



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIC**  
**COMMUNICATION**

**Assessing the Practice of Media Relation: Focusing on Addis Ababa  
Transport Bureau /AATB/**

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**Addis Ababa University**

**May 2023**

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**A Thesis Submitted To Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Art  
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This is to certify that the thesis carried out by Seblewongel Getachew, I hereby declare that this thesis entitled "Assessing the Practice of Media Relation: Focusing on Addis Ababa Transport Bureau / AATB/ " submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Art in Public Relations and Strategic Communication with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **List of Acronyms**

**AATB:** Ababa Road Transport Bureau

**BSC:** Balance Scorecard

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## **Abstract**

*Media relations is the activity on which the majority of PR practitioners spend most of their time to inform and influence the target audience as well as to keep the reputation of an organization through different mechanisms of contacting the media. It is an observable fact that the Addis Ababa road transportation service has faced problems due to complex issues. AATB as the responsible government organization for managing the city's road transport sector has been undertaking various activities to bring solutions to the current transportation service delivery problems.*

*However, unless the information is communicated to the public about the organization's ongoing efforts to solve the current transportation service delivery problem of the city through the media relation activity properly the organization's efforts can be devalued. Therefore the main purpose of this study is to assess the Media Relations practice of AATB in terms of communicating public about the organization's activities. Research questions were raised in the study in order to meet the objective of the study. This study's research design is a descriptive with a qualitative research approach. Based on research questions data is collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The sampling design is non-probability; particularly purposive sampling used for this investigation. For in-depth interview samples were selected from the AATB communication affairs directorate and media journalists. Regarding documents, analysis documents were selected purposefully from one year of media relation practice of the AATB communication affairs directorate. The data gained through these methods are categorized into different themes and the result is presented or discussed in the form of narration.*

*The Communication Department of AATB has annual public relations plan to carry out different public relation activities including media relation practice, but it is not strategically prepared. AATB's media relation practice's primary goal is to gain media attention for the issue of public transport tariffs and other transportation problems. Media organizations also produce news coverage focusing on these problems. AATB has established regular engagement with the media in order to communicate with the public about the organization's activities to solve road transportation service delivery problems in the city. This relationship is established on both sides, but it frequently begins with media requests. Finally, recommendations are forwarded regarding media relation strategy, media relation focuses and relationship with media.*

# Chapter One

## Introduction

This Chapter introduces the research context, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and research questions. Also provides an overview about the importance of conducting this study.

### 1.1. Background of the study

According to Tchanche {2019}, the road transport sector plays an important role in African economies. In sub- Sahara Africa road appears as the dominant mode due to favoured by the low purchasing power of the population. Road transport is made up of several sub- transport modes. It includes walking, animal carriage, taxis, motorbikes, buses, etc. This sector is facing many challenges related to urban transport management, road design, road transport equipment, driver licensing, road traffic accident, etc. Therefore, the involvements of various actors and stakeholders will be important to bring a solution for the problem of this sector.

Aklilu{2006} stated that the modern transport system in Ethiopia is about a hundred years old. The transportation branches available in Ethiopia are road transport, air transport, rail transport and water transport. Among these four transport sectors, the biggest service provider is the road transport sector. 90% of freight and 95% of the public transportation service are provided by this sector. Similarly, the Addis Ababa city transportation system is largely dependent on the road transport sector. For this and other reasons, there are various problems in the sector. The transport policy of Addis Ababa {2011} mentioned that Addis Ababa is the capital city of the country and also home to the African Union and other international organizations and embassies. It is observable fact the imbalance in the area of road transport infrastructure and road transport service suffers the resident to inadequate transport service. Transport operation service has faced problems due to complex issues. The commitment of government, public and private stakeholders is very important to improve the sector.

Communication is necessary when humans interact. A large number of people interact daily within the transportation sector, emphasizing the need for effective communication. In order for a transportation system to function efficiently, communication must occur rapidly and effectively between many individuals who perform various roles. This communication occurs mainly between transport services regulatory institution, transport users, transport service provider and traffic officer. { M.M.Withers,2019,p2}

Media is the means of mass communication in society. It includes broadcast media (television, radio), print media (newspapers, magazines, etc) and digital media (social media, website etc ). As Sood{2018} explained in today's world media is playing a significant role in shaping the public role, creating public awareness and strengthening society. Because of this, it becomes as essential as our daily needs. Media is the most powerful tool of communication in developing as well as in developed countries. It has a positive role in promoting the right things to society.

Tilley{2014} noted that Media relations (MR) are a specialized sub-branch of public relations. In the organization, the public relations department's media relation staffs are responsible to increase public awareness and understanding of an organization's activities through media.

According to several literatures, the public relations department of an organization is responsible to establish and maintain the goodwill of the organization as well as creating a common understanding between the organization and the public. Theaker{2004} stated that Media relations is the activity on which the majority of PR practitioners spend most of their time to inform and influence the target audience as well as to keep the reputation of an organization through different mechanisms of contacting the media.

Addis Ababa Transport Bureau/ AATB/ was established by proclamation number 64/2011 with the mission of maintaining an accessible, safe, affordable and environmentally friendly road transport system in Addis Ababa city. To achieve its mission, the bureau being undertaking various activities including identifying problems related to road transport infrastructure and service delivery, preparing and implementing long term transport development strategy, implementing important procedures to improve public and freight transport system of the city

and developing the capacity of the road transportation sector to ensuring efficient city transportation system.

However, it is observable fact that the Addis Ababa road transportation service has faced problems due to complex issues. This suffers the resident of the city to have inadequate transport services. AATB as the responsible government organization for managing the city's road transport sector has been undertaking various activities by coordinating different stakeholders of the sector to bring solutions for the current road transportation service problems and provide accessible, safe, affordable and environmentally friendly road transport systems in the city. Therefore, it is important to assess the media relations practice of AATB in terms of communicating public through media about these ongoing efforts.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Admasu{2019} stated that road transport systems are designed to let people circulate through the systems, arrive at their destination with convenient, safe, comfortable transportation service. However, according to the Transport policy of Addis Ababa{2011} Addis Ababa city road transport sector has faced problems due to complex issues. Therefore, the commitment of government, public and private stakeholders is very important to improve the sector.

Addis Ababa Transport Bureau {AATB} as it is the main responsible government institution regarding with road transport issue it has set a mission of providing accessible, safe, affordable and environmentally friendly road transport services for society by solving the current transportation problem of the city by coordinating all stakeholder involved in the road transport sector. To accomplish this, it is undertaking various activities. The Bureau's Communication Affairs Directorate is also carrying out various public relations activities to communicate public about these activities.

Theaker {2004} explained that media are the most relevant to the public relations department of an organization. This allows communicating to large numbers of people at a low cost. As a result media relations is considered the main activities of public relations which are responsible for communicating with journalists, specialists, editors from local, national, international and trade media including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and web-based communication. Reid{2019}

also noted that the purpose of this media relation is to inform the public of an organization's mission, policies and practices consistently and credibly.

Also, Supa{2008} p2 quoted (Kendall, 1996), (Miller, 1984), (Lesly,1991) and (Guth& Marsh, 2003) Media relation can be viewed as the relationship of public relation practitioners with uncontrolled mass media. So that, it should be systematic, planned, and purposeful and has a mutually beneficially relationship between mass media and organization.

The AATB Communication Affairs Directorate has been working with different media outlets to communicate with the public about the organization's various activities. However, unless the information is delivered to the public about the organization's ongoing efforts to solve the current transportation service delivery problem of the city and provide accessible, safe, affordable and environmentally friendly road transport services for society through the media relation activity properly the organization's efforts can be devalued and only the transportation problem can be reported on media. This can negatively affect the image of the organization.

Therefore, it is important to know the media relations practice of the AATB is systematic, planned and purposeful to communicate the organization's effort to the public. However, no research or evaluation document has been found whether ongoing media relation practice of the AATB is being done in this way or not. Thus, it is important to assess the media relation practice in this regard.

In addition, many researchers have been conducted regarding the issue of media relation practices on other sectors. However, no research has found concerning with the media relation practice of road transport sector, especially communicating the public about the activity of the sector through media relation practice. Therefore, this study aimed to fill the gap in this regard.

### **1.3. Objective**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

To assess the practice of Media Relations in terms of communicating public about the organization's activities. Focusing on Addis Ababa Transport Bureau / AATB/.

### **1.3.2. Specific objective**

- To assess the media relation strategic plan used to communicate the organization's activities.
- To explore the media relation tools used to establish relationships with media.
- To assess ongoing media relation practices in terms of communicating the organization's activities through media.
- To assess the media relation evaluation method.
- To identify the media relation challenges.

### **1.4. Research questions**

- What is media relation strategic plan used by the public relation department to communicate the organization's activities?
- What are the media relation tools used to create relationships with media outlets?
- What are the ongoing media relation practices in terms of communicating the organization's activities through media?
- How media relation activity evaluated?
- What are the challenges of media relation?

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

Media are the most relevant to the public relations department of an organization. This allows them to communicate with large numbers of people at a low cost.

This study gives insight into how media relations are practiced in Communication Affairs Directorate by using media to communicate public about the AATB activities. Thereby it gives the recommendation to perform media relations based on the recommended procedures of media relations. Also, this research will be used as a benchmark for other organizations to assess their media relation practice whether based on the procedures of media relation or not. As well, this study will be used as a source of data for other researcher who works on research on similar topics.

## **1.6. Scope of the study**

Public relations activities take place in the organization in a variety of ways. The activities may also have different purposes.

This study mainly focused on AATB Communication Affairs Directorate. It focuses on media relation, one of the public relations activities, and assesses the practice of media relation, particularly in terms of communicating public through media about the AATB ongoing activities to solve the current transportation service delivery problem of the city and provide, accessible, safe, affordable and environmentally friendly road transport service for the society. In particular, conducted on media relations plan, media relation tools, evaluation methods, look insight whether the media relation practices effectively communicate public about organization's activities through media or not and challenges of the media relation.

Media relation activity can be carried out through mainstream (traditional) media or digital media. This study assesses the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate media relation practice by focusing only on Mainstream or traditional media.

## **1.7. Limitation of the study**

The subject of media relations is sometimes confused with public relations. Due to this, there were few constraints in this study. First, there was a lack of understanding among some participants of the study about the concepts of media relation practice and what makes it different from public relations. To overcome these, the researcher explained to respondents the context of the study in detail to have accurate and sufficient information about the subject under study.

Similarly, to fill the awareness gap observed by a few respondents, the researcher included respondents from different media institutions and with different educational backgrounds to get sufficient and accurate information for the study. This made it possible to obtain sufficient information from another respondent for an interview question where there was insufficient information from one respondent.

Second, unable to find sufficient data for document analysis from the AATB communication affairs directorate. To overcome this, the researcher tried to get documented information about

some of the media relations practices of AATB from the media institutions that have frequent relations with the AATB.

## **1.8. Organization of the paper**

This paper is organized into five chapters. The first chapter includes background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, scope, and limitation of study and organization of this paper. Chapter two contains literature reviews related to this media relation and theoretical frameworks. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study. Chapter four consists of data presentation and analysis. Finally, chapter five is about the conclusion and recommendation.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature review**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews related literatures that gives theoretical background for this study. In this section different books, scholarly articles and other study have been reviewed which are relevant to this particular study.

It consists concept of public relation , media relation, media relation strategy, media relation tools and techniques, how to working with media, the role and the importance of media relation, media relation guidelines, media relation evaluation, challenges of media Relation and theoretical Frameworks.

#### **2.1. Public relation definition**

The 1978 World Assembly of Public Relations Associations in Mexico agreed that: Public relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programmers of action which will serve both the organization's and the public interest. {Theaker ,2004, p4quoted Wilcox et al. 2003: 6}

Theaker {2004} p4 stated that Public Relation is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and understanding between an organization and its publics.

According to Theaker {2004}p11 the main activates of public relation are Internal communications, Corporate PR, Media relations, Business to Business, Public affairs, Community relations/corporate social responsibility, Investor relations, Strategic communication, Issues management, Crisis management, Copywriting, Publications management, Events management and exhibitions.

As Gezihagne{2018} p28 cited Solomon{2000} in Ethiopia it is believed that modern public relation have been started in 1960's as the result of the establishment of the ministry of pen in

1940's. At that time different media outlets such as radio, News Agency and Television services were established and administered under the ministry of pen.

Gezihagne {2018} p29 noted that currently in Ethiopia public relation activities considered as very crucial to support developmental activities. Almost there is public relation department in each government organization.

## **2.2. Media**

Media are effective tools for communication. It attempted to communicate a range of messages to a large audience. Print, TV, radio, and internet media are all included. Today's media plays a significant role in influencing public opinion through communicating a strong message to society about what is right and wrong. It is just as important as our daily necessities. {Sood, 2018,p 657}

Paul & Rai {2021} stated that one of the mediums of communication that has brought the globe together is media. Through media messages are communicated from the sender to the recipient in the form of a spoken, written, printed, or any other symbol. It is instruments that disseminate information and entertainment messages to a wide number of people.

Media offers many functions for society and government. According to Sood {2018}, The media is used by the government to inform, explain, and obtain support for policies. Investigative reporting is becoming one of the most important functions of media. The media has brought findings of corruption, misuse of authority, and insufficient policies and programs to improve people's lives. Furthermore, the media has a huge influence on what and how to learn about various issues in society. People can learn about society's values and what society expects of them through the media.

## **2.3. Media Relation**

Media relations is one of the most well-known segments of public relations. Positive working connections with journalists, bloggers, and other media professionals are fostered via effective media relations, which leads to more effective public relations strategies overall. (Johnston, 2013, p13)

According to Wilcox et al. (2015), public relations experts are also known as media relations specialists. They are mostly in charge of an organization's communication with media reporters. They responsible to keep the organization's public updated about its operations through the media. To establish constructive relationships with the media, the media relations practitioner must understand their views and concerns. Many television or radio broadcasts, newspaper pieces, and magazine articles begin with media relations activities such as press releases, interviews, and press conferences.

Media relation is typically classified as a technical discipline of public relations related to publicity. Writing and sending press releases, media alerts, and media kits, scheduling media conferences, maintaining up-to-date media lists, photographing, filming, and audio materials, and updating online organizational information are all responsibilities. However, media relations include far more than simply collecting, writing, distributing, and presenting material to the media. Successful media relations demands more than simply knowing what to do to reach your goals: it requires considering why you do what you do in the situation and also how you may do it best. A media relations practitioner serves the media in two capacities: as a communicator and as a relationship manager. It also defines how media relations may be conducted at various levels, such as within an organization and a group of individuals. {Johnston, 2013, p14}

Tench&Yeomans{2006}stated that media relation is among the most challenging aspects of public relations practice. This practice is always changing in relation to new trends that develop throughout time. There is competition in the media environment, with more publications and channels. Many organizations are also actively seeking to attract the media's attention. This is one of the reasons for the increasing of media relations practice. The organization and media build partnerships in the form of editorial, advertising, and marketing through media relation.

#### **2.4. Media relations strategy**

The strategic public relations department helps the organization as a whole achieve its overall objectives. When public relations efforts contribute to the overall success of the organization, they are playing a strategic role. {Heath,2001,p215}

Theaker{2001} stated that media relation is one of the most important aspect public relations activities. It is not only about distributing press releases or dealing with media inquiries. The main objective of media relations is to strengthen an organization products or service reputation in order to influence target audience. Even though media relations efforts appear tactical in action, media relations, as one of the most important aspects of public relations, should be planned strategically.

Good media relations can help to achieve long-term strategic goals. such as, improving company or brand image, changing the attitudes of target audiences (such as customers), improving community relationships, improving interactions with investors, rising market share, enhancing industrial relations, and influencing government policy at the local, national, and international levels. {Theaker,2001, p122}

Heath{2001} explained that Strategic planning requires the fulfillment of activities step by step. These steps are the four phases of the public relations process. They are as follows: research, planning, communication, and evaluation. Once strategic planning is accomplished, the strategy requires particular communication tactics that will be utilized in order to communicate the appropriate messages to public.

**Research:-**This is the initial stage of strategic planning. This section contains background information as well as a situation analysis. Practitioners explain important facts regarding the problem or program in the background. A situation analysis is a description of the problem, circumstance, or settings that describe the current situation.

**Planning:-**Planning is developed depending on information gathered by research. This part determined the best means to deliver intended messages to the target audience. This part includes the following:-

- **Goal:** -The desired outcome of strategic planning. It must be developed in order to support the organization's mission and goals.
- **Objective:** -The objective is defined, quantifiable, achievable, and time-bound activates.
- **Target public:-**Identify target public need to attain the organization aim and goals.
- **Messages:-**Design messages for the target audience. The messages are designed in accordance with the strategic plan's purpose and objectives.

- **Tactics;**- list of particular activities to accomplish the goal and deciding on media tools for interacting with target audiences
- **Time table and Budget:** -This is the timetable for implementing the plan and the cost for each activity in the plan.

**Communication/ Implementation:**-At this stage, the target audience will be categorized into groups, and the message will be delivered depending on their categories and how to best communicate with them. All of these must guarantee that the strategic plan's goals and objectives are met.

**The Evaluation:**-Evaluation is the process of measuring the success or failure of strategic plan based on the plan's goals and objectives. Specific assessment criteria for measuring the plan are specified in this section. In addition, relevant assessment techniques were employed.

## **2.5. Media relation tools and techniques**

Tench&Yeomans{2006} stated that the purpose of media relations is to manage the communication between the organization and its multiple audiences, which is associated with the larger goal of strategic public relations. The media relations team also assists reporters and editors in their work. In a country where the majority of people get their news from newspapers, radio and television, media relations can be the most effective approach to get publicity for a product or service. As a result, many organizations prefer this alternative over paid promotion. As well as media relations team supply information about the organization to the media reporters who rely heavily on public relations sources.

According to Theaker (2004), media relations tools are the mechanisms of reaching the media. Hitchins {2003} as cited in Theaker {2004} media relations tools include news releases, press conferences, informal media briefings, exclusive interviews, Media Tours, facility visits, virtual press conferences, and photo calls.

Tench&Yeomans{2006} noted that media relation is concerned about relationships with media. Therefore the practitioner must identify and meet the target media by the most appropriate way. The relationship must then be kept going.

### 2.5.1 Press releases / media release

Organizations frequently use press releases as a communication tool to provide information to the media. Organizations use press releases in a variety of situations to announce events, request support, address criticism, encourage cooperation, and update the public on their progress. {Smith, 2003, p122,}

Johnston {2013} stated that the press release is one of the most important and often utilized tools in media relations. The majority of the times, press releases come from government, politics, and industry. It is easy option to send out press release in order to gain media coverage for their issues. Furthermore, news media have become increasingly reliant on media relations materials. The major is the press release.

According to Johnston (2013), the media relations practitioner can raise the possibility that his press release will be picked by carrying out the following standards.

**The information's content will be interest of the media and its audience;**-Writing press releases demands evaluating the message's newsworthiness. The message must contain the fundamental elements of news. If a practitioner sends out press releases that have no news value, he loses trust in the media. It is essential for media relations practitioners to understand what makes a story newsworthy.

**The information is written in a news format:** -The news release must be written in a journalistic format.

**Ensure that the news release reaches the appropriate media at the appropriate time:** -It is important to send the press release to the appropriate media and gatekeeper at the appropriate time.

Smith {2003} also noted that news releases serve different objectives and provide a variety of advantages. Therefore news release writers should aim towards news-style writing. The most common news release structure is the well-known inverted pyramid style. The most significant information is at the top and less important following in this style

**Exhibit 6.2—ELEMENTS OF A NEWS RELEASE** The relationship between the various elements of a news brief and a news release.

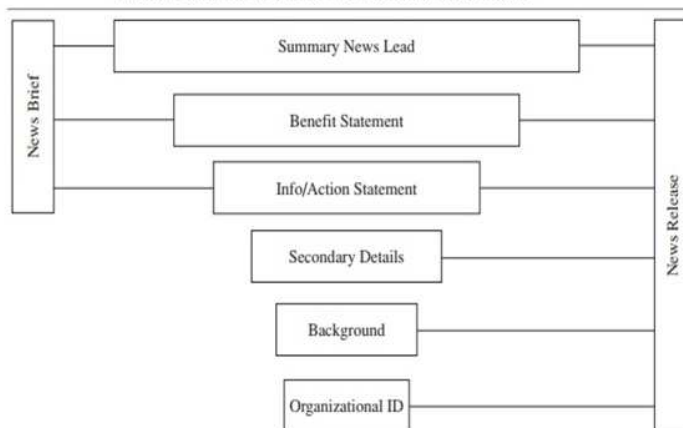


Figure1 ; {Smith, 2003, p135} Elements of news a news release

### 2.5.2 Press conference

The media conference, commonly referred to as a press conference or news conference, is a crucial instrument for simultaneously conveying important messages to a select group of media outlets. {Johnston, 2013,p169}

According to Smith (2003), press conference is a collective interview arranged by the public relations department in order to deliver an organizational message to a number of reporters at once. It's an interesting practice. Nevertheless, it is also have risks. Everything is depending on how successfully the public relations/media relations expert prepared and controlled the situation. The practitioner selects the topic and delivers information at a press conference, but he or she has little control over how the information is presented.

Bland et al. {2005} noted that Press conference is important for announcing the organization's investment, activity, or plan. Furthermore, according to Johnston (2013), the reasons for conducting a media conference are to clarify the situation in a crisis and to establish relationships with the media.

Smith (2003) listed the following logical steps in preparing news conference

**Planning:-** A press conference is an occasion to discuss major news, and it necessitates much planning. A wise public relations specialist will take the time to arrange a news conference.

**Invitations:** The media relations practitioner must formally invite media representatives via written invitation. This invitation must include the general topic, date, time, and location, as well as the speaker's name and contact information.

**News statement:** The media relations practitioner must prepare a news statement, which includes a news release, a position paper, and a speech. The news statement must include the speaker's introduction, background information, any essential announcements, and personal comments.

**Media Kit:** -A media kit may provide background and extensive information for reporters. When working with the media, the practitioner should have at least an updated information sheet or press release and distributed to the reporters.

**Questions and answer responses:-**During the press conference, there will be a question and answer section. This is another opportunity to communicate essential information. During this session, the reporters may be looking for information that was not mentioned in the original statement. As a result, the media relations professional must be prepared in this situation case of this.

**Evaluation and follow-up:-** After the press conference, take detailed notes on who participated, the journalist's questions and how they reported the event.

### **2.5.3. Interview**

Bland et al. {2005} stated that interview is an important tool for discussing many topics that the journalist desires to explore.

According to Wilcox et al. {2015} Reporters, contact an organization's spokesperson or the public relations department to set up an interview. When organizing an interview, the spokesperson or public relations practitioner should be informed of the purpose of the interview and be ready to answer inquiries with information, facts, and figures. A spokesperson must prepare to reply to a reporter's questions.

Conducting an interview is one of the best ways to tell your story. By replying to a reporter's questions, you may convey your organization's message and point of view to a broad and diverse audience. Organizations handle interview situations differently and with varying degrees of efficacy. In general, an organization will be more successful in influencing public opinion if it is more open to the public and actively engages with it. {Smith,2003, p362}

According to Smith {2003}, an interviewer must be accurate, fair, and professional. And the person who give an interview must be researching the topic of the interview, have basic knowledge of the issue, and be authorized. The following questions will assist in interview preparation.

- What is the objective of the interview?
- Who are the topic's intended audiences?
- Am I knowledgeable enough to speak on this subject?
- What types of questions may a reporter have?

#### **2.5.4. Media Tour**

According to Wilcox &Reber {2009}, the goal of the media tour is to gain press coverage for the organization as well as to build productive relationships with the media.The following scenarios usually need a media tour.

- The establishment of a new facility
- The launch of a new product
- The launch of a new promotion for an existing product.

Journalists were invited on a media tour to assist them in writing stories about the new facility, a new product or announcing a new promotion that is planned to start shortly. This form of publicity increases public awareness about those issues. A media tour must be carefully planned and coordinated in order to be effective and establish strong media relations.

#### **2.5.5. Media Advisory**

Wilcox &Reber {2016} stated that media advisory notifies assignment editors about issues. The story angles, interview options, and visual components are all included in media advisories. It

offers more basic details information for journalists about different issues or event so that they can cover it.

Media advisories, also known as media alerts, are simple memoranda that advise the media to cove of an upcoming newsworthy event involving the organization. A press release, on the other hand, gives details on an event. A media advisory, unlike a press release, simply alerts the media that something newsworthy will occur. {Smith, 2003, p175}

Typical one-page Media advisories may include any or all of the following components:

- Date
- The headline announcing the event or circumstance
- Name, phone number, and email address of the contact person (can also be listed at end of advisory)
- A summary of the event or story concept
- The necessary five Ws and one H of journalist questions
- Possibilities for interviews
- Visual components (photos and videos)
- A brief statement describing the sponsoring organization's history {Wilcox &Reber, 2016, p101}

### **2.5.6. Pitch**

According to Wilcox &Reber{2014},pitch is when a public relations professional contacts a reporter or blogger to suggest a story topic. Contact can be made through email, phone, or text messaging. The goal of a pitch is to persuade a journalist that a topic is newsworthy and should be covered.

The following six aspects should be included in the pitch:

- Enough information to support a complete story
- A point of interest to the readers
- Necessary figures, quotations, interviews with reliable sources, photo setups, and so on.
- A sign of authority or credibility

- An invitation to contact the editor as soon as possible in order to get a decision {Wilcox & Reber,2014, p165}

Wilcox and Reber (2014) stress the significance of following up after a pitch. It's not enough to tell a reporter at the end of a pitch to call if they have any questions. It's vital to contact and get an immediate response after the media relations professional emailed or faxed a pitch to an editor or reporter.

## **2.6. Working with media**

Johnston {2013} stated that when engaging with the news media, media relations practitioners must remember that the media is first and foremost interested in news stories; they will not carry a story simply because they sent it. To improve their working relationships with the media, media relations practitioners should be aware of the following.

**Being aware of what is new and what is not:** - News is made up of several activities chosen by the newsmakers. There are three kinds of news, Routine, staged, and spontaneous. In all this types of news all messages in the news must be approved by organization's media relation manager and the manager also responsible to manage this information before sent to media.

**Gate keeping and News Values:** -A reporter's select a good news story based on news values. The main news values are impact, conflict, timeliness, proximity, prominence, currency, human interest and unusual.

Gatekeepers are senior members of the media newsroom who determine whether or not to cover news. These gatekeepers allow news coverage depending on news values. As a result, it is critical for media relations practitioners to draft media releases while keeping in mind the news values that media gatekeepers will select.

**Themes for news:-**Following-up stories indicate news themes. News must be updated and developed. This allows organizations to create an increasing number of news stories. To benefit from this opportunity, media relations practitioners should write follow-up articles about various organizational issues.

**Recognizing the many responsibilities in the newsroom:**-Identifying who does what in the newsroom simplifies the media relations practitioner's ability to increase connection to media outlets, to develop strong working relationships and to communication with particular journalists.

The main professional in the news room are Editor, Chief of staff, Sub- Editor, Producer, Photo Editor, Section Editor and Journalist/ Reporter.

**Lists of Media:** -The media list is a database that contains the names of reporters and other newsroom professionals. It includes the right name spelling, title, email address, phone numbers, and publishing deadlines. It is essential for media relations practitioners to send out press releases and engage the media for a variety of reasons. Additionally, the media list must be updated multiple times a year.

**Deadlines:**-When working with various media, media relations practitioners should keep deadlines in mind. As a result, the practitioner must be aware of the particular deadlines and other criteria of the media and their program sections.

**Media conventions:**-There are several standards and rules that govern how a newsroom operates. This protocol covers several procedures for gathering and publishing news, as well as how journalists deal with their news sources and other issues. As a result, media relations practitioners must be familiar with particular procedures and practices in order to create trustworthy and serious professional relationships with the media.

**Scoops:**-The concept of scoops refers to the decision of a media relations practitioner to deliver a story exclusively to one media outlet or one journalist. In this situation, key media/journalists would be targeted as media agenda setters. To determine which media will be contacted, a detailed specification is required. Additionally, media relations practitioners should select whether to supply services only to one journalist/media organization or to a variety of media organizations.

**No Comment:**-The response "no comment" can cause harm than good and create rumors.If a journalist approaches your organization for comment on a variety of issues, media relations practitioners may offer much more than "no comment." After a while the practitioners should provide a more detailed answer to the media outlets that have inquired.

**Embargoes:-**An embargo is keeping a story until a defined period. They are intended to notify the media of an upcoming event or announcement but do not need immediate coverage. The embargo date and time should be clearly stated at the top of the media release. To guarantee that news does not leak before the embargo period, the media relations practitioner must have very solid security within the organization.

**Crisis in the Media:-**Before a crisis occurs, crisis communications strategies will be developed. Crisis communications include how to handle media questions by media/public relations department. It is critical for the media relations practitioner to respond to media demands as soon as possible. Otherwise, social media may disseminate conflicting information about the problem, and the organization may lose control of the situation.

**Media Training:-**Media training is specific training on how to successfully work with media. It helps media relations practitioners and other staff members better understand how the media operates.

**Key Messages: -** Key messages are clear and simple truths that make positive effect on the target audience. Media relations practitioner should develop the key message and support with facts and stories.

**Answering the questions:-**The media relations practitioner should respond to the journalist's questions by communicating the main message, with sufficient fact. While answering the question, it is also crucial to provide background information that supports the main idea.

## **2.7. The Role and Importance of Media relation**

Tench and Yeomans (2006) indicated that a public relations practitioner should have the ability and knowledge to select the most relevant channels for communicating with a target audience. These channels are either controlled or uncontrolled by the organization. The media is uncontrolled and free. In this case, the practitioner expected to reach the independent media through effective media relations. To create successful relationships with journalists and editors, as well as to generate and distribute story at the right time and by the right methods, media relations requires a trained team of practitioners.

Wilcox &Reber{2016} stated that building ongoing relations with journalists, editors, and bloggers who cover your organization is referred to as media relations. It is an essential part of the public relations profession.

Media relations are the focus of the majority of public relations departments and consulting firms. An organization's communications regarding its goods, services, and policies reach the public more effectively when it has a good working relationship with journalists and bloggers .{Wilcox& Reber,2014, p 116}

Tench&Yeomans{2006} explained that Media relation also important for journalists as well. This is because most journalists who work for broadcast media, online news sites, or daily newspapers work long hours researching and writing a story. As a result, the journalist should hunt for news announcements or news releases from an organization's public relations department. As a result, the media relations practitioner should approach the media with a clear and trustworthy story. It should also have a convincing reason why it is news.

According to Lattimore et al. {2012},the backbone of public relations practice is media relations. It is important for organizations to build and maintain solid relationships with the media in order to get their news or information broadcast or written in the mass media. This enables the organization to obtain various types of support from its constituents.

When the media publishes or broadcasts information of an organization, such information appears to establish a feeling of legitimacy that the organization may not gain through paid advertising.{Lattimore et al.,2012, p 181}

According to Sood{2018},for organization working with media or media relation is important for the following reasons.

- It is important to communicate the organization's message to a larger audience.
- It can benefit in targeting an organization's message to those who wish to hear it.
- It offers free publicity and promotion for an organization's news, statements, activities, or concerns.
- It can raise the public's awareness of the organization, and its activities
- Obtaining media coverage is an excellent method to add public credibility to your organization and its activities.
- One of the most important functions of media is the ability to shape opinions. Media coverage provides an excellent opportunity to get more people thinking positively about the activities of the organization.

## 2.8. Media relation guideline

Organizations and practitioners alike should consider media relations to be an investment. Media coverage is not just dependent on the efforts of reporters to be accurate and impartial. The quality of an organization's news coverage is influenced by the working relationship between practitioners and journalists. If practitioners follow to these fundamental rules, those interactions will be most successful. {Broom & Sha, 2013, p537}

According to Broom & Sha {2013}, to achieve the best results with journalists or the media, media relations practitioners should follow the fundamental guidelines outlined below.

**Honesty:** -When engaging with the media, media relations practitioners must be honest. Earning media credibility is the most crucial asset in working with the media. The practitioner should not tell any lies. If he or she is confronted with a complicated subject, it is preferable to state the truth and say nothing than to lie. Journalists uncover the truth through time. As a result, if practitioners are honest with bad news, they are more likely to be trusted with positive news.

**Provide service;**-Journalists frequently work under strict deadlines. As a result, media relations professionals must be aware of the media's strict deadlines and Collaborate with them to provide newsworthy, interesting, and relevant story and images in the format and time that they like.

**Don't beg:-**Media relations practitioners should not beg editors or news directors to cover their stories. Journalists have established journalistic objective in terms of news value. If the information is not enough newsworthy in his/her viewpoint, there is no need to ask them to cover it. If the practitioner tries to put pressure on the editorial to cover the information, it is insulting to the journalist.

**Do not request a story from being covered:-**Media relations practitioners have no right to request journalists or editors to prohibit something from being covered. It is disrespectful and an insult to journalists. It is requesting that journalists abuse their public trust. However, there are times when it is acceptable to seek a delay in publishing.

**Establish contact with appropriate media:-**The media relations practitioner should make contact with appropriate media and provide relevant information. A variety of public relations items are delivered to newsrooms. Not all of it will pass through examination of media gatekeepers; through experience, they know which sources deliver information with proper news

value. Therefore Practitioners should focus on what journalists will consider news, keep media email lists up to date, and deliver the story to the most appropriate media and journalists in each media.

## **2.9. Ethical consideration in media relation**

Parsons {2008} stated that media and public relations are strongly linked. Therefore it is important to have long-term strategies for media relations. This strategy must also include ethical considerations for media relations practice.

Tench&Yeomans {2006} noted that Accuracy and honesty should be the goals of both journalism and media relation relations practitioner. Full disclosure of the information is a good practice. However, it is not always the best thing to do. However, it would be unethical if the media relations professional hid essential information with the intention to mislead.

Also Johnston {2013} explained that the role of media relations in corporate governance should not be ignored. As the link between an organization and the media, accurate and informed media communications are critical.

The four pillars of ethical media relations, according to Parsons (2008), are as follows:

**Honesty and Accuracy:-**We must adopt a policy of honesty and accuracy in all of our interactions with the media. This may not necessarily entail full disclosure of information. It requires do not spread inaccurate or misleading information.

**Judicious:-**The media relations practitioner should determine how and when to use the media. The practitioner should avoid using media for non-news or fake news.

**Responsiveness:-** One of the most crucial aspects of building trust in a relationship is responsiveness to the media. Taking and responding media requests is an excellent strategy for creating long-term partnerships.

**Respectful:-**Professionalism and respect are essential components of an ethical relationship. The first step toward effective engagement in the media or any other employment is to treat people with respect.

## 2.10. Relationship between Journalist and media relation practitioner

Lattimore et al. (2012) remark understanding the interaction between journalists and public relations practitioners is the first step in media relations activities. Journalists who gather and organize information for the media sometimes see themselves as the people's eyes and ears, serving as watchdogs. The public relations practitioner, on the other side, wants the story to be covered positively.

The objectives of public relations are to inform, influence, and motivate. This is only achievable if people consistently and regularly receive reliable messages. In order to effectively disseminate information to millions of people, the public relations sector depends on a variety of independent media channels. As a result, the media strongly depends on a continual supply of news and information from public relations sources. (Wilcox & Reber, 2016, p60)

Lattimore et al. (2012) also noted that Public relations practitioner and journalists are mutually dependent. As relationship managers, public relations practitioners are usually placed between media and organization to explain one to the other.

Wilcox & Reber (2016) stated that public relations/media relations practitioners and journalists expected to have a collaborative, trusting, and respectful relationship. This is not meant there relationship is always free of conflict.

The following are the complaints about public relations/media relations professionals and journalists, according to Wilcox and Reber (2016).

### Complains about public relations/media relations professionals

**Poorly written:**-Press releases and other written materials constantly surround Journalists. The majority of them, unfortunately, are poorly written. Frequently look to be advertising, with a variety of jargon terms and too many words, phrases, and paragraphs instead of simple information.

**Ignorance of publication format and content:**-Editors and journalists receive a massive number of press releases written in ignorance of a publication's format and contents. They frequently send such news releases to be spam and prevent the sender from receiving any future contacts.

**Lack of Access;**-Journalists regularly have difficulties in contacting a organization's public relations/media relations practitioners. Many journalists have complained about public relations/media relations staff for an organization that do not quickly return phone calls or respond to email questions.

**No for an answer:** -According to journalists, a lack of timely answers implies a lack of interest to answer.

**To get to the point:** -Journalists are usually on the schedule and don't have time for long discussions. They are irritated when public relations/media relations practitioners delay to get the point.

### **Complaints about Journalists**

**Changing their minds:**-Because of the constant flow of breaking news, journalists and editors are frequently unsure if information about an organization will be covered. They agree to use the information at first, and then change their minds if something more interesting comes up.

**Failure to contact the organization:** -Journalists in a hurry to reach the deadlines regularly fail to contact organizations for fact-checking or to comment on stories about them. They also phone at the last minute and want a quick answer. These upset public relations / media relation practitioners.

**Lack of preparation:**-Journalists usually fail to conduct adequate research on an organization. Public relations professionals are disappointed by journalists' lack of organizational understanding.

**Bias:** -Some reporters have an opinion on a story before even checking the facts. As a result, their line of questioning only to confirms their assumptions about the story.

**Sensationalism:** -Practitioners of public relations and media relations frequently claim that the media tries to attract readers and viewers by emphasizing issues.

**Influence of advertising;**-In order to compensate for the decline in advertising earnings, several media outlets accept payment from an organization to sponsor a column or a feature article. The legitimacy of this medium as a fair, objective source of information has been fail in to doubt.

Lattimore et al. {2012} once a media relations practitioner has developed relationships with media/journalists, they must maintain them. The following are some suggestions for getting along with journalists.

- Avoid presenting inappropriate gifts to journalists
- Provide sufficient and timely information when required.
- Be available any time to respond to reporter requests and enquiries.
- Building trust with journalists requires accuracy, honesty and transparency.
- The practitioner should conduct himself in a professional manner. Return calls on time and within deadlines. Request no favors, special treatment, or the elimination of negative coverage.

Also Supa {2008} noted that interaction between public relations and journalists is typically initiated by practitioners. As a result, the practitioner committed to providing journalists with newsworthy information in order to maintain strong media relations. If this strategy is used, the relationship between public relations practitioners and the media will improve. Journalists and the media relation practitioner instead of ignoring each other they attempt to be partner to make the information more useful.

## **2.11. Media relation evaluation**

According to Smith (2013), the process of strategic planning includes evaluation. It is about assessing the success of a project, program, or campaign based on how well-stated objectives are accomplished. The strategic plan requires adequate and effective evaluation procedures.

Before creating specific evaluation methodologies, take into account the standards by which you will judge the efficacy of anything. Metrics are the terms used to describe the criteria used to assess a program or activity's success. Each metric needs to be suitable for the goal it is measuring. {Smith,2013, p331}

Lattimore et al.{2012} stated that even while public relations operations are intangible, their outcomes may be measured and attributed to them. Some aspects of public relations, such as media coverage and effect, are evaluated in some way.

Impact of Media Coverage While "clip counts" and "impressions" are still employed as stand-alone evaluations of public relations effectiveness, such metrics are widely acknowledged to be insufficient. These standard approaches, however, can be considerably improved by introducing measurements that separate findings based on the "tone" of coverage received. The use of content analysis to measure the degree of favorability of media exposures or clips helps in understanding the outcomes in terms of positive or negative effects. {Lattimore et al., 2012, p163}

Evaluation, like other aspects of public relations practice, necessitates careful planning. The evaluation process should be planned from the program's beginning. When evaluation is part of the overall plan, each component may be built with the goal of ultimately measuring its performance later. {Lattimore et al., 2012, p163-164}

Lattimore et al. {2012} explained that through evaluation, public relations practitioners should consider their relationship with media houses, the effect of their messages on the public they want to attain, the number of people reached, how many media use their messages, and the importance of their efforts for the organization.

According to Broom & Sha {2013}, the best practices approaches recommend performing evaluations has three stages. These are Preparation/ inputs/, Implementation/ outputs/ and impact/ outcome/ or effects. These evaluating process split into the following manageable stages.

**Preparation:-**This stage evaluates the quality and appropriateness of the information used to develop the program's strategy and tactics.

- **Information Base;-**The sufficiency of the background knowledge needed to develop the strategy.
- **Program content:-**Evaluating if the messages and programs' content is appropriate for the target audience.
- **Presentation quality:-** Evaluating the technical and production aspects of the quality of a message presentation

**Implementation/ outputs:-**Evaluation assesses effort and progress as the program proceeds.

- **Distribution:-**keeping track of how many messages were distributed. These records indicate that the program is being conducted as intended.
- **Placement: -**measuring the total number of messages distributed through the media. It indicates whether or not intended audiences are exposed to the delivered message.

- **Potential audience:** -determining how many target audiences were exposed to the messages the program intended to communicate; that is, the number of people who may have been exposed to the messages.
- **Attentive Audience:** -the number of people that received the messages. Determine how many individuals read or watched the messages that were distributed.

**Impact evaluation:**-This stage provides detailed information on how successfully the objectives and goals were met.

- **Knowledge gain:**-Evaluate how many people understand the message's meaning. Examine what people know, regardless of where they learned it.
- **Opinion change:**-Evaluate changes in knowledge, awareness, and comprehension to assess if a message had an influence on audience feelings.
- **Attitude change:**-Determine how many people changed their attitudes as a result of the message. Changing one's attitude requires time and effort.
- **Behavior change:**-Determine the number of people who behave in the desired way.
- **Repeated behavior:**- In terms of long-term behavior change, evaluate the program's success. Determine the number of persons who act in the intended way.
- **Social and cultural change:**-At this stage, the program or activity is evaluated in terms of long-term cultural and social change.

The following are guidelines for evaluating the impact of media relations, according to Smith {2013}

- Establish defined objectives and the criteria that will serve to evaluate the success.
- To determine the starting point, do a pre-test, such as an awareness survey
- Conduct a post-test to compare findings from the pretest to improvements in awareness.
- Use a focus group to investigate the connections between awareness, acceptability, and behavior.
- Clippings and records can be used to track media distribution. Examine these not simply in terms of distribution, use, and other indicators of audience exposure, but also do some type of content analysis to assess the message's effectiveness.
- Measure activity by monitoring changes in attendance, traffic, purchases, or other related with media relation activates.

## 2.12. Challenges of Media Relation

Wilcox&Reber{2016} stated that one of the primary goals of many public relations activities, particularly media relations, is to supply information to various forms of media in the expectation that it will be published, aired, or uploaded online.

According to Johnston{2013},one of the challenges for media relations practitioners is a lack of competent writing media releases and the ability to identify the appropriate media to send out the media release and other information. Media outlets have been overwhelmed by the large number of media releases that have arisen from various sectors. As a result, the likelihood of selective media release and other information in such media is relatively low.

Also Lattimore et al.{2012} noted that gaining a large share for media relations activities is difficult in such a competitive atmosphere. In times of crisis or controversy, organizations frequently receive media attention. As a result, they must consider how they will handle crisis or disaster circumstances before they emerge.

On the way to gaining media coverage, media relations practitioners confront at least four difficulties according to Wilcox &Reber {2016}

**Media Gatekeepers:** - A reporter and an editor are media gatekeepers who select what information is published or aired. Those gatekeepers may print or broadcast only a portion of the material in a press release on which the practitioner worked hard.

**Decreasing of Space for news segment:-**Because of the shift in advertising to the internet, many newspapers and magazines have been forced to limit the number of pages in each edition. This has reduced the number of news pages available. Every time a newspaper receives a number of news releases or other pieces of information, but does not have enough room to accommodate them.

**Increasing the number of mass media:-**It became harder to engage the greater audience through a single medium as the number of mass media with varying forms increased. Therefore, media relations practitioners must prepare news items in a different format.

**Information Overload:-**Currently, a variety of information is available through numerous mediums. They are all competing for attention. As a result, an organization's news may fail to capture the attention of the audience.

Addressing these challenges is the primary responsibility of a media relations practitioner for informing, influencing, and motivating diverse audiences on behalf of an organization.

## **2.13. Theoretical Framework and Model**

### **2. 13.1 Agenda setting theory**

Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw developed agenda setting theory in 1972. Smith {2013} explained that, according to this theory the media raises concerns about the issue what they believe newsworthy for their audience. This implies that the media tells the public what is the important issues to focus on. Wilcox and Reber {2016} also state that the media's choices of news articles, length, and presentation of news set the agenda for public discussion. Through this process, the articles and headlines that received the most attention from the media house attract the public's interest to discusses an important issue rather than others.

According to Fortner &Fackler {2014} explained that there are two levels of media agenda-setting impacts on the audience. First, it forms a public opinion on the most important issue of the day rather than other issues, and second, it attract audience concern on specific parts of this most important issue.

Lattimore et al. {2012} state that the media can set the agenda on what the public says and thinks about. So that public relations and media relations practitioners should try to influence the media agenda by giving current organizational information for mass media to offer to their audiences. People may discuss about the institution, but if the practitioner wants to influence the public's perspective, he or she must conduct a study on how to accomplish it.

### **2. 13.2. Excellence theory**

E.Gruning& A. Gruning{2008} discussed that excellence theory emphasizes the public relations function as a strategic managerial role in the organization. As a result, the public relations function assists the organization in interacting with the public surrounding it in order to fulfill its mission and goals.

The public relations department facilitates communication between the organization and the public. It manages communication to establish long-term productive interactions with the organization's most important public through trust, collaborative responsibility, dedication, and satisfaction. To carry out its functions, public relations professionals should first identify strategic publics with whom the organization needs to establish a relationship and then decide how best to establish that relationship. According to this theory, the media is one of the organization's most important stakeholders.

According to E. Gruning & A. Gruning (2008), the following are the characteristics of excellence public relation function

- The organization must see public relations as an integral aspect of management. With this, the public relations contribute to management by identifying the target public to bring their voices into management to participate them in organizational decisions that impact them.
- Communication programs that are created to communicate with the public should also be handled strategically. The programs should have contained quantifiable objective rather than ordinary activities, and they should have been evaluated.
- The public relations executive should be able to create relationships with top management.
- In order to communicate with a variety of publics within their environment, the public relations department needs diversity in terms of sex, language, and so on.
- The public relations department should include at least one senior communication executive who leads public relations programs.
- The public relations manager and other staff members must have the knowledge required for the management job as well as other communication functions.
- The public relations function should integrate all public relations activities into a single department.
- The public relations function should be independent and not in other departments. Otherwise, it cannot be handled strategically.
- In order to promote successful public participation, this theory suggests a two-way symmetrical model rather than the other three models of public relations.

### 2.13.3 Social Responsibility Theory

The philosophy of Social Responsibility it is an extension of the libertarian philosophy in that the media recognize their responsibility to resolve conflict through discussion and to promote public opinion, consumer action, private rights, and important social interests. This theory has its major premise that freedom carries concomitant obligations. The press has an obligation to be responsible to the public. If it is not so, then some agency of the public should enforce it. Public opinion and consumer action can guarantee that the press behaves. {Ravi, 2012, p307 }.

According to Ravi (2012) Communication scholars Denis McQuail<sup>3</sup> summarized the major goal of social responsibility theory is not to impose high or expert standards for formativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance. Media should practice self-regulation within the bounds of the law and established institutions in adopting and abhorring these commitments. The media should have avoided offensive material that could have caused violence, criminality, or other types of unrest, or could have harmed minority populations. The media as a whole need to be pluralistic and reflect the diversity of the society it serves, providing access to opposing viewpoints and the freedom to respond. In addition to employees and the market, journalists and media professionals should be held responsible to society.

Obagwu& Idris {2019} Stated that media recognize their obligation to foster public opinion, individual rights, and significant social interests. They also recognize their responsibility to mediate conflicts through dialogue. The primary principle of social responsibility is that freedom comes with responsibilities. The press nevertheless has the responsibility to make sure that their actions are always constrained by ethical standards, even though responsible journalistic practice is a bulwark for societal advancement. The public expects media to further the interests of the public. To this end, it is expected that the media not only informs, but also educates. The society expects the media to play the role watchdog, leadership to the community, empowerment and many other emerging redeeming functions.

The primary principle of social responsibility is that freedom comes with responsibilities. The press has an obligation to be responsible to the public. Media expected only informs, but also educates.

## 2.14 Related Study

Humnesa{ 2018} assess the practice of media relation in Federal HIV/ ADIS prevention and control office. According to the study the goal of media relation activates of the organization is to increasing public awareness by providing useful information in attractive and persuasive way. The organization used all available media relation tools in order to achieve its goal. However in the organization there is no organized media relation document as well as there are no media relation's effectiveness measurement tools.

Gedlu {2019} conducted study on the strategic role of media relations in corporate communication: the case of Ministry of Revenues. She stated that ministry of revenue developed communication strategy that includes media relation activity. The purpose of the strategy is to establish partnership with its stakeholders, to publicize the activities and achievement of ministry, to inform staff and stakeholder and to increase the positive attitude of the public toward the organization. But the ministry tries to persuade its public through different media relation tools without understanding the environment around them because in the organization there is no organized system to collect feedback.

Chernet{2019} explained on conducted research on determinant of media relation in selected public sectors of city government of Addis Ababa media relation activities are faced various challenges. This because the strategies are being used by the media and this public sector government affected the media relation activities. As well as the knowledge gab about the media relation tools and misunderstanding between public relation professionals and media journalist also another factor that affected media relation activities.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

Creswell {2014} stated that first and foremost, the researcher should consider the philosophical worldview or paradigm assumption governing the issue under study. The research design, techniques, or processes that put the research concept into action come next.

Therefore, this section begins by trying to state the topic's paradigm assumption. The research design, research approach, and research methodologies that will be employed for this study will be outlined based on the assumptions.

#### **3.1. Philosophical Worldviews**

Creswell {2014} stated that Research philosophical worldviews or paradigms are the general philosophical perspective on the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study. According to Creswell {2014}, there are four philosophical research worldviews. The paradigm chosen for this study is constructivism or interpretivism paradigm.

#### **3.2. Constructivism / Interpretivism paradigm**

Creswell {2014} stated that this paradigm argues that people acquire subjective meanings for certain things depending on their experiences. Their meanings are various, leading the researcher to explore for the variety of viewpoints rather than a few categories or concepts. Instead of beginning by constructing a theory or pattern of meaning, the researcher uses more open-ended questioning to attentively listen to the people and address the process based on the interaction among the individuals and interpret the meaning others have about the situation.

The researcher chose this paradigm for this study because the primary goal of this study is to evaluate the practice of media relations in terms of communicating the organization's activities to the public. As a result, the researcher attempted to discover about different perspectives on the subject based on the participant's experience and data from other sources.

The data is gathered and the meaning interpreted or constricted on the practice of media relations inside the AATB's Communication Affairs Directorate through the interaction the researcher has with a participant using open-ended questioning and from other data sources.

### **3.3. Research design**

This study's research design is descriptive research study with a qualitative research approach. According to Rahi{2017, research design defines a process of collecting and interpreting data with clear objectives. Also, Easterby-Smith et al{16} as cited Rahi{2017} A research design is a general plan for answering the researcher's study topic.

Kothair/ 2004/ stated that descriptive research design studies are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or group. In this type of research design, the researcher collects data, analyses, prepares and then presents it in depth and in an understandable manner. Most of the social research comes under this category.

According to Akhtar/2016/ descriptive research design answers the questions, what, who, where, how and when. It used to study the current situation and more common in the social sciences, as in socio-economic survey and activities analysis.

The descriptive research design was chosen for this study because the researcher intends to develop an in-depth analysis and deep understanding about the activities of media relation practice, which is communicating public about the activities of an organization through media in focusing on AATB Communication Affairs Directorate.

In-depth analysis is conducted through several techniques used to gather and analyze data for this type of research design.

### **3.4. Research Approach**

This study follows the qualitative research approach. Rahi {2017} noted that interpretative paradigms typically employ this strategy to gather in-depth information about a particular subject. This method interprets the feelings, emotions, and viewpoints of one individual or a

small group of people. Creswell {2014} stated that the researcher uses this approach to determine the meaning of phenomena based on the perspectives of participants.

Creswell (2013), Hatch (2002), and Marshall & Rossman (2011) as cited Creswell{2014} The core feature of a qualitative research approach is that the researcher tends to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study by gathering data forms of multiple data collection forms such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information. The researcher next reviews all of the material and organizes it into categories or themes by integrating data from various sources.

Therefore, a qualitative research approach is used for this study because, based on the study's objectives and research questions, the researcher intends to collect detailed information from various sources of data using various data collection methods that can provide a deep insight into the issue. Furthermore, this research approach is the appropriate method for developing in-depth analyses of the issue once the researcher has reviewed all of the data gathered from multiple sources and organized it into themes and categories. It is also an effective approach to analyze the event based on the research participants' perspectives and experiences.

### **3.5. Source of data**

According to Cohen, Manlion, & Morrison (2007), Primary and secondary data sources are the two types of research data sources. The primary sources of the data items have a direct bearing on the subject being studied. Items from secondary sources of information have not direct link to the subject being studied and can be utilized to supplement primary sources of information.

Primary and secondary data sources are used in this study. Primary data is collected based on research questions through in-depth interviews and document analysis.

In-depth interview with AATB Communication Affairs Directorate Director and senior communication officer and from selected media journalists were undertaken. These Communication Affairs Directorate staff and journalists are key informative about the organization's media relations practice.

The document analysis data obtained from the AATB Communication Affaires Directorate media relations practice documents.

Secondary data have been gathered from various literatures relating to this research topic.

### **3.6. Data collection instrument**

Murray & Beglar {2009} stated that data instruments are devices that are directly connected to research questions and objectives. Instruments are also the tools utilized to bring abstract concepts to life and are an important aspect of the study since they produce data that serves as the basis for study results and conclusions.

Based on the research questions and objectives, qualitative research is the appropriate approach for this study. As a result, the study is used data gathering tools classified as qualitative research approaches from both primary and secondary data sources. Therefore, data gathering tools such as in-depth interviews and document analysis were employed to provide relevant data for the study.

#### **3.6.1. Interviews**

The interview is an essential data collection technique that involves verbal dialogue between the researcher and the subject. (Mathers, J Fox & Hunn ,2000,p1)

According to Dawson {2002}, unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews are the most common technique of data collection in interview.

**Unstructured interview:** - In this type of interview, the participant is free to discuss whatever is essential to her or him. The researcher has limited influence over the participant. Furthermore, the researcher may generate a large amount of data that is difficult to analyse.

**Semi-structured interview:-** In qualitative social research, this is the most widely used form of interview. The researcher is looking for specific information in this kind of interview. In order to do this, identical questions must be asked in each interview. The interview schedule is designed by the researcher, and it contains a list of particular questions or subjects to be covered.

**Structured Interview:-**This interview style is commonly employed in quantitative research. The interview might be performed in person or by other means. The interviewer asks a series of questions and checks boxes based on the participant's responses. It is, as the name suggests, a very organized interview.

A semi-structured interview is a type of interview that was chosen for this study. This is because it enables the essential questions to be asked in order to answer the study's research questions. As a result, the same questions have been developed which addressed by AATB Communication Affairs Directorate staff who are key informants on the organization's media relations practice. As well as the same questions also designed for journalists that have frequent interaction with AATB and prioritized on the organization's media list.

The interview questions were prepared by English language and the questionnaires were sent to the respondents before the interview session. The interview with the respondents was conducted in Amharic language and the recorded interview was transcribed in text, translated to English language, and coded.

The interview question was developed based on the objective of the research. Each interview has been recorded. The transcribed interviews are what the respondents said and meant.

### **3.6.2. Document Analysis**

Document analysis is a systematic technique for assessing or evaluating documents, including printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) data. {Bowen, 2009, p27}

Bowen{ 2009} stated that document analysis is a component of qualitative research that is used for systematic assessment to develop studies in a variety of formats. It includes advertisements, meeting minutes, books, brochures, press releases, radio and television show scripts, organizational or institutional reports, and so on. These records can be located in a variety of archives, including organizational and institutional files.

For this study document analysis instrument is used in addition to the interview. Document related to media relation activity such as Communication Affaires Directorate annual plan and

report, press releases, press conferences, evaluation document are used to assess the media relation practice of the AATB Communication Affaires Directorate.

### **3.7. Sample design**

Sampling is a method of choosing a few individuals (a sample) from a larger group (the sampling population) to serve as the foundation for estimating or forecasting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation, or result related to the larger group. A sample is a subset of the population of interest. {Kumar, 2001, p48}

According to Kothari (2004), there are two types of sample designs: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

**In Probability sampling:-** Every item in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample under probability sampling. It is a lottery system in which individual units are selected at random from a population group by a mechanical process.

**Non-probability sampling:-** Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, involves a researcher purposefully selecting sample items. The researcher chooses samples that corroborate his point of view.

There are five non-probability sampling designs that are frequently employed in both qualitative and quantitative research. They are quota sampling, accidental sampling, judgmental sampling or purposive sampling, expert sampling and snowball sampling.

A non-probability sampling design, particularly purposive sampling has been used for this investigation. This is because according to Kumar{2001} In purposive sampling, the researcher selects the sample that will give the necessary information to meet the research's objective. The researcher has contacted the sample who has the right information regarding the subject under investigation.

Etikan{2016} stated that purposive sampling should have considered selecting people who can contribute information via expertise or experience, are well informed about a phenomenon, and are available and eager to share their experiences and opinions.

As a result, the interview is included seven(7) total participants based on the above criteria. The participant is selected from the AATB Communication Affaires Directorate and Media journalists

who have frequently contact with AATB and who have priority in the media list of the organization. These are key informative concerning the organization's media relations practice.

The total numbers of professional in the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate are four (4).1(one) communication Affairs Directorate Director, two (2) senior communication officer and one (1) camera man. From this, Communication Affairs Directorate Director and one (1) senior communication officer are included in interviews. The rests five (5) journalists are selected from five different media institution.

The researcher believes that these participants can provide important information to achieve the objective of the study based on the experience they have on media relation activity of their organizations.

Samples for document analysis have taken from one year plan and report of Communication Affairs Directorate from Jun 2013 – Jun 2014 E.C. This report has provide a general overview of media relation practice in AATB Communication Affairs Directorate over this year, particularly in terms of communicating public through media about the organization's activities to solve the current transportation problem of the city. From the last one month of this set period of time media relation practice one (1) press releases, one (1) press conference and one (1) evaluation documents have taken as a sample and analyzed in detail in this regard.

### **3.8. Qualitative Data analysis and interpretation methods**

This research uses two data gathering methods based on a qualitative approach. As a result, the data obtained through those procedures is interpreted using qualitative data analysis Flick{2014} stated that the practical processes for analyzing qualitative interview data primarily include coding the data, categorizing the data, and identifying themes.

Therefore in this research, the data gained by interviews first transcribed into text and coded. After that, the coded interviews are categorized into different themes and the result was presented or discussed in the form of narration.

Similarly, the data gained through document analysis from the selected data are presented by thematic analysis in the form of narration after coding data.

### **3.9. Validity and Reliability of the Study**

Validity means in the broader sense refers to the ability of a research instrument to demonstrate that it is finding out what you designed it, or truthfulness of the study on the perspectives of respondents. It can be understood as the extent to which the field presents the social phenomena it refers to. Reliability, on the other hand, brings up to the level of consistency with which cases are set apart to the same category by different observer or by the same observer on different functions (Kumer, 2011).

Based on this , the researcher's methods for gathering data for the study included an in-depth interview and content analysis. Seven semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher; two were with the Addis Ababa Transport Bureau Communication Affair Directorate and five were with media stakeholders. The interviewees were chosen through purposive sampling to guarantee representativeness. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher selects the sample that will give the necessary information to meet the research's objective. The researcher has contacted the sample who has the right information regarding the subject under investigation.

The organization's primary media stakeholders are represented by the five journalists who were chosen and given permission for the interview. They represented Ethiopia's actively found media. The responders from the organization were chosen based on their involvement in media relations and how frequently they used the services activity. All of them have experiences of interview with journalists at different types of media.

### **3.10. Ethical Considerations**

According to Yin (2005) in his treatise on research design and methods, every research endeavor must be guided by certain ethical considerations. The study, in sampling respondents, considered all situations that might make a respondent ineligible to be sampled.

Respondents were informed that if they believed the study violated their right to privacy or any other right in any way, they might choose not to participate in it. The study's aim and objectives were thoroughly described to the sampled respondents. Their privacy ensured not providing their names or any other identification details on the study in order to ensure confidentiality. Each interview with respondents has been recorded. The transcribed interviews are what the respondents said and meant.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to assess the Media Relations practice of AATB in terms of communicating public about the organization's activities. To achieve this, the research methodology presented in the previous chapter was employed. This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from journalists and PR practitioners from the AATB communication affairs directorate director.

To understand the organization media relation practice related to the objective of the study, the study aimed to answer the following research questions. What is the media relation strategic plan used by the public relation department to communicate the organization's activities? What are the media relation tools and techniques used to create relationships with media outlets? What are the ongoing media relation practices and their effect in terms of communicating the organization's activities through media? How is media relations activity evaluated? What are the challenges of media relation and their consequences? To answer these questions, this chapter was organized on seven major themes and sub other themes that emerged from the data analysis in order to discuss the result of our findings compared with the literature review and theory to determine the media relations practices of the office.

#### **4.1. Communication strategy**

Communication programs are organized and handled strategically with key publics. Strategic management implies that these initiatives are founded on formative research. That they have specific and measurable goals, that they employ varied rather than regular techniques when executed and that they are evaluated formally or informally. Furthermore, public relations professionals may present proof that these efforts meet their short-term goals while also improving the organization's long-term engagement with the public at large. E. Gruning & L. Gruning {2008} p 235

AATB Communications Affairs Directorate director stated that, the AATB's communication affairs Directorate don't have a strategic plan for public relation in general and media relations in particular. The department's ongoing media relations activities are carried out by incorporating t into the yearly public relations plan. The public relation annual plan does not prepared by including the key elements of the public relations strategic plan, which are research, action plan, communication and evaluation.

According to the department's senior communication expert,

*'The AATB Communication Affairs Directorate has prepared a ten-year communication strategic plan which includes media relation activates. But this plan couldn't convert to five years and one year in a workable manner. The reason is the communication affairs department was merged into another department and the public relation activities was done only at the officer level. At present, despite the departmental restructuring again independently by the directorate level, the communication strategic plan that is prepared is not being implemented.'*

The Communications directorate director added, media relations activities of the directorate are not based on a communication strategic plan, but it based on the directorate's yearly plans. The directorate plan is not prepared by conducting necessary studies, but on the basis of the previous year's plan performance. Even though it is necessary to conduct research and develop a strategic plan for public relation activates specifically for media relation activates, the human resources in the department are not sufficient to carry out this work. Media relations activities are also planned based on previous year's activities rather than a research based strategic plan.

In this research, a document analysis was conducted on AATB Communication Affairs Directorate 2014 E.C public relation plan. According to this, in the view of the researcher, the plan prepared by the directorate has three main parts.

The first part of the plan includes an introduction, purpose, importance and expected results.

- The introduction summarizes the issues set out in the 2014 plan.
- The main goal of the 2014 Communication Directorate plan is to build a good image of the organization by making timely information available to the community regarding the activities carried out by AATB.

- The purpose of the preparation of the communication plan is to provide regular information to the media about the activities planned and performed to improve the transportation services in the city, to build a good image of the organization and to increase public satisfaction regarding the delivery of transportation services.
- Expected results include converting AATB plans into action by creating effective communication channels with the public and stakeholder, and creating a positive image of the organization.

The second part includes situation analysis. It concludes

- The situation of the organization leadership in terms of supporting the activities of the communication Affairs directorate.
- Existing situation the human resource and material input of the Directorate
- About Lack of communication with the stakeholders and public in terms of working together to improve the delivery of the transport service,
- About Lack of satisfaction of the users related to transport service,

In the third part of this plan communication affairs directorate's budget year key activities are set. In general, the key activities is to carry out public relation and communication activities to play their part in the achievement of the AATB plan which is improving the road transportation service delivery of the city. To achieve these specific tasks are categorized into four basic views of BSC (Balanced scorecard). Major activities are included in two views.

The first views is customer's perspective, in this views the main objectives of the plan are increasing public and stakeholders participation , increasing the quality and accessibility of information and building the image of the institution.

The other view is the internal process. It includes increasing experience sharing, making information accessible for the public and stakeholders on social media, and increasing the effectiveness and number of activities provided by the department, such as producing and delivering newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, press releases and press conferences.

The messages conveyed by these activities focus on expanding non-motorized transport, improving service delivery and increasing the satisfaction of society. To execute the tasks the employee prepares their plans based on the directorate plan. To evaluate the implementation of

these activities, the work department prepares a 3-month, 6-month, 9-month and annual report to inform the relevant parties.

Heath{2001}stated that a strategic public relations strategy helps organizations achieve their vision and goals. In other words, public relations cannot be evaluated as strategic if they are not prepared in this manner. According to Theaker2001, the primary public relations activity is media relations. Even though media relations efforts appear tactical in practice, media relations, as one of the most important aspects of public relations, should be planned strategically to communicate with media. Heath {2001} elaborated Strategic planning necessitates the completion of activities in stages. These are the four phases in the public relations process. They are research, planning, communication, and assessment.

In this study we find that, the Communication Department of AATB has annual public relations plan to carry out public relation activities including media relations practices, but it is not strategically prepared. On-going media relations activities are carried out by including into the department's annual public relations plan. This public relations plan is not prepared in strategic way by including the basic components of strategic public relation planning, which are research, action planning, implementation and evaluation stages. The Media relations activities plan also prepared based on the previous year's performance, not based on the study.

The annual plan of the department is not prepared according to the basics of communication strategy. The annual plan does not meet the requirements of basic communication strategy preparation, namely situation analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation in relation to each other.

The situation analysis is not prepared by conducting research. The objectives of the plan are not specific and measured in time. To achieve these objectives, the target public and the media are not identified. The activities listed to achieve the objectives are not defined in a way related to the objectives. Likewise, the plan does not mention which public relation strategy to be carried out through these activities. For instance, specifically, it does not define how media relations are carried out within the annual year. Finally, The only way they use to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan is reporting.

## 4.2. Media relation tools

From the interview with AATB Communication Affaires Directorate, media relations tools are used to communicate with the media in order to send various information related to the sector to the target audiences via the media. Press conferences and press releases are the most commonly utilized tools. Even though it is limited, they employ alternative media relations tools to engage with the media when needed.

Press conferences and press releases, according to senior communication experts of AATB, are the most regularly tools used by organization to engage with the media. They also use the interview media relation tools. The AATB will answer media queries. At the same time, the AATB will contact the media and provide information via an interview. Various information has lately been posted on AATB social media pages, and the media has taking the content from there. The organization is using it as an additional instrument in its media relations activates.

Based on the information obtained from:

Based on the information obtained from:

- Ethio FM 107.1 Journalist, *‘AATB will send out a press release in order to build media relations with Ethio FM 107.1. At the same time, they hold a news conference and invite several media outlets. However, most of the time, Ethio FM communicate with AATB via an interview media relations option. The radio station is usually the one that contacts the organization in this interview option.’*
- Bisrat FM 101.1 Journalist, *‘AATB communicates with the media via the press conference media relation tools option. The issue will be stated, and an official letter will be sent to them. Press releases are rarely sent. Rather, the media will approach them for further information via the interview option based on the information they posted through their social media pages.’*
- Ahadu FM 94.1 Journalist, *‘AATB mostly communicates with the media through press conferences. Information also prepared in the form of a press release and posted on the Bureau's official Facebook page. The media will look over the content and contact the*

*organization to clarify and obtain additional information via an interview media relations option.'*

- Addis Media Network Journalist, '*AATB contacts the Addis Media Network through formal letters, When AATB organize a press conference or an event that they want to get coverage for, they bring up the topic and notify the media in a formal letter. The media procedure also requires the organization to contact the media with a written letter if they desire media coverage.'*
- Sheger FM 102.1 Journalist, '*AATB often employs the press conference option to engage with the media. However, information prepared in the form of a press release is rarely sent.*

Relationships are crucial to media relations. The public relations practitioner must identify and meet with the target media. Tench&yeomans{2006}p312. Theaker {2004} cited in Hitchins{2003} media relations tools include news releases, press conferences, informal media briefings, exclusive interviews, media tours, facility visits, virtual press conferences, and photo calls.

In this work we understood, to communicate with the media, AATB employs press conferences, news releases, and interview media relations tools. The Bureau holds a press conference on various topics and sends an invitation letter to the media. The media will also attend and cover the news conference. The Bureau prepares news releases on a variety of topics. Instead of sending press releases to the media, they released them on their social media platforms, especially their Facebook page.

Among these media relations alternatives, the interview is the one that the Bureau most frequently employs to provide information to the media. This is because the media frequently approaches the Bureau with inquiries about the sector. Similarly, based on the content released by the Bureau on its social media platforms, particularly its Facebook page, the media requests an interview for more information. Most of the interviews are taken place based on request from the media.

Apart from these media relation tools, the AATB has limited experience in using other media relation tools.

#### **4.2.1. Standard of media relation tools**

The AATB Communication Affaires Directorate Director forward her view,

*‘AATB interact with the media effectively using media relation tools properly by preparing information following media relation tool standards. Public relations practitioners in the department have been trained in public relations and media relations, so we interact with the media by preparing information in accordance with media relations standards.’*

about the standard of media relation tools used by the directorate, in her view AATB interact with the media effectively using media relation tools properly by preparing information following media relation tool standards. Public relations practitioners in the department have been trained in public relations and media relations, so they interact with the media by preparing information in accordance with media relations standards.

According to communication officer in the directorate, the media relation tools used by the department to communicate the information with the media are prepared according to the standards required by each media relation tool. As a result, when a press conference is planned, what information we will deliver in the press conference, who we will contact, what are the issues that are happening at the time, and other issues are planned. In addition, press releases and interviews are planned in the same way. However, road transportation services are a daily issue, and there is sometimes a lack of time to prepare properly the information according to the standards required by each media relation tool. The limited number of public relation practitioner in the department also has negative impact.

Regarding the standard of media relations tools used by the department to communicate the information with the media according to:-

- Ethio FM 107.1, When the AATB plans a press conference; they usually contact the media via a formal letter. The letter format is always the same, only the subject of the letter will change. Similarly, press conferences are not conducted when they are scheduled. Time is not respected. During the conference, it is possible that not all of the

journalist's questions will be addressed. In contrast, during a press conference, they provide additional relevant data in the form of a press kit.

- Bisrat FM 101.1, The AATB communication affairs department prepares press releases and sent to the media following the standard. Also they properly prepared the press conference. On the topic of the news conference, detailed information is provided. However, during the press conference there is a limitation in providing other supporting information for media in the form of a press kit. When it comes to interviews, most of the time, the person concerned is the one who gives the interview to the journalists.
- Ahadu FM 94.1, The AATB communication department often organizes press conferences and calls the media. However, most news conferences are focused on a single topic. It primarily addresses transportation tariff issues. Other supporting information prepared in the form of a press kit is rarely provided to journalists during press conferences. Regarding the interview, the communication affairs department will give information through interviews or assign an expert, who can provide information from other departments. However, sometimes experts from other departments are not willing to provide the information to the media.
- Addis Media Network, When the AATB communication affairs section intends to share information with the public, they hold a news conference. The information obtained from the news conference will also be made available to the public through the media. However, aside from the individual who provides information orally at the press conference, they do not provide supporting information in the form of a press kit. The media will also get information from the organization through interviews. And the Interview is usually obtained from the communication affairs directorate.
- Sheger 102.1, Press releases sent to media outlets follow a standard format. In addition, appropriate information is provided to the media via interviews. Other experts or officials assigned from other department, on the other hand, are not always willing to offer information to the media through interviews.

Document analysis was conducted on the press release prepared and distributed in July 2014 e.c by the AATB Communication Affairs directorate. The press release focuses on the graduation of volunteer student traffic police officers.

The press release:

- The press release was prepared in an inverted news writing format
- The press release follows the format of a news release and includes headlines, leads, detailed information and contact addresses for additional information.
- The news release was distributed on the institution's official Facebook page.

Document analysis conducted on the report of the press conference conducted On July 6, 2014, E.c. The press conference was conducted to inform the media about the planned activities to be carried out in the summer to improve the transport service delivery in the city and to modernize the sector in the future. Accordingly

- No planning document was found to give the press conference.
- By including the subject of the press relies an invitation letter has been sent to media institutions
- The Director General of the organization conveyed the media statement orally but a written news statement was not given to the media.
- Other information that may be helpful in relation to the issue is not prepared and given to the media in the form of a press kit.
- Media monitoring is done to evaluate how the media reported the issue.

In this study we found The AATB Communication Affairs Directorate mainly uses press conferences, press releases, and interviews as media relations tools to communicate with media outlets.

According to Johnston (2013), the primary and most regularly used media relations tool is the press release. The majority of the time, media releases come from government, politics, and industry. It has become a simple choice to send out media notices in order to gain publicity for their issues. Likewise, news media have become increasingly reliant on media relations materials. The most important is a press release. To increase the likelihood of the press release being picked by the media, the press release material should be of interest to the media and its audience, the information should be written in news format, and the news release should be delivered at the proper location and time.

From the interview and document analysis, it is found that the press release prepared by the AATB communication affairs directorate meets the requirements of the press release preparation standards. However, since the press release is released on the institution's Facebook page, it is not possible to confirm whether the press release reached the media or not.

Smith (2003) ,stated that A press conference is a group interview held by the public relations department to give an organizational message to a large number of reporters all at once. It is an interesting activity. It is also unsafe. It is determined by how the public relations/media relations expert prepared and managed the situation. As a result, while planning a press conference, logical procedures must be taken. Planning, invitation, news release, media kit, question and answer replies, and follow-up and assessment are all included.

From the interview and document analysis it is found that, the Communication Affaire Directorate arranges news conferences, invite the media to inform and educate the public about transport issues through the media, and finally evaluate how the media reported the issue. However, the press conference was mostly focused on a few issues, the time of the press conference was not respected, all media questions were not answered during the press conference, other supporting information was not provided to the journalist in the form of a press kit, the press conference is not planned by following the necessary procedure and written news statement is not given to the media. Due to this the press conference prepared by AATB fulfilled a few standards of the preparation of a press conference

Giving an interview is one of the most effective methods to share your story. You may offer a message and perspective of your organization to a large and diverse audience by answering a reporter's inquiries and responding to them. As a result, anyone conducting an interview must be truthful, fair, and professional. And you must be looking at the topic of the interview, have basic knowledge of the issue, and be permitted. {Smith,2003, p362}.

From the interview it is found that an interview is another public relations instrument used by the Communications Affairs Directorate. Information will be provided to the media through an interview in two ways. These are provided by public relations experts from the Communication Affairs Department, as well as by experts and officials assigned from other directorates assigned by the Communication Affairs Directorate who are knowledgeable about the issues.

Communications Affairs Directorate conducts appropriate media interviews. However, when requested to offer information to the media in an interview, other officials and experts from other directorate assigned by the Communications Affairs Directorate often refuse.

### **4.3. Target media and audience**

Excellence theory [E. Gruning & E. Gruning 2008] indicated Public relations brings value by assisting organizations in identifying stakeholders and segmenting distinct types of public from its stakeholder groups. Following the identification of stakeholders, the organization develops goals that are shared by the organization and its public. Employees, consumers, investors, the community, government, association members, and the media are the most common types of stakeholders. Each group of stakeholders and publics has an impact on the organization.

Tench & Yeomans [2006] stated that communication and public relations activities are aimed at audiences. These are the organization's stakeholders or publics. These audiences are frequently targeted by mainstream media. As a result, in most cases, a public relations or media relations program will identify the target audience based on their significance and capacity to influence the organization.

According to the director of the Communication Affairs Directorate, AATB focuses on all media to build strong relationships with them in order to communicate messages to society about the sector through the media. However, since the organization's service is based in Addis Ababa city, it mostly engages with Addis Media Network. In terms of audience, every message produced by the organization is aimed at all types of road transportation users.

Senior communication officer of the communication affairs department stated that,

*'AATB focuses on FM radio stations in Addis Ababa. This is because the organization's activity focuses on the city, and these FM radio stations are likewise widely broadcast in the city. Despite this, the organization engages with other national media outlets. In relation to the audience, all city residents, service providers, pedestrians, and people who visit the city for various reasons, are target audiences, and the organization collaborates with the media to deliver various messages about the sector to these audiences.'*

As indicated in the 2014 Annual Performance Report of AATB communication affaires Department, the organization has built relations with several media outlets. Compared to other media organizations, 5 media outlets keep regular interactions with the organization. These include Ethio FM 107.1, Addis Media Network, Bisrat FM 101.1, Ahadu FM 94.1, and Sheger 102.1.

From the interview with the above mentioned media the researcher summarized, their media target audience is Addis Ababa city residents of all ages, and they work on social, political, and economic issues. Furthermore, being the media of the Addis Ababa city administration, Addis Media Network gives special attention and media coverage to the activities of different private and governmental organizations in the city.

In this work, we understood the AATB's target audience includes all city road transport users and service suppliers. In order to reach this target audience with information related to the Addis Ababa road transport sector, the media relation activity of the organization focuses on Media that focuses on various social, political and economic issues of the city.

#### **4.4. Media coverage**

##### **4.4.1. Focuses of AATB in Media coverage**

From the interview with director of the Communication Affairs Directorate found that, the organization's media relation activity mainly focuses on public transport issues. In relation to this, the issue that needs to be covered by the media is the public transport tariff issue. For each distance, the organization has set a service tariff. However, illegal public transportation service providers are breaking this by asking the public more than the tariff, so the organization wants the media coverage focuses on making the public aware of their rights and paying according to the tariff.

The department's senior communication officer stated that, despite the fact that many problems exist in the city's road transportation service, the AATB is working to resolve the issue using all of its capabilities. However, instead of focusing on the work being done, it has been noted that media coverage focuses on the sector's problems. As a result, the organization would like to get media coverage for the work being done to solve the issue.

The officer added, there are instances where society and other stakeholders are to blame for the city's road transportation problems due to a lack of awareness. For example, there is a situation in society that does not use the available public transportation. Similarly, the sector's stakeholders are the cause of the problem due to their inability to fulfil their responsibilities when providing transportation services. To solve such issues, the media plays an important role in raising awareness for society and other parties to be part of the solution to address the problems in the sector, so AATB wants the media coverage to focus on raising awareness of society in this regard.

AATB focuses on the following issues as reflected by:

- Journalist from Ethio FM 107.1, If there are issues that the public has complained about, and if those issues are addressed, they will seek media coverage in order for the information to reach the public.
- Journalist from Bisrat FM 101.1, If there is information about the transport tariff and the work done by the AATB to address the sector's current problems; they want the media to cover it.
- Journalist from Ahadu FM 94.1, The information that AATB needs to be reported by the media is about the organization's successful efforts to overcome problems in the field. However, to address the issues identified in the sector, their performance in using the media to raise awareness among society and other stakeholders is inadequate.
- Journalist from Addis Media Network, The AATB is primarily interested in getting media coverage for tariff-related information. They sometimes try to get news coverage for their discussions with stakeholders on different topics in order to address information about their discussion to the public through the media.
- Journalist from Sheger 102.1, The AATB seeks media coverage for the tariff revision, the transportation service infrastructures that have been built or are being built, the activities carried out by the organization to improve the service, and the discussion forums they hold with stakeholders related to transportation services.

Mc Combs{ 2011} stated that the news media's ability to set a nation's agenda and focus public attention on a few critical public concerns is enormous and well-documented. The news media not only provides people with accurate information about current events; readers and viewers

also learn how much significance to place on an issue based on the emphasis placed on it in the news. Which are repeated every day, effectively express the significance of each issue. In other words, the news media can set the agenda that shape public opinion.

From the interview the researcher summarized that, the AATB Communication Affaires Directorate media relation practice primarily focuses on getting media coverage for the issue of public transportation tariffs. Because society pays more than the AATB tariff for public transportation services, this is a problem for transport service delivery; therefore, the organization would like the media to give focus on this issue to raise awareness among the public and other stakeholders about the importance of protecting the rights of transport service users in this regard. In addition to this, the organization would like to get media coverage for its efforts to address problems with Addis Ababa's road transportation sector.

The AATB Communication Affairs Directorate Director noted that,

*‘ There are undeniable problems in the service delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa. As there are many stakeholders in this sector, this problem cannot be solved by the organization alone. Even though the organization has carried out many activities to solve the problem, the problem still exists. In their media reports, the media news coverage focuses on the problems of the sector, particularly on transport service delivery, even though it is not satisfactory they also reporting on the work that the organization is doing to address the problems. The media coverage is off to a good start in terms of informing society or other stakeholders about the activities that the organization is undertaking to address problems within the sector.’*

Senior communication officer stated that the media news coverage on Addis Ababa's road transport service delivery is dependent on current service delivery conditions. They report problems when they noticed. When transportation service delivery improves, the media report focuses on the work done to enhance service delivery.

He added, There was a time when the media reports on transport service delivery problems without explaining the causes of the problems or including the organization's perspective. This

happened as a result of the journalists' lack of understanding of the road transport sector. Since the road transport service consists of many stakeholders, all parties have their share of problems in the sector. They also have a role to play in improving the service's problems. However, media coverage indicated that the AATB was primarily responsible for the sector's problems due to a misunderstanding of the relationship between the AATB and other stakeholders in service delivery.

The officer added, Currently, as the AATB communication directorate improves its working relationship with the media, the situation in which the focuses of media on only reporting the problem is decreasing, and they have begun making media reports that include the responsible stakeholders as well as the work that needs to be done to solve the problems by those stakeholders.

**According to the information obtained from the interview with;**

- Ethio FM 107.1 Journalist, their media news coverage is focus on Addis Ababa's transportation service delivery problems. This is due to problems being noticed and the desire to be resolve as soon as possible. When such reports are prepared, AATB requested additional information in order to balance the report. As a media, it works for the community. The community's question is the problem of transportation. So the media focused on it. When such reports are made, any work done by the organization to address the problem will be reported together with it.
- Bisrat FM 101.1 journalist, their media will produce a report that focuses on the problems raised by society regarding the delivery of transportation services in Addis Ababa.If the AATB does anything in order to address these community problems it will be reported.
- Ahadu FM 94.1 journalist, regarding the delivery of transportation services in Addis Ababa, their media focuses primarily on the problems observed. Several problems are being noticed during the delivery of transportation services. The media also gets many opinions from the community regarding this problem. Their media coverage focuses mainly on this, with the hope that the problems can be resolve. They include AATB's responses in their reporting of the problems.
- Addis Media Network journalist, news coverage given by their media regarding the road transport services in Addis Ababa city is focuses on the problems observed in the

transport service delivery. Because most of the problems are raised by society, so the media produces a news report based on these concerns of society.

- Sheger 102.1 journalist, there are many problems in the sector regarding the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa city. The media coverage focuses on this problem. Side by side, reports will also be made on the activities of the AATB to address these problems.

Based on the information found in document analysis on the 2014 E.C. annual report of the directorate, in July month 2014 E.C., Ten (10) media institutions raised questions for AATB to make media report on the delivery of transport services in Addis Ababa. Among the questions raised by the media, 7 questions focus are related to the problems in the transport service, i.e. related to tariff and lack of transport, and the remaining 3 questions are about the work being done by AATB to improve the transport service.

McCombs{ 2011 } stated that the components of an issue are mentioned in the news – and the relative emphasis on these various aspects of an issue – makes a significant impact in how people perceive that issue. From the pattern of overall news coverage, the public is focused on what journalists regard to be the most significant subjects of the day. The public creates its perceptions and perspectives regarding these topics based on the contents of this coverage - the agenda supplied by the news media.

In this research from the interviews and document analysis we found that several problems arose in Addis Ababa's road transportation service. Even though the AATB is working hard to address it, the problems remain more visible than the work done. Many questions emerge from society regarding these problems. Media organizations also produce news coverage focusing on the problems addressed by society.

In addition to AATB, many stakeholders are involved in this sector. However, due to the media's lack of knowledge of the relationship between these stakeholders and AATB, it has been noted that in their media coverage of the issue, their reports indicate that AATB is the only one responsible for the sector's transportation problems. Even though they report the activity of AATB to resolve these problems, they mostly produce media coverage focusing on the problem.

## **4.5. Relation with Media**

### **4.5.1. Establishing relationship with Media**

Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman&Toth{2012} noted that Public relations practitioners and journalists are mutually dependent. As relationship managers, public relations practitioners are usually positioned between journalists and institutions, attempting to explain one to the other. Public relations specialists and journalists rely on one another. Once a media relations practitioner has developed relationships with the media/journalists, they should safeguard them by being available 24 hours a day to respond to the needs and enquiries of reporters.

Also Supa {2008} noted that Communication between public relations and journalists is typically initiated by practitioners. Therefore, the practitioner commits to providing journalists with noteworthy content in order to maintain strong media relations. If this method is used, the relationship between public relations practitioners and the media will improve.

Communication Affaires Directorate Director said that ,the media come to the AATB to gather information related to Addis Ababa transport services. As a result, the interaction with the media two to three times a day on average.

The director added, Efforts would be made to provide information to the media ahead of time before the media arrives at the organization in search of information. However, due to shortcomings in the services provided, there is a gap in supplying the media with as much information as needed in advance. There is also a circumstance, in which the media comes with information collected from several sources and the organization gives a briefing on it. In addition to a news conference and press release, they started to use social media options to provide advanced information on various issues. Using this information as a starting point, the media has produced a variety of reports. However, this is enough.

Senior Communication officer stated that

*‘ Interaction with media is established on a daily basis because the issue of road transport service is a daily issue of society. This relationship is mutual. If there is information that the*

*organization wants to reach the public, we will send it to the media in advance so that the information can be transmitted. Similarly, the media come to the organization in search of information with their own questions about the transportation service. However, no research has been done to determine which side weighs more.'*

According to information obtained through interview from:

- Ethio FM 107.1 respondent, the media has established a relationship with the AATB to prepare media reports on various topics regarding the delivery of transport services in Addis Ababa. But interaction usually starts through the media. The media goes to the AATB for information on various subjects.
- Bisrat FM 101.1 respondent, the media has established a permanent relationship with AATB to make a media report on the transport service delivery. This relationship usually starts by the media. AATB provides information to the media on various subjects based on requests from the media. Despite this, there are times when the institution discloses information to the media in advance.
- Ahadu FM 94.1 respondent, the media has a relationship with the AATB. Road transport is one of the issues that the media focuses on, as it is a frequently asked question by the media audience. As a result, it has a permanent relationship with the organization. In this relationship, however, the media takes the initiative. When it receives various information and suggestions, it is the media that usually goes to the media for additional information. There is a time when the AATB provides advanced information to the media. But this is limited.
- Addis Media Network respondent, the transportation service of the city is a key issue of the city, so the media focuses on the service delivery and has a permanent relationship with AATB. The media has made several contacts with the organization to produce reports on the matter. However, most of the connections are made through the media's requests. In certain cases, there are times when the information is provided to the media in advance by the organization.
- Sheger 102.1 respondent, the media has a permanent relationship with the AATB to make various reports on the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa City. These relationships are created when the organization calls the media on various topics and

when the media goes to the organization with their own questions. The relationships are created equally on both sides.

E. Gruning & L. Gruning {2008} stated in excellence theory Communication programs should be designed for particular public using a two-way symmetrical approach for building and sustaining relationships. This study found that, the issue of road transport service delivery in Addis Ababa City is a daily issue of society, so AATB has a permanent relationship with the media in order to deliver information to society as well as the stakeholders regarding these issues. This relationship is created on both sides but often begins with requests from the media. AATB provides information to the media on various subjects based on requests from the media. Meanwhile, there is a time when the organization informs the media about various topics in advance.

#### **4.5.2. Relationship with the Media in communicating activities**

Based on the information obtained from AATB Communication Affairs Director through interview, AATB is carrying out a number of activities to resolve problems with the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa city. It is important to address this information to the public through the media in order to communicate these activities to society and other stakeholders and to create awareness so that they can be part of a solution to the problems. In this respect, a good relationship with the media has been established.

Senior communication officer of AATB noted that, the organization's relationship with the media is currently at a good level in terms of using the media to inform the public about the AATB's efforts to resolve problems in the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa city. However, it is not as much as it should be. The organization is currently working variety activity to enhance the city's transportation service delivery. Following these activities regularly and informing the public about ongoing activities is not done as it should be. This is due to a lack of media relations and public relations experts in the communication affairs directorate. However, as the information is published via the organization's social media website, the media will use the information from social media to produce media reports about the AATB's activities.

Journalist from:

- Ethio FM 107.1 stated that, they do not pay much attention to the work done by the AATB in their media coverage of Addis Ababa transportation issues because such information is posted on the organization's social media options.
- BisratFM 101.1stated that, there is a limitation in the communication affairs department's delivery of information to the media about AATB's activity to enhance the city's transportation services. They provide media coverage for activities done by the AATB based on the information they get when they go to the organization with various questions about transport service delivery.
- Ahadu FM 94.1stated that, the organization releases information about its efforts to improve transportation services in Addis Ababa city through its social media options. Taking this information and adding additional information, the media would report the AATB's activities to enhance transportation service delivery.
- Addis Media Network stated that, if the organization provides information to the media about the work being done to improve transportation in Addis Ababa, it will be covered. Similarly, when the media requests the organization to get answers to questions raised from the public about service delivery, any work done by the AATB to address these questions raised by the public will be given media coverage.
- Sheger FM 102.1stated that, on its social media platforms, AATB provides information about its activities in the delivery of transportation services in Addis Ababa city. The media gathers that information, asks for additional information from the organization, and disseminates the news to the public.

E. Gruning & A. Gruning {2008} explained in excellence theory, communication programs should be developed for specific publics or stakeholders using a two-way symmetrical technique to preserve relationships. The media is one of the most common types of stakeholders of the organization.

According to Broom and Sha (2013), the best strategy to acquire the cooperation of journalists is to supply them with newsworthy, interesting, and relevant content and images

in the format and timeframe that they prefer. Journalists often work under strict deadlines. As a result, media relations professionals must be aware of the media's tight deadlines. Journalists also cooperate with practitioners whom provide them services in the shape they desire within the timeframes they set.

From the interviews this study found that, The AATB is working variety of activities to address problems related to the delivery of road transportation services in Addis Ababa city. A close relationship with the media has developed in order to inform the public about these activities and raise awareness among society and other stakeholders to engage them in problem-solving efforts.

However, The communication affairs department not regularly notifying the media in advance as it should be about the activities carried out by the AATB to improve service delivery. This is due to the lack of enough media and public relations professionals in the communication affairs directorate.

Despite of this, information is released via the organization's social media platforms. The media obtains information from social media, and when they contact the organization with various questions about transportation service delivery and if they find out AATB is making efforts to improve the transportation services sector, they produce news coverage that reports on the organization's efforts.

#### **4. 5.3. Responses to media inquiries**

Johnston {2013} stated that the media relation practitioner should answer the journalist's questions by communicating the key message with credible evidence and facts to get the message across to the media. Wilcox & Reber{2016} also stated that the relationship between public relations/ media relations practitioners and journalists is based on mutual collaboration, trust and respect. But Journalists frequently have problems contacting an organization's public relations/media relations representative. Many journalists have complained about public relations/media relations representatives for an organization who do not answer calls or react to an email questions immediately. Journalists argue that a lack of timely response indicates a lack of interest in answering.

Regarding the responses of Media questions Journalist from,

- Ethio FM 107.1 explained that, *'regarding the responses for questions of media related to the service delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa city, AATB Communication Affairs Directorate staff gives responses to questions from the media.'*
- Bisrat FM 101.1 explained that, *'Communication Affairs Directorate staff is good in giving responses to media question related to transport service delivery in Addis Ababa city. But in a certain way, when they go to the organization for information, there is a problem of not getting the person who provides the information quickly.'*
- Ahadu FM 94.1, explained that, *'AATB Communication Directorate staff as well as other organization staff answer media queries related to the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa. However, compared to the depth of the problem in the transport sector of the city, the responses given to media inquiries are not satisfactory.'*
- Addis Media Network explained that *'the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate staff replies to enquiries from media outlets about the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa. But sometimes it is difficult to reach them by phone and by scheduled appointments to get information.'*
- Sheger FM 102.1, explained that *'the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate staff replies to questions from media outlets about the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa city.'*

From the interview with media the researcher summarizes that, the Communication Affairs Directorate of the AATB gives responses to questions from the media regarding the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa.

However, it has been pointed out that in some cases when the media wanted to ask for information quickly, it is difficult to reach the officer of the directorate on the phone and the

answers given for media inquiries are insufficient compared to various issues observed in the sector.

#### **4.5.4. Ethical working relationships with the media**

Parsons {2008} stated that public relation is closely associated with media. More strategic function is developing long term plans for media relation. In addition it needs to consider the ethical issues in media relation long term plan. The pillars of ethical media relation include honesty and accuracy, Media relation practitioner should decide on how use the media means and when, taking media request and response media request, treating individuals with respect from the media or in any other job are a good ethical approach to developing long-term relationships and successful interaction.

AATB Communication Affairs Directorate director stated that in order to conduct communication with the media in an ethical manner a joint forum is being prepared by the department to work jointly and cooperatively with the media on many issues in the sector.

The director added, Even though there is no documented code of ethics to guide media relations activities, various works have been done to ensure that relations with the media follow ethics.

Accordingly:

- If media want information from AATB on various issues, they should first submit their requests to the Communication Department.
- No official of the AATB or other professionals should exchange information to the media.
- Information should not be given to the media without being verified by the Communication Department.
- By clearing the appropriateness of requests from the media, the communication affaires directorate facilitates for media to access the information.

As a result of performing these tasks complaints from media professionals have been addressed. However, there are still people who come from the media with unethical

questions. For example, they request immediate information as soon as they submit questions and request information for individual cases. Likewise, there are media outlets that focus only on the problems of transportation services in Addis Ababa city and report only one-sided information. To fix these things and to manage the relations with the media in an ethical manner a joint forum is being prepared.

Senior Communication officer explained that,

*‘Relation with the media has traditionally been governed due to the lack of a documented code of ethics to guide relationships with the media. To address this, a strategy for leading the relationship in accordance with the ethical procedure is being developed, the document that is being produced, clearly outlining the ethical issues so that the relationships can be professional.’*

The officer added, *‘The document of the joint forum mainly includes what issues Media should fill full when comes to the organization to request information, how they can get information, and also the issues that the organization must perform to provide information to the media.’*

According to the information obtained from the interview with

- Ethio FM 107.1, in terms of carrying out the media relations activities in an ethical manner, when the media go to the organization to ask for information, the staffs of the Communication Affairs Directorate are willing to provide information. However, the staff of the communication affairs department should remain ready as media outlets may call at any time for information requests.
- Bisrat FM 101.1, in terms of carrying out the media relations activities in an ethical manner, as road transport is a daily issue, the media frequently go to the AATB for information requests. The staffs of the Communication Affairs Directorate are cooperative in responding to questions raised by the community. However, the media often try to contact the organization by phone. However, there is some gap in the organization's to response media calls.

- Ahadu FM 94.1, in terms of carrying out the media relations activities an ethical manner, the staffs of the Communication Affairs Directorate are positive to respond to inquiries from the media. But the media needs information immediately because it needs to deliver the information to the public as soon as possible. Therefore, they should facilitate information for the media as soon as possible about road transport services in Addis Ababa City.
- Addis Media Network, in terms of carrying out the media relations activities an ethical manner, Staffs in the Communication Affairs Directorate are volunteers in providing information to the media. However, there is a certain gap in organising and holding sufficient information, so they should organize sufficient information on Addis Ababa transport issues and provide the information to the media. Likewise, they should provide information immediately to questions from the media about transport service delivery.
- Sheger 102.1, in terms of carrying out media relations activities in an ethical manner, Staff within the Communication Affairs Department is good at responding to inquiries from media outlets. However, other officials in the institution represented by the Department of Communication have a gap to provide information to the media on the delivery of road transport services in Addis Ababa city.

In this research we understood that the Communication Affairs Department of AATB is preparing a joint forum to lead ethically in its relations with the media and to work in a spirit of cooperation with the media. Even though there is no documented code of ethics to guide media relations activities, various works have been done to make relations with the media ethical. They are also cooperative in responding to media inquiries. However, media institutions need information quickly, but there is a gap in the Communication Affairs Directorate of AATB in providing information to the media quickly because there is a gap in organizing and holding information about the transportation and service delivery of Addis Ababa city.

#### **4.6. Method of Evaluation**

E. Gruning & Larissa. Gruning {2008} stated in excellence theory every communication activity should be planned carefully. These activities should be managed carefully using formative research, that they have specific and measurable goals that can be evaluated formally or

informally. This gives proof that these programs meet their short-term goals while also improving the organization's long-term relationship with its stakeholders. A stakeholder includes media.

Evaluation, like other aspects of public relations practice, necessitates careful planning. The evaluation effort should be planned from the program's beginning. When evaluation is part of the broader strategy, each component may be built with the goal of later evaluating its performance. { Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth , 2012, p163-164 }

To make information available to the public, the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate provides various information regarding to Addis Ababa city road transport sector and the work done to improve service delivery to the media via various media relations options. According to information obtained from the director of the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate, after providing such information, the effectiveness of media relations activities is evaluated in the following ways.

- Identifying the media that took the information, monitoring how they reported it / positively or negatively /, preparing a report and planning future work.
- Evaluation of the individual who gave the information to ensure that the information was properly transmitted.
- A survey will be conducted by going physically to transport service areas to evaluate whether the society or the stakeholders are implementing activities based on the information delivered by the media or not.
- In this regard, directorate's senior communication officer noted that,

*'There is no documented evaluation system to evaluate the media relation activities of the department. However, after informing the public about AATB's activities to enhance road transport service delivery through the media, feedback will be gathered from the public via a variety of means. The feedback information gathered will be organized and delivered to the relevant department in the organization so that it can be used as input for further work. These are feedbacks on the strengths and weaknesses of the AATB's work to improve the city's transportation services.'*

Document analysis takes place on the media monitoring reports on the delivered press conference by the office on July 6, 2014 E.C, the media monitoring reports prepared regarding the press conference statement mainly included two issues. The first one identifies the media institutions that attended the press conference and gives media coverage on the issues, and the second explain the angle of the news reported by media.

Based on the information obtained through the document analysis on July 2014 E.C, evaluation document, the evaluation survey was made to understand how the public received the information delivered through media regarding transportation services delivery and other road transport issues. The evaluation document mainly includes the place where the opinions of the public gathered, the issue and the opinion given by the community on the issue.

Broom & Sha {2013} stated that the best practice approaches recommend conducting evaluation has three stages. Preparation /evaluates the information used to build the program's strategy and tactics for quality and appropriateness/, Implementation /As the program progresses, evaluation monitors the effort and progress/ , effects /how well the objectives and goals were attained/.

This study found out that, AATB Communication Affairs Directorate has not documented an evaluation system to evaluate the media relation activities of the department. Even though, after communicating information through the media about AATB's activities to improve the delivery of road transport services and other information, they monitor how the media reported it and will conduct a survey by physically going to transport service areas to collect feedback from the public. The information gathered from media monitoring and feedback from the public will be organized and given to the appropriate directorate of the organization to utilize as input for future work.

Even though by using these mechanism AATB Communication Affairs Directorate evaluates media relation activities to understand how the information transmitted by the media has reached society, the evaluation does not include basic evaluation procedures. This means that the office is not carrying out evaluation activities in planning. They do not have an implementation procedure to carry out the evaluation work, the impact of the information transmitted by the media on society has not been measured, and they have not prepared a measurement method.

#### **4.7. Challenges in media relation**

On media relations activities, especially, in terms of making the information available to the society as well as to the stakeholders about the works being done by the institution to improve the delivery of road transport services through media, AATB Communication Affaires Directorate Director noted,

*‘ The main challenge is that the organization is doing many works to improve the road transport service in Addis Ababa city, but since many stakeholders are involved in this sector, there are various gaps in the delivery of services every day. As these gaps are raised by society, based on these the media raises many questions to the organization. As there are many stakeholders involved in the sector, the institution cannot respond to all the questions raised by the media regarding the problem of transport services, because there are questions that need to be answered by other stakeholders of the sector. For this reason, the problems in service delivery are reported more in the media instead of the work done by the organization to improve service delivery.’*

The Director added, furthermore, there is a situation in which some employees of the organization at various levels of responsibility provide information to the media without consulting the communication department. As a consequence, they provide information to the media that should not be disclosed. This problem is being addressed.

According to Senior Communication expert, one of the challenges of media relations activities is that media professionals do not understand the sector well. Even though the organization carries out many activities to improve the delivery of road transport services in the city, there are many stakeholders involved in the sector, so problems arise from time to time. Due to the fact that the media professionals do not understand the road transport sector and the relationship between the stakeholders in the sector, they consider AATB to be the only one responsible for the problems that arise in the service and make media report in this way. As a result, the public is unaware of the organization's efforts to enhance service performance.

In addition, the lack of enough professionals in the communication department has made the media relations activities of the organization not work properly as it needs to.

Related with challenges of media relation Journalist from:

- Bisrat FM 101. stated that ‘ *The problem with the media relations activities with the organization is that it is sometimes difficult to reach the experts in the communication department by phone.*’
- Ahadu FM 94.1 stated that ,‘*Not assigning the appropriate person to the questions from the media is a challenge that is mentioned in relations with the organization. Likewise, the inability to send information to the media in advance on existing problems and the work being done is another challenge of media relations.*’
- Addis Media Network stated that, ‘ *The challenges in the media relations activities with the organization are not being able to reach the experts in the communication department immediately by phone and the difficulty in finding the person who may have the information.*’
- Sheger 102.1 stated that,‘ *There is a situation in which the organization chooses media to deliver information, which is mentioned as a challenge in the media relations activities with the organization. In this way, there is a situation in choosing the state media. This is a problem not only in this organization but also in other government organizations. As a result, there is a situation of marginalization of private media with the idea that they are focusing on the problem. As a consequence, there is a challenge not responding quickly to response for requests from private media.*’

From the interviews this study found out the challenges of media relation in terms of communicating public about AATB’s activities from the organization side as well as from the media side.

#### **From the AATB side:-**

Challenges arise from the media as well as from the organization in terms of communicating the activities of the AATB to improve the delivery of Addis Ababa transport services to the public as well as to the stakeholders.

- Many stakeholders are involved in the Addis Ababa road transport sector. All stakeholders at every level are responsible for the current problem of service delivery. In order to improvement of the service, the coordinated work between these stakeholders is

very important. However, there is a lack of understanding by the media about the Coordinating works of stakeholders in the sector. As a result, there are situations where media reports blame only the AATB for the problems in service delivery and do not mention the responsibility of other stakeholders for the problems that have arisen. This situation has prevented the public from having enough information about the activities of AATB to improve service delivery.

- Even though it is being addressed when this information is collected, there is a situation in which employees at various levels of responsibility of the organization offer information to the media on their own without consulting the communication department. As a result, they provide information to the media that should not be disclosed.
- Due to the lack of enough media relations experts in the Communication Affairs Directorate , the activities carried out by AATB to improve service delivery have not been communicated to the media in advance through various media relations options.

**From Media side:-**

- Challenging to contact the experts in the communication department over the phone at times.
- Difficulty in finding the individual who have the information or failing to assign the right person to questions from the media.
- Due to lack of information inability to provide information to the public in advance about existing problems and ongoing works.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **Introduction**

An effort was made in previous sections to evaluate the Addis Ababa Transport Bureau's (AATB) media relations practice in terms communicating the public about the organization's activities. The research questions are answered collecting data from the in-depth interview and document analysis.

This Chapter covers a brief summary of the research topic's conclusions and recommendations. As a result, the conclusion will be discussed first, followed by a recommendation that could assist in reducing the shortcomings identified while keeping strengths.

#### **5.1. Conclusion**

The objective of this research is to assess the practice of media relations within the Communication Affairs Directorate of AATB in terms of communicating public through media about the ongoing efforts of the organization to improve the transport service of the city. The study concluded the data presented on the pervious chapter as follows.

Regarding communication strategy, the study conclude Communication Department of AATB has annual public relations plan to carry out public relation activities including media relations practices, but it is not strategically prepared. On-going media relations activities are carried out by including into the department's annual public relations plan. This public relations plan is not prepared in strategic way by including the basic components of strategic public relation planning, which are research, action planning, implementation and evaluation stages. The Media relations activities plan also prepared based on the previous year's performance, not based on the study.

The study concluded that, AATB employs press conferences, news releases, and interview media relations tools. The Bureau holds a press conference on various topics and sends an invitation letter to the media. The media will also attend and cover the news conference. The Bureau

prepares news releases on a variety of topics. Instead of sending press releases to the media, they released them on their social media platforms, especially their Facebook page. Among these media relations alternatives, the interview is the one that the Bureau most frequently employs to provide information to the media. This is because the media frequently approaches the Bureau with inquiries about the sector. Similarly, based on the content released by the Bureau on its social media platforms, particularly its Facebook page, the media requests an interview for more information. Most of the interviews are taken place based on request from the media. Apart from these media relation tools, the AATB has limited experience in using other media relation tools.

According to the findings of the study, the study concluded that, AATB is working variety of activities to address problems related to the delivery of road transportation services in Addis Ababa city. A close relationship with the media has developed in order to inform the public about these activities and raise awareness among society and other stakeholders to engage them in problem-solving efforts. But the communication affairs department not regularly notifying the media in advance as it should be about the activities carried out by the AATB to improve service delivery. They provide information to the media on various subjects based on requests from the media. Meanwhile, there is a time when the organization informs the media about various topics in advance.

Despite of this, information is released via the organization's social media platforms. The media obtains information from social media, and when they contact the organization with various questions about transportation service delivery and if they find out AATB is making efforts to improve the transportation services sector, they produce news coverage that reports on the organization's efforts.

AATB Communication Affaires Directorate media relation practice primarily focuses on getting media coverage for the issue of public transportation tariffs problem. Because society pays more than the tariff for public transportation services, this is a problem for transport service delivery; therefore, the organization would like the media to give focus on this issue to raise awareness among the public and other stakeholders about the importance of protecting the rights of transport service users in this regard. Media organizations also produce news coverage focusing on this and other problems addressed by society.

Regarding the evaluation method the research, conclude that, The AATB Communication Affairs Directorate has not documented an evaluation method to evaluate the media relations activities of the Directorate. Even though, they monitor how the media reported it and conduct surveys to collect feedback from the public.

Finally, the study founded that AATB is facing challenges in communicating its activities to the public and stakeholders. There is a lack of understanding by the media about the Coordinating works of stakeholders in the sector, leading to media reports blaming only the AATB for the problems. Similarly, media institutions face challenges to find Communication Affairs Directorate staff over the phone and finding the right individual who has the information. These challenges unable the media to provide enough information to the public about Addis Ababa's transport service sector.

## **5.2. Recommendation**

- Media relation is the major public relations activity. Good media relations can contribute to longer-term strategic objectives. Such as changing the attitudes of target audiences and improving relationships with the public. Therefore, the plan of media relations should be strategic. AATB should ensure that the institution's public relations plan is systematic and purposeful to inform the public about the activities it does and to improve its relationship with the public. As media relations is one of the major public relations activities it needs to be planned strategically by following the major four steps of the public relation process namely research, planning, communication and evaluation.
- Media relations is concerned with relationships with media. In a country where the majority of people get their news from newspapers, radio and television, media relations can be the most effective approach to getting publicity for a product or service. Therefore the practitioner must identify and meet the target media most appropriately. Therefore to communicate with the media about the activities carried out by AATB related to transport service delivery, the communication affairs directorate should use other appropriate media relation tools in addition to news releases, press conferences and interviews by following the standards of each media relation tool

- Media not only provides people with accurate information about current events. Media can set the agenda that shape public opinion by emphasizing the issue on the news. AATB's media relations practice primarily focuses on raising the awareness of the public about tariffs and other transport service delivery problems, so media reports mostly focus on these issues. However, besides this, the organization should seek to get media coverage for its efforts to address problems with Addis Ababa's road transportation sector. This can shape public opinion positively towards AATB's efforts to solve the service transportation problem.
- Media is one of the most common types of stakeholders in the organization. It is appropriate to develop and preserve relationships by using a two-way symmetrical relationship technique and supplying them with newsworthy information. AATB Communication Affaires Directorate should establish two-way regular engagement with the media to give information to the public as well as stakeholders about the activities carried out by AATB to solve the transportation problem. Journalists often work under strict deadlines. The communication affairs directorate frequently should be the first to alert the media about new issues with sufficient information. Journalists also cooperate with practitioners who provide them services in the shape they desire within the timeframes they set.
- Media and public relations are strongly linked. To establish ethical media relations AATB communication affairs directorate should adopt ethical guidelines for honesty and accuracy interaction with the media, to build trust in a relationship and for effective long-term engagement with the media.
- Like other aspects of public relations practice, evaluation necessitates careful planning. The AATB Communication Affaires Directorate should prepare an evaluation plan along with the plan for other public relations activities, including media relations activities to measure the performance later.
- Lack of understanding leads the media to bias and unbalanced media reports. Therefore, AATB communication affairs directorate should create awareness for the media about the coordination work between AATB, stakeholders and society concerning Addis Ababa transport service delivery.

- The communication affairs directorate should create awareness for employees at various levels of responsibility in the organization about the media relation practice and its benefit to achieve the goal of the organization.
- In order to communicate to the public about the activities that the AATB is doing to improve the city's transport service delivery and other issues through effective media relations practice, Communication Affairs Directorate needs to have a media relations expert who only performs these activities.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1

#### **Interview questions for the Communication Directorate Affaires of AATB**

This study is being conducted to assess the media relations practices of AATB in terms of communicating with the public about the organization's activities to solve the current transportation problem in the city. Therefore, this in-depth interview is prepared to get the feedback of public relations practitioners from the communication directorate of AATB in this regard.

1. What is your position in the directorate?
2. What is your educational background and area of study?
3. How long have you been in this field of work?
4. Is there a media relations strategic plan in your department? What are the key aims or objectives of your strategic plan, if you have?
5. If you have a media relations strategic plan, do you conduct research before preparing the plan? What research outputs do you consider before beginning planning?
6. Who are your organization's target media and target audience interact through media?
7. Who usually initiates contact between your organization and the media?
8. On average, how many times do you have interaction with the media in a month?
9. What kind of organizational issues do your media relations practices prioritize?
10. What media relations tools have you used to communicate with the media alongside your messages? Why?
11. How do you provide quality information to the media outlets by using the media relations tools properly and correctly?
12. Based on your experience in the AATB Communication Affairs Directorate do you think media give more media coverage on city's transportation problems rather than the

organization's ongoing activities to address the present transportation problem of the city? Or vice verses?

13. How would you describe your relationships with the media, particularly in terms of communicating the organization's activities to the public through media?
14. How do you guide your relationship professionally and ethically with the media? Do you have procedure guidelines and ethical considerations for your media relations practice?
15. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your media relations overall practice, particularly in terms of communicating the organization's activities to the public?
16. What benefits does your organization get from your media relations practice?
17. What are the challenging aspects of your media relations practice? Especially in terms of communicating to the public about the activities of the organization?

## **Annex 2**

### **Interview questions for the Journalist**

This study is being conducted to assess the media relations practices of AARTB ( Addis Ababa road transport bureau) in terms of communicating with the public about the organization's activities to solve the current transportation problem in the city. Therefore, this in-depth interview is prepared to include the perspective of the journalist about the organization's media relations practice in this regard.

1. What is your position in the media?
2. What is your educational background and area of study?
3. How long have you been in this field of work?
4. On what issues your media give more coverage?
5. Who are your media target audiences?
6. Do you have working relationship with AATB? How many times have you contact them in the last six months?
7. Who usually initiates contact between your media and AATB?
8. By what media relation tools AATB usually used to communicate your media?
9. Does AATB provide quality information to your media by using the media relation tools properly and correctly?
10. Explain the responsiveness of the public relation officers of AATB to your media requests?
11. What kind of information and content that the AATB need to be cover by your media?
12. Based on your experience working with AATB, do your media give more media coverage on the city's transportation problem rather than the organization ongoing activities to solve the present transportation problem of the city? Or vice verses?
13. What is your opinion on your media and AATB relationships? Especially in terms of communicating to the public through media about the activities of the organization?
14. What are the challenging factors on your media and AATB relationships?
15. How do you evaluate the ethics of AATB officers in dealing with your media?

