-21-48-78

Boja Deyase

Thank you

Questions for staffs of Ethiopian Airlines Group

Please circle or write your responses for the following personal based on information questions.

General background of the respondents

1. Gender A. Female B. Male

2. Age A.18-27 B.28-37 E.58 years and above
C.38-47 D.48-57

3. Educational level
A. below grade 10th B. 10th complete E. above first degree
C. Diploma /Certificate D. first degree

4. How long have you been in Ethiopian Airlines?
A. less than 1-year C. 5-8 years
B. 1-4 years D. more than 9 years

5. What is your status category in Ethiopian Airlines?
A. management C. Officer D. other
B. middle management D. subordinator

6. How do you evaluate the practices corporate communication department in Ethiopian airlines group?
A. Very High C. Moderate E. Very Low
B. High D. Low

7. How do you evaluate the image of the company in the mind of its customers?

A. Very High C. Moderate E. Very Low

B. High D. Low

8. How do you evaluate the airlines relationship with media?

A. Very high C. Moderate E. Very Low

B. High D. Low

9. How do you see Ethiopian airlines group focus on corporate communication activities?

A. Very high C. Moderate E. Very Low

B. High D. Low

B. Questions related to the perceptions of the respondents

The below mentioned information are related to the role and practices of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group. Kindly, indicate your perception by putting the sign of

✓ at the right side of the issues.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
The role of corporate communication in the organization	1	2	3	4	5
How do you evaluate Ethiopian’s corporate communication in promoting partnership, good-working relationships with journalists and media representatives?			✓		
How do you evaluate the corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group in managing and arranging conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and meetings?					

How do you observe the department in handling organized information about corporate communication problems?			✓		
How do you evaluate Ethiopian's corporate communication in editing and reviewing press releases to local, regional, and international press when it is requires?	✓				
How do you evaluate the corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group in creating corporate communication policies and procedures?	✓				
How do you observe the Ethiopian's corporate communication department in identifying the basic corporate communication Problems?			✓		
How do you get the practitioners of Ethiopian's corporate communication department in performing corporate communication activities independently?		✓			
The ladder or structural issue of group corporate communication					✓
How do you evaluate Ethiopian's corporate communication department in providing relevant information?			✓		
How do observe the clarification on service providing by the corporate communication department of Ethiopian airlines group?			✓		

❖ What is your perception towards the activities of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group?

- ❖ If you have any suggestion and recommendation regarding to the practices of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group please can you notice it?

- ❖ Please list the practices of corporate communication practices in your organization?

Appendix B

Interview questions with Ethiopian Airlines Group of corporate communication managers

What is your current position in Ethiopian Airlines Group?

How long have you been working in Ethiopian Airlines Group?

How do you evaluate the practices of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group?

How do you describe the activities of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines group in general?

Do you think communication is important to achieve organizational objective?

What are the challenges of corporate communication department in Ethiopian Airlines Group?

Do you think there is a possible communication distortion when the message travels down to the lower level in the hierarchy and vice versa?

How do evaluate the position and acceptance of corporate communication in Ethiopian airlines group?

What do you recommend for the betterment of corporate communication practices in Ethiopian airlines group?

How do you describe the potential of corporate communication in problem solving and decision-making?

To what extent do you think the corporate communication practitioners aware of the utilization of social media?

How does the corporate communication department integrate with another department of Ethiopian Airlines Group?

Do you think that the corporate communication department practices are independent from any external interference?