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A Comparative Study of Public Relation-Practices: Focused on Ethio-Telecom and Ethiopian Electric Utility

By

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
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A Comparative Study of Public Relation-Practices: Focused on Ethio-Telecom and Ethiopian Electric Utility

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Art in public relation and strategic communication

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
June, 2020

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “Success and challenges of Public relation practices and implementations in Ethiopia: A comparative study focusing on Ethio Telecom and Ethiopian Electric Utility.” is carried out by Abayneh Zewdu Shay under the guidance and supervision of Tadesse Zenaye (Asst. Prof) and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master in PR and Strategic Communication. The thesis complies with the regulations of the University and meets the standards with respect to originality and quality, likewise the books, articles and websites, which I have made use of are acknowledged at the respective place in the text.

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Chair of Department of Graduate Program Coordinator

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to examine the success and challenges of the practices and implementation of public relations profession in the two Ethiopian organizations-Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian electric utility. The study used a comparative analysis of the two organizations and employed a quantitative method that was complemented with qualitative data. Standards tabulations and quantitative analysis were done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Proportions of the variables were measured for testing significant differences and relationships among variables. Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The study sees the following major findings .Majority of the participants (76.8%) reported that the existing public relation activities of their organization was ‘good’, and 12.5% of them said ‘excellent’ while 10.7% of them felt ‘bad’. All of those participants who reported ‘bad’ were from Ethiopian Electric Utility. Regards their belief about public relation as the heart of their organization, many of them (44.6%) agreed and 19.6% strongly agree, other 19.6% of them neither agree nor disagree, 10.7% disagree and 5.4% strongly disagree. The respondents reported that low awareness of PR profession as the first challenge (30.4%), poor planning and coordination (25.0%), lack of PR professionals (21.4%), poor utilization of social media (12.5%) and financial constraints (10.7%). Furthermore, 64.3% respondents follow media news, documentary and other programs in order to identify any crisis potentially happening over their organization and most of them (44.6%) utilized various forms of Medias, 26.8% meetings with stakeholders, 16.1% trainings, 7.1% education and 5.4% persuasions. However, the higher number of participants (55.4%) said their organization didn’t conduct successful crisis management.

Lists of Acronyms

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EEU	Ethiopia Electric Utility
EEPC	Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation
ET	Ethio-Telecom
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoI	Ministry of Information
PMP	Program Management Office
PR	Public Relation
PRSA	Public Relation Society of America
SMS	Short Message Service
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

List of Tables

Table-1: Socio-Demographic Information- Percent distribution of study participants by background information, Addis Ababa June 2020.....	26
Table-2: Responsibilities and activities of PR departments- Percent distribution of study participants by their responses about responsibilities and frequent activities of the PR departments in their organizations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	30
Table-3: Percent distribution of respondents by the degree of their agreement about their beliefs towards public relation and corporate social responsibility for an organization, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	33
Table-4: Crisis management- Percent distribution of study participants by their thoughts about the time and successful crisis management and role of PR in the management, Addis Ababa, June 2020	39
Table-5: Summaries of the comparative analysis of the two organizations for the selected observations, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	52

List of Figures

Figure-1a: Percent distribution of quantitative study participants by their gender types, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	20
Figure-1b: Percent distribution of the participants by their gender types in the two organizations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	20
Figure-2a: Percent distribution of the study participants by their age category, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	21
Figure-2b: Percent distribution of the study participants by their age category and organization types, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	22
Figure-3a: Percent distribution of the study participants by their level of education, AA, June, 2020	23
Figure-3b: Percent distribution of the study participants by their level of education and organization type, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	23
Figure-4a: Percent distribution of the study participants by their job positions, AA, June, 2020.....	24
Figure-4b: Percent distribution of study participants by job position types, Addis Ababa, June 2020	25
Figure-5: Percent distribution of the respondents by their responsibilities, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.	27
Figure-6: Percent distribution of the study participants by their frequently done activities, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	28
Figure-7: Percent distribution of the study participants by their agreement to their organizations in supporting the local community in any developmental activities, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	29
Figure-8: Percent distribution of respondents by the types of channels and tools which their organizations use for information to the internal and external publics, AA, June, 2020.....	31
Figure-9: Percent distribution of the study participants by their perceptions about PR, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	32
Figure-10: Percent distribution of participants based on their level of perceptions about public relation practices and thoughts around the role of PR in their organization, Addis Ababa, June, 2020	33
Figure-11: Percent distribution of participants in assessing the existing challenges in practicing public relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	34
Figure-12: Percent distribution of respondents who preferred strategies in identifying crisis in their organizations, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	35
Figure-13: Percent distribution of study participants based on their thoughts about the success of their organizations in crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	36

Figure-14: Percent distribution of responders based on the level of their thoughts in leveling the roles of their organizations in managing crisis, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	37
Figure-15: Percent distribution of the participants based on the timing of crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	38
Figure-16: Percent distribution of respondents who reported means of crisis management in their organizations, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.....	40
Figure-17: Percent variations among Ethiopian Electric Utility and Ethio-Telecom based on perceptions of the participants towards public relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	41
Figure-18: Percent differences between participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility and Ethio-Telecom based on the existing challenges of Public Relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	42
Figure-19: Percent variations between the two organizations in implementing the crisis management as confirmed by the participants, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	43
Figure-20: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations based on their level of agreement as the contribution of Public Relation, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	44
Figure-21: Percent variations between participants of the two organizations based on the contribution of the organizations towards Corporate Social Responsibility, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	45
Figure-22: Percent variations participants of the two organizations based on their crisis identification mechanisms, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	46
Figure-23: Percent variations of participants of the two organizations based on the information dissemination mechanisms, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	47
Figure-24: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations based on their frequent Public Relation activities, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	48
Figure-25: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations based on the level of roles of Public Relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	49
Figure-26: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations by the timing of crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	50
Figure-27: Percent variation among participants of the two organizations in the use of means of crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020.....	51

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
List of Acronyms.....	iii
List of Tables.....	iv
List of Figures.....	iv
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1. Background.....	1
1.1.1. Ethio-Telecom.....	2
1.1.2. Ethiopian Electric Utility.....	3
1.2. Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3. Objective of the research.....	5
1.3.1. General objectives.....	5
1.3.2. Specific objectives.....	5
1.4. Research questions.....	5
1.5. Significance of the study.....	6
1.6. Scope of the study.....	6
1.7. Strengths and Limitations.....	6
1.7.1. Strengths.....	6
1.7.2. Limitations.....	7
1.8. Theoretical frameworks.....	7
1.9. Organization of the study.....	7
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	8
2.1. Introduction.....	8
2.2. Historical Development of Public Relations.....	8
2.3. Public Relations in Ethiopia.....	8
2.4. Internal and External Publics of Public Relations.....	9
2.5. Roles of Public Relations Practitioners.....	9
2.6. Meaning and Definition of Public Relations.....	10
2.7. Limiting factors in Public Relations.....	10
2.8. System Theory.....	11
2.8.1. Characteristics of system component.....	11
2.8.1a.Hierarchical ordering.....	11

2.8.1b. Interdependence.....	11
2.8.1c. Permeability.....	12
2.8.2. System processes.....	12
2.9. Models of public relations.....	12
2.10. Corporate social responsibility (CSR).....	13
2.11. Public relation and crises.....	13
2.11.1. Crisis communication.....	13
2.11.2. Crisis response strategy.....	14
Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....	15
3.1. Introduction.....	15
3.2. Research Design.....	15
3.3. Research Approach.....	15
3.4. Target Population.....	16
3.5. Sampling Technique.....	16
3.5.1. Study Population.....	16
3.5.2. Sampling Procedures.....	17
3.6. Data Collection tools and Procedures.....	17
3.7. Data Quality.....	18
3.8. Data Entry and Analysis Procedures.....	18
3.9. Ethical consideration.....	18
Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Discussion.....	19
4.1. Introduction.....	19
4.2. Demography Data Presentation.....	19
4.2.1. Gender.....	19
4.2.2. Work Experience.....	21
4.2.3. Educational Level.....	22
4.2.4. Job Position.....	24
4.3. Summary of the Socio-Demographic Information.....	25
4.4. Responsibilities of PR departments and their activities.....	26
4.5. Frequently done activities.....	27
4.6. Supporting local communities.....	28
4.7. Summary of the responsibilities and activities of PRs departments.....	29
4.8. Information Dissemination channels and tools.....	30

4.9. Perceptions of Participants about PR practices.....	31
4.10. The role of the PR in the organizations.....	32
4.11. Beliefs about PR and Corporate Social Responsibility.....	33
4.12. Challenges in practicing PR.....	34
4.13. Crisis Management.....	35
4.13.1. Identifying crisis in the organizations.....	35
4.13.2. Crisis management in the organization.....	36
4.13.3. Role of PRs practitioners and crisis.....	36
4.13.4. Time of crisis management.....	37
4.13.5. Summary of the crisis management.....	38
4.13.6. Means of crisis management.....	39
4.14. Summaries of the comparative analysis.....	40
4.14.1. Perceptions of Public Relation.....	40
4.14.2. Challenges the organizations faced.....	41
4.14.3. Success of crisis management.....	42
4.14.4. Public Relation contributions.....	43
4.14.5. Corporate Social Responsibility.....	44
4.14.6. Crisis identification mechanism.....	45
4.14.7. Information Dissemination.....	46
4.14.8. Frequent activities.....	47
4.14.9. Role of Public Relation.....	49
4.14.10. Timing of crisis management.....	49
4.14.11. Means of crisis management.....	50
4.14.12. Summaries of comparative analysis of all variables.....	51
4.15. Key Informant Interview with PRs practitioners of the organizations.....	53
4.15.1. Perception of Public Relation.....	53
4.15.2. The role of the Public Relation in the organizations.....	53
4.15.3. Frequently done activities.....	54

4.15.4. Crisis management.....	55
4.15.5. Challenging matters.....	55
4.15.6. Corporate Social Responsibility.....	56
4.16. In-depth Interviews of Non-PRs practitioners of the organizations.....	56
4.16.1. Information dissemination.....	57
4.16.2. Perceptions of Public Relation.....	58
4.17. Discussions.....	60
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	63
5.1. Conclusion.....	63
5.2. Recommendations.....	64
References	
Annexes	

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background

For many years public relations practitioners have been struggling to define the strategic contribution that public relations makes to an organization's success. Organizations need to recognize the value of placing public relations at the boardroom table, as a strategic business partner and critical part of business planning and operations. Public relations ought to be positioned at the helm of an organization and as a management function. The communication function of public relations is seen as being integral to an organization. No formal organization is an island. Each is composed of an internal system of social networks, and each exists within a framework of interrelated systems of relationships with key stakeholders such as competitors, consumers, sponsors, regulators, and the media. Public relation is an important subsystem of an organization and the effective practice of public relations is integrally bound to the health of an organization (Veena, 2012).

The issue of public relations practices in different countries including Ethiopia has been controversial within in the field of communication. The consistency of the public relations practices may not be on the right track. In spite of significant changes in the focus and practice of public relations during the last decade in Ethiopia, the term is still misused and misunderstood in many organizations. It is often wrongly associated with propaganda, publicity, and manipulation (Geremew, 2017). Previously, public relations were an instrument to work and communicate effectively with public. Today, public relations covers areas related to leading and changing public views and thinking. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other social media allow organizations not only access, communicate with the public but also tackle key issues, access new social groups and constantly involve them to change their thinking, attitudes and character (Nurbek, 2016).

The communication department of Ethio-Telecom has seen various changes. Since the birth of Ethio Telecom both internal and external communication affairs of the organization administered under the chief executive officer by a single department called program management office (PMO).It continues for seven and half years by working various communication functions except marketing communication. Since Sep 2019 the executive office directly manage any communication affairs including the corporate and marketing communications of the institution adding women and children affairs (Minas, 2014). In contrast, the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPC) was a government owned utility which is responsible for the generation, transmission, distribution and sales service of electric energy throughout Ethiopia. As EEPC

has work burden, it was restructured into two different established organizations as Ethiopian electric power and Ethiopian electric utility (Hyelom, 2019).

1.1.1. Ethio Telecom

Telecommunication service was introduced in Ethiopia by Emperor Menilik in 1884 when the construction of the telephone line from Harar to the capital city, Addis Ababa, was commenced. It started by facilitating long distance communication with the assistants or operators at Intermediate stations frequently acting as verbal human repeaters between the distant calling parties. Since its establishment the organization has gone through different changes. When it is established the name of the organization was “Central administration of the telephone and telegraph system of Ethiopia”. After it was called by this name from 1890 up to 1907 the service was renamed as “the central office of post, telegraph and telephone system of Ethiopia. This is from 1907 - 1909”. After this in 1910 it was named as “ministry of post, telegraph and telephone” The imperial board of telecommunication of Ethiopia was established under the imperial regime.

By the proclamation no.131 on October 15, 1952. During the Derg regime the organization has gone through two changes of names. The first was, in October 1975 it was renamed as “the provisional military government of socialist Ethiopia telecommunication services”. The second name change was in January 1981, and was called “Ethiopian telecommunication authority” till November 1996. On November 1996, under the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the telecommunication sector was restructured and two separate independent entities namely the Ethiopian telecommunication authority and (ETA) and the Ethiopian telecommunication cooperation (ETC) were established by proclamation No.49/1996. From the ambition of supporting the growth of the nation, with in the Growth transformation plan (GTP) Ethio Telecom was born on November 29, 2010 with a vision of being a world-class telecom services provider.

The communication department of the organization has seen various changes. Since the birth of Ethio Telecom both internal and external communication affairs of the organization administered under the chief executive officer by a single department called program management office (PMO). It continues for seven and half years by working various communication functions except marketing communication. Since Sep 2019 the executive office directly manage any communication affairs including the Corporate and marketing communications of the institution adding women and children affairs (www.ethiotelecom.et).

1.1.2. Ethiopian Electric Utility

Electric power is introduced to Ethiopian in the late 19th century, during the regime of Minilik. The first generator was said given, during the regime of Minilik around 1898 to light the palace. In addition to the use of generator, Minilik got constructed the first hydro power plant on Akaki river in the year 1912 in order to supply power to small factories that had been established in Addis Ababa. Consequently, the power supply that had been limited to small factories and the palace was extended to public places and major roads in the vicinity of the place. However, the effort of the government to extend the power supply to the public was hindered by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the year 1936. during this temporary occupation, the Italian company called Coneil over took the generator and distribution of electric power. The company installed generators at different places and extend the power supply to the then major towns. After the Italian were driven out from Ethiopia the year 1941, an organization called enemy property administration was established and took over long with other activities the generation and distribution of power to the public.

In the year 1948, the organization that had been vested with the power to administer the enemy property was evolved to an organization Shewa although with limited capacity, managed to increase the power supply not only in Shewa but also other administrative regions. In light of its function, its name was changed to “Ethiopian Electric Light and Power” in the year 1955. Soon after its establishment, the supervision and management of the organization was vested in the board of directors appointed by the government.

After eight months of its establishment, the Ethiopian electric light and power was transformed to the “Ethiopian electric light and power authority”. The purpose of the Ethiopian electric power authority was engaged in the business of production ,transmitting, distributing, and selling of electric energy to the public of Ethiopian and carry on any other lawful business incidental or appropriate here to which is calculated directly or indirectly to promote the interest of the authority or to enhance the value of its properties. According to the new change in 1987 the Ethiopian electric light and power authority was transformed to the “Ethiopian electric power corporation” by reorganizing its function on the basis of principles of commercialization and decentralization. Accordingly, the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation as public enterprise was established indefinite duration by regulation no.18/19197, and conferred with the power and duties of the previous Ethiopian electric light and power authority. The purpose of the corporation is to engage in the business of producing, transmitting, distributing and selling electrical energy. EEPCO later spited into two companies Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) and Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU), newspaper of Ethiopian electric power public relations (1992).

The Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) as public utility enterprise was established for indefinite duration by regulation No. 18/1997, and conferred with the powers and duties of the previous Ethiopian Electric Utility. Currently EEU has above 2.7 million customers in Ethiopia, (www.eeu.et).

1.2. Statement of the problem

The concept of public relation is at its birth stage in Ethiopia which deals with propaganda, manipulation and publicity. This is a critical problem implemented by public relations officers. In this context, the leaders of most organizations see the profession as it everyone can do the job. To this effect, the practicality of the public relation profession in the targeted organizations has also such problems. The concept of system theory is not well addressed in the two organizations .According to (Miller, 2012), Organizations are systems and subsystems of behavior that are interrelated interdependent, and interacting rather than chartable, linear or strategic structure. However, Public Relation practitioners of the two organizations are not working in interactive, interdependent and interrelated manners. This leads the organizations to have poor communication performances in addressing both the internal and external publics professionally.

The employees do not see the public relation officers as they are exercising the profession rather they see them as members of political parties. Even the PR practitioners lack the true knowledge and skill of public relation and what it aims to do in an organization. The paper will see and compile the comparative practices of Public Relations in the two organizations by examining the practices and implementations of public relation in the two organizations. It observes the roles and functions of public relations with in the organizations pertinent to the contemporary global findings and theories of the practices of public relations.

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. General objective:

The main objective of this study is to examine the success and challenges of the practices and implementation of public relations profession in the two Ethiopian organizations. Thus, the concern is to improve the public relation activities in the two organizations through empirical analysis.

1.3.2. Specific objectives:

- 1- Assess how the public relation practitioners of the two organizations perform their PRs function.
- 2- Analyze the success and challenges of the PRs practitioners in the two organizations.
- 3- Evaluate how the PRs practitioners inform, persuade and motivate the public in order to create awareness about their organizations.
- 4- Examine the CRS role in networking the respective organization to the publics (community).
- 5- Assess the responsive role of PRs practitioners during crises situations which targets their organizations.

1.4. Research Questions

The themes of the study are to explore and compare the success and challenges of public relations practices and Implementations in Ethio Telecom and Ethiopian Electric utility. To this end, the following basic research questions are identified for the inquiry.

RQ-1: What are the basic functions of the public relation practitioners in the two organizations?

RQ-2: How do the PR professionals inform, persuade and motivate the public in order to create awareness about the institutions?

RQ-3: How do the employees gather information from internal and external publics of the organizations?

RQ-4: How the PRs of the organizations discharge their corporate social responsibility?

RQ-5: How the PRs of the organizations identified and managed crises situations?

1.5. Significance of the study

The profession of public relation is a growing discipline in the global context in general in Ethiopia in particular. In this vein, the study may enable us to publish the key knowledge that may help rethinking policies in the intellectual and practical dimensions. On this perspective, the study may have the following three major significances. The first one is policy significance as the study will identify possibly existing gaps in the practice and implementation of public relations within the two organizations and come up with solutions. Besides, it initiates debate about the challenges of public relation practitioners and ways to solve PR problems. The second one is the time significance; the practicality of public relation models and theories in Ethiopia is at its embryo stage, in this scenario the study focuses in one of the most important issue in the country and the organizations are concerned about. The third one is the academic significance. The findings of the study would be a good resources bearing valuable information and initiate intellectual debate about the subject and attract attention of other researchers to engage with further enquiries.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study was focus the PRs practices and implementations in Ethio- telecom and Ethiopian electric utility. It focuses on PR practitioners, supervisors and managers and non-PRs practitioners who were working in the two organizations in Addis Ababa.

1.7. Strengths and Limitations

1.7.1. Strengths

- Findings of the quantitative data were triangulated with qualitative results after deeply interviewing responsible key informants from both organizations so that the investigator has tried to produce strong evidences for actions.
- As digital data collection templates designed in Google form and disseminated for the study participants through their telegram address, the quality of the quantitative data were highly assured by keeping confidentiality of the data not to be extracted by other persons.

1.7.2. Limitations

- Due to limited movement and contact with many people to prevent risk of acquiring COVID-19 infection, the PI selected small number of study subjects so that the sample size might be not enough to generalize the findings in broader level.
- Statistical tests have not been used in comparing the significance of existing differences between the two organizations for the selected variables due to still the small sample size and also the objectives of the study.

1.8. Theoretical frameworks

The theoretical framework of the study lays its base on theories of public relations and communications in general and system theory in particular. According to system theory all biological entities and commercial organizations are part of the system. The environment in which the organization is involved, its goal are also part of the system. According to Katherine miller (2012), a system is more than the sum of its parts, this shows that the success and facility of the system is depends on this individual components. It is the interaction of these components which gives the system its properties. The conceptual frame work of the study, therefore is the interplay among the organizations system and their respective components.in this context, the study will see will focus on the interplay of various components in the target organizations and their practices of public relations.

1.9. Organizations of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one presents the “Introduction” that explains the problem and the approaches of the study in general terms. It also gives the general background of the two institutions in brief. The statement of the problem is stated in this chapter. Chapter two discusses the “literature” Here the concern is discussing the theories and concepts used in the in the study as thoroughly as possible. The theories and concepts to be discussed here are supposed to provide the means for analysis and interpretation of the data. Chapter three focuses on the ‘methodology’ and discusses the Methods and techniques employed for the investigation .The sampling technique, the instrument for data collection, the procedures of data gathering and the analysis of the data are also included. In general chapter four discusses about data presentation and analysis. The last chapter is the ‘conclusion’ and recommendation of the study. This summarize the data step by step and shows how the research questions are answered with the actual data and makes concluding remarks.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

To make proper assessment of any subject matter, it is crucial to have a look at a conceptual aspect and previous related literature of the study. As such this chapter reflects on the conceptual framework and related literature of the subject matter-models of Public relation, and system theory are described. Hence, the functions of public relations are also discussed. Besides the theoretical frame work sees the conflict management processes and corporate social responsibilities.

2.2. Historical Development of Public Relations

The 18th century American Revolution in the United States was one of the most important products of public relations-like activities in history (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Further, the temporary patterns of public relations practices were shaped by innovations in mobilizing public opinion that formed part of Revolutionary War propaganda campaigns (Cutlip, 1995). Different writers have mentioned at least two major early founders and contributors of modern public relations. Ivy Lee was one of the great contributors to the emergence of modern public relations (Glen, 2006). In 1914, in Ludlow, Colorado, a bloody massacre was happened between Colorado militiamen and company guards because of evicted miners and their families. It was at that crisis time Ivy Lee who was a journalist by profession was called for help. Lee had tried his level best to help in the effort of managing the crisis. Lee who started his public relations Job in such a manner went on to contribute significantly to the creation of modern public relations practice and accordingly came to be considered as one of the fathers of modern public relations, (Seitel, 2011). Edward sought to achieve public relations goals through the spread of cultural ideas about art, science, and social programs that would appeal to the mutual interests of organizations and their publics (Bernays, 1923).

2.3. Public Relations in Ethiopia

According to MoI (2003) cited in Zemedkun (2014:19) “the beginning of newspapers since 1900”s that provided advertisement space for business organizations together with the introduction of printing press, telecommunication and the rail way by Emperor Minilik II in the late 19th century paved the way for the development of mass media and communications in all aspects including the emergence of modern public relations”. However, during the previous regimes, public relations were conducted in a traditional manner in various government organizations. Accordingly, there were a number of public relations resembling practices during those times. Preparing and distributing newspapers entitled “Bandirachen” (Our flag) in order to arise patriotism among Ethiopian guerrillas during the fascist Italy occupation (1936-1941), and

Amharic language paper entitled “Yetor Wore” (War news) that was distributed by the allied forces during world war II can be mentioned (Zemedkin, 2014).

2.4. Internal and External Publics of Public Relations

Employees are called internal public of an organization. They are important because they participate in the operation, production and formulation of ideas which leads to achievement of organizational objectives. The success of activities of an organization is determined by its internal communication i.e. communication within an organization. This can be achieved by developing channels of internal communication to make the members aware of the message to be developed at any given time. It also insures proper working of the different elements of PR. Failure will end in PR disasters and electoral failures. Lack of co-ordination, planning and professionalism will damage the image and success of the organization. On the other hand, external public relations is concerned with people outside the Such as customers, government, shareholders and opinion leaders on the other hand, private sector companies being owned by individual or shareholders, mass media, community at large, civic and government bodies, financial institutions, citizen’s action group and public at large (Banik, 2004).

2.5. Roles of Public Relations Practitioners

Every profession has its own specific role to play; the same is true in the case of public relation According to Ruler and Vercic, PR’s role can fall in four broad categories: reflective, managerial, operational and educational. The managerial role is more of “developing plans and maintaining relationships with publics, reflective – analyzing standards in society to enable the organization to adjust its own standards, operational - carrying out communication plans, 12 educational – helping the members of the organization to become effective communicators”, (Ruler, 2014). There are two dominant roles of PRs practitioners: communication technician and the communication manager. The communication technician is often a highly skilled individual carries out communication programs and activities such as writing news releases, editing house-magazines and developing websites. They probably do not undertake study and will not be involved in decision making. On the other hand, the communication manager is in the dominant coalition, plans, manages and facilitates the communication program, counsels’ management and makes policy decisions. They can also find themselves in different roles (Gregory, 2001).

2.6. Meaning and Definition of Public Relations

One of the difficulties in public relations is getting an agreeable definition among scholars (Yeomas, 2006). Different scholars and practitioners give different definitions in different times. Public relation is commonly considered to be a 'young profession' a type of communications byproduct of twentieth century capitalism (Chalkley, n.d). According to Seitel, the most ambitious effort to come up with universally acceptable definition of public relations was commissioned in 1975 by the foundation for Public Relations Research and Education. At that forum more than sixty public relations leaders were participated and about 472 (some says 500) different definitions were forwarded for analyses. Based on it the American academic Harlow produced the first all-inclusive definition of PRs (Seitel, 2011). Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinions; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; it helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools, (Harlow, 1976). Within all the above contexts the PRSA has given the most recent definition of PRs as “a Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations & their publics.” (<https://www.prsa.org/about/all-about-pr>).

2.7. Limiting factors in Public Relations

Public relations problems are peculiar to the country or organization where it is operating. It is not exaggeration that public relations is faced with numerous problems or challenges, the truth is that, these problems have constituted to the major challenges the profession is facing today. More so, the dynamism of the world has posed another challenge to the profession, since our job is communication oriented, we are faced with divers' media to communicate our messages to identified audience. Some schools of thought have enumerated their passive opinions as regarding their thoughts on what public relations' problems are globally. These are: financial constraints, increasing in communication platforms, client's expectation management, poor man-power situation, poor appreciation of the profession among public and private organizations' leaders, low awareness of public relations and what it stands for and poor usage of social media (Joseph, 2012).

2.8. System Theory

Organizations are systems and subsystems of behavior that are interrelated interdependent, and interacting rather than chartable, linear or strategic structure. Organizations are dynamic, living entities that have been put together to accomplish some type of purpose they are goal oriented. Organizations follow to maintain their organizations. The system perspective is potentially a seductive for looking at organizations because a systematized pattern of behavior is practically a synonym for the concept of the organization. More properly, an organization should be viewed as a system because it is the sum total of the various parts and how those parts interact determine the output and growth of the process (Miller, 2012).

2.8.1. Characteristics of System Component

At its most basic level, a system is an assemblage of parts, or components. In a biological system, these parts include cells and organs. In an organizational system, these components are the people and departments that make up the organization. We could also think about the larger society as a system. In this case, the parts would be the organizations and institutions that make up the society. Regardless of what particular system we look at, the first task of a systems theorist is to identify the relevant components that comprise the system (Miller, 2012).

2.8.1a -Hierarchical Ordering

A system is not simply an undifferentiated set of parts together. To the contrary, system components are arranged in highly complex ways that involve subsystems and super systems a hierarchical ordering. If you think about your body as a system, you can observe this hierarchy. Your body is composed of a number of subsystems the cardiovascular system, the digestive system, the neurological system, and so forth. In turn, these systems are also made up of subsystems for example; the cardiovascular system includes the heart, lungs, and blood vessels. We could take this even further with a consideration of organ components, cells, and so on. The same hierarchical ordering can be seen when considering the organizations a system (Miller, 2012).

2.8.1b-Interdependence

A second concept that characterizes system components is interdependence. The notion of interdependence implies that the functioning of one component of a system relies on other components of the system (Miller, 2012).

2.8.1c-Permeability

A third characteristic of system components is that they have permeable boundaries that allow information and materials to flow in and out. The degree of permeability varies from system to system; some are relatively closed, whereas others are extremely open. However, all biological and social systems require some degree of permeability to survive. Permeability refers both to the system as a whole which must be open to its environment and to the components within the system. For example, the human body must be open to its environment in order to take in the air, food, and water necessary for survival (Miller, 2012).

2.8.2. System Processes

Let's now look at how these hierarchical, interdependent, and permeable components function in a system. At the most basic level, systems are characterized by input-throughput output processes. That is, a system "inputs" materials or information from the environment through its permeable boundaries. The system then works on these inputs with some kind of transformational process; this is "through put. "Finally, the system returns the transformed "output" to the environment. For example, a furniture manufacturer will input raw materials, such as wood and fabric, transform these inputs into chairs and couches, and output these products to the buying public through retail outlets. Organizations also input and transform information (Miller, 2012).

2.9. Models of public relations

Grunig and Hunt explained they chose the term 'models' to describe four types of public relations that have evolved through history. The models of Public Relations are famously known because they stepped the public relations profession up and up to now serve as baseline to sever public relations away from propaganda and persuasion. The models will be used to interpret the Government PR activities as being any one of the four. Although public relations were developed as a persuasive communication function, not all of these models are persuasive. Thus, these different models indicate how the different characteristics and purposes contribute to the kinds of public relations.

In press agent/publicity model, the public relations serve a propaganda function. In this model practitioners spread the faith of the organization involved, often through incomplete, distorted, or half-true information. In public-information model, the purpose is the dissemination of information, and not with a persuasive intent. The public relations person functions essentially as a journalist in residence, whose job it is to report objectively information about his organization to the public, but usually only favorable information. In two-way asymmetric model, Practitioners conduct scientific research to determine how best to persuade publics

to behave in the way their organizations wish. In the two-way symmetric model, practitioners serve as mediators between organizations and their publics (Grunig, 1992).

2.10. Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Based on the naming differences, the definition of CSR is varied. The almost commonly agreed definition of CSR is: “it is the management of relationships between organizations and stakeholders since organizations are dependent on either heterogeneous or homogeneous groups (Keinert, 2008). Public relations are an important subsystem of an organization. Effective practice of public relations is integrally bound to the health of organizations. It gives a way for organizations to effectively monitor, interact and react with stakeholders. A corporation commits itself to operate as open system when it embraces public relations and public affairs (Gqamane, 2010). An open organization interacts with its environment at tremendous aspects beyond and in its boundaries with all stakeholders (Lerbinger, 2006). Organizations have important relationships outside of their boundaries with many stakeholders by using different strategies and means of relationship (Gerry, 2005).

2.11. Public relation and crises

Public Relations professionals must develop communication strategies and processes to influence the course of conflicts to the benefit of the organizations and, when possible, to the benefit of the organization’s many constituents. Such use of public relations to influence the course of a conflict, and ultimately a crisis, is called strategic conflict management.” A prepared organization has a well versed PR department. “Because a true crisis is a turning point, after which things may change drastically, an organization not prepared to deal with crisis is constantly at risk. Crisis prevention, mitigation, and communication response begins with savvy strategic business planning. Thus, the integrity and legitimacy of the organization is central to the theme of crisis (Coombs, 2010).

2.11.1. Crisis Communication

Cambie and Ooi (2009) state the vulnerability of every organization to crisis and puts the role of crisis communication as “the collection, processing, and dissemination of information that serve in the management of a crisis. Corporate communication helps an organization in decision making and strategic communication when something goes wrong (Doorley& Garcia, 2007). Challenges associated with crisis communication make crisis normative and the conditions may trigger to the extent of damaging the reputation and image of an organization (Cambie and Ooi, 2009). Communication is linked with crisis management and determines the overall outcome of a crisis management (Sapriel, 2003).

2.11.2. Crisis Response Strategy

Crisis response is believed to be the most researched aspect in the crisis communication that intrigues scholars to investigate on the role of crisis communication in creating the desired effect on stakeholders and eventually bring positive results. The first objective of a crisis response strategy is to instruct information to stakeholders and ensure safety. The second objective of a strategic crisis response is adjusting information, which basically addresses stakeholders with messages of sympathy and reassurance and update them on measures taken to avert the reoccurrence of crisis. Finally, crisis response strategies are designed to minimize damages a crisis poses on the reputation of an organization (Struges, 1994).

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic. This chapter presents a research methodology employed in the study. It allows the readers to critically evaluate the study's overall validity and reliability and also it answers two main questions: how were the data collected or generated? How were they analyzed? Technically, it explains the research design, target population, data collection methods, sampling techniques and methods of data analysis and interpretation.

3.2. Research Design

A research design is a framework or blueprint for conducting a research project. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve research problems. In simple words it is the general plan of how we will go about our research. There are various types of research designs which can be used depending on the goals of researches. In line with the objectives of this study, the principal investigator used a descriptive cross-sectional comparative study design.

3.3 Research Approach

The worldviews, the designs, and the methods all contribute to a research approach that tends to be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. These three approaches have their own advantage and disadvantage in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. To have a complete understanding of a problem and avoid bias, researchers use both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study. The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data neutralized the weaknesses of each form of data (Creswell, 2014). Mixed method claims pragmatic worldview knowledge on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. The method employs both open- and closed – ended questions to collect detailed views from participants (ibid).

Therefore, the researcher employed a mixed methods-quantitative method that was complemented with qualitative study. The quantitative study was taken as the main study design while the findings of the qualitative study were triangulated with the quantitative results. Besides, the mixed method has more complete representation of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for a study is the entire set of units for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. Thus, the target population defines those units for which the findings of the survey are meant to generalize. Establishing study objectives is the first step in designing a study. Defining the target population is the second step. Target populations must be specifically defined, as the definition determines whether sampled cases are eligible or ineligible for the survey. The geographic and temporal characteristics of the target population need to be delineated, as well as types of units being included. In some instances, the target population is restricted to exclude population members that are difficult or impossible to interview.

In this study, the target populations were all Public Relation practitioners, supervisors and managers and non-PRs practitioners who are currently working at Ethiopian Electric Utility and Ethio-Telecom offices in Addis Ababa.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sampling methods refer to how we select members from the population to be in the study. In order draw valid conclusions from our results, we have to carefully decide how we will select a sample that is representative of the group as a whole. There are two types of sampling methods: probability sampling involves random selection, allowing us to make statistical inferences about the whole group. Non-probability sampling involves non-random selection based on convenience or other criteria, allowing us to easily collect initial data.

As the researcher of this study utilized mixed methods-Quantitative with Qualitative, both the probability and non-probability sampling techniques were applied. Those study subjects of the quantitative study were randomly selected from the identified sampling framework of the two organizations from all eligible groups who are working in Addis Ababa. However, the qualitative study key informants were selected purposely considering their roles and responsibilities related with Public Relation activities under their respective organizations and also the objectives of the study.

3.5.1. Study Population

The study population is a group of individuals selected on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria which relate to the variables being studied. It is the population from which the sample population will be randomly or purposively selected. In this case, those PR practitioners, supervisors and managers who were randomly and also purposively selected from telephone directory or list of the two organizations.

3.5.2. Sampling Procedures

Sampling procedure is choosing part of a population to use to test hypotheses about the entire population. It is used to choose the number of participants, interviews, or work samples to use in the assessment process. The quantitative study employed a systematic random sampling scheme for the purpose of comparing the PR performances of the two organizations. Total of 60 PR practitioners were randomly selected from the rosters taken from the two organizations; that is, proportionally equal number (30 practitioners from each organization) participants were selected.

On the other hand, two heads and managers of communication departments of each organization were purposely selected for the qualitative study (total of 4 key informants from the two organizations) as key informants as they directly lead the PR activities of their organizations. In the contrary, other four additional key informants were also purposely selected from the ordinary staffs of the two organizations without considering their role directly linked with PR activities.

Therefore, total of 60 study subjects were randomly selected for the Quantitative and 8 key informants were purposely selected for the Qualitative study.

3.6. Data Collection tools and Procedures

The study uses two types of data gathering methods as this research employed mixed method i.e. Questionnaire and interview.

Structured survey questionnaire applied to collect the numerical Data (quantitative data) from the research participants. They were collected using English version structured questionnaire (Annex-1.2) which was first designed in a paper and transformed into Google form. The number of the questioners for quantitative analysis are 20 in number prepared in English and reached to the selected study subjects through telegram by their address. A variety of questions were incorporated in the tools for gathering the required data. Similar questions were asked to help look at how participants view each other. Clear instructions were provided through phone call and SMS texts in clarifying the steps how to complete the template. In order to accommodate all requirements, the items of the questionnaire were designed in simple way possible.

The qualitative key informant interviews were conducted through face-to-face interview and also through phone call. The interviews were tape recorded and at the same time the interviewer took notes.

3.7. Data Quality

The electronic template was made to control incomplete or missing sections so that the study participants couldn't submit incomplete questionnaires. Besides, the principal investigator checked completed questionnaires on daily basis for other errors and consistency of responses of the questionnaire and timely feed-backs were provided to the study participants to correct errors. Skip patterns were done by doing univariate analysis for some selected variables and used to ensure data quality. The voice recorded qualitative data were transcribed word by word and translated from Amharic to English using appropriate terminologies.

3.8. Data Entry and Analysis Procedures

Kothari (2004, p. 122) quoting Giles defines analysis as to the computation of certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationship that exist between data-groups. Thus, in the process of analysis, relationships or differences supporting or conflicting with original or new hypotheses should be subjected to statistical tests of significance to determine with what validity data can be said to indicate any conclusions. Hence, quantitative data were entered in excel spreadsheet for cleaning and all the detected inconsistencies were addressed. In addition, standards tabulations were generated in which the outliers were identified prior to subjecting the data to analysis. The quantitative data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Proportions of the variables were measured for testing significant differences and relationships among variables. Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The texts were coded or broken down into manageable categories on a variety of levels: word, word sentence, phrase, theme and visuals and then examined using the basic methods of content analysis, conceptual analysis or relational analysis. The frequency of certain words, phrases and themes common were identified. The findings are reported and contextualized against the three functions of public relations.

3.9. Ethical consideration

The Project proposal was undergone ethical and technical approval by the advisor of Addis Ababa University. The Principal Investigator submitted supporting letter to get permission for the management and administrators of Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian Electric Utility. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before enrolling them in the assessment. Confidentiality and anonymity of information obtained was maintained at all levels of data handling by keeping all the information among the study team. Electronic copies of the data were accessible only to relevant study team and were password-protected.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology employed for the study. Now, this chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from PR practitioner of the two organizations. In this regard, the first section of the questionnaires' included demographic variables such as gender, age, educational level and length of time employed within the organization. The second section includes different types of question with choices.

Under this chapter the study sees, what public relation practices in the organizations are put in place, how the Public relations professionals disseminate information, what are also the perceptions of other staff members about the Public relations, how much they work on corporate social responsibilities and crises management, are answered through quantitative and qualitative data presentation analysis as it was depicted under the research question section of the first chapter.

4.2. Demography data presentation

The data were collected from Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian Electric Utility PR and communication workers. There were only 4 non-responders of the total 60 identified participants. Equal numbers of workers (28) were interviewed from each organization.

4.2.1. Gender

Researchers are often concerned with obtaining balanced samples, equally- or nearly equally-sized subgroups. Specific concerns might be raised regarding the imbalance between the number of men and women. Gender imbalance should be understood through representativeness and statistical power (Dickinson, etal, 2012). The rationale for routinely considering sex and gender in research is multifold. Sex and gender are important in decision-making, communication, stakeholder engagement and preferences for the uptake of interventions. Gender roles, gender identity, gender relations, and institutionalized gender influence the way in which an implementation strategy works, for whom, under what circumstances and why. Programme theories may operate differently within and across sexes, genders and other intersectional characteristics under various circumstances (Tannenbaum, etal, 2016).

Figure-1a: Percent distribution of quantitative study participants by their gender types, Addis Ababa, June, 2020

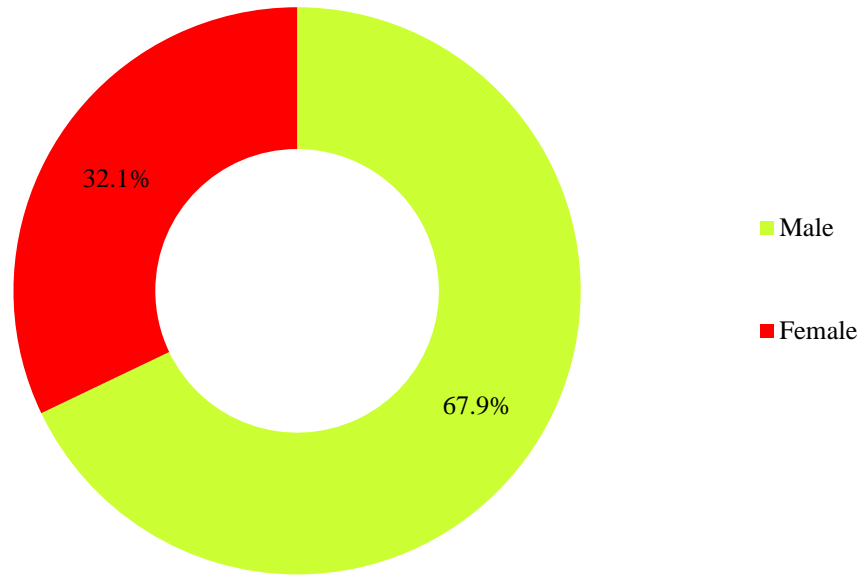
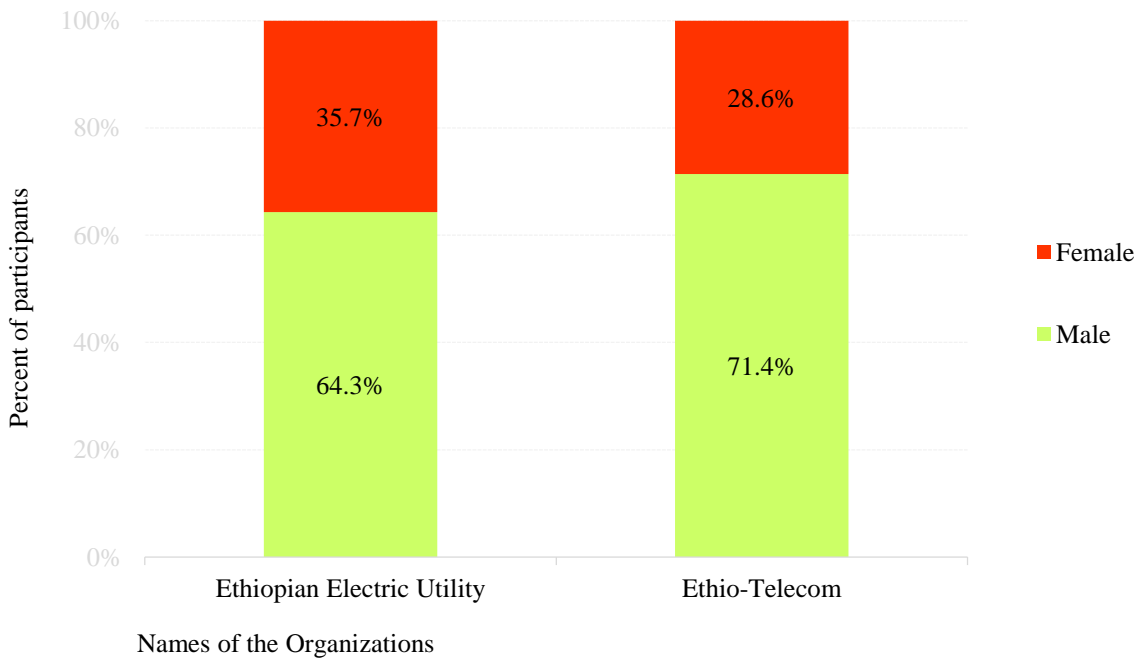


Figure-1a above showed that the proportion of males and females of ET and EEU employees who participated in the study. The majority responding participants (67.9%) were males while the rest (32.1%) were females. That is, around one-third females participated in the study that would indicate the gender balance was good in this study viz-a-viz its objectives.

Figure-1b: Percent distribution of the participants by their gender types in the two organizations, AA, June 2020

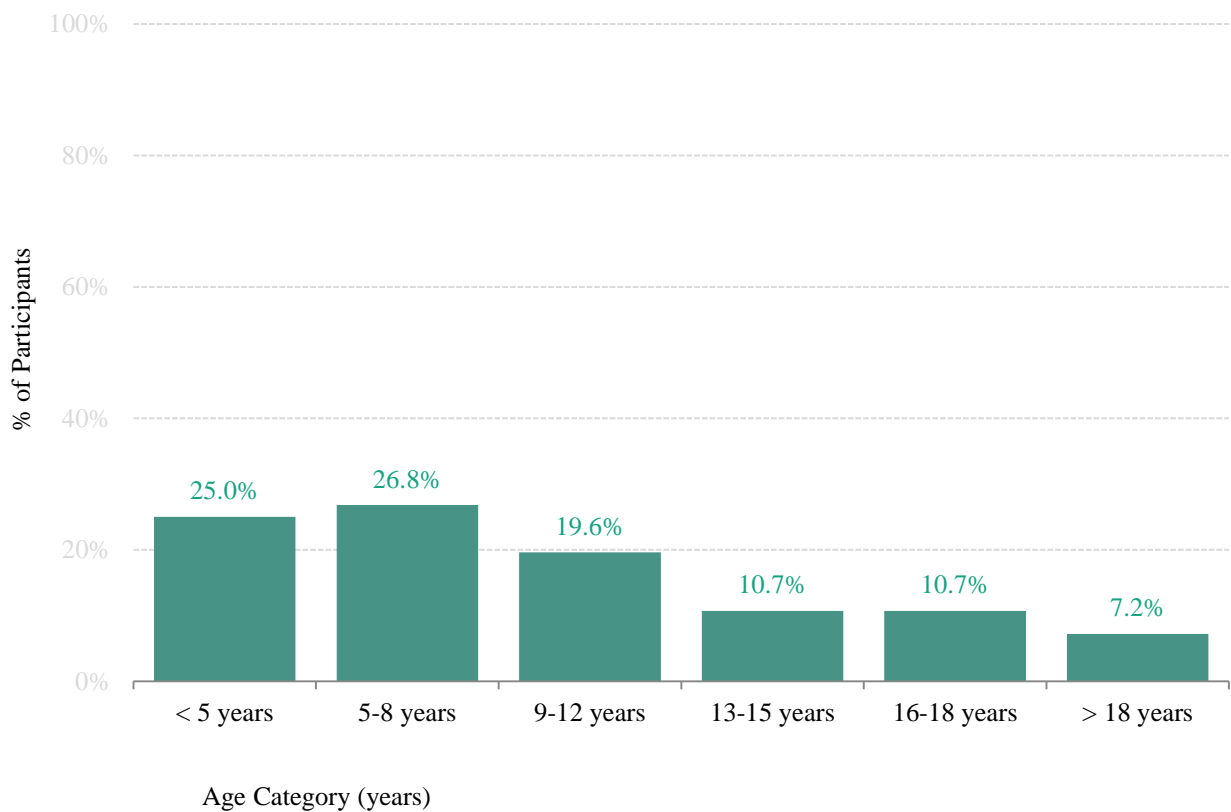


Furthermore, figure-1b showed most of the participants (64.3%) of Ethiopian Electric Utility was male which accounts for 71.4% in Ethio-Telecom. Thus, more males participated from Ethio-Telecom than Ethiopian Electric Utility. In the contrary, 35.7% of the study participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility were females which accounts for 28.6% in Ethio-Telecom. Overall, more females participated from Ethiopian Electric Utility.

4.2.2. Work Experience

The study participants were asked about how many years they worked in the same or different organizations. All of them provided the number of years of their work experiences.

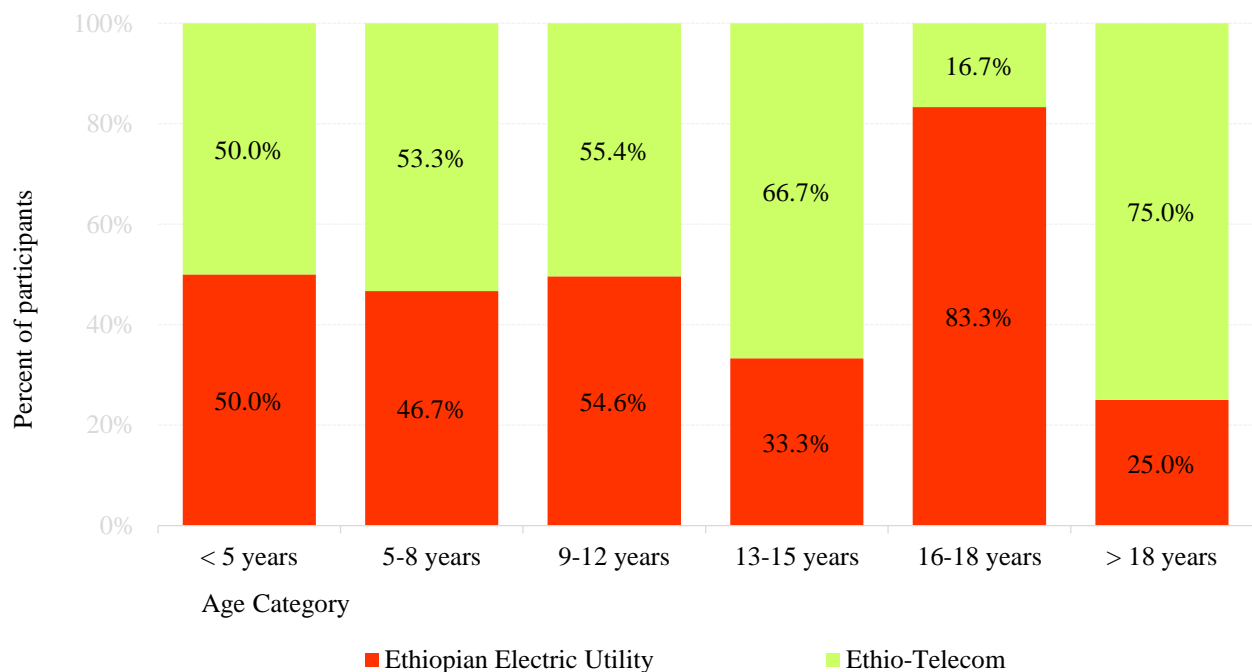
Figure-2a: Percent distribution of the study participants by their age category, Addis Ababa, June 2020



As the findings is depicted in the figure-2 above, a quarter of the respondents had less than 5 years' of work experience while the majority of the respondents from both organizations (26.8%) had a work experiences between 5-8 years, 19.6% of them had 9-12 years experiences, 10.7% had 13-15 years' experience, the other 10.7% of them had 16-18 years' experience and the most senior respondents with > 18 years work experience accounts for 7.2%.

When we see the participants by their work experience across the two organizations, no variations observed between the organizations at the work experience years of < 5 years; but a bit higher number of participants observed in Ethio-Telecom for 5-8 years and 9-12 years of work experience. Besides, significant difference of participants observed at 13-15 years' work experience as 66.7% participants reported from Ethio-Telecom and 33.3% from Ethiopian Electric Utility. Majority of the participants (83.3%) were from Ethiopian Electric Utility among 16-18 years' work experience. In the contrary, the majority participants for > 18 years' work experience (75%) were from Ethio-Telecom (Figure-2b).

Figure-2b: Percent distribution of the study participants by their age category and organization types, AA, June 2020



4.2.3. Educational Level

As the study conducted at organizational level among educated staffs, illiterates were not expected. Thus, all of the participants were educated but at different levels. They completed higher level education. As the findings depicted in figure-3a, Education rates in the sample were high: 69.6 % of the participants had first degree while 23.3% of them had master's degree and the remaining 7.1% of them had diploma. Detail educational status of participants is presented in figure-3b below. Equal proportion of diploma holder respondents were participated from each organization. A bit higher proportion of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (56.4%) was first degree holders which accounts for 43.6% participants from Ethio-Telecom. However, significant proportions of participants of Ethio-Telecom (69.2%) were Master's degree holders which were compared with 30.8% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility.

Figure-3a: Percent distribution of the study participants by their level of education, AA, June, 2020

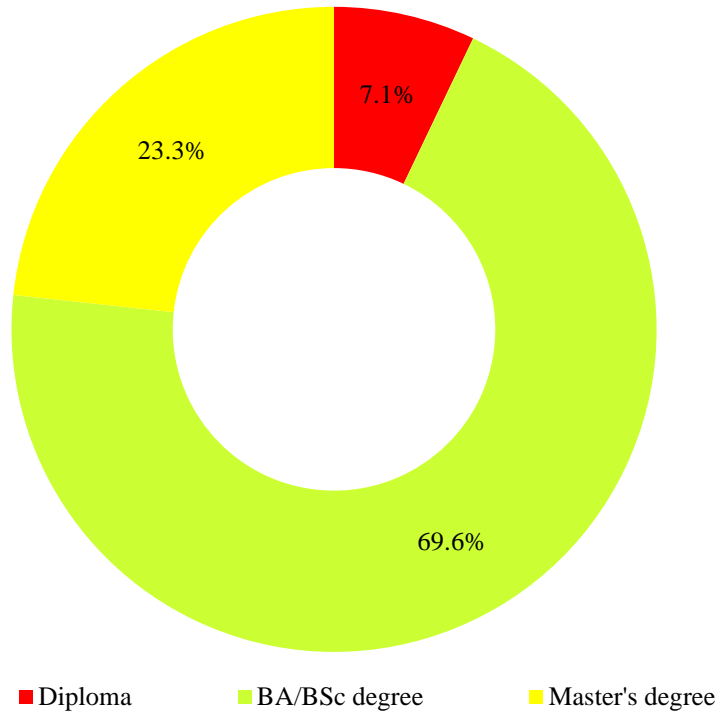
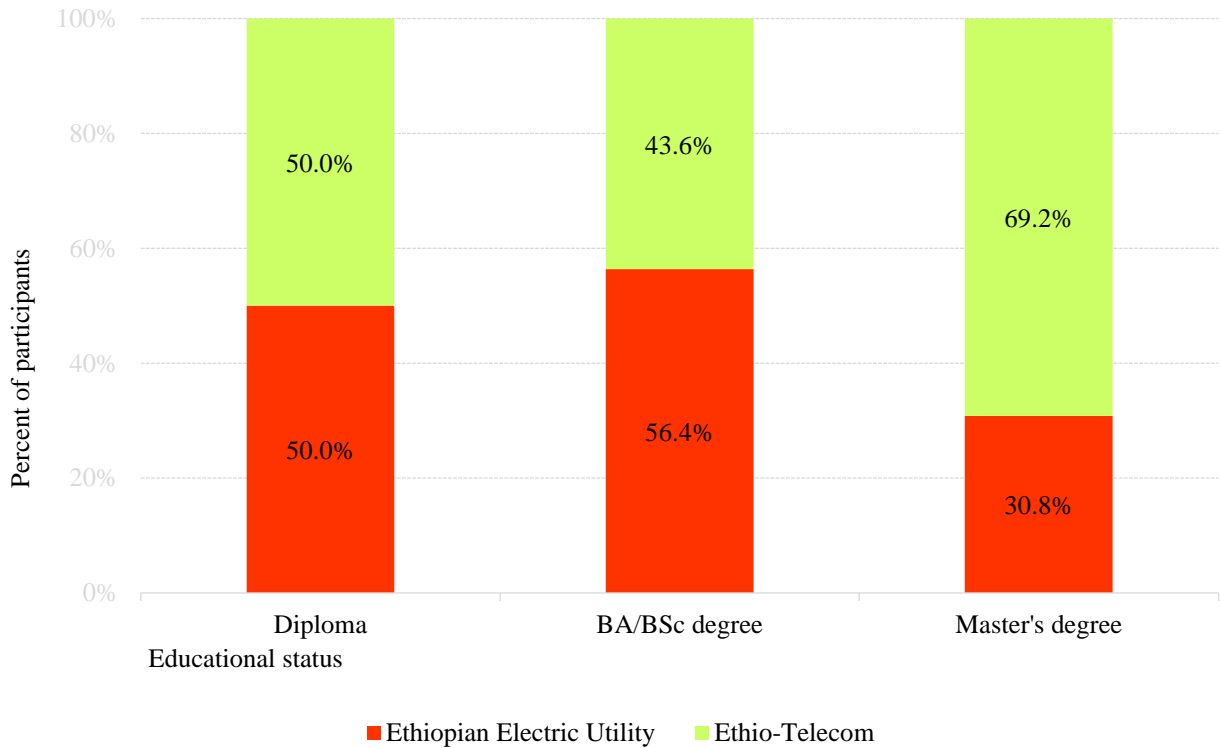


Figure-3b: Percent distribution of the study participants by their level of education and organization type, Addis Ababa, June, 2020



4.2.4. Job position

The study participants were asked about their job positions in their respective organization once they were randomly selected and for the study purpose, the positions were broadly categorized into four as Expert, supervisors, Managers and other non-managerial posts.

Figure-4a: Percent distribution of the study participants by their job positions, Addis Ababa, June, 2020

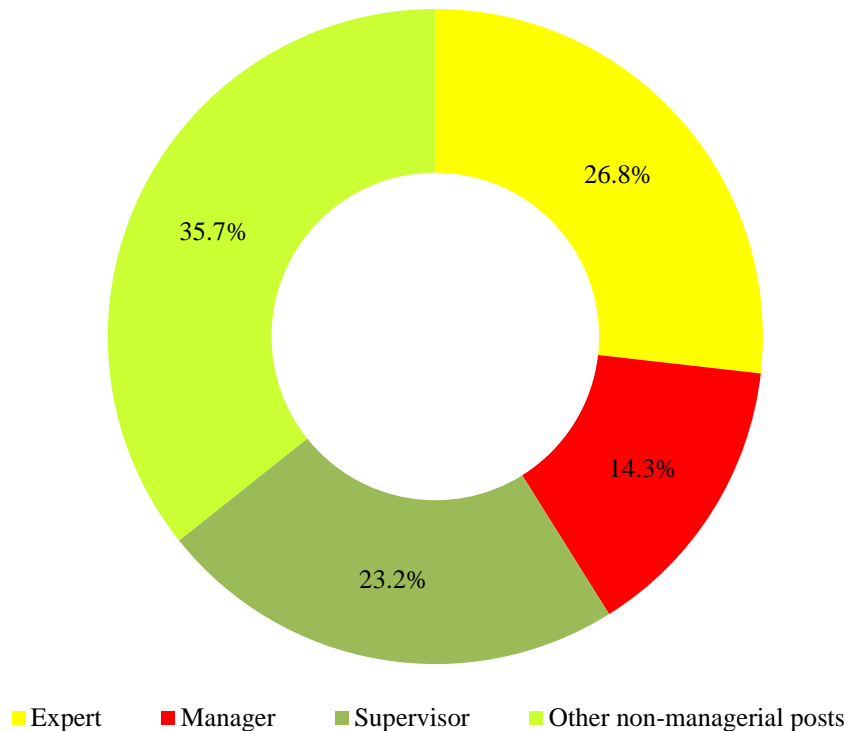
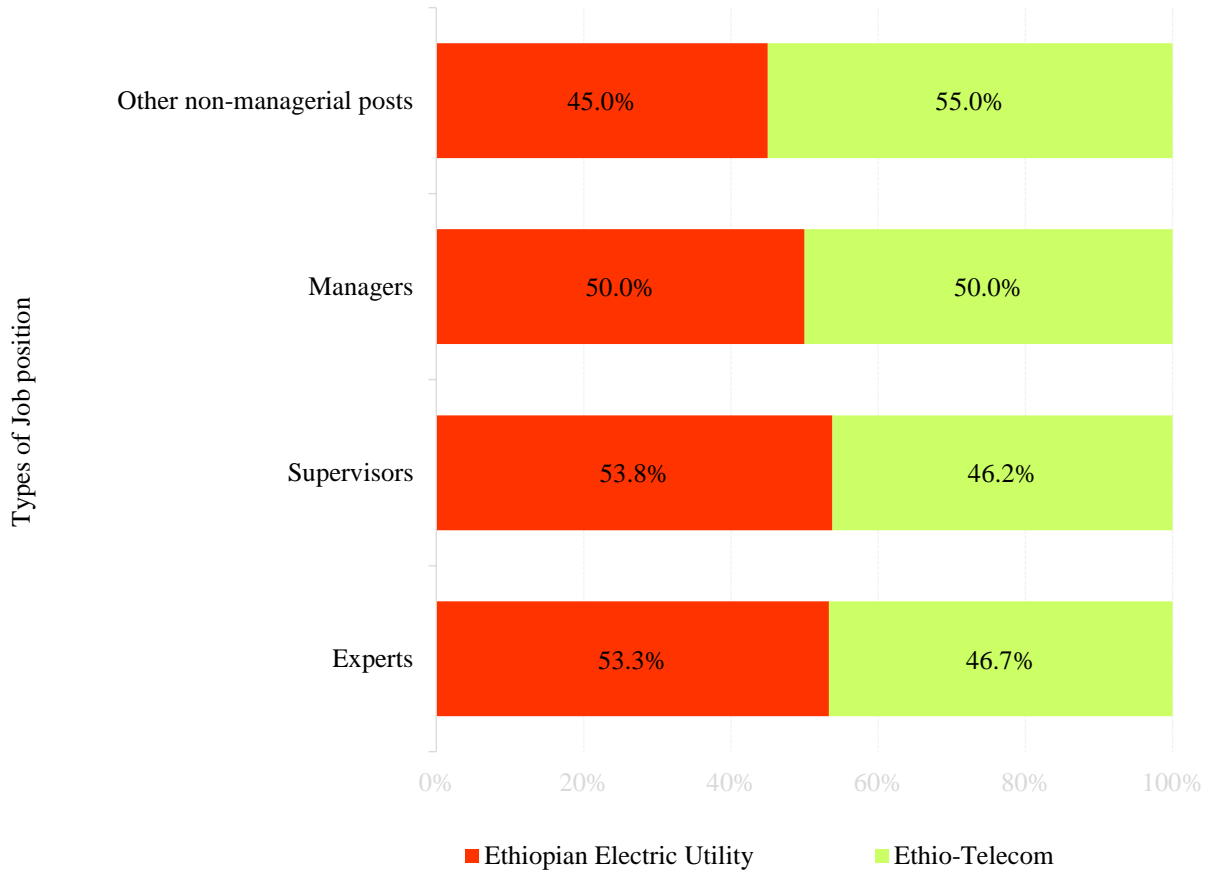


Figure-4a showed that many of the participants (35.7%) had other non-managerial posts while 26.8% of them were experts; the other 23.2% of them were supervisors and 14.3% managers. The distribution of participants is summarized in figure-4b by their organization types and job positions. When we see the non-managerial positions, 55.0% of the participants were from Ethio-Telecom and the rest 45.0% of them were from Ethiopian Electric Utility. Equal proportions of participants were managers. In some extent, higher proportions of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (53.8%) were supervisors which account for 46.2% Ethio-Telecom participants. Similarly, higher proportions of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (53.3%) were experts which also account for 46.7% participants of Ethio-Telecom. Overall, there were fairly distributed proportions of job positions participated from each organization.

Figure-4b: Percent distribution of study participants by job position types, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.3. Summary of the socio demographic information

The findings of the socio demographic information are explained explicitly in the above section. The following table-1 gives a quick summary of distribution of the study participants based on their gender differences, their organizations in which they were working, level of their work experiences measured in years, their educational background and also their roles and responsibilities they had in their organization in unison.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Information:

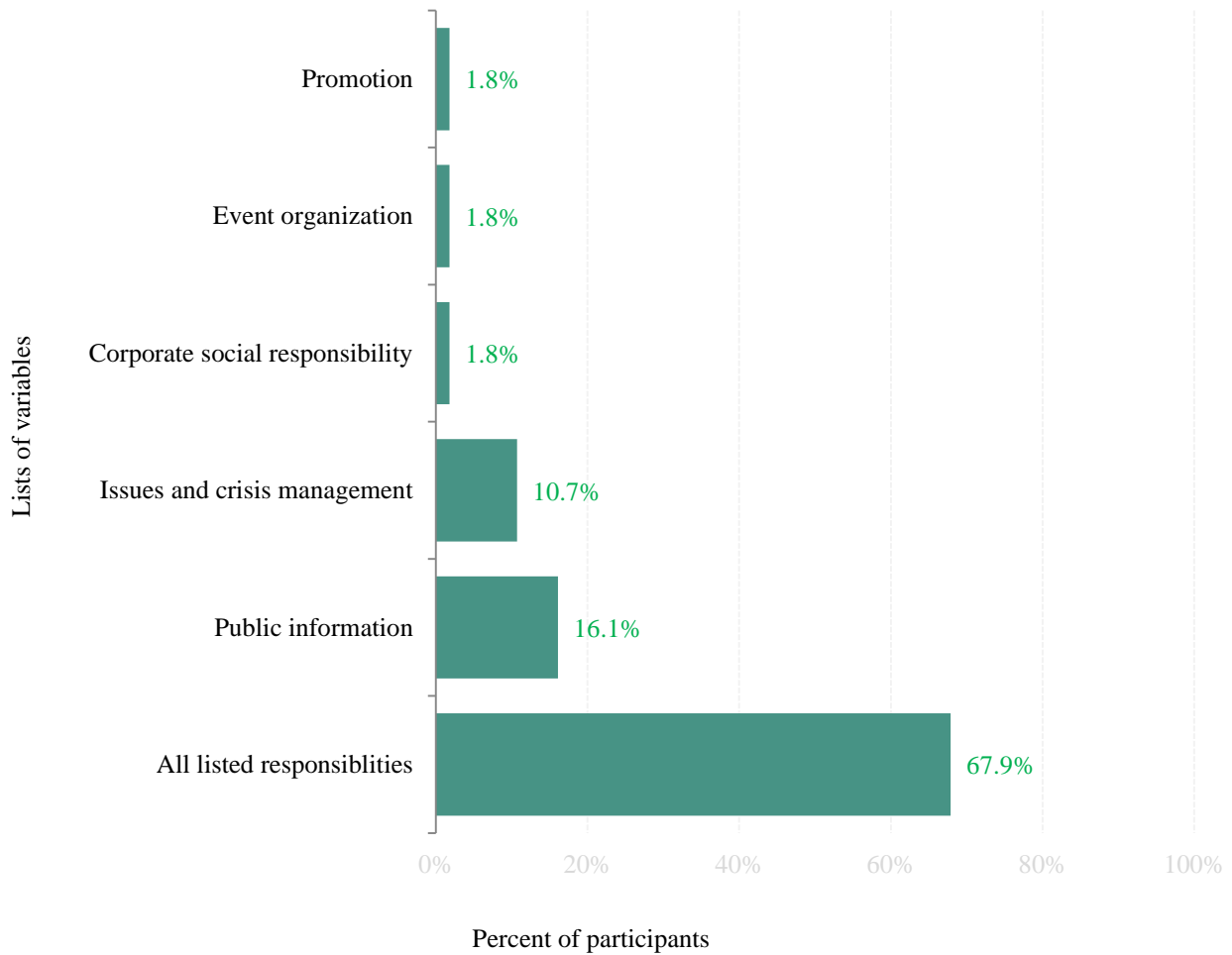
Percent distribution of study participants by background information, Addis Ababa June 2020.

Variables	Number	Percent (%)
Gender (n=56)		
Male	38	67.9
Female	19	32.1
Organization type (n=56)		
Ethio-telecom	28	50.0
Ethiopian Electric Utility	28	50.0
Work experience (n=56)		
Less than 5 years	14	25.0
5-8 years	15	26.8
9-12 years	11	19.6
13-15 years	6	10.7
16-18 years	6	10.7
Above 18 years	4	7.2
Education level (n=56)		
Diploma	4	7.1
BA/BSc degree	39	69.6
Master's degree	13	23.3
Job position (n=56)		
Expert	15	26.8
Manager	8	14.3
Supervisor	13	23.2
Other non-managerial posts	20	35.7

4.4. Responsibilities of PR departments and their activities

Public relation practitioners build and maintain a positive public image for a company or organization. They create media, from press releases to social media messages that shape public opinion of the company or organization and increase awareness of its brand. They use different tools and techniques to disseminate information both to the internal and external publics in order to meet the goal and the vision of the organization in which they are employed. The practices listed on the left of the figure-5 below are the activities done by the PRs practitioners. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents (67.9%) agreed with the responsibilities of the PR departments for all public relation, issues and crisis management, corporate social responsibility, event organization and event organizations. The PR departments had minimum responsibilities related with corporate social responsibility, event organization and promotion.

Figure-5: Percent distribution of the respondents by their responsibilities, Addis Ababa, June, 2020

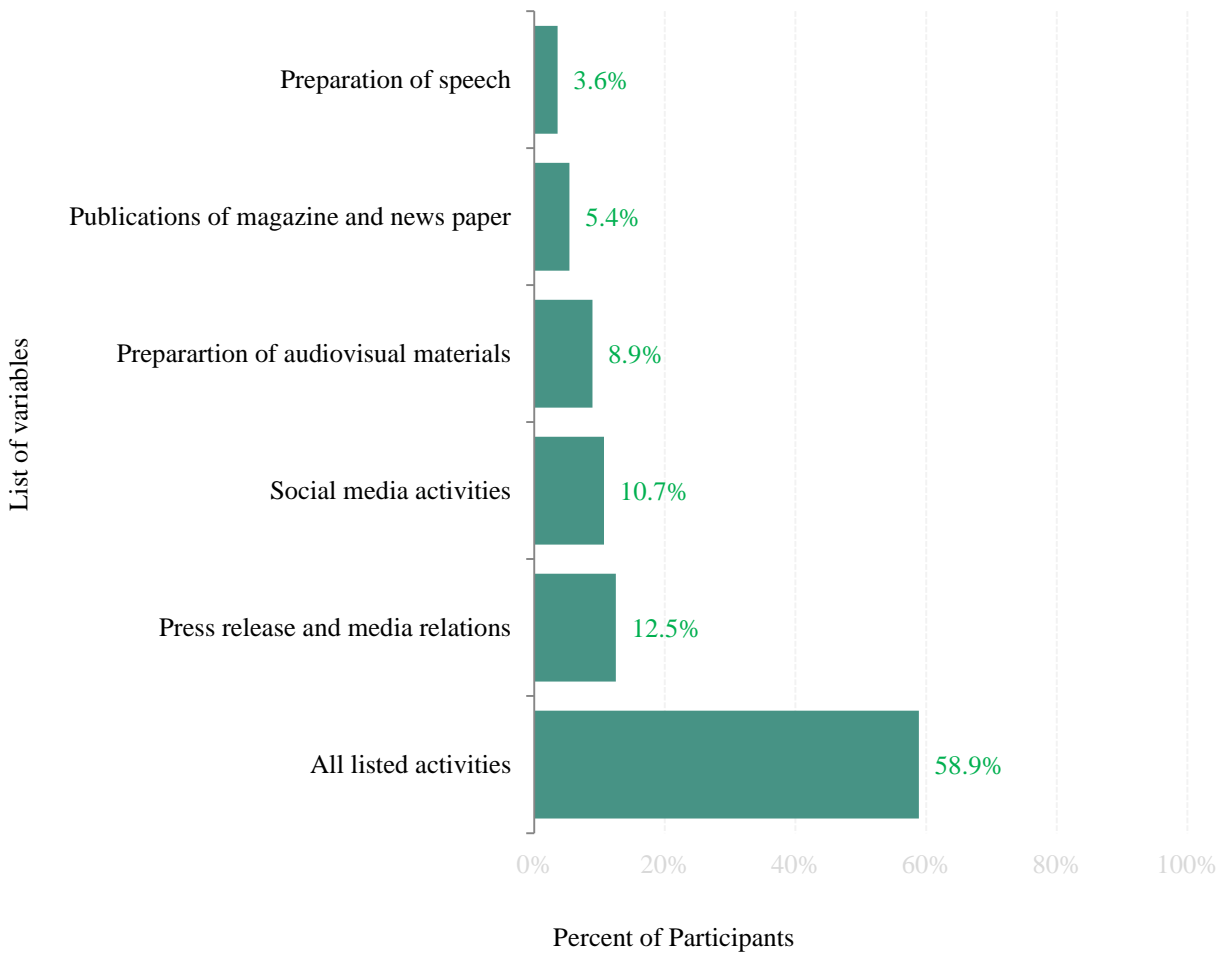


Even though the participants reported that they had roles and responsibilities of the listed activities, 16.1% of them had role of dissemination of information for the public; 10.7% of them had specific issues and crisis management responsibilities, 1.8% of them had roles in corporate social responsibility, other 1.8% had role in organizing events and the last 1.8% of them had responsibility of promoting their organization.

4.5. Frequently done activities

Preparation of speech, publications of magazines and newspapers, preparation of audiovisual materials, different social media activities like uploading advertisements and news, press release and media relations are communication tools used by the PRs practitioners. However the tools are not done in equally. With this in mind the researcher is keen to know the most frequent communication tool used by the PRs practitioners.

Figure-6: Percent distribution of the study participants by their frequently done activities, June, 2020



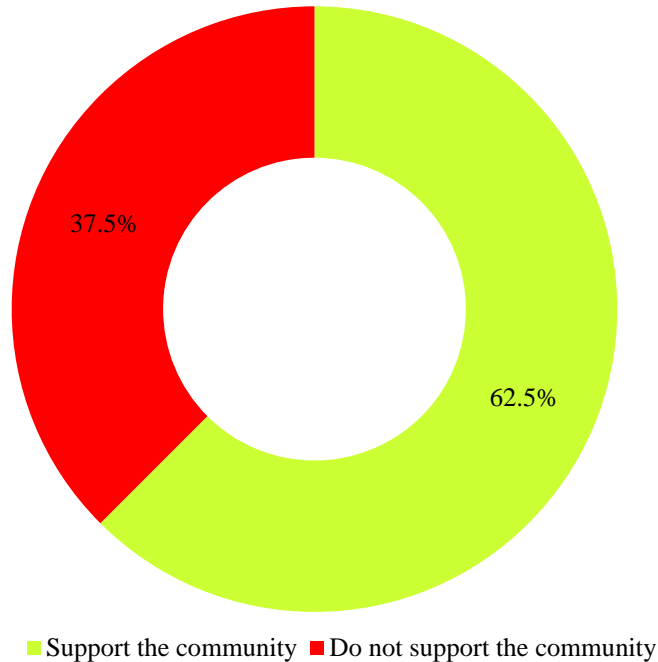
According to the findings indicated in figure-6 above, higher proportion of the participants (58.9%) confirmed that the PR departments conducted all the listed communication activities frequently. Specifically, 12.5% of the total respondents reported that press release and media relations were their frequently done activities while the other 10.7% of them said social media activities as their frequent activity, 8.9% reported preparation of audiovisual materials, 5.4% reported publications of magazines and newspaper and the last 3.6% of the respondents confirmed that speech preparation as their frequent activities.

4.6. Supporting local communities

According to (Miller, 2012), one of the concepts that characterizes system components is interdependence. The notion of interdependence implies that the functioning of one component of a system relies on other components of the system. One of the duties a Public relation is to establish a smooth relationship with the components in which the organization is functioning. External publics are one of the components of the

system. In this regard, it is the duty of the PRs practitioners to establish a smooth relationship among the components of the organization.

Figure-7: Percent distribution of the study participants by their agreement to their organizations in supporting the local community in any developmental activities, June, 2020



In supporting the local communities in developmental issues, many of the respondents (62.5%) reported that their organization supported the community but 37.5% of them didn't agree (figure-7).

4.7. Summary of the responsibilities and activities of PRs departments.

Table-2 below indicated summaries of overall the roles and responsibilities of Public Relation departments including the frequently done activities by the departments in both Ethiopian Electric Utility and Ethio-Telecom and also the contribution of the organization in supporting local communities developmental activities and as emergency response.

Table 2. Responsibilities and activities of PRs departments:

Percent distribution of study participants by their responses about responsibilities and frequent activities of the PR departments in their organizations, Addis Ababa, June 2020.

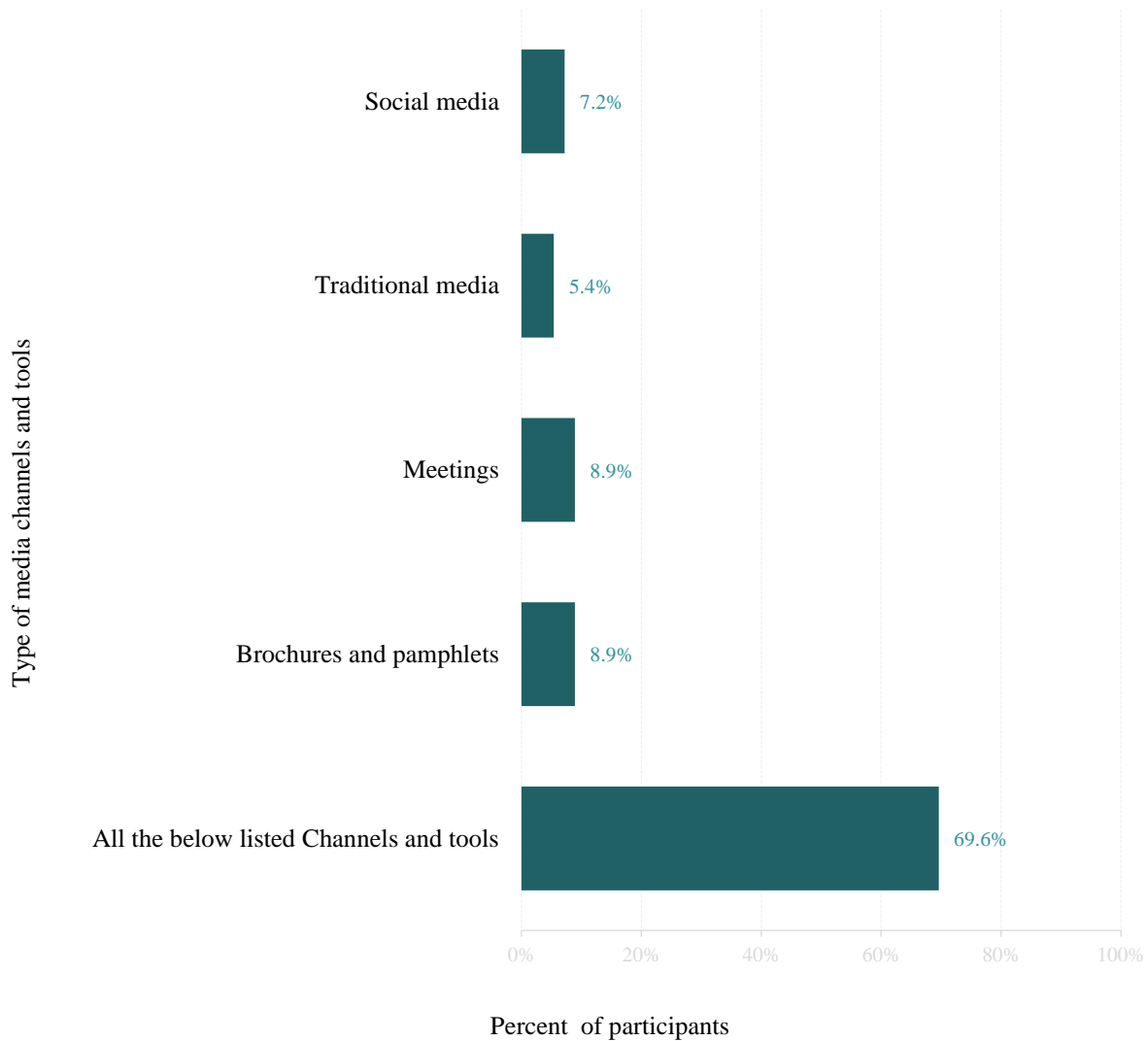
Variables	Number	Percent (%)
Responsibilities of PR departments (n=56)		
All the listed responsibilities	38	67.9
Public information	9	16.1
Issues and crisis management	6	10.7
Corporate social responsibility	1	1.8
Event organization	1	1.8
Promotion	1	1.8
Frequently done activities (n=56)		
All the listed activities	33	58.9
Press release and media relations	7	12.5
Social media activities	6	10.7
Preparation of audiovisual materials	5	8.9
Publications of magazine and news paper	3	5.4
Preparation of speech	2	3.6
Does the organization support the local community in dev't? (n=56)		
Yes	35	62.5
No	21	37.5

4.8. Information dissemination channels and tools

Information media can be divided into social and traditional media. Social media including short messages, microblogs, and news portals, because of their high impact and coverage ratio made possible by developments in information technology, are becoming increasingly popular and therefore critical tools of information dissemination. For instance, they can enhance the decision-making process since more data is provided than it is the case with traditional media. However, some traditional media, including cell phones, television, and oral communication, also play important roles in information dissemination. The different characteristics of information dissemination medium have been studied in different fields (Zhang, et al, 2014).

Media is the bridge which links The PRs practitioners with the internal and external publics. The researcher asked the kind of channel the two organization use to deliver information to the message receivers? As the findings depicted in the figure-8 below, the majority of the respondents (69.6%) reported their organizations used all the available channels and tools including brochures and pamphlets, meetings and media traditional and the social media. Specifically, 8.9% of the respondents used brochures and pamphlets, other 8.9% meetings, 7.2% social media and 5.4% traditional media.

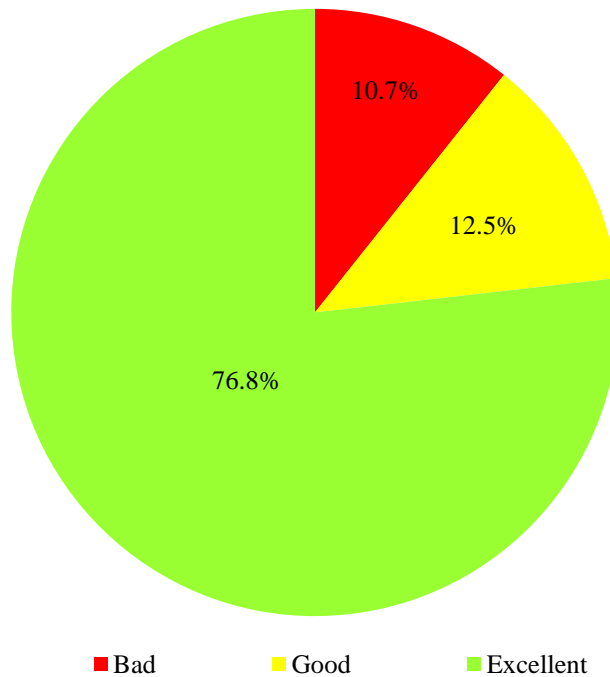
Figure-8: Percent distribution of respondents by the types of channels and tools which their organizations use for information to the internal and external publics, Addis Ababa, June, 2020



4.9. Perceptions of participants about Public Relation practices

Perceptions about public relations affect the perceived credibility of the profession and influence whether people see public relations as valuable to society. Second-level agenda setting and cultivation theories purport that mass media contribute to beliefs about social reality by creating a cumulative, general consciousness upon which assumptions and judgments are based, suggesting that public perceptions about public relations would match media portrayal. Public relations are associated with publicity, media relations, and the attempt of an organization to advance its own agenda (White, 2010).

Figure-9: Percent distribution of the study participants by their perceptions about PR, Addis Ababa, June, 2020

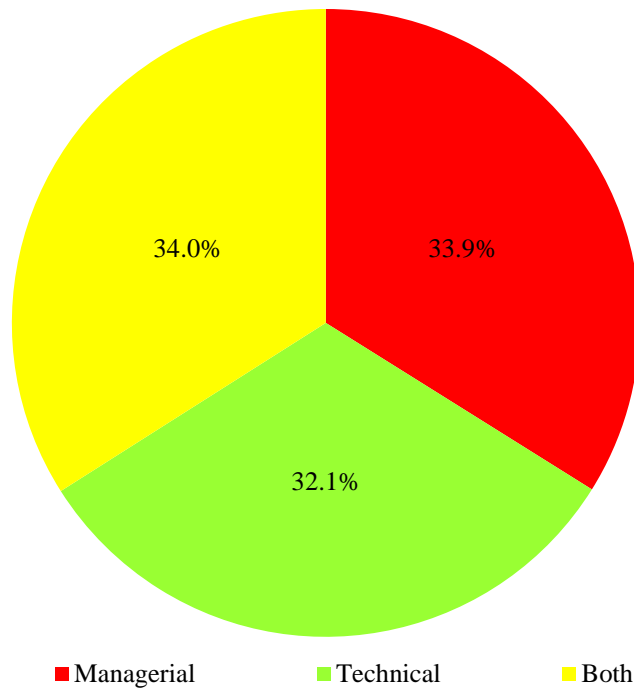


The study participants were asked about their general perception of public relations practice and research within their respective organizations. As it is depicted in figure-9 above, majority of the participants (76.8%) reported that the existing public relation activities of their organization was 'Good', and 12.5% of them said 'Excellent' while 10.7% of them felt 'Bad'. All of those participants who reported 'Bad' were from Ethiopian Electric Utility.

4.10. The role of the public relation in the organizations

The role of public relations in any organization is to identify the key publics, both internal and external, with whom the organization must operate effectively, and alongside this, to strategically develop and maintain a relationship with these publics for the benefit of both the organization and the identified publics (Stellha, 2014). Placement public relations at certain positions in management have consequences in the process of implementation of the public relations function. It happened because the management, workflow and hierarchy greatly affects work patterns as well as patterns of decision making in carrying out communication tasks performed by public relations (Anggreni, 2018).

Figure-10: Percent distribution of participants based on their level of perceptions about public relation practices and thoughts around the role of PR in their organization, Addis Ababa, June, 2020.(n=56)



As the findings indicated in figure-10 above, a public relation practitioner performs both a managerial and a technician role. There were no significant variations observed in their thoughts in clarifying the roles of public relation practitioners as slightly above one-third of them reported that PR played both a technical and managerial roles. That is, 34% of the participants had both managerial and technical roles in PR while the other 33.9% of them had managerial role and also 32.1% of them had technical role.

4.11. Beliefs about PR and corporate social responsibility

The participants were asked about their beliefs as public relation is the heart of any organization and also corporate social responsibility is a must duty activity for an organization.

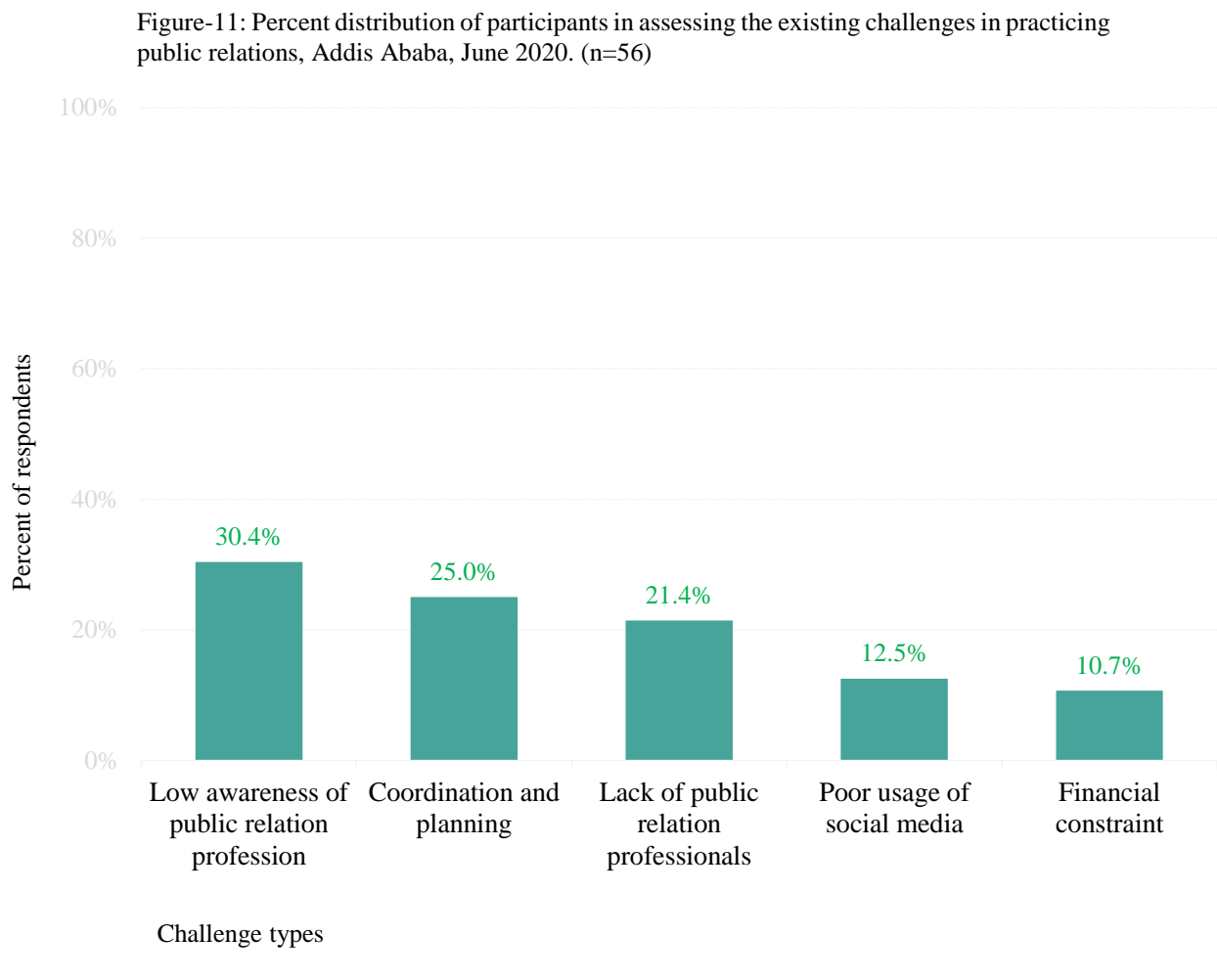
Table-3: Percent distribution of respondents by the degree of their agreement about their beliefs towards public relation and corporate social responsibility for an organization, Addis Ababa, June 2020. (n=56)

Observations	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe public relation is heart of my organization	5.4%	10.7%	19.6%	44.6%	19.6%
Corporate social responsibility is a must duty activity for an organization	3.6%	10.7%	7.1%	51.8%	26.8%

As the findings showed in table-3, many of the participants (44.6%) agreed and 19.6% strongly agree, other 19.6% of them neither agree nor disagree, 10.7% disagree and 5.4% strongly disagree. Regarding, corporate social responsibility, majority of the respondents (51.8%) agree and 26.8% strongly agree that it is a must duty activity for an organization; 7.1% neither agree nor disagree, 10.7% disagree and 3.6% strongly disagree.

4.12. Challenges in practicing public relations

As it is briefly explained in the previous section of the study, PRs is at its embryo stage in Ethiopia. Understanding this scenario one can merely explain that PRs practitioners face various challenges.



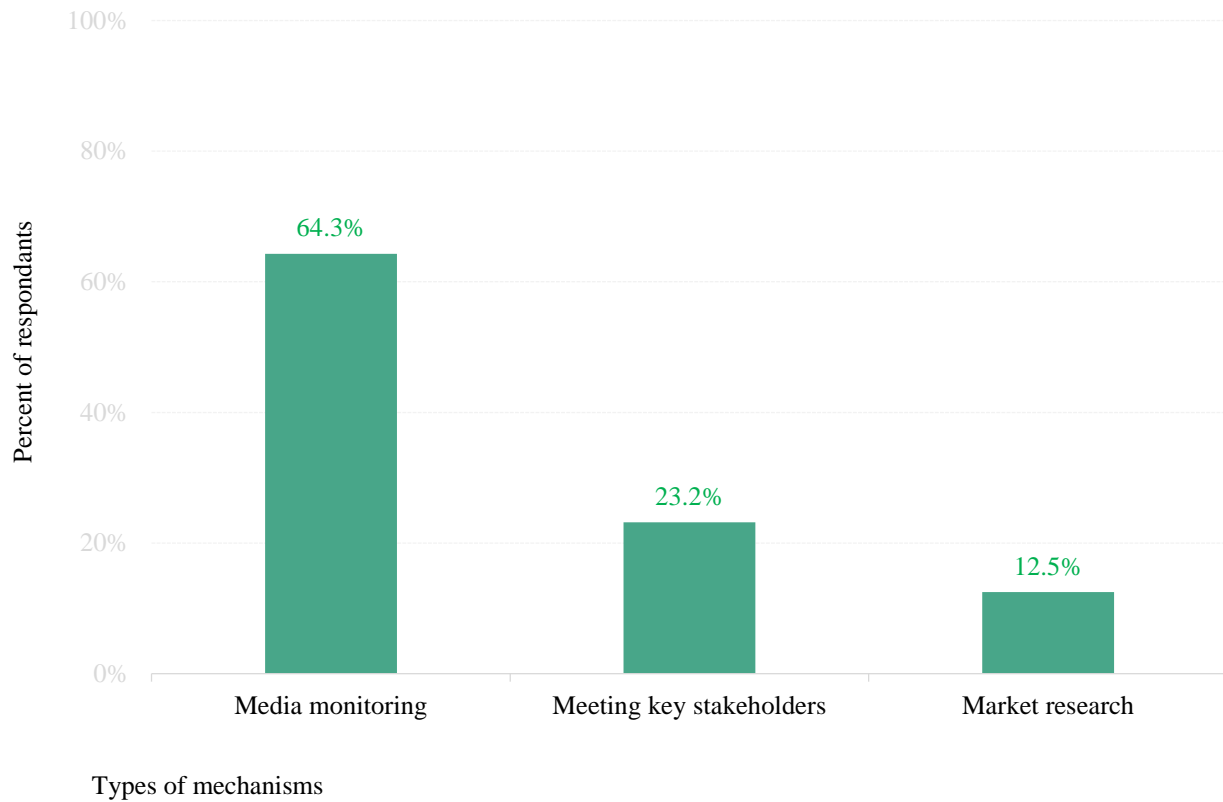
As it is depicted in figure-11 above, the respondents reported that low awareness of PR profession as the first challenge (30.4%), poor planning and coordination (25.0%), lack of PR professionals (21.4%), poor utilization of social media (12.5%) and financial constraints (10.7%).

4.13. Crisis Management

4.13.1. Identifying crisis in the organizations

Crises are something bigger and different than everyday problems which attract public attention through news coverage. It is a sudden and unwanted situation that has the potential to threaten the integrity or reputation of an organization.

Figure-12: Percent distribution of respondents who preferred strategies in identifying crisis in their organizations, Addis Ababa, June, 2020. (n=56)

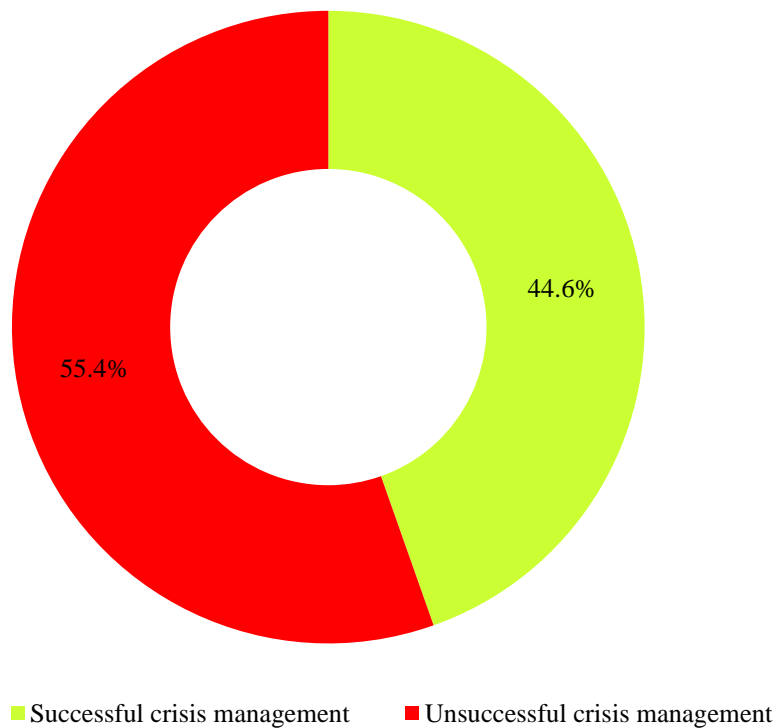


As depicted in figure-12, majority of the respondents (64.3%) follow media news, documentary and other programs in order to identify any crisis potentially happening over their organization. The other (23.2%) of them reported that they identify crisis when they meet stakeholders and discuss details about their activities and the rest (12.5%) explore the existence of crisis in their organization by conducting market research.

4.13.2. Crisis management in the organization

As the finding is presented in figure-13, study participants were asked about whether they think their organization done successful crisis management or not. The findings showed that the higher number of participants (55.4%) said their organization didn't conduct successful crisis management; only 44.6% of them reported their organization did successful crisis management.

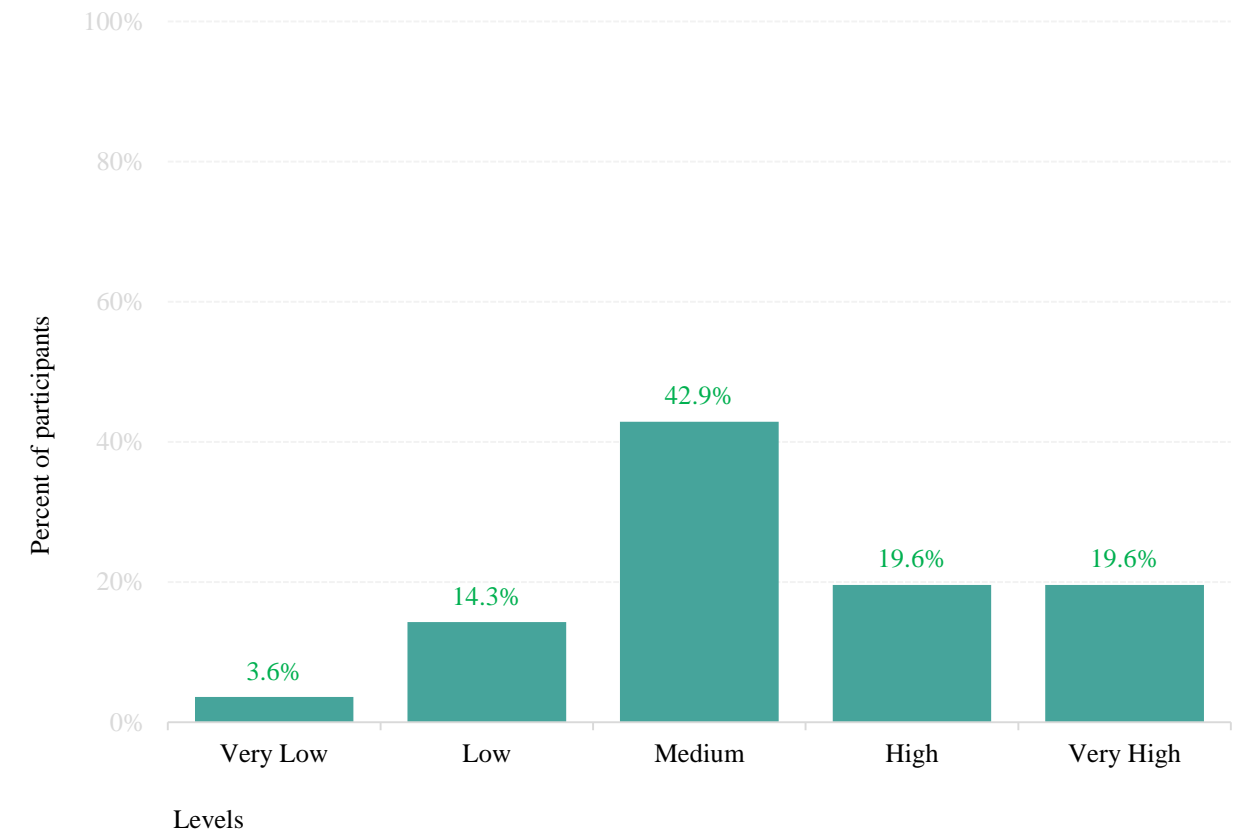
Figure-13: Percent distribution of study participants based on their thoughts about the success of their organizations in crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.13.3. Role of PRs practitioners and crisis

Organizations need to understand the role of effective crisis management in shaping the perception of stakeholders and building reputation. Sapriel (2003) states that organizational crises are regularly non-event related which cause management problems. The participants were also asked about at what level did public relation played a role in the implementation or management of crisis. The result indicated in figure-14 that many of them (42.9%) agreed that the PR had a role in practicing crisis management at medium level, 19.6% at high, 19.6% at very high, 14.3% at low and 3.6% at very low levels.

Figure-14: Percent distribution of responders based on the level of their thoughts in leveling the roles of their organizations in managing crisis, Addis Ababa, June 2020

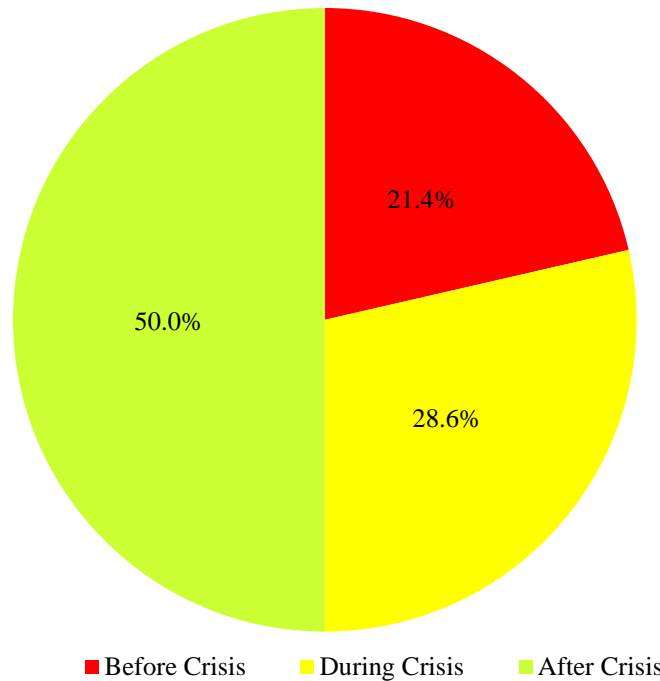


4.13.4. Time of crisis management

Crisis management helps an organization and its stakeholders perceive threats and mitigate them with predetermined methods. It is equal parts diagnostic, vigilance, and action- often within a compressed timeline. Decisions have to be made quickly and definitively. But until the unforeseen- yet inevitable- crisis occurs, all organization can do is plan ahead. Crisis management is essentially about making a plan, one that anticipates the unpredictability of world events and the dependability of organizations. In short, a solid crisis management plan expects the unexpected (Daedalus, 2020).

Effective and timely communication with stakeholders and the public has always been a vital element in managing an organization's reputation- especially during a crisis. Today's hyperdrive digital information and misinformation culture makes it more critical to have a finely tuned, mature communications expert in place before, during and after an event (Sean, 2019).

Figure-15: Percent distribution of the participants based on the timing of crisis management, AA, June 2020



The other assessment was about the time when crisis are managed in their organizations. Half of the respondents reported that their organization manage crisis after occurrence of the crisis while the other 28.6% said during the crisis and 21.4% before crisis (figure-15).

4.13.5. Summary of the crisis management

All the findings related with crisis management are summarized in table-4 including whether the two organizations had successful management of crisis or not; the roles of public relations in the management of crisis and the timing of crisis management.

Table 4. Crisis management:

Percent distribution of study participants by their thoughts about the time and successful crisis management and role of PR in the management, Addis Ababa, June 2020.

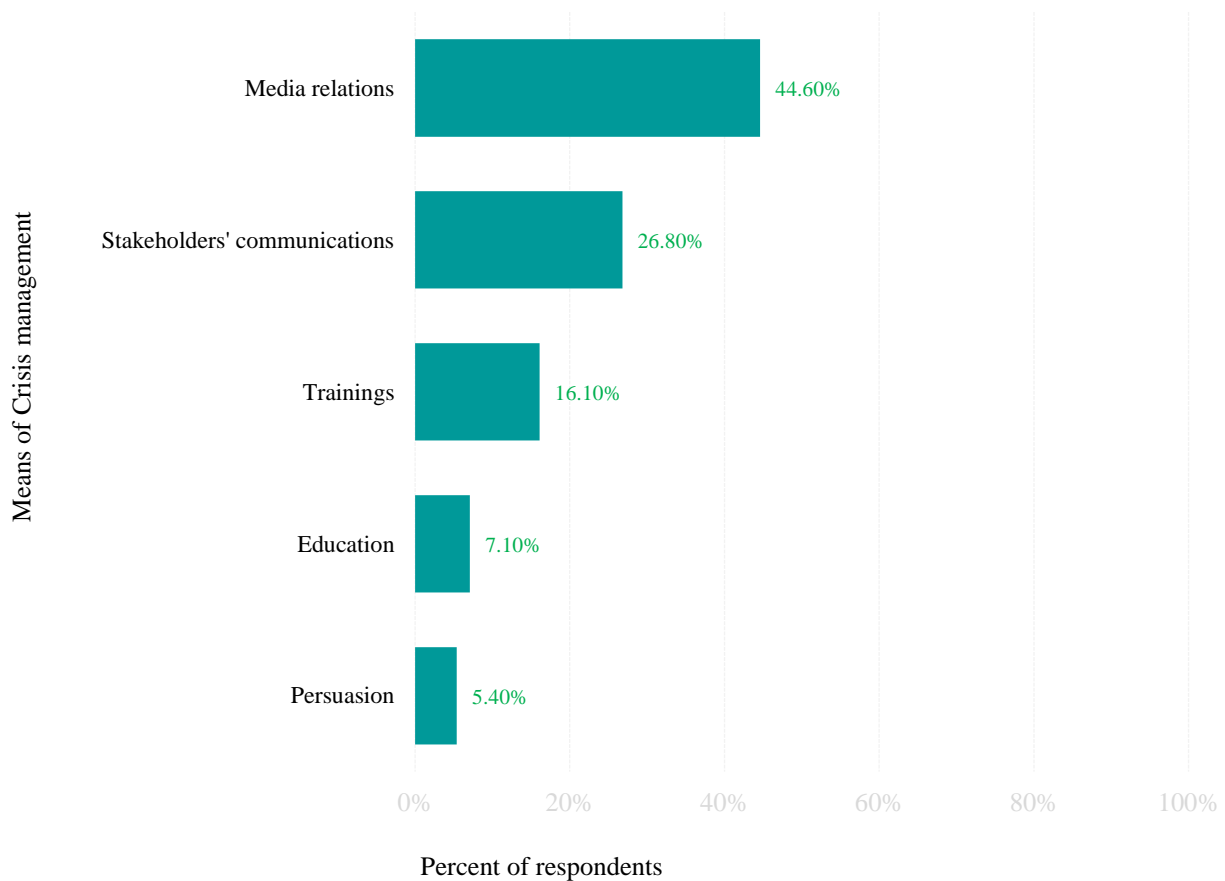
Variables	Number	Percent (%)
Do you think the crisis management in your organization is successful? (n=56)		
Yes	25	44.6
No	31	55.4
Role of public relations (PR) in the practice of crises management in your organization? (n=56)		
Very low	2	3.6
Low	8	14.3
Medium	24	42.9
High	11	19.6
Very high	11	19.6
When crises management is conducted in your organizations? (n=56)		
Before crisis	12	21.4
During crisis	16	28.6
After crisis	28	50.0

4.13.6. Means of crisis management

Different organizations use various types of crisis management approaches that can happen in their organizations. In this study, participants were asked about the ways how their organizations manage crisis when happened in the organization.

As the findings related with the means of crisis management in the organization presented in figure-16, most of the respondents (44.6%) utilized various forms of Medias, 26.8% meetings with stakeholders, 16.1% trainings, 7.1% education and 5.4% persuasions.

Figure-16: Percent distribution of respondents who reported means of crisis management in their organizations, Addis Ababa, June, 2020. (n=56)

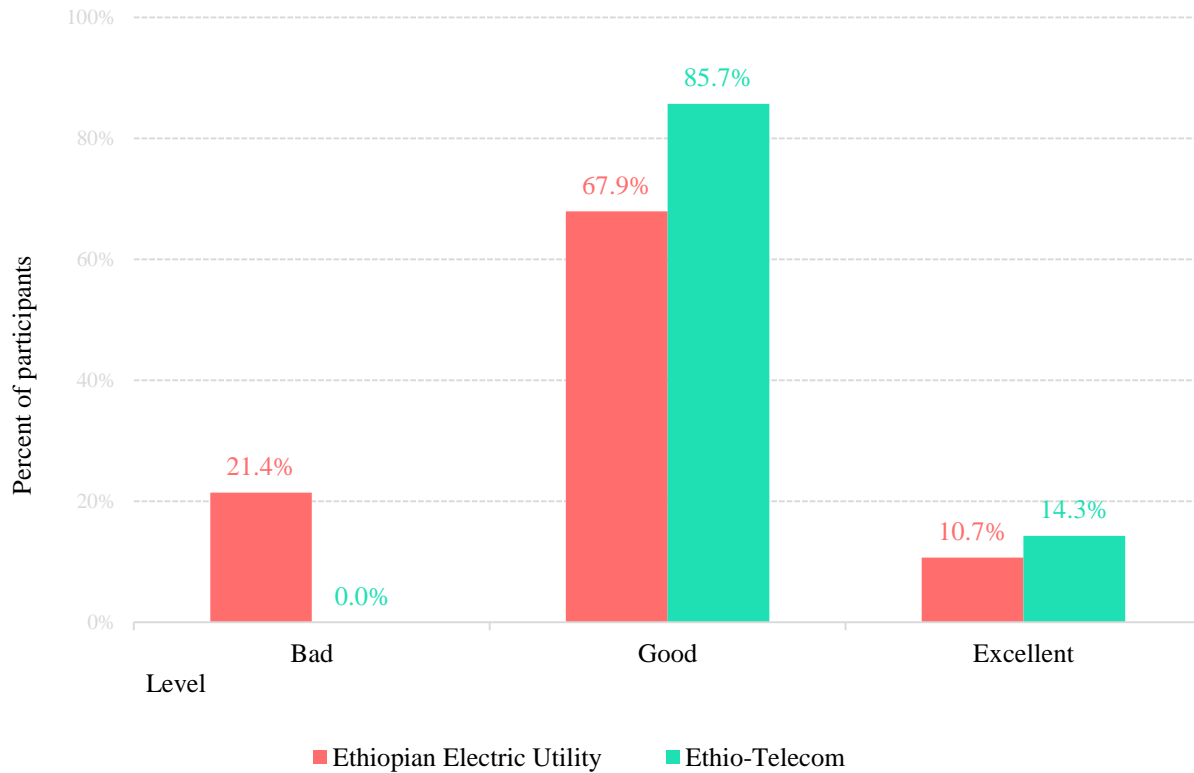


4.14. Summaries of the comparative analysis

4.14.1. Perceptions of Public Relation (PR)

As it is depicted above in figure-17, some of the participants (21.4%) from Ethiopian Electric Utility had ‘Bad’ perceptions about their organizations towards practicing Public Relation activities. In the contrary, none of the Ethio Telecom participants had ‘Bad’ perceptions. In both organizations, most of the participants had ‘Good’ perceptions; specifically, 85.7% of them from Ethio-Telecom had a ‘Good’ perception which was even a bit higher than Ethiopian Electric Utility as 67.9% of them felt ‘Good’. Still, a bit higher number of participants of Ethio-Telecom (14.3%) reported that they had ‘Excellent’ perceptions when compared with the 10.7% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility.

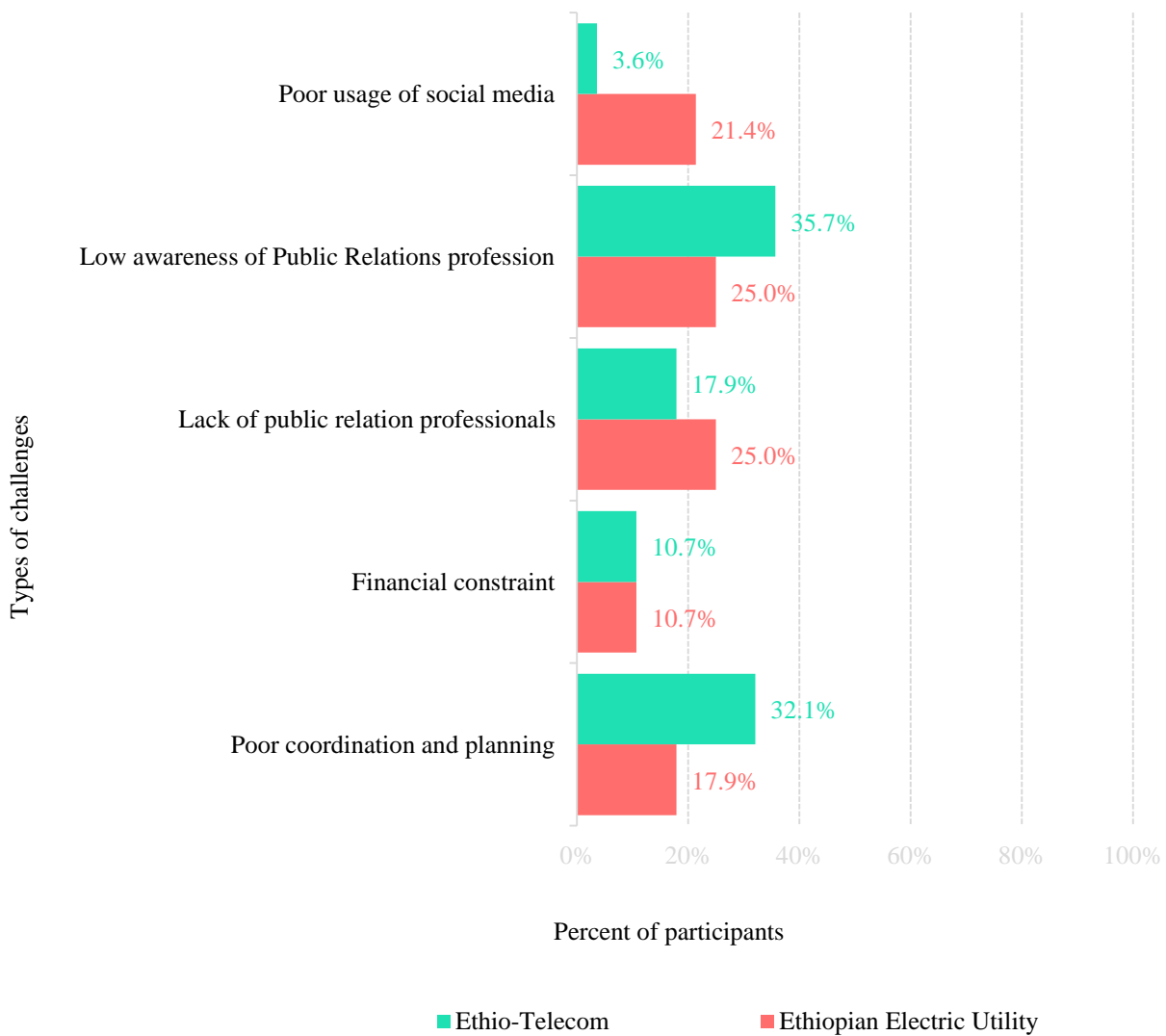
Figure-17: Percent variations among Ethiopian Electric Utility and Ethio-Telecom based on perceptions of the participants towards public relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.2. Challenges the organizations faced

Figure-18 below indicated the existing challenges between the two organizations. In the utilization of new or social media, both organizations were poorly utilizing the new media. However, Ethio-Telecom had a better practice than Ethiopian Electric Utility as 21.4% of the participants from Ethio-Telecom and 3.6% from Ethiopian Electric Utility confirmed in the assessment. In some extent, participants of Ethio-Telecom (35.7%) had better awareness about Public Relation as compared with 25.0% participants of the Ethiopian Electric Utility. On the other hand, shortage of Public Relation professionals was more serious in Ethiopian Electric Utility than Ethio-Telecom as the difference if 25.0% to 17.9%. Surprisingly, similar level of budget constraint (10.7%) was observed within the two organizations. Planning and coordination of PR activities were common problems among the two organizations; particularly, the problem was more serious in Ethio-Telecom as 32.1% of the participants reported when compared with 17.9% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility confirmed.

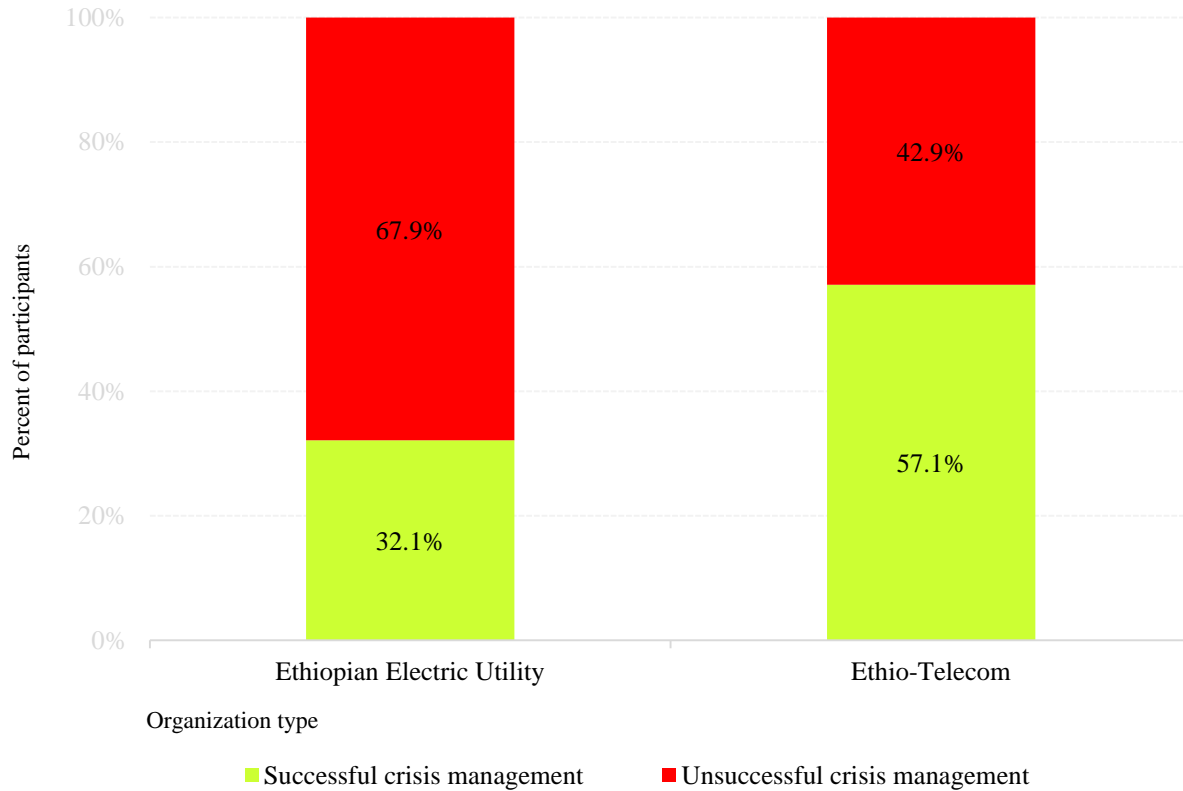
Figure-18: Percent differences between participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility and Ethio-Telecom based on the existing challenges of Public Relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.3. Success of Crisis Management

As it is depicted in figure-19 below, most of the participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (67.9%) reported that their organization was not successful in managing crisis while the rest 32.1% of them said their organization was successful in managing crisis. In comparison, Ethio-Telecom was successful in managing crisis as 57.1% of the participants agreed with the successful crisis management of their organization and only 42.9% of them reported as their organization was not successful in crisis management.

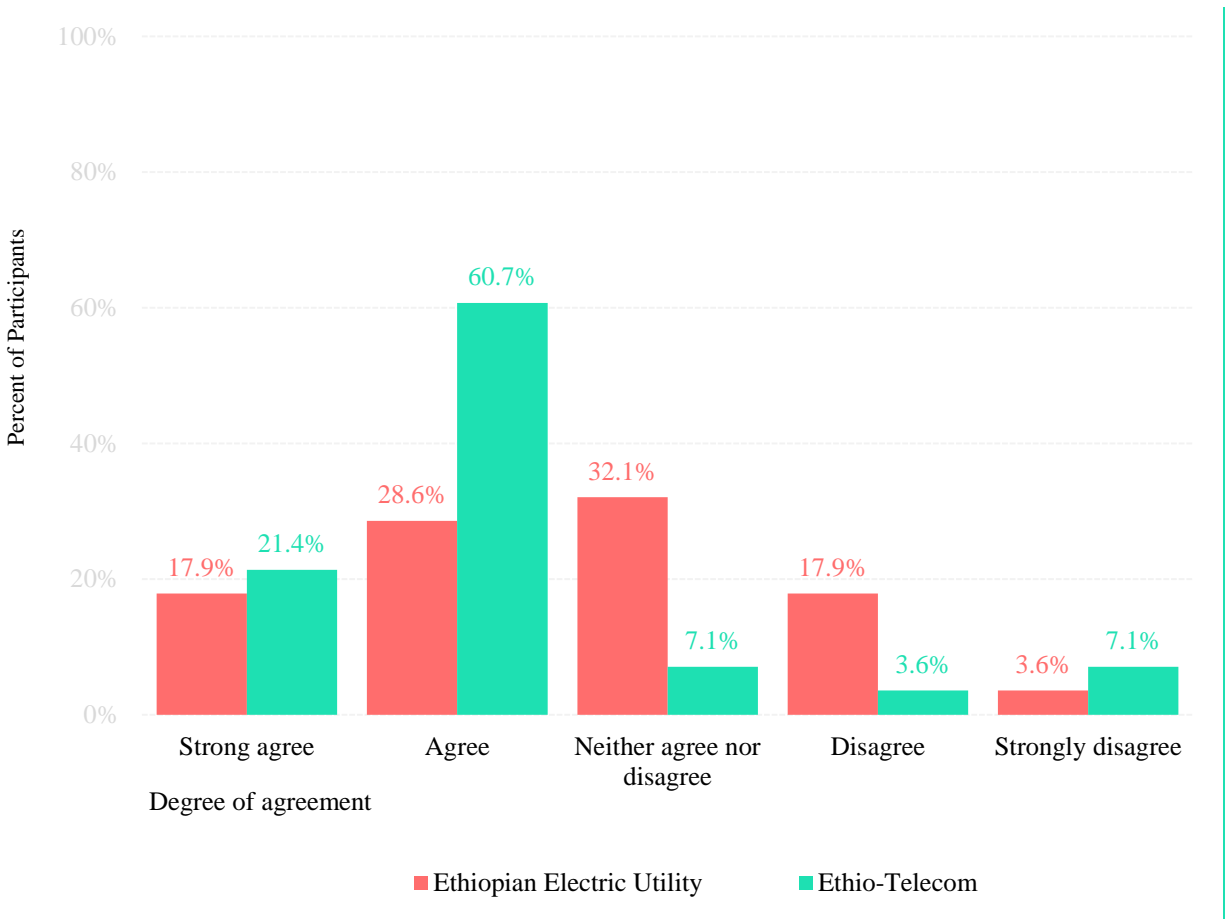
Figure-19: Percent variations between the two organizations in implementing the crisis management as confirmed by the participants, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.4. Public Relation contributions

Figure-20 showed that variations of the degree of agreements of participants considering Public Relation as the heart of their organization. Some of the participants (21.4%) of Ethio-Telecom were strongly agree that Public Relation is the heart of their organization; the figure was a bit lower (17.9%) among Ethiopian Electric Utility participants. A big significant difference observed among those participants who agreed as Public Relation is a key for their organization; the findings were 60.7% with Ethio-Telecom and 28.6% with Ethiopian Electric Utility. Overall, Public Relation was more important and key in Ethio-Telecom than Ethiopian Electric Utility. Most of the participants (32.1%) of Ethiopian Electric Utility were neither agreed nor disagree when compared with the participants (7.1%) of Ethio-Telecom. Much higher proportion of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (17.9%) was disagree as compared with those participants (3.6%) of Ethio-Telecom. In the contrary, a bit higher proportion of participants of Ethio-Telecom (7.1%) was strongly disagree when compared with participants (3.6%) the Ethiopian Electric Utility.

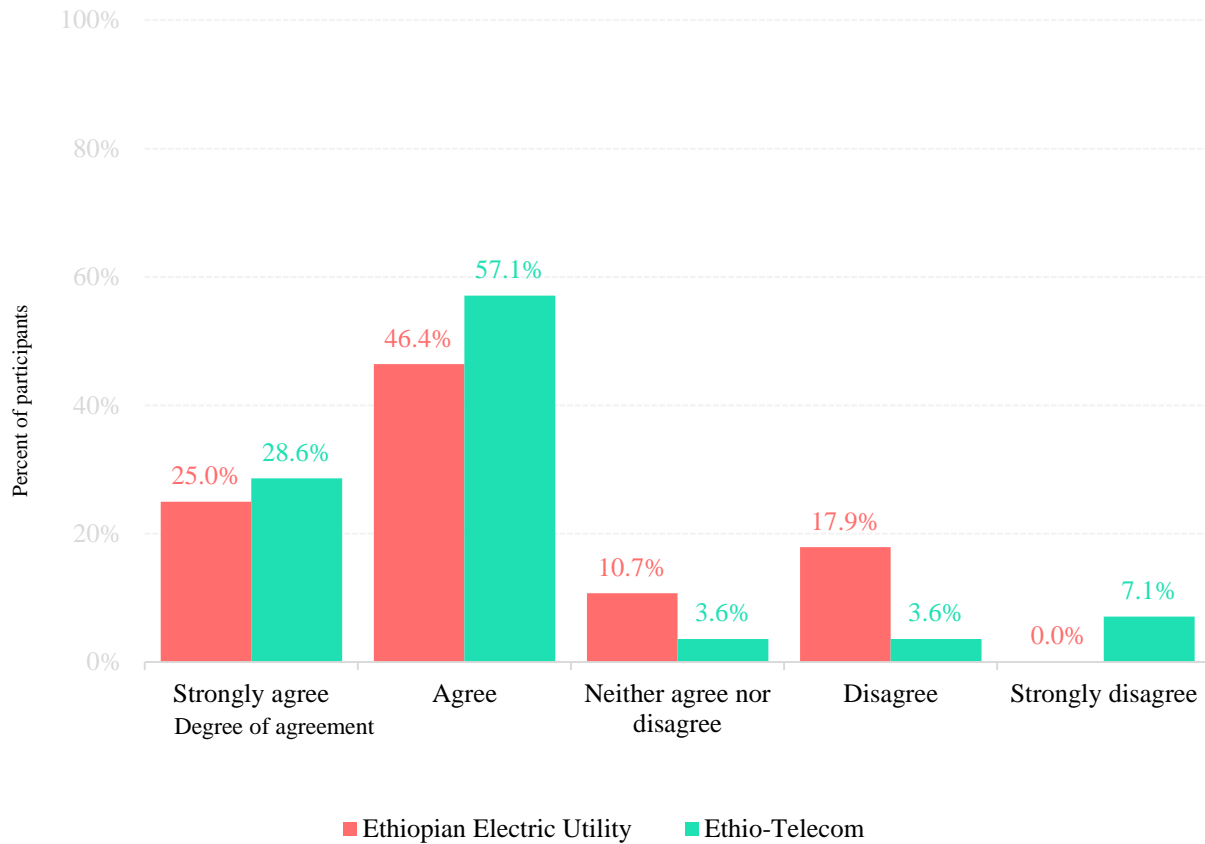
Figure-20: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations based on their level of agreement as the contribution of Public Relation, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.5. Corporate Social Responsibility

As it presented in figure-21 below, more than a quarter of Ethio-Telecom participants (28.6%) were strongly agree with the contribution of their organizations in playing the social responsibility; almost closer proportion of participants (25.0%) of Ethiopian Electric Utility were also strong agree. Similarly, more than half of participants (57.1%) of Ethio-Telecom and 46.4% of them from Ethiopian Electric Utility agreed with the contribution of their organizations for social responsibility. The differences between the agreed participants of the two organizations were not much significant variations. However, a bit higher proportion of the participants from Ethiopian Electric Utility (10.7%) were neither agree nor disagree when compared with the proportion of participants (3.6%) of Ethio-Telecom. Similarly, much higher proportion of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (17.9%) disagrees as compared with the participants (3.6%) of Ethio-Telecom. In the contrary, none of the participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility strongly disagree but 7.1% of the participants of Ethio-Telecom strongly disagree.

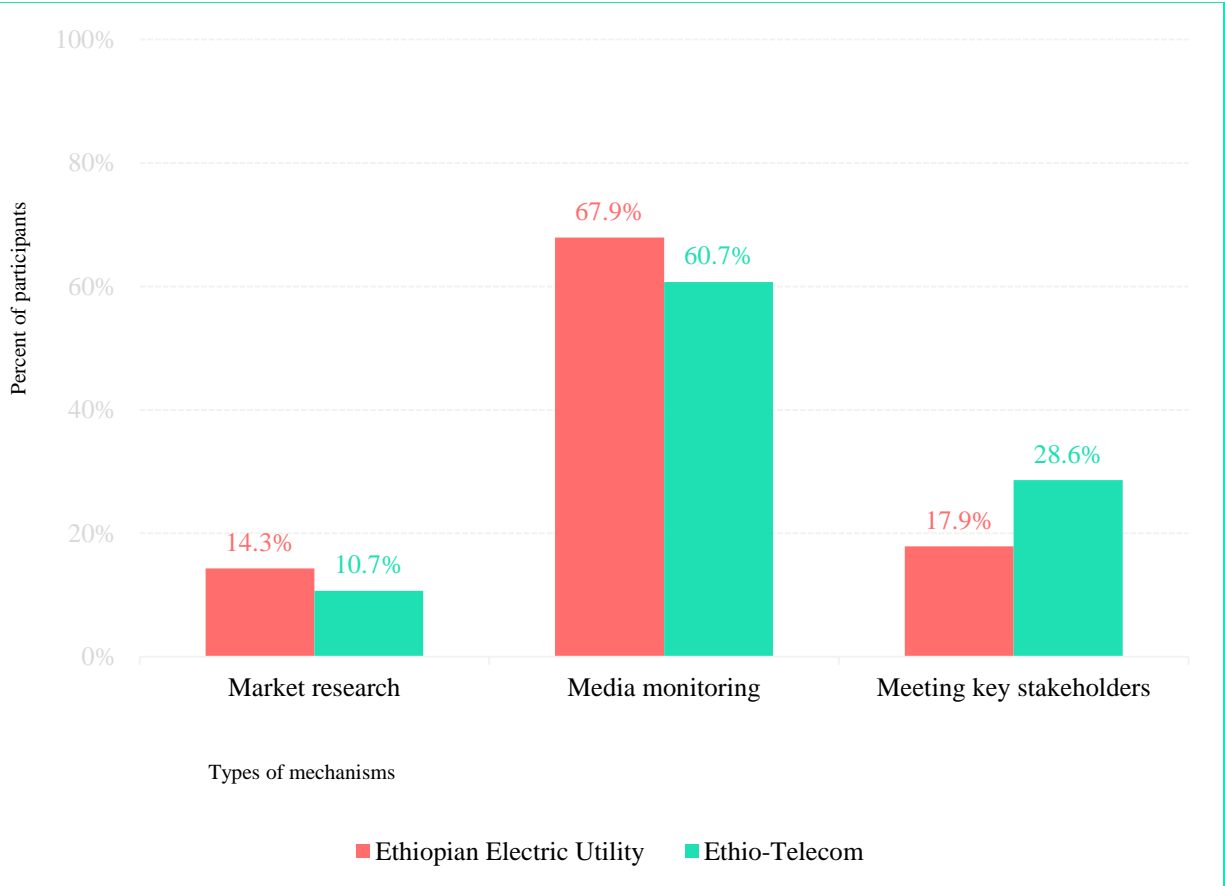
Figure-21: Percent variations between participants of the two organizations based on the contribution of the organizations towards Corporate Social Responsibility, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.6. Crisis Identification Mechanism

As the findings depicted in figure-22 below, market researching in the identification of crisis was a more common approach in Ethiopian Electric Utility as 14.3% of the participants witnessed; 10.7% of the participants of Ethio-Telecom reported the market research as a mechanism of their organization. Media monitoring was the most common approach in identifying crisis in both organizations with a little variations as 67.9% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility and 60.7% participants of Ethio-Telecom reported. In some extent higher proportion of the participants of Ethio-Telecom (28.6%) reported that their organization hold meetings with stakeholders as compared with 17.9% of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility. Therefore, meeting with stakeholder seems that a major approach for Ethio-Telecom as Market Research and Media monitoring for Ethiopian Electric Utility.

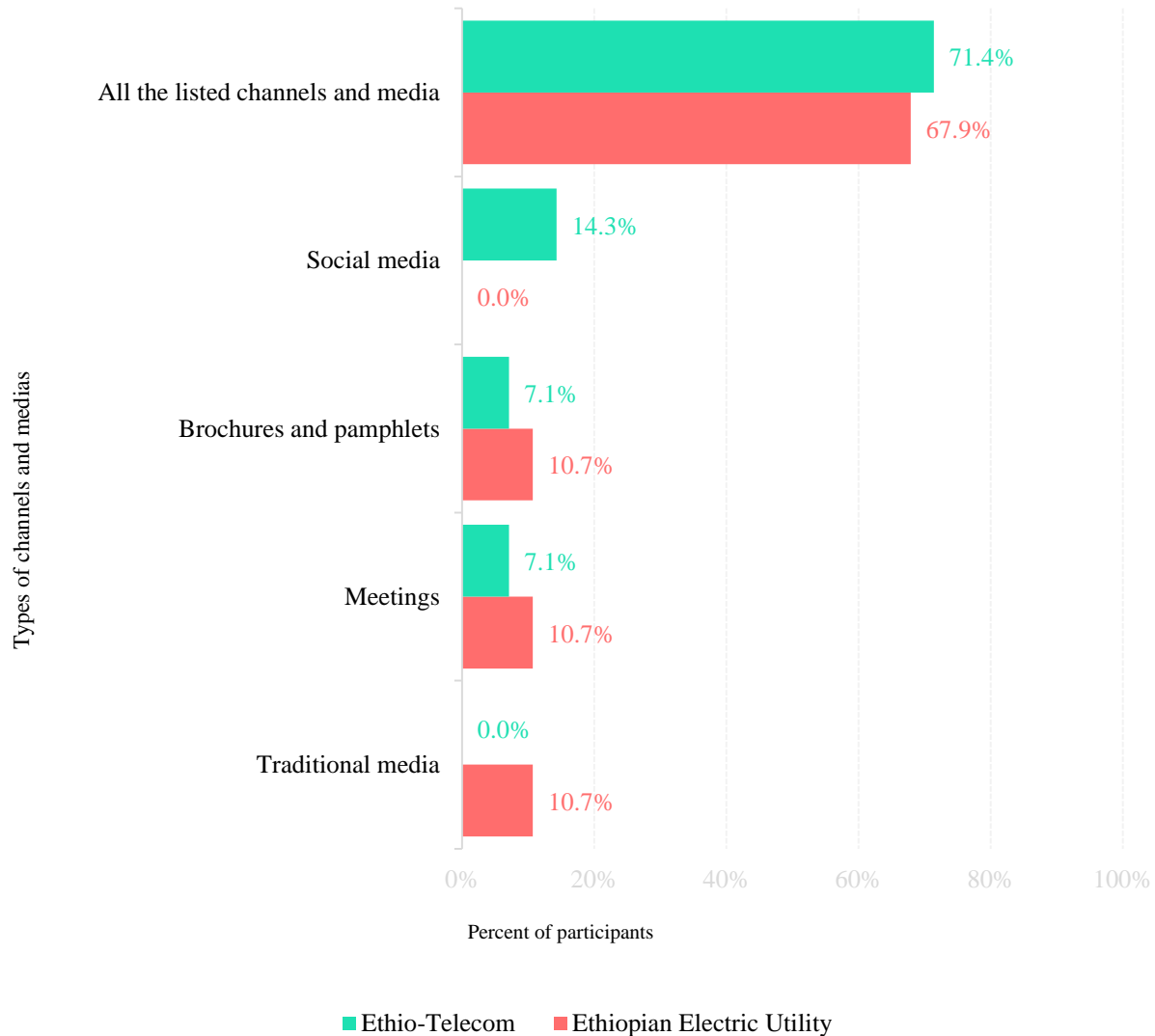
Figure-22: Percent variations participants of the two organizations based on their crisis identification mechanisms, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.7. Information Dissemination

Figure-23 below indicated that significantly higher proportion of participants of Ethio-Telecom (71.4%) and Ethiopian Electric Utility (67.9%) were utilized all forms of channels and Medias to disseminate information. However, none of the participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility reported that their organization used social media in disseminating information but 14.3% of participants of Ethio-Telecom reported that their organization utilized new Medias. Therefore, Ethio-Telecom had more tendencies in utilizing social media for information dissemination than Ethiopian Electric Utility. In using brochures and pamphlets, no significant differences observed between the two organizations as 10.7% of participants of the Ethiopian Electric Utility and 7.1% of Ethio-Telecom participants reported as their organizations utilized the tools to disseminate their information. Meetings were the other means of disseminating information within the two organizations; again no much difference between the organizations as 10.7% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility and 7.1% participants of Ethio-Telecom reported. Traditional media seems more utilized by Ethiopian Electric Utility as 10.7% participants of the organization reported and as none of the participants of Ethio-Telcom reported in comparison.

Figure-23: Percent variations of participants of the two organizations based on the information dissemination mechanisms, Addis Ababa, June 2020

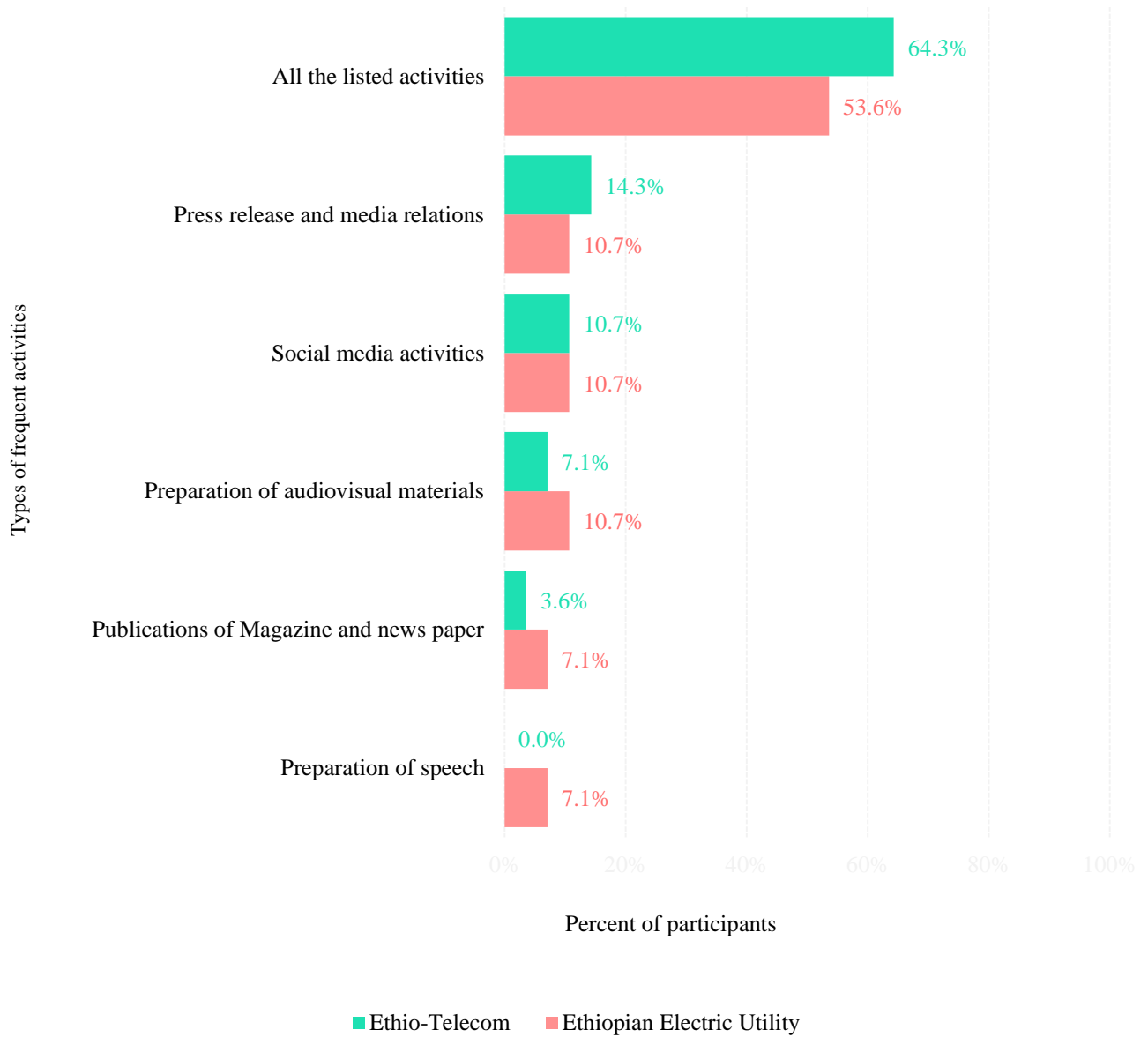


4.14.8. Frequent activities

Figure-24 below showed that most of the participants of the two organization reported that their organizations conducted all listed activities with some higher proportion of participants of Ethio-Telecom (64.3%) reported all activities as compared with 53.6% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility. Press release and media relations were much more frequent activities of Ethiopia-Telecom as 14.3% of its participants reported compared with 10.7% participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility. There was no difference observed among the two organizations as reporting social media as frequent activities. Audiovisual materials preparation was more frequent activity of Ethiopian Electric Utility as 10.7% of its participants reported and compared with 7.1% participants of Ethio-Telecom. Similarly, publications of

magazines and newspaper were more frequent activity of Ethiopian Electric Utility with 7.1% of its participants compared with 3.6% participants of Ethio-Telecom. Furthermore, speech preparation was the only frequent activity of Ethiopian Electric Utility with the confirmation of 7.1% its participants.

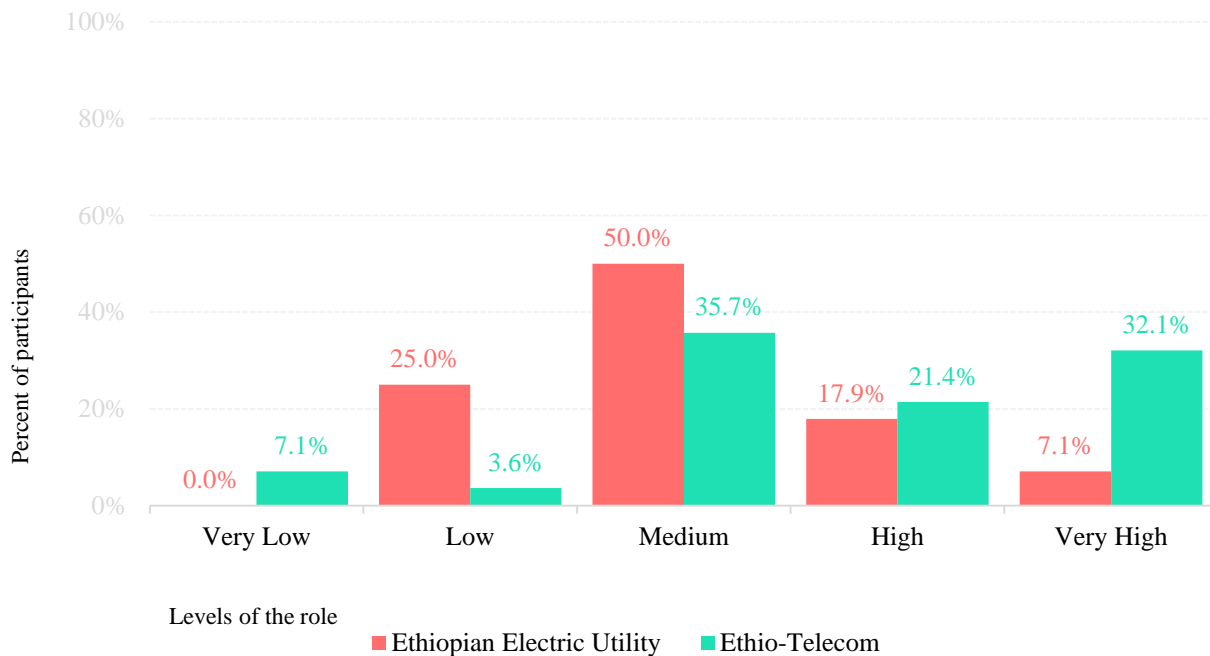
Figure-24: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations based on their frequent Public Relation activities, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.9. Role of Public Relation

As the findings presented in figure-25, even though none of the participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility participants reported that the role of Public Relation is very low in their organization, 7.1% of Ethio-Telecom participants said very low. In the contrary, a quarter of participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility reported that the role of Public Relation was low in their organization which was significantly higher proportion when compared with the 3.6% respondents of Ethio-Telecom. On the other hand, half of the participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility reported that the role of PR in their organization was medium which was higher than the proportion of participants (35.7%) of Ethio-Telecom. Overall, the role of PR was high in Ethio-Telecom as its participants (21.4%) reported and compared with 17.9% of respondents of Ethiopian Electric Utility. Significantly much higher proportion of participants (32.1%) of Ethio-Telecom reported as the role of PR in their organization was very high as compared with 7.1% of Ethiopian Electric Utility participants.

Figure-25: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations based on the level of roles of Public Relations, Addis Ababa, June 2020

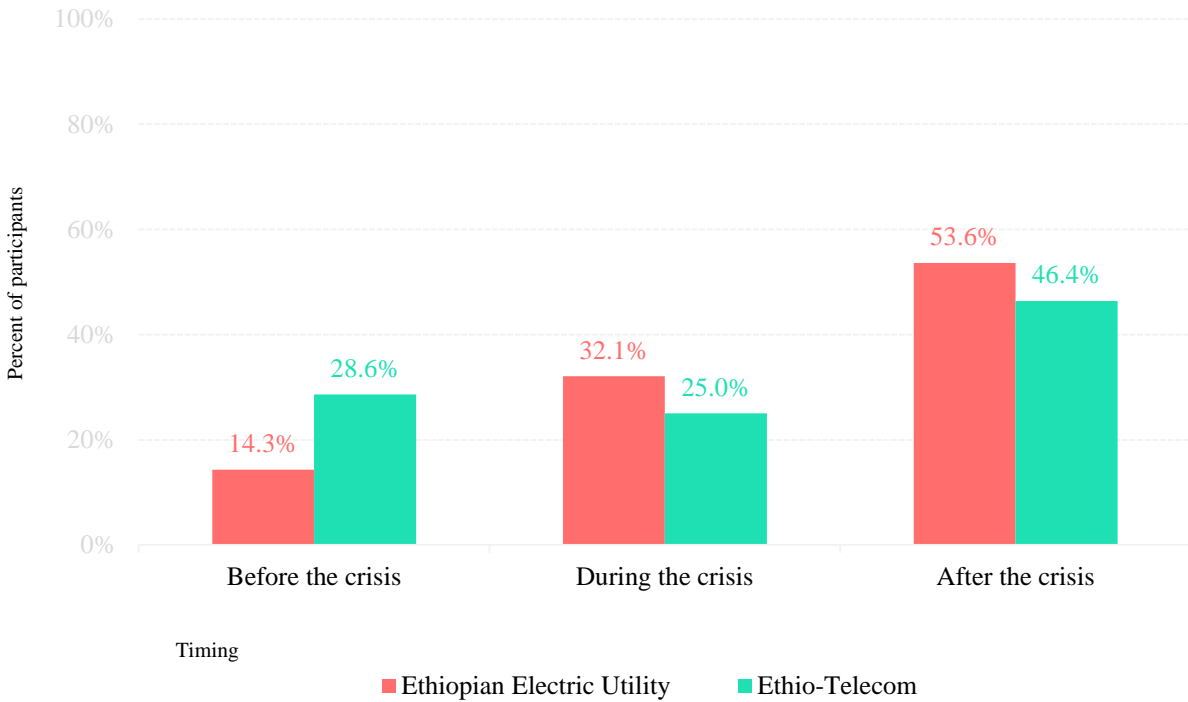


4.14.10. Timing of crisis management

As the findings showed in figure-26, 28.6% of the participants of Ethio-Telecom reported that their organization managed crisis before the occurrence which is a bit higher than Ethiopian Electric Utility as its 14.3% respondents replied. On the other hand, more proportion of participants (32.1%) of Ethiopian Electric Utility reported as their organization managed crisis while it is happening when compared with the

reports of 25.0% participants of Ethio-Telecom. Similarly, more proportion of the participants of Ethiopian Electric Utility (53.6%) reported that their organization managed crisis after its occurrence than what was reported by 46.4% participants of Ethio-Telecom.

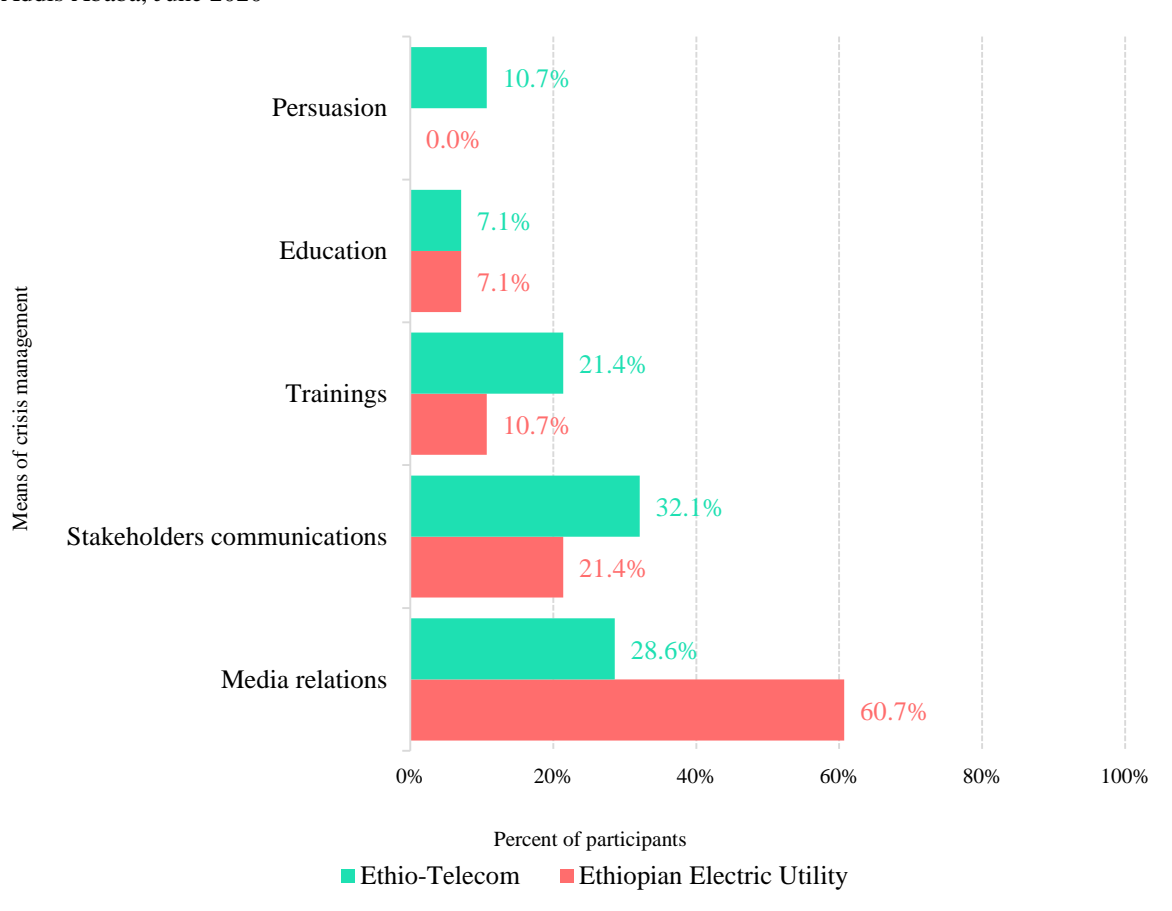
Figure-26: Percent variations among participants of the two organizations by the timing of crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.11. Means of Crisis Management

Crises as it happened in an organization are communicated through various ways like persuasion, education and short trainings, communicating the stake holders and by establishing media relations in timely bases. As the findings presented in Figure-27 below, more proportion of participants from EEU (60.7%) reported that their organization utilized media as a means of crisis management when compared with 28.6% ET participants. Stakeholders communications were more used by ET (32.2%) when compared with EEU (21.4%). Similarly, trainings were used by more by ET (21.4%) than EEU (10.7%). There was no any difference observed between EEU and ET in using Education as a means. Persuasion was only used by ET as 10.7% of its participants reported.

Figure-27: Percent variation among participants of the two organizations in the use of means of crisis management, Addis Ababa, June 2020



4.14.12. Summaries of comparative analysis of all variables

As it is depicted in table-5 below, only participants of Ethiopian electric utility had perceptions for the PR practices existing in their organization. Poor planning and coordination, low awareness of PR profession were common problems of Ethio-telecom while shortage of PR professionals and poor utilization of social media were more observed in Ethiopian electric utility. Higher number of respondents of Ethiopian electric utility didn't accept the existence of successful crisis management in their organization when compared with Ethio-telecom. Much higher number of participants of Ethio-telecom agreed that public relation is the heart of their organization. Regards to Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS), high number of respondents of Ethiopian electric utility didn't agree that CRS is the must duty of their organization. EEU didn't utilize new media and social media as the most information dissemination channels while ET didn't use traditional media. The role of PR in crisis management is much lower in Ethiopian electric utility than Ethio-telecom. Ethio-telecom managed crisis before occurrence than Ethiopian electric utility. As a means of crisis management, Ethiopian electric utility utilized more of media relations than Ethio-telecom; however, persuasions and trainings were more utilized by Ethio-telecom.

Table 5- Summaries of the comparative analysis of the two organizations for the selected observations, Addis Ababa, June,2020

Selected observations	Options	Ethiopian Electric Utility		Ethio-Telecom	
Perception of PR in the organization	Bad	6	21.4%	0	0.0%
	Excellent	3	10.7%	4	14.3%
	Good	19	67.9%	24	85.7%
Challenges faced in practicing PR	Coordination and planning	5	17.9%	9	32.1%
	Financial Constraint	3	10.7%	3	10.7%
	Lack of public relation professionals	7	25.0%	5	17.9%
	Low Awareness of Public Relations profession	7	25.0%	10	35.7%
	Poor Usage of Social Media	6	21.4%	1	3.6%
Successful crisis management done	No	19	67.9%	12	42.9%
	Yes	9	32.1%	16	57.1%
Public relation is the heart of the organization	Agree	8	28.6%	17	60.7%
	Disagree	5	17.9%	1	3.6%
	Neither agree nor disagree	9	32.1%	2	7.1%
	Strongly agree	5	17.9%	6	21.4%
	Strongly Disagree	1	3.6%	2	7.1%
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is must duty of the organization	Agree	13	46.4%	16	57.1%
	Disagree	5	17.9%	1	3.6%
	Neither agree nor disagree	3	10.7%	1	3.6%
	Strongly agree	7	25.0%	8	28.6%
	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%	2	7.1%
Crisis identification mechanisms	Market research	4	14.3%	3	10.7%
	Media monitoring	19	67.9%	17	60.7%
	Meeting key stakeholders	5	17.9%	8	28.6%
Mostly used Information dissemination channels and tools	Brochures and pamphlets	3	10.7%	2	7.1%
	Meetings	3	10.7%	2	7.1%
	Social media	0	0.0%	4	14.3%
	Traditional media	3	10.7%	0	0.0%
	Using the above all channels/tools	19	67.9%	20	71.4%
Frequent activities of the PR units	All the below listed activities	15	53.6%	18	64.3%
	Preparation of audiovisual materials	3	10.7%	2	7.1%
	Preparation of speech	2	7.1%	0	0.0%
	press release and media relations	3	10.7%	4	14.3%
	Publications of Magazine and newspaper	2	7.1%	1	3.6%
	Social media activities		3	10.7%	3
ole of PR in crisis management	High	5	17.9%	6	21.4%
	Low	7	25.0%	1	3.6%
	Medium	14	50.0%	10	35.7%
	Very high	2	7.1%	9	32.1%
	Very low	0	0.0%	2	7.1%
Timing of crisis management	After the crisis	15	53.6%	13	46.4%
	Before the crisis	4	14.3%	8	28.6%
	During the crisis	9	32.1%	7	25.0%
Means of crisis management	Education	2	7.1%	2	7.1%
	Media relations	17	60.7%	8	28.6%
	persuasion	0	0.0%	3	10.7%
	Stakeholders communications	6	21.4%	9	32.1%
	Trainings	3	10.7%	6	21.4%

4.15. Key Informant Interview with PRs practitioners of the organizations

The main purpose of this key informant interview is to have a full picture on the practices and challenges of public relations in the two organizations. Due to the pandemic of COVID 19, the key informant interview was conducted via telephone call recording and face-to-face with target populations. Open-ended, unstructured questions were prepared and used to facilitate the qualitative discussions. In the Key Informant Interview, four interviewees of two the organizations were participated. They had roles and responsibilities directly related with Public Relations.

4.15.1. Perception of public relation

According to informant A from ET, there was no problem concerning the attitude of the workers towards the public relation practitioners. He said *“Almost all the workers have a positive attitude for us”*.

Informant B from ET had also strengthen the idea of Informant A. As for him some years ago the public relation office of ET was not in a good state. He also added that the public relation department became part of the dominant coalition after it was newly structured as Division. Generally speaking the two informants from ET agreed over the positive perception of the profession. In the other side of the page, Informant A from EEU believes that there were some gaps about the perception of their profession as it was seen by the workers of the organization. On the same ground Informant B from EEU consolidates the idea of Informant B had the following to say

“Totally the profession of public relation and our company diminished drip by drip after the late communication head of the Ethiopian Electric Authority left the organization. It is after him that the public relation officers join our institution under political assignments.”

4.15.2. The role of the public relation in the organizations

Informant A from ET said the communication division is seen like the deputy director of the organization. As for him the division got the mandates of coordinating others divisions like in the issues of national affairs communication. The communication division head was also the member of executive management board and has got enough say in all matters which need decision. The same idea was raise by Informant B from ET. He said

“Before the new structure is crafted all the internal communication affairs is under the human resource department but now the organization put all the communication units under its direct supervision and leveled it as a core division section so that the division head participate in the executive management board.”

In matters of decision making the EEU communication head was also the member of the dominant coalition. Both informants from EEU confirmed the researcher that the communication heads participated in the top management meetings. However, Informant B didn't appreciate the mere participation of the communication head on the top management meetings. He also mentioned that the communication division is not as power full as the other divisions like the finance one. As for his view, the division shouldn't be a simple recipient of what is just dropped from the top management

4.15.3. Frequently done activities

Public relation tools are the main meanness of the PRs practitioners to disseminate information both inside and outside of the organizations. ET uses various tools of communications. In this case, Informant A from ET said that they use different communication tools like press releases, press conferences, meetings. They also used the social media like Facebook frequently. On contrary to this idea, Informant B from ET raised the lack of the former publication of the organization like pamphlets and magazines having said the following

“We don't have any publications like magazines and a pamphlet like the previous times. It is replaced by the digital media. We have also audiovisual sections by which we produce mini productions”

Informant A from EEU said

“We use all the communication tools in hand as much as possible. We uploaded various educational materials using our telegram and Facebook Chanel. If there is a need to use the traditional media we arranged an interview session and deliver information this includes productions aired on the traditional media at our own airtime cost.”

Informant B from EEU widened the scope of the idea to the next top level. According to him a public relation officer should play an advisory role in smoothen the relationship between the employees and the management. He said

“We spend a lot in other communication ways like press conference and media monitoring and other similar activities.”

4.15.4. Crisis management

Crisis management entails the cautious development of strategies and proactive reaction that ensures normal business by controlling crisis from inflicting harm on the organization (Seeger and Sellnow, 2013). In order to control crisis, there should be a well-planned and coordinated communication expected to be done by the public relation practitioners. In the case of the Ethio Telecom, the communication division shared ideas and work together with other divisions to tackle the problem. Informant A shared this idea and Informant B said

“Whenever there is need of addressing the public we held a press conference and let the public know about it.in addition to this we use the new media and traditional media platforms.”

As of Informant A from EEU the public relation department of the organization used every communication tools whenever crisis happened on their organization. The informant reminds the case of the new Tariff increment the EEU made in 2011.During that period, the public relation department crafted the pre-crisis mitigation plan to control the crisis which was expected to occur because of the new increment. Informant B from EEU also added the scenario happened in ‘Harar’ electric shock death which hosted the death of 19 people. In here EEU communication department held various meetings with family of the death and the villagers before the riot cracked out of its shell.

4.15.5. Challenging Matters

The field of telecommunication has its own versatile nature and somewhat dynamic. It needs highly professional man power which could go in tune with the flicking nature of the technology. Talking about this, Informant A from ET believes the organization don’t have enough of such workers. According to the Informant A getting timely information from other divisions is less in their organization. Not only this Working over false news with extreme follow ups and crafting solution for them was also the biggest problem in ET. Informant B from ET had this to say

“Most of our problems are solved after the communication department is emerged as a division head. But still we are struggling on getting timely information from co-divisions in our organization.”

EEU has many branches in all the nine regions and two administrative regions of Ethiopia. In matters of communication practices the public relation practitioner should work hand and glove to realize the essence of the profession. Taking about this informant A from EEU explained the challenge of financial constrained they face to reach all the branches. On the same page Informant B said the following in brief

“The problem is the understanding of the public relation professions in our organization both from the managerial and the technician side. Sometimes the managers asked the importance of the public relation. We don’t have any problem on planning but we have a lot remains to be done in aspects of coordination. We don’t have the right communication head that knows the profession well and studied public relation. The right person should be assigned on the right position.”

4.15.6. Corporate Social Responsibility

Communication happens inside and outside the organizations. It is often observed that daily interactions between people are a necessary part of getting the job done. As of Informants from ET; the organizations played its own role in supporting the public in various ways. The informant mentioned the most highlighted activities done by the communication division in planning and organizing events the organization has done on matters of CSR. The informant explained the various activities accomplished by the organization. According to the informant the organization donated about 100 million birr each for the effort spared on fighting Covid -19 and for “beautifying Sheger” project .The organization also awarded best female students drawn from about 846 Woredas in Ethiopia, and donated 79 million birr in service for with *Macedonia*” He added. The informants from The Ethiopian Electric Utility believe the importance of CSR for an organization and said

“It is mandatory for our organization to work in relation with the society. It is with understanding we prepared a manual on corporate social responsibilities.”

He also explained what the organization has done in aiding humanitarian organizations like *Macedonia*” and ‘Koshe’ rubbish tip area

4.16. In-depth Interview of Non-PRs practitioners of the organizations

In this section of the depth interview the researcher was keen to analyze what the other employees whose jobs are not directly related with PRs will say about the practices and implementations of PRs in their organizations. A total of four interviewees were selected to answer the depth interview questions.

4.16.1. Information dissemination

4.16.1a. Internal

One of the duties of PRs was to communicate the internal publics in order to meet the goals and visions of the organization. Informant M from Ethio-Telecom said that the PR office communicate various sub departments using all available channels. According to the informant the Gmail-outlook took the upper hand in disseminating information to the internal publics. In times of Press releases the communication division let only few employees know about the content of the press release a few minutes before the press release was done and the call center employees in turn communicated the external Public about the content of the press release when they are called to brief about the issue on the press release. On the top of Informant- M Informant - N added the employees get any information on the Gmail outlook on which the top management, middle and line managements are grouped. And with this the management received the informant on from the communication division and dispatched it to the employees to the next level.

Informant – T from EEU said

“Internally the PRs communicates the employee whenever there are issues of complains from our customers, they deliver every complaints in a printed form for the concerned departments. During times of celebrations like women’s day, the workers day of the organizations and on different humanitarian activities blood donation and tree planting movement the PRs practitioners of our organizations communicate us and prepare a stage to meet the goal.”

Informant – R from EEU also shares the idea of Informant – T and adds the need of new software plat form used only for exchanging ideas among workers without knowing the identity of the viewers.

4.16.1b. External

According to (Saunders, 1999) as companies and organizations grow globally, however, such interactions become increasingly complex. Employees may become disconnected by their place within the hierarchy, their office location, how the work is divided up or through psychological discomfort with management practices. With respect to communication flows between the corporate organization and its environment, a distinction may be made between endogenous communication flows (from inside to outside) and exogenous communication flows (from outside to inside).In a similar assumption both the organizations had endogenous and exogenous communication flows. On such cases informant M from ET explained the means of information dissemination channels the organization has. He said

“Some years ago we have only one call center which is 994 to receive any information and compliant inquiries but now we have multi channels like Facebook, SMS 8994, email address which is 994@Ethio Telecom .et and Ethio-chat room .whenever we have unique cases we communicate with the PRs and they in turn communicate the external public.”

On the external communication Informant - N suggests the following and said

“A lot remains to be done by the PRs practitioners in the case of addressing information about posed complain.”

The Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation, EEPCO spliced into two companies Ethiopian Electric Power (EEP) and Ethiopian Electric Utility (EEU) in 1992. As for the informants the PRs practices in their organization was not excellent in performance. However, they were trying their best to deliver what they can do as much as possible. Informant - T from the organization said

“In terms of power relationship our communication division is well structured; however, they should be more influential in reaching the external public, we have a call center called 990 to receive complaints from the external service but additional systems must be implemented as we are service givers for every Ethiopian.”

On this context Informant – R said

“Most People do not know the difference between EEP and EEU we do not build and maintain electric power infrastructures our organization only gives electric power services many come to my office for maintenance inquiry. Such misunderstandings of the external public occurred because of the lack of communication .so the communication division should work hard on such matters.”

4.16.2. Perception of public relation

As the profession of PRs is at its embryo stage in Ethiopia the practitioners face challenges on matters of perception towards their profession. Employees see the as a talking tool lays between the manager and the workers. On contrary some view the practitioners as a communications bridge between the managers and workers. Informant A from ET had this to say

“Frankly speaking our communication division is the one of our special divisions it is not just a symbolic representation in the organization they do both internal and external communication tasks efficiently.”

Informant – N said

“Branding is one of the strategies of ET, whenever there are duties of social responsibilities to be addressed by the CEO. They are the PRs practitioners who facilitate the communication tasks.”

Informant –T from EEU said

“Our late public relation head was very much influential everybody knows him he was taken as a model in the profession of PRs. But now I don’t think we have such an influential communication head. In the case of the power relationship the communication division of our organization is great but in the case of powerful and authorized communication head we need to work hard.”

.Informant – R added

“The employees see the PRs practitioners as the communicators of the employees and the managers after the department are structured as a communication division. I believe it is one of the core divisions in our organizations. So the PRs practitioners should exercise doing what is so needed from us and from the external publics.”

Overall, PRs of EEU communicates their employee whenever there are issues of complaints from their customers; they deliver every complaint in a printed form for the concerned departments. Likewise Ethio-Telecom has multi channels like Facebook, SMS 8994, email address which is 994@Ethio Telecom .et and Ethio-chat room whenever the staffs have unique cases, they communicate with the PRs and they in turn communicate the external public. In terms of power relationship, EEU communication division was well structured; however, it was not much influential in reaching the external public. In the contrary, the PR division of ET did both internal and external communication tasks efficiently.

4.17. Discussions

Public relations in organizations in term of work quality means assist to organization management in achieving organizational goals, believe to the transparency affairs and accountability, respect citizens' rights, identify duties and responsibilities of government, the right control of people to the work and the right people in criticize and evaluate programs and practices of the organization and having specific strategies (Gilaninia, etal, 2013). Findings of this study indicated that the PR departments of Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian electric utility had played key roles in managing issues and crisis, corporate social responsibility, organization of events. Furthermore, they conducted all the listed activities including press release and media relations, social media activities, preparation of audiovisual materials, publications of magazine and newspaper and preparation of speech. However, the roles and responsibilities of the departments were minimum in the areas of corporate social responsibility, event organization and promotion. Ethio-telecom participants had better perception of the public relation as the heart of their organization when compared with Ethiopian electric utility.

PR practitioners believe that the underlying and crucial foundation for effective PR is strong communication and ethical transparency. Through communication management and the division of responsibilities and duties among PR practitioners, this ultimately helps the organization to create healthy relationships both within and outside the organization (Al-Jenaibi, 2015). As both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study indicated that the two organizations' staffs had poor awareness about PR profession that became the top level challenge which was more common problem of Ethiopia electric utility. The management and technical staffs of the organization have less understanding about the role and importance of PR for the organization and most of the time people assigned as head of communication unit without having the PR knowledge and experience as a result the planned PR activities face a challenge in the implementation. They have also limited capacity in reaching and supporting PR practitioners who are working in each of the nine regions and two administrative states of the country.

In the contrary, planning of PR activities had not been a major issue in the two organizations but they had poor coordination and collaboration among the respective divisions in implementing the activities. Lack of PR professionals was the other observed problem in the organization; particularly, Ethio-telecom had shortage of high level professionals who can cope up with the versatile and somewhat dynamic nature of telecommunication. The organization had also difficulty of getting timely information from other divisions of the organization for action and decision making. Similarly, the two organizations had poor utilization of social media and financial constraints. They had also challenges in controlling the release of twisted and

false news from different channels with extreme follow ups and crafting solutions for them is also a problem. Poor planning and coordination, low awareness of PR profession were common problems of Ethio-telecom while shortage of PR professionals and poor utilization of social media were more observed in Ethiopian electric utility.

Several different approaches to communication are used in public relations and related fields. Three varieties are worth particular attention: information, persuasion and dialogue. These align loosely with the classic models of public relations. Informative communication plays out as press agency and public information; persuasive communication is asymmetric, with a focus on advocacy and influence; dialogic communication is a symmetric approach that is rooted in relationships (Ronald, 2008). According to this study, both Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian electric utility have used all the available channels and tools including brochures and pamphlets, meetings and media (new, traditional and social) for communicating the internal and external public.

Specifically, Ethio Telecom has about 18 thousand employees, the organization communicate all its workers through their individual email addresses. Besides, the organization use mini meetings held among employees and their direct supervisors in frequent basis. The organization has bi-annual meetings in which over 400 top management members gather and exchange information and evaluate the organization's performances and progresses. On the other hand, Ethiopian electric utility has its own communication directorate to deliver information for the internal and external publics. They use various media platforms as required depending on the audiences and contents of the messages. On top of that, the organization has used the social media, particularly, Facebook and telegram for immediate information delivery to reach the largest public.

As the means of crisis management, the two organizations utilized primarily Medias, and they also use meetings with stakeholders, trainings, education and persuasions. PR officers of the organizations follow primarily media news, documentary and other programs in order to identify any crisis potentially happening over their organization. Additionally, they identify crisis when they meet stakeholders and discuss details about their activities and explore the existence of crisis in their organization by conducting market research. However, Ethiopian electric utility utilized more of media relations than Ethio-telecom; however, persuasions and trainings were more utilized by Ethio-telecom. On the other hand, Ethiopian electric utility use all available and accessible communication tools whenever crises happened in their organization. The PR practitioners conduct pre-crisis assessment and forecast occurrences of the possible crisis and design mitigation plan.

Even though majority of the study participants believe in the role of public relation in playing a role in the implementation or management of crisis, they felt as their organization didn't conduct successful crisis management. With regard to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a resource-generating activity by creating support networks, relationships and management of perceptions in the form of social and reputational capital. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been touted as an effective management tool to strengthen the organizations' performance through a better image in stakeholder's mind and also because of their responsible behavior toward society and environment (Mohtsham and Arshad, 2012). Findings of this study showed that both organizations had history of their support of local communities in developmental issues and emergency crisis. Majority of the participants of Ethio-telecom agreed with the idea that CRS is a must duty activity for an organization.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

According to the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study

- Both organizations were able to actively and efficiently manage crisis, press release, social media activities, prepare audiovisuals, publications of magazine, newspaper and preparation of speech. However, their roles and responsibilities were limited in the areas of corporate social responsibility, event organization and promotion.
- On top of that Ethio -Telecom participants had better perception of the public relation as the heart of their organization when compared with Ethiopian electric utility.
- Management and technical staffs of the organizations had poor awareness about the role and importance of PR profession for their organization, particularly in Ethiopia electric utility.
- Both the PRs practitioners of Ethio -Telecom and the Ethiopian Electric Utility did not communicate the external publics to create awareness based on the complaints given from their customers through their channels.
- Most of the time people assigned as head of communication unit without having the PR knowledge and expertise as a result planned PR activities face challenges in the implementation.
- Ethio -Telecom had shortage of high level PR professionals who can cope up with the versatile and somewhat dynamic nature of telecommunication. Ethiopian electric utility have also limited capacity in reaching and supporting activities of the nine regions and two administrative states.
- The two organizations had also challenges in controlling the release of twisted and false news from different channels and Medias with extreme follow ups and crafting solutions for them.
- Social media utilization is poor in both organizations; especially in Ethiopian electric utility. Besides, Furthermore, both PR of Ethio-telecom and Ethiopian electric utility had financial constraints.
- Ethiopian electric utility utilized more of media relations than Ethio-telecom; however, persuasions and trainings were more utilized by Ethio-telecom.

5.2. Recommendations

In order to change and strengthen the attitude, belief and practice of public relation in both of the two organizations, the following mixed interventions are recommended:

- Both organizations should strengthen their crisis management, press release, social media activities, and publications of magazine, newspaper and preparation of speech and audiovisuals. Furthermore, PR officers and managers should plan detail activities for corporate social responsibility, event organization and promotion and monitor the implementation.
- Staffs of the two organizations, especially, Ethiopian Electric Utility should get orientation and trainings about the importance of PR for their organization. Furthermore, Management and technical staffs of the organizations should participate in planning PR activities and give priority to coordinate and support the PR unit for successfully implementation.
- The Management of ET and EEU should allot enough budget on teaching how the public should solve problems which they usually inquire through call centers and other communication platforms. Moreover ET should re launch its previous Television program used to connect its external public through traditional, Media.
- PR professionals should be assigned in their respective post considering their educational preparation and experience/expertise about public relation. Moreover, Ethio -Telecom should recruit high level PR professionals who can cope up with the versatile and somewhat dynamic nature of telecommunication and provide trainings for the existing staffs, too.
- Ethiopian electric utility should also recruit required number of PR professionals to build capacity in reaching and supporting activities of the nine regions and two administrative states. Furthermore, The PR professional should get trainings on how they can easily detect twisted and false news from different channels and Medias using technology and take required actions.
- The organizations should also use their official social Medias for their PR activity information dissemination; especially in Ethiopian electric utility. Furthermore, the management body of the two organizations should allocate enough budgets for PR activities.
- Persuasions and trainings should be applied in increasing the public awareness in both cases. Moreover, staffs of Ethio Electric Utility should be oriented about corporate social responsibility.

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Annex-1: Informed Consent Form

Addis Ababa University
School of Journalism and Communication
Public Relations and Strategic Communication Graduate Program

I am Abayneh Zewdu, a Masters student in the Public Relations and Strategic Communication at Addis Ababa University, conducting my MA thesis research as a partial fulfillment of my MA degree in my area of study. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the practice of organizational strategic communication focusing on Ethio–Telecom and Ethiopian Electric Utility in Ethiopia. This study hoped to examine the practices and implementations of public relations among employees, supervisors, and managers in Ethio-Telecom and Ethiopian electric utility. I would like to state that the response you will be providing to the question raised in the questioner will be helpful to come up with reliable findings and, therefore the student researcher kindly requests you to read all the questions and provide your genuine answers. The Information you provide in this interview will be kept confidential and will be utilized only for the purpose of the study.

Annex-1.2: Quantitative Data Collection Tool

Section-I: Identification			
101	Please indicate your gender?	Male 1 Female.....2	
102	What type of organization do you work for?	Ethio-telecom1 Ethiopian Electric Utility..... 2	
103	How long you have worked in the organization?	Less than 3 years1 5-8 years2 9- 12 years3 12-15 years.....4 16-18 years.....5 Above19 years6	
104	Educational level	Diploma..... 1 BA/BSC degree.....2 Master's degree.....3 PhD.....4	
105	Job position	Managerial..... 1 Supervisor.....2 Expert.....3 Other non-managerial position.....4	
Section-II: Organization and Work related questions			
201	What is the general perception of public relations practice and research within the organization?	Excellent.....1 Very good.....2 Bad.....3	
202	What do you think the role of the public relation in your organization?	Managerial role.....1 Technical role2 Both.....3	
203	How do you identify a crises is happened in your organization?	Market research..... 1 Media monitoring.....2 Meeting key stakeholders.....3	

204	How do you mostly disseminate information to the INTERNAL and EXTRENAL publics in your organization?	Through New media.....1 Through traditional media.....2 By brochures and pamphlets.....3 Through meetings.....4 Using the above all.....5	
205	What are the challenges you have faced in practicing public relations?	Low Awareness of PR profession.....1 Financial Constraint.....2 Poor Usage of Social Media.....3 Lack of public relation professionals.....4 Coordination and planning.....5	
206	What are the responsibilities of Public relations department?	Promotion.....1 Public information.....2 Event organization.....3 Issues and crisis management4 Corporate social responsibility5 All6	
207	Which of the activities are frequently done in your office?	Preparation of speech.....1 Preparation of audiovisual materials.....2 Publications of Magazine and newspaper.3 Social media activities.....4 All.....5	
208	Do you have crisis management team in your organization?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
209	Do you think the crisis management in your organization is successful?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
210	What is the role of public relations (PR) in the practice of crises management in your organization?	Very high1 High2 Medium.....3 Low.....4 Very low.....5	
211	When crises management is conducted in your organizations?	Before the crisis.....1 During the crisis.....2 After the crisis.....3	

212	What are the means your organization uses during crisis management?	Education1 Persuasion.....2 Media relations.....3 Stakeholders communications..... 4 Trainings.....5	
213	Does your company have a contribution for the local community on developmental issues (e.g. building of schools, clinics, planting trees etc.)?	Yes.....1 No.....2	
214	I believe public relation is heart of my organization	Strongly Disagree.....1 Disagree.....2 Neither agree nor disagree.....3 Agree.....4 Strongly agree.....5	
215	Corporate social responsibility is a must duty activity for an organization	Strongly Disagree.....1 Disagree.....2 Neither agree nor disagree.....3 Agree.....4 Strongly agree.....5	

Annex-1.3: Key Informant Interview Facilitation guide

1. How do you disseminate, inform, and motivate the employees in your organization?
 2. What are the most challenging matters in your organization in practicing and implementing public relations in your organizations?
 3. How do you proceed corporate social responsibilities in your organizations?
 4. How do you manage crises as it happened in your organizations?
-