



**AN ASSESSMENT ON THE ROLE OF
SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS:
A CASE OF FACEBOOK PAGE
IN MEKELLE CITY
TIGRAY PUBLIC RELATIONS BUREAU**

Etenesh Nigussie

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES,
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

**Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
June, 2019**

An Assessment on the Role of Social Media in Public Relations: A Case of Facebook Page in Mekelle City - Tigray Public Relations Bureau

EteneshNigussie

**A Thesis Presented to the School of Journalism and Communication
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
in Journalism and Communication
Public Relations and Strategic Communication Program**

**Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
June, 2019**

Addis Ababa University
School of Journalism and Communication

**An Assessment on the Role of Social Media in Public
Relations: A Case of Facebook Page in Mekelle City -
Tigray Public Relations Bureau**

SIGNED BY THE EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Chair of department or Graduate Coordinator

Abstract

Public relations professionals largely view social media specially Facebook as a “cost effective way to receive greater reach for research and timely targeted dialogue. The current study aimed at finding out the use of Social Media in Public Relations, a case of Facebook in Tigray Public Relations Bureau. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the qualitative method, in-depth interview as a data gathering tool was employed. For the quantitative method, questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool. The questionnaire was distributed to 72 PR practitioners selected participants. Obtained data were analyzed through statistical percentage for quantitative and thematic description for qualitative. The analysis of the data reveals that social media, especially TPRB Facebook page is very important for communication, as it enables ordinary people to access incidents throughout the globe; it also networks the people cheaply and easily. The data indicates that participants of this study use TPRB Facebook page to get latest information about the current economic, social and political issues, to interact with people and to share information for the state government. It was found that with all its importance and function, TPRB Facebook page applied two-way communication tools. Based on the findings, some recommendations are suggested.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thanks to Almighty God for his blessing and help from the beginning to the end of my stay in this academic program. I would also be glad to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciations to my advisor, Amanuel Geberu (PHD), for his unreserved effort in providing me with all the necessary guidance and encouragements that contributed a lot to the successful completion of the study.

My special gratitude goes to Instructor Binyam Debela who helped me during the quantitative data analysis using SPSS software. I would like to thank my families for their support and encouragement they have given me throughout my academic life and I hope that they will be proud of my achievement. My mother Abrehet Redae also deserves my special respect and appreciation for her love and prayers. And my Son Dr. Binyam Teklehaimanot also deserves my special thanks and appreciation for his contribution in improving the quality of this work.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mengistie Rebsso, Dr. Tadesse Hailemariam and Dr. Gidey Yirga for their generous time and the many good constructive suggestions while I'm working the research project proposal. Also I would like to acknowledge the Journalism and communication department academic staffs of Addis Ababa University including professor Tonveen for sharing us his knowledge and good experience during our stay of two years. My special thanks goes to the Tigray Public Relations Bureau Deputy head Mr. Hadush Kahsu; Directorate of guiding and Capacity building of media and PR Mr. Gizachew Girmay; PR team Leaders; Facebook page teams; Journalists of "MEKALIH" News Paper, and also all IT and web administrators and PR experts, who participated in filling the questionnaire and participate in the interview and FGD as well.

I will never forget the contribution of the Managers and Journalists from different Media such as Tigray Mass Media Agency, Weyin, FBC, FM Radio104.4, and DWET for devoted their time in completing the questionnaires. I would also like

to extend my heartfelt gratitude to those who cooperated in providing me access to the data relevant to make this study a reality. I thank to Mr. Selomon Abadi, Mr. Awetehegn Birhane, Mr. Abel Guesh, and Mr. Nega Zeruu, Dean of Global school of Journalism and communication. I would like to thank Mr. Luel kinfu, Mr. Kiflom G.Tekle, Mr. Hagos sibhatu, Mr. Samuel Weldu, and others for their encouraging words and comments when necessary. My friends and colleagues in the school of Journalism and communication were also helpful in sharing a wonderful life with me during our classes.

Finally, I would like to thank my relatives Dr. Tsegay W.Mariam, Dr.Mulu Nega, Mr. Fiseha Legese, Mrs. Abeba Teklu and others for being my source of strength and support.

Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this research paper is my original work and that all sources of the materials in the research paper have been duly acknowledged. The matter expressed in this research paper has not been submitted earlier for award of any master degree, degree or diploma to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contents

List of Figures	ix
List of Tables.....	ix
Lists of Acronyms	ix
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.3. Research Questions	6
1.4. Objectives of the Study	7
1.4.1. General Objective	7
1.4.2. Specific Objectives	7
1.5. Significance of the Study.....	7
1.6. Scope of the Study.....	8
1.7. Limitation of the Study	8
1.8. Definition of terms	8
1.9. Organization of the paper.....	8
CHAPTER TWO - REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	10
2.1. Conceptual Framework.....	10
2.2. Online Public Relations using Social Media.....	13
2.3. Facebook as a Public Relations Tool	14
2.4. Public Relation Model	16
CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	18
3.1. Research Design and Approach.....	18
3.2. Data types and Sources	19
3.3. Sampling Technique	19
3.4. Sample Size determination.....	20
3.5. Data Collection Instruments	20
3.6. Methods of Data Processing and Analysis	21
CHAPTER FOUR - RESULT AND DISCUSSION	23
Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion	23
4.1. Demographic information.....	23
4.2. Existing practices of TPRB	25
4.2.1. How often use TPRB Facebook page	29

4.2.2. The Kind of Social Media Most Use	30
4.2.3. TPRB Facebook Page Design is good enough?	30
4.3. The major contents uploaded on the TPRB Facebook page	31
4.3.1. TPRB Mission, Vision and Values are being reflected in its use of face book page	31
4.3.2. The Role of TPRB Facebook page in promoting communication between the people and state government	31
4.4. Challenges and Opportunities of TPRB Facebook page	32
4.4.1. Challenges of TPRB Facebook page.....	32
4.4.2. Opportunities of TPRB Facebook page	32
4.4.3. The Advantages of TPRB Facebook Page for the region	33
4.4.4. Suggestion for the future of TPRB Facebook Page.....	33
4.5. Response from the Interviewee	33
4.6. Focus Group Discussion Response.....	46
CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION.....	51
5.1. Conclusion.....	51
5.2. Recommendation.....	51
Reference:	54
Appendices	68

List of Figures	Page
Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents	28
Figure 4.2: Age distribution of respondents	29
Figure 4.3: Length of service of the respondents	29
Figure 4.4: Educational Status of the Respondents	30
Figure 4.5 Existing Practices of TPRB Facebook page	32

List of Tables	Page
Table 4.1: How often use TPRB Facebook page	35
Table 4.2: The Kind of Social Media Most Use	36
Table 4.3: TPRB Facebook Page Design is good enough	36
Table 4.4: TPRB Mission, Vision and Values	37
Table 4.5: The Role of TPRB Facebook page	37

Lists of Acronyms

TPRB	Tigray Public Relations Bureau
FB	Facebook
PR	Public Relation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Public relations professionals largely view social media specially Facebook as a “cost effective way to receive greater reach for research and timely targeted dialogue” (DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2011, p. 327). In addition, public relations practitioners in Fortune 500 companies believe that one of the most important functions of social media is “getting attention focused on an issue” (Lariscy, Avery, Sweetster, & Howes, 2009, p.13). Practitioners also use social media tools to promote ideas and activities and engage in a two-way dialogue with publics (Avery, Sweetster, & Lariscy, 2010). However, while social media especially Facebook present many positive opportunities for organizations, challenges remain that must be addressed.

In September 2015, Facebook said that 1.01 billion people log onto Facebook daily (daily active users or DAU), which represents a 17% increase year over year. Wherever you go, you are sure to find people using Facebook as if they were addicted to it. You can love it or hate, but you certainly cannot ignore it. It is extremely popular among the masses, and allows you to engage your audience through high-quality content in the form of posts, images, videos, infographics, and links. In order to succeed on Facebook; you will need to become a conversational brand. Only then will you be able to build a strong base of audience. Once you’ve developed that, they will be able to follow your page and receive updates about your brand as and when you post them(Pratik Dholakiya, 2016)

Apart from that, PR practitioners can also explore other features that may be helpful in engaging audiences. These include Mentions (open only to public figures), Facebook’s improved search function that makes public posts more accessible, Facebook’s shopping tab (not available to all) to partner with

marketers and leverage it for better sales, Instant Articles (for iOS) to offer valuable content to customers, and Facebook Events to manage the many events that will be organized. Additionally, Facebook's 'Donate' button, Music Stories and Facebook Professional Services are other features that can be helpful to PR professionals (Ibid).

Wright and Hinson (2009) studied extensively how social media tools are implemented in PR and they perceived social media positively with respect to strategic communication for PR professionals. In another study (Herger and Howell, 2007) on the importance of blogging in PR, research results revealed what the potential of blogs can be used for rather than what PR practitioners actually do with blogs, and showed that "from a public relations perspective, there has been limited investigation and understanding into the nature of cyberspace as a communications medium." Researchers (for example, Weber, 2007) also highlight that the communications world is increasingly moving in a digital direction and those who can grasp this transformation will be able to communicate far more effectively than those who do not. As such, and given the phenomenal usage of Web 2.0 platforms in corporate communications, it is critical for PR professionals to understand how social media works.

As the Top 20 Valuable Facebook Statistics Updated on March 2019, Facebook represents a continually evolving marketing platform and communication channel especially given the recent news coverage and insights. As routinely hear customer/prospect insights about their views of all social media channels which require making well-informed, digitally driven decisions in ways to communicate with target audiences. Worldwide, there are over 2.32 billion monthly active users (MAU) as of December 31, 2018. This is a 9 percent increase in Facebook MAUs year over year. This is compared to 2.27 billion MAUs for Q3 2018. (Source: Facebook 1/30/19) Facebook is simply too big to ignore as an on-going part of the digital communications program.

There are 1.15 billion mobile daily active users (Mobile DAU) for December 2016,

an increase of 23 percent year-over-year. (Source: Facebook as of 2/01/17)
This is hugely significant and shows the dramatic growth of Facebook.

1.52 billion people on average log onto Facebook daily and are considered daily active users (Facebook DAU) for December 2018. This represents a 9 percent increase year over year (Source: Facebook as 1/30/19). Sixty-six percent of Facebook's audience would be considered DAU versus Monthly Active Users (MAU). The Implication: A huge and vastly growing number of Facebook users are active and consistent in their visits to the site, making them a promising audience for marketing and communication efforts. Growth was experienced across all global regions for the fourth quarter of 2018.

So it is impossible to ignore the influence of social media on our society. While it took traditional media such as radio and television more than a decade to reach 50 million users, it took Facebook less than nine months to reach 100 million users (Patel, 2010). Mobile technologies including laptops, tablets and smartphones allow us to be constantly connected, which has had a dramatic impact on our daily lives. Internet and social media usage is increasingly taking place on mobile devices, particularly on smartphones. In fact, according to research firms Nielsen and McKinsey, share of internet time on social media spent on smartphones is reported as 31 percent compared to only 18 percent on PCs (Perez, 2012). Social media has changed the way society learns and communicate.

The present Tigray Bureau of public Relations has evolved over a number of years. The precursor was Tigray bureau of culture, tourism and information established in 1992 in Mekelle city which was later renamed Bureau of information in 2001.

It again changed to its present name Tigray Public Relations Bureau in 2001 E.C and started its work as a regional PR bureau since then. In accordance with article 4\3\υ\ The Tigray regional government reestablished the charter of the regional government; under Proclamation No. 215/2011 defining the powers and

duties of the executive organs of the regional government of Tigray public relations bureau having the following Mission, Vision and Core Values

Mission

To create a good regional image \reputation by insuring a fast, timely, truthful flow of information makes the relation between people & government strong and successful and having mutual understanding on main issues.

Vision

To see people with a strong sense of togetherness by insuring a fast, timely, and truthful flow of information and strengthening the relation between the people and government by the year of 2017 E.C

Core values

- Believe in the rule of law of our constitution.
- Respect workplace ethics.
- Believe that information is valuable resource.
- Provide timely and truthful information to the people.
- Value the questions and comments of the people.
- Believe the comments of our readers have a big role in insuring the quality of our work.
- Strengthen capacity building of the Bureau experts.
- Encourage creativity

Recently it has been running its duties and responsibilities having 2 directorates, and supportive bodies with a total number of male 55 female 31 total 86 employees in the year 2011 E.C. In this bureau there are different productions outlets like magazines, newspaper, brushers, yearbook, press release, website, media, internet, etc. It used to communicate and share ideas with governmental

and nongovernmental organizations and its various publics. Nowadays the bureau tries to own the sophisticated media through its website creates Facebook page called “Tigray communication Affaires”.

The website of the bureau started around 10 years with 2 web administrator experts. It gives different services like, sending and receiving messages via email, downloading newspapers every two weeks, every three months magazines and radio broadcast ones in a week, etc. and it was reactive for the above-mentioned past years. Nowadays it created its new Facebook page called “Tigray communication affairs” in February 19\2010 E.C. with 3 nonprofessional experts without organized formal team or structure. Up to now it has 58,072 likes, 66,125 followers and the number increases by the minute with different publics in the globe. Because it is interconnected with Facebook, YouTube, Awramba times, Aigaforum, Tigray on line, Selam, UTNA, and others which are actively involved using 3 languages (i.e. In Tigrigna, Amharic, & English) exchanging online service information without interruption 24/7. It serves the government and the public in politics, economy, and social issues to bring national consensus and peace for the country.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Over the last few years, it has become apparent that social media specifically Facebook has captured the fancy of most people. The extensive use of social media has drastically changed the way people communicate and share information (Dholakiya, 2016).

As social media continues to grow in usage, studies that explore the application of social Media for organizational-public relations remain scanty (Briones, Kuch, Lui & Jin, 2011). Also, the use of social media websites, particularly Facebook as a tool for public relations and how it is evaluated seem hazy, as most organizations underutilize the technology (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012) especially in the African context. Hence, this study aims to contribute to this knowledge gap by investigating how an organization uses Facebook as a public

relations tool by examining TPRB Facebook.

Social media has had a huge impact not only on people, but also on brands across industries as they devise strategies to engage their audiences and win their loyalty. Public Relations (PRs) are no different as professionals constantly seek to communicate with and hear from customers, who are ever-present and active on social media (Ibid).

However, there are unexplored issues with PR practitioners in using of the Facebook page of Tigray public relation Bureau. The website is a political, socio-economic platform and very important as such in communicating government position and developments of the day. However it needs an investigation to find out different aspects of the web pages as public relations platform. It is important to know how Facebook has been used and what the technical features are important in public relations work. It is also necessary to know whether the Bureau's mission, vision and values are being reflected in its use of the Facebook page. The student researcher assessed the above gaps which are still untouched in the study area.

To this end, the researcher interested to analyze the use of Facebook by PR practitioners in: - the case of Tigray public relations bureau in Mekelle city.

1.3. Research Questions

The study has the following research questions:

1. What are the design features and practices of the Tigray Public Relations Bureau (TPRB) Facebook page?
2. What are the major contents uploaded on the Facebook page?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities of the Facebook page?
4. To what extent does the Facebook page play its role as a public relations tool promoting communication between the people and state government as well as between the state government and outside of Tigray stakeholders?

5. What public relations model is reflected in the Facebook communication of the PR body?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The research has the following general and specific objectives;

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the use of Social Media in Public Relations, a case of Facebook in Tigray Public Relations Bureau.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- To explore the existing practices and design features of the Facebook page in Tigray Public Relations Bureau;
- To identify the major uploaded contents of Tigray Public Relations Bureau Facebook page;
- To investigate the challenges and opportunities of TPRB Facebook page;
- To examine the role of the Tigray Public Relations Bureau Facebook page in relationship and information communication between state government and regional people as well as the region and outside stakeholders.
- To determine the PR model used by the PR body?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that finding of this study is significantly providing effective information on the use of Facebook social media in Tigray Public Relation Bureau. Moreover, the Bureau can be benefited in recognizing what challenges and opportunities its Facebook page has so far. Besides, this investigation has also been significant for policy makers in adopting and implementing the standard features and practices of Facebook media in order to fill the gap in conducting its mission. The last but not the least, this paper can be used as source of material for those who are interested to conduct a relevant study for the enhancement of social media in the region.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to reveal the use of social media specifically the Facebook in Tigray region, Public Relations Bureau communication directorate. Facebook is picked due to the fact that it was found to be the most popular social networking site for the people in the sites of the study in general and to the participants of this study in particular. The thematic scope of this study is limited to the employees of the Public Relation Bureau, PR practitioners of the seven-sub cities, activists, journalists, PR professionals in the study area. Additionally, this study is geographically and conceptually delaminated.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

This research is constrained from different angles like non response of the questionnaire and irrelevant responses and delay in responding. Furthermore, the study is constrained to the use of Facebook social media of the above-mentioned organization. So, to minimize the problem of delay the researcher added more paper to replace them. And for the irrelevant response the researcher rejected them and compensate by maximizing the percentage of the relevant responses.

1.8. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A Facebook page is a public profile created by businesses, organizations, celebrities and anyone seeking to promote themselves publicly through social media.

Social media- Ouiridi et al, (2014) define social media as mobile and web-based platforms that allow users to share and add geographical information to user-generated content for purposes of collaboration and building networks and communities.

1.9. ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

This study is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter elaborates the introduction of the research: It sets out the background, statement of the problem,

research objective, research question, and significance, scope & limitation of the study. The second chapter provides the literature review of the study. The third chapter holds the methodology part which consist research strategy and design, sample size and sampling technique, data types and sources, data collection instruments, data processing and analysis. Chapter four is the analysis and discussion part in which all the data is interpreted and analyze by the researcher. Finally, the last chapter i.e. chapter five is the conclusion and recommendation part of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The researcher has tried to review different literatures which are related to the use of social media focusing on Facebook in public relations as follows:-

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Definition of Social Media

So far there has not been a very clear definition of social media among academics. One reason for this can be the fact that shape and functionality of social media depends on many factors which make it constantly change and evolve. Technological factor plays an especially important role in social media dynamics as social media development is directly dependent on the technology and platforms that enable the interactive web's content creation, collaboration and exchange by participants. According to Gillin (2009) social media is a shift in how people discover, read, and share news and information and content. Gillin further explains that social media is a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming information flow from monologue (one to many) into dialog (many to many) (Eisenhardt & Kathleen 2009).

Eisenhardt, Kathleen and Graebner (2007) identified an emerging trend taking place in online communities known as "Ground swell" in which consumers interact through web 2.0 enabled technologies. Social media that use such technologies include, but are not limited to, Facebook, LinkedIn and My Space – social networks where members can connect with each other, and such websites as YouTube, Helium, and Wikipedia that feature user-generated content. Groundswell is formed by the intersection of people, interactive technologies and online economics.

Social media is interactive in nature and is therefore known as consumer-generated media, new media or citizen media (Eikermann, Hajj & Peterson 2009).

Conventional media is company-generated and information flows in one direction i.e., messages are broadcast from company to target audience (one-to-many). In case of social media the flow of information takes the form of active communication among members of online community (many-to-many) and happens in multiple directions. In (2008) defines social media as the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into content publisher. In this definition an emphasis has been given for the capability of content creation and the understanding of the role people play in the process. According to Yin, social media is not only about people reading and disseminating information, but also how they share and create content for others to participate. Dubois and Gadde (2012) explain this phenomenon as a shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a conversational format between authors and media consumers.

Public Relation

Public relations according to Theaker (2004), is quite challenging to define as it draws on concepts and practices from several distinct arenas including management, media, communication and psychology. In Wilcox, Cameron, Ault and Agee's work (as cited in Theaker, 2004), public relations was defined as a separate management role which aids the establishment and maintenance of mutual communication channels, acceptance, concurrence and co-operation between an organization and its publics. Public relations (PR) is seen as encompassing crisis management, keeping abreast with and better responding to public trends and opinions. It also emphasizes the need for management to keep the public interests at heart, using research and ethical communication techniques as key aids.

Freitag and Stokes (2009) note that in defining public relations, three components become apparent. The first component is that of management and leadership; practitioners having access to top management and acting as though they were managers themselves. Stated another way, practitioners must have the support of top management, and public relations efforts must conform to

corporate goals. The second component involves practitioners who must execute public relations responsibilities as well as keep in touch with the organization's key publics. The final component includes the fundamental and practical competences of designing, conducting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative research.

The foregoing perspectives demonstrate the essence of public relations to organizations in their attempt to establish, maintain and enhance relationships with key publics. However, as new forms of communication develop and old forms evolve – especially with respect to the internet and social media – public relations practice seems to be headed for change.

As opposed to the traditional communications paradigm, the elements of the promotional mix such as public relations, which were largely within the control of organizations, have now become democratized as internet users can now generate and adjust content (Mangold&Faulds, 2009). User-generated content has been facilitated by Web 2.0 (Kaplan &Haenlein, 2010).

Web 2.0 is a term encompassing a second generation of internet-based and interactive applications that are developed around user-generated and user-adjusted content, such as wikis, blogs, podcasts and social networking sites. Web 2.0 allows internet users to engage in the creative process by publishing and sharing creative content as well as disseminating information (Thackeray *et al*, 2008).

With the broad range of new communication channels, public relations practitioners are faced with a daunting challenge as “internet-based social media tools such as blogs, podcasts, online video and social networks are giving voice to the opinions of millions of consumers” (Carrabis, Cass, Gillin, Nacht&Peverill-Conti, 2008, pg. 11). Kim and Johnson (2011), drawing on Solis and Breakenridge's (2009) work add that Web 2.0 and social media have widened the parameters of communication and has granted public relations practitioners various avenues for reaching publics.

From the forgoing views, public relations practitioners, such as organizations, may need to reconsider and augment their traditional approaches. The reason is that, building and maintaining relationships with key publics have paradoxically become both easier and difficult. It has become easier in the sense that more communication options are now available, but the difficulty arises from the fact that publics now have a significant amount of control over content, as opposed to traditional public relations.

2.2 Online Public Relations using Social Media

Previously in the 1980s, information channels could be split into two forms: mass communication and micro communication. Mass communication included newspapers, magazines, television, radios and other information sources shared with large groups of people in an asymmetrical or unbalanced exchange. Micro-communication on the other hand tended to deal with exchanges between individual persons and thus, was more symmetrical in its exchange (Phillips & Young, 2009).

In this current online space, public relations practice has become more transparent because communication is handled in the spotlight (that is, on the internet where everyone has democratic access). This has been facilitated by the rise of social media (Breakenridge, 2012). As defined in Chapter One, social media includes mobile and web-based technologies that construct highly engaging arenas by which individuals and communities share, create, dialogue, and adjust user-generated content (Kietzmann *et al*, 2011).

Breakenridge (2012) notes that “when social media meets PR, communication unites with technology” (p. 1). Social media causes content to be democratized, and demands a change of attitude to unite communications with collaborative technology. Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton (2012) assert that social media or social networking, such as Facebook, has afforded organizations the opportunity of engaging their stakeholders in real-time communication and information exchange.

2.3. Facebook as a Public Relations Tool

Despite the surge in popularity of social media, studies that explore the usage of social media for public relations remain few (Briones *et al*, 2011). Public relations, defined by Grunig and Hunt (as cited in Kamerer & Morris, 2011), is an organization's attempt to manage the communication between itself and its publics. Communication by a single person or organization to thousands of other individuals has been heightened by the advent of internet-based social media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas (2009) undertook a content analysis of 275 non-profit organization profiles on Facebook to assess how they used social networking sites to promote their organizational mission and programs. Among others, they sought to answer the question of how non-profit organizations incorporate relationship development strategies into their Facebook profiles. They found that the non-profits had not integrated most of the numerous interactive Facebook applications on their profile. They failed to capitalize on the interactivity of social networking, and consequently Facebook. They also rarely distributed organizational news.

McCorkindale (2010) also conducted a quantitative content analysis of 2008 Fortune 50 companies Facebook pages to assess how they used Facebook. The study analyzed 55 Facebook pages to determine what was posted or published about the company. Among other results, the findings from the study indicated that few companies were using Facebook as a channel for disseminating information. Moreover, the communication on the Facebook page was generally one-sided, resembled a monologue and thus, neglected the two-way, relationship building potential of Facebook. McCorkindale (2010) concluded that companies in the Fortune 50 were not taking full advantage of Facebook and needed to incorporate relationship building strategies on their social networking sites.

Furthermore, Briones *et al* (2011) conducted a study by interviewing forty individuals from the

American Red Cross to explore how social media is used in communication with key publics. The study sought to investigate how two-way dialogue had been accomplished primarily through Facebook. The research showed evidence that the study's participants were aware of the importance of social media, and how it could be used to build stronger relationships with publics such as volunteers and the community.

It seems that most studies recognize the relationship-building capacity of social media. This can also be applied to the sectors of this study, as they also communicate or dialogue with various key publics, using Facebook. In effect, dialogue is seemingly necessary in an organization-public relation.

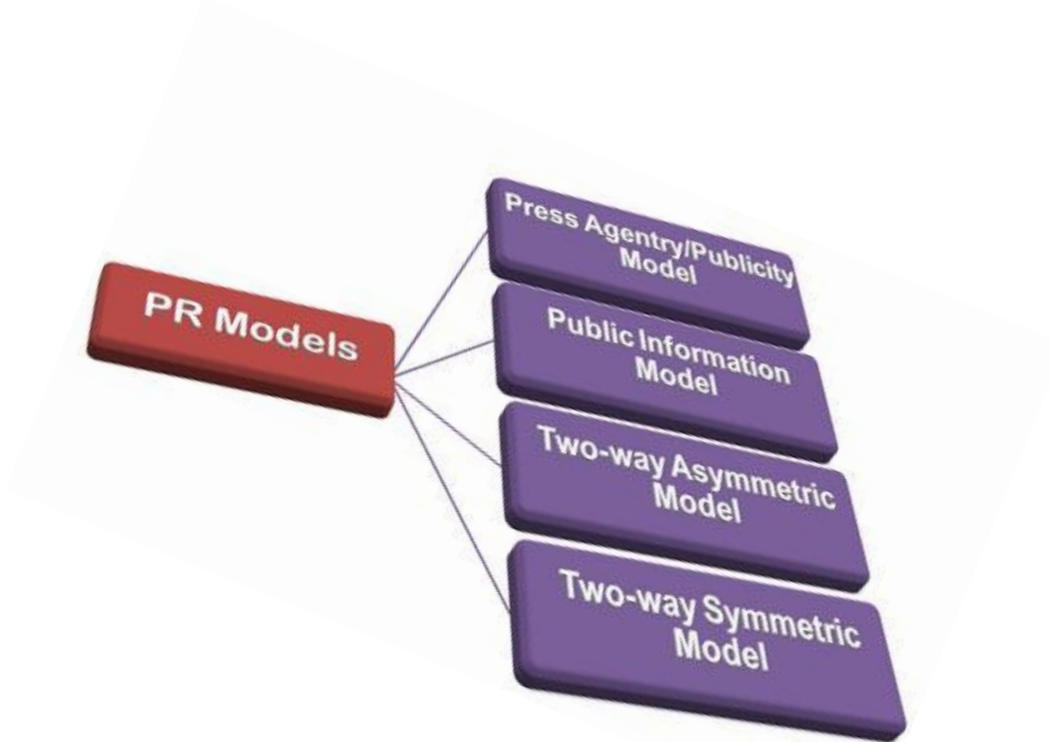
Facebook

Facebook provides social utility services that help people communicate more efficiently with their friends, families and colleagues. The technologies of Facebook facilitate the sharing of information through the social graph and digital mapping of people's real world social connections service. It was launched in February 2004. Facebook was founded by four students of Harvard University- Mark Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. It was initially called Facemash and was restricted to students of Harvard University. The use was later extended to people in the universities in Boston, Canada and Ivy League Universities. The Facemash software was written by Mark Zuckerberg. It was opened to members of the general public, of 13 years and above, in September 2006. There are over 1,679,433,530 Facebook users worldwide, out of which 9.3% (146, 637,000) of the subscribers are from Africa. There are over 4,500,000 Facebook users in Ethiopia. (Internet World Stat, March 2017).

From the above literature we can understand that nowadays technological advancement brings information in hand even at individual level. Whereas the public relations especially in our country didn't go forward as to the technological development. Therefore, assessing the use of social media specifically Facebook

in Tigray PRs bureau is vital and crucial if the Bureau has to meet its mission effectively.

2.4 Public Relation Model



Source: <https://businessjargons.com/models-of-public-relations.html>

Press Agency/ Publicity Model: The press agency model is characterized by the propaganda, wherein the press agents do not lay emphasis on research and surveys just want to manipulate the behavior of the target audience. Here, the public relations experts enhance the image of the organization among its stakeholders Viz. Customers, employees, government, suppliers and others who are directly or indirectly associated with the company through manipulation.

The Press Agency/ Publicity model is also called as P.T. Barnum model. It is a one-way form of communication wherein the information is passed from the sender to the receiver without giving much consideration to the opinions of the

receiver. Thus, the companies hire the PR experts to send out the strongly positive message about the company and its offerings and create a favorable image in the minds of customers through arguments and reasoning.

Public Information Model: This is yet another one-way form of communication method wherein the PR expert shares the meaningful information about the organization and its offerings to the prospective audiences. Here also, the research and survey are not conducted to ascertain the efficiency of the message content and its effectiveness on the customers.

The purpose of this model is to educate the customers about the organization and its issues and lay much more emphasis on truthfulness than in the press agency. Here, the PR experts rely greatly on the press release, video release, company brochures, newsletters, magazines, etc. to reach the prospective customers at regular intervals for positioning the brand image in their minds.

Two-way Asymmetric Model: This model is developed by Edward. L. Bernays. As the name suggests, this model supports the two-way communication between the sender and the receiver, but however the communication is not balanced. This is because the PR experts position the image of the organization and a brand in the minds of the customer through manipulation and forces them to behave in a manner as expected by them. Thus, the objective of this method is to understand the psychology of the customers and manipulate it accordingly so as to get the favorable reactions.

Two-way Symmetric Model: This is the ideal model of public relations wherein the free flow of information between the organization and its stakeholders is facilitated. Here, the emphasis is greatly laid on building understanding between the organization and its public and the conflicts are resolved through discussion and communication.

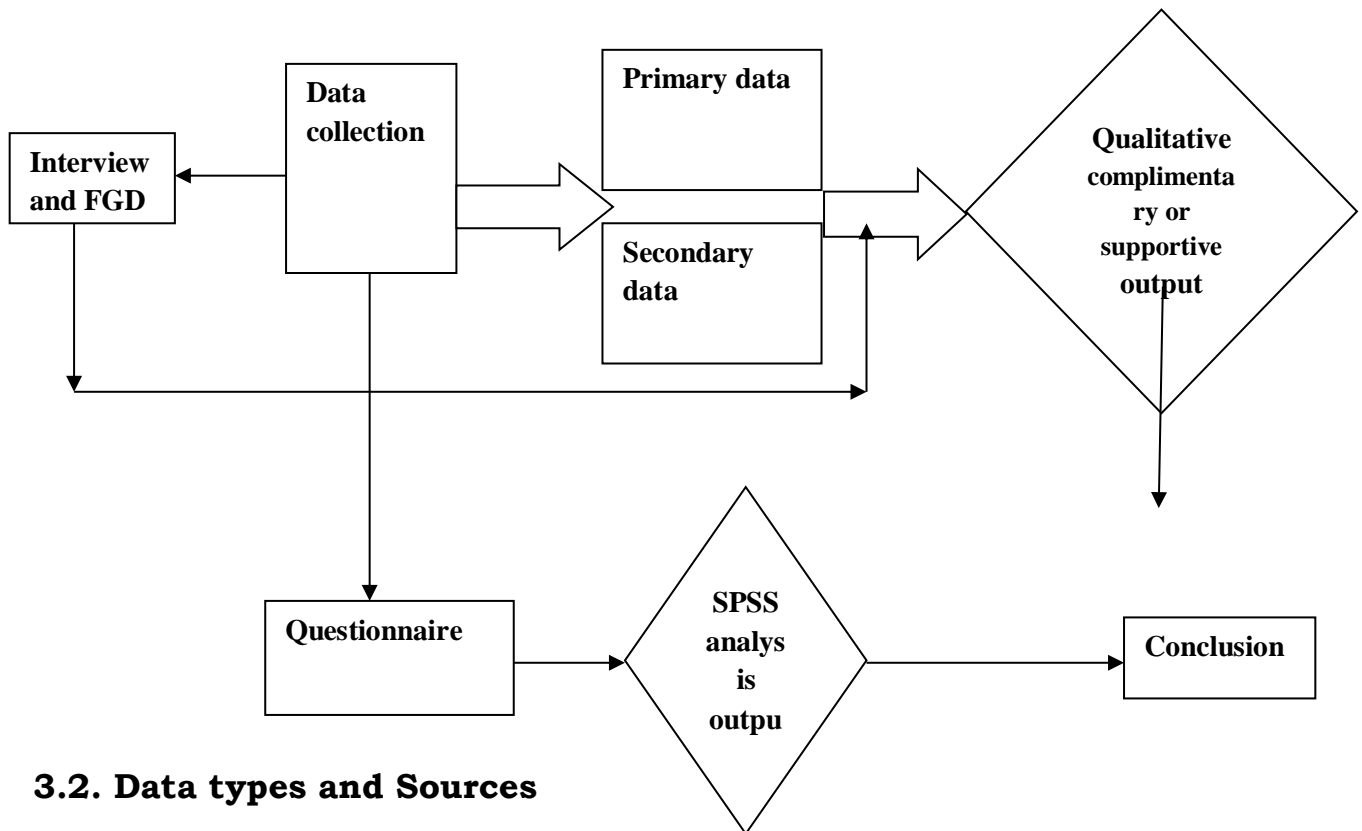
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design and Approach

While for the purpose of triangulation of data, mixed research approach used in this study. Accordingly, the research employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative approaches to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinion and behavior while quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount which is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity (Kothari, 2004). Moreover, this research is designed as a cross-sectional research design. This is because cross-sectional research design allows data to be collected at one point in time. The design also has greater degree of accuracy in social science studies than other design. This design perfectly goes hand in hand with the purpose of this research, i.e. assess the practice and content of social media specifically “Tigray communication affairs Facebook page” in the TPRB from 2017-2018.

Road map of the study



3.2. Data types and Sources

As confirmed on the above, the study is used a combination of qualitative and quantitative information from primary sources. Primary and secondary data are used as a source of data in this study. The primary sources were collected from Staff members, Frontline Public relations practitioners, popular activists. In addition to that, the secondary data is collected from Publications books, articles, journals and research works on the effect of social media in public relations.

3.3. Sampling Technique

Most important, a preliminary assessment was conducted deeply. This is expected to generate over all information on the profile of the respondents in the given area. To this end, a guideline that requires both quantitative and qualitative information is prepared and employed to serve as a tool for determining sample size, combination of respondents, information type, and the practical organization of the data collection activities.

Selection of Key Informants

The researcher used the Judgmental (Non probability) sampling method for the selection of key-informants, for an interview. Here, the specific individuals to be included as key informants of the study was decided by the researcher based on certain criteria. These are Bureau head, Deputy Bureau head and process owners of the Bureau because they are relevant for generating the required information.

3.4. Sample Size determination

The study is designed to be a mixed for the qualitative one; sample size is determined by the judgment to be made by the researcher herself; in relation to this judgmental sampling is used and used 8 interviewees for the interview part. In selecting individuals for the interview age, educational status, work experience, etc. it would take in to account. On the questionnaire part, since the population size is 72, the researcher considered all of them as study participants. Accordingly, the researcher used censes sampling method for this study.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

For quantitative data

A. Questionnaire

In this research questionnaires were distributed to all respondents as a quantitative approach to cross validate the qualitative one. Accordingly, the researcher employed open and close ended questionnaires for this study and this is used as a main data collection tool because it is easier to handle and simpler for respondents to answer with in short period of time. Therefore, questionnaire survey is employed to collect quantitative data from PR practitioners and specific techniques also used for each specific objective.

The researcher administered research questions for the listed respondents. The researcher also distributed some of the questionnaire giving to 10 respondents. (2 PRs experts from TPRB, 3 from PR professionals (from Mekelle university PR

instructors)3 journalists, 2 from PR practitioners total 10 for pilot testing whether or not the questionnaire contains valid information and related with the objectives of the study.

For qualitative data

A. Key informant interview

KII is conducted to generate in-depth information with regard to the use of social Media, about the uploaded contents, the design feature of the Facebook page, PR practitioner's attitudes, feelings, perception and experiences in using of social Media specifically TPRB Face book page. Because it is suitable when the researcher has a series of open-ended questions and wishes to encourage research participants to explore the issue in a very detail manner (Jenny, 1995). The researcher therefore conducted interview with 3 key informants, 3 IT experts and web administrators, 2 non-professionals to PR but involved in the Facebook page. Totally 8 participants were participated who are purposively selected. The expected duration of the discussion was 45 Minutes and responses are recorded. The key informants, practitioners and IT professionals are included regarding to website designing. According to Flick et al. (2000:10), gaining adequate qualitative data requires that research participants pre-selected, based on their level of knowledge and experience.

B. Document analysis

This data gathering tool is also very important to get the real information from the documents of the annual reports of public relation bureau communication department. Accordingly, this is also undertaken by the researcher.

3.6. Methods of Data Processing and Analysis

For analyzing the data, the research employed both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. As a result, the qualitative data has analyzed by making use of interpretations. The quantitative data also analyzed by making use of descriptive statistical tools such as (the mean, percentages, frequency, table etc.) this is help for the researcher to clarify more in easy way, without

using any complicated mathematics formula. And Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 employed to analyze the collected data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

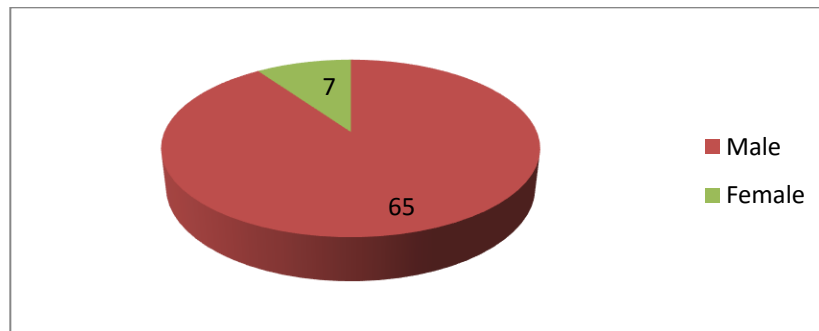
4.1. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

This chapter tries to present, analyze and interpret data. Data are analyzed in association with the research questions raised in chapter one. The chapter has two parts. The first part is about data presentation while the second part deals with data analysis and discussions. Finally, summary of findings with respect to the same issue were analyzed and discussed in a way the researcher could grasp ideas leading to the next conclusion section.

4.1. Demographic information

4.1.1. Gender distribution of respondents

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents (N=72)

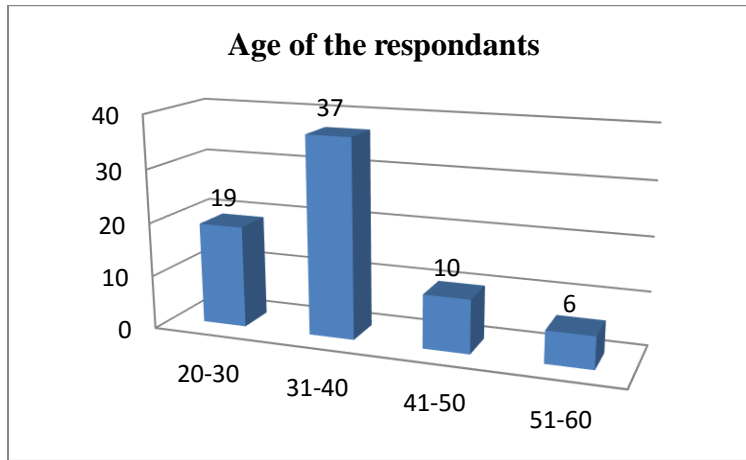


Source: Own survey, 2019

As it is seen from the figure above, the majority of respondents are males 65(90.3%) and fewer females 7(9.7%) participated in this study. This may indicate that a few females are participated in public relation activates. Though, in this research gender factor was an issue, but their participation still remains less when compared to their male counterparts. What is predicted from this finding is that the participation of females in PR is yet low.

4.1.2. Age distribution

Figure 4.2: Age distribution of respondents (N=72)

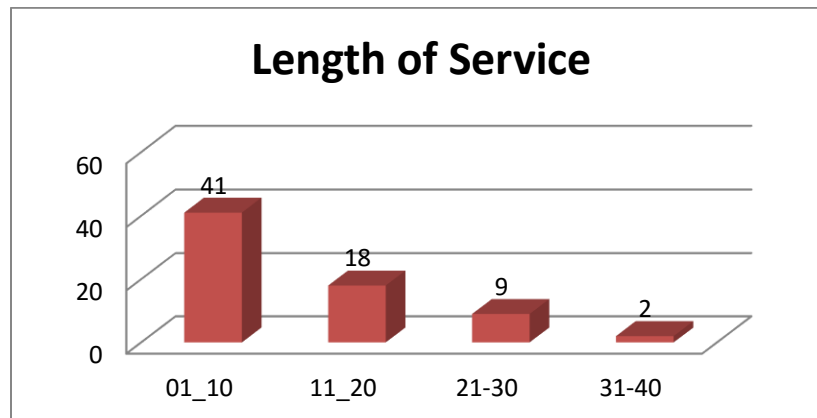


Source: Own survey, 2019

As indicated in the figure above (figure 2), the overall age range of respondents are between 31- 40 and 51-60, whereas the majority of this research participants aged between 31-40 years and small age between 51-60. This shows that the majority of users are between 31-40 years of age. This result points out that, the young adults are the central PR practitioners in the area this research covers.

4.1.3. Length of service

Figure 4.3: Length of service of the respondents (N=72)



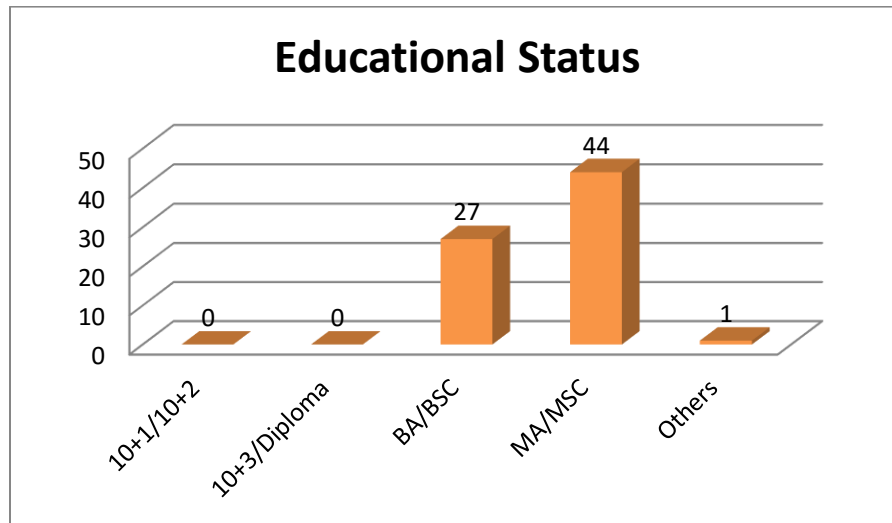
Source: Own survey, 2019

As indicated in the above figure the majority number of respondents was found

between the ranges of 1-10 years. Thus, having more experiences does not have that much relationship with this study.

4.1.4. Educational Status

Figure 4.4: Educational Status of the Respondents



Source: Own survey, 2019

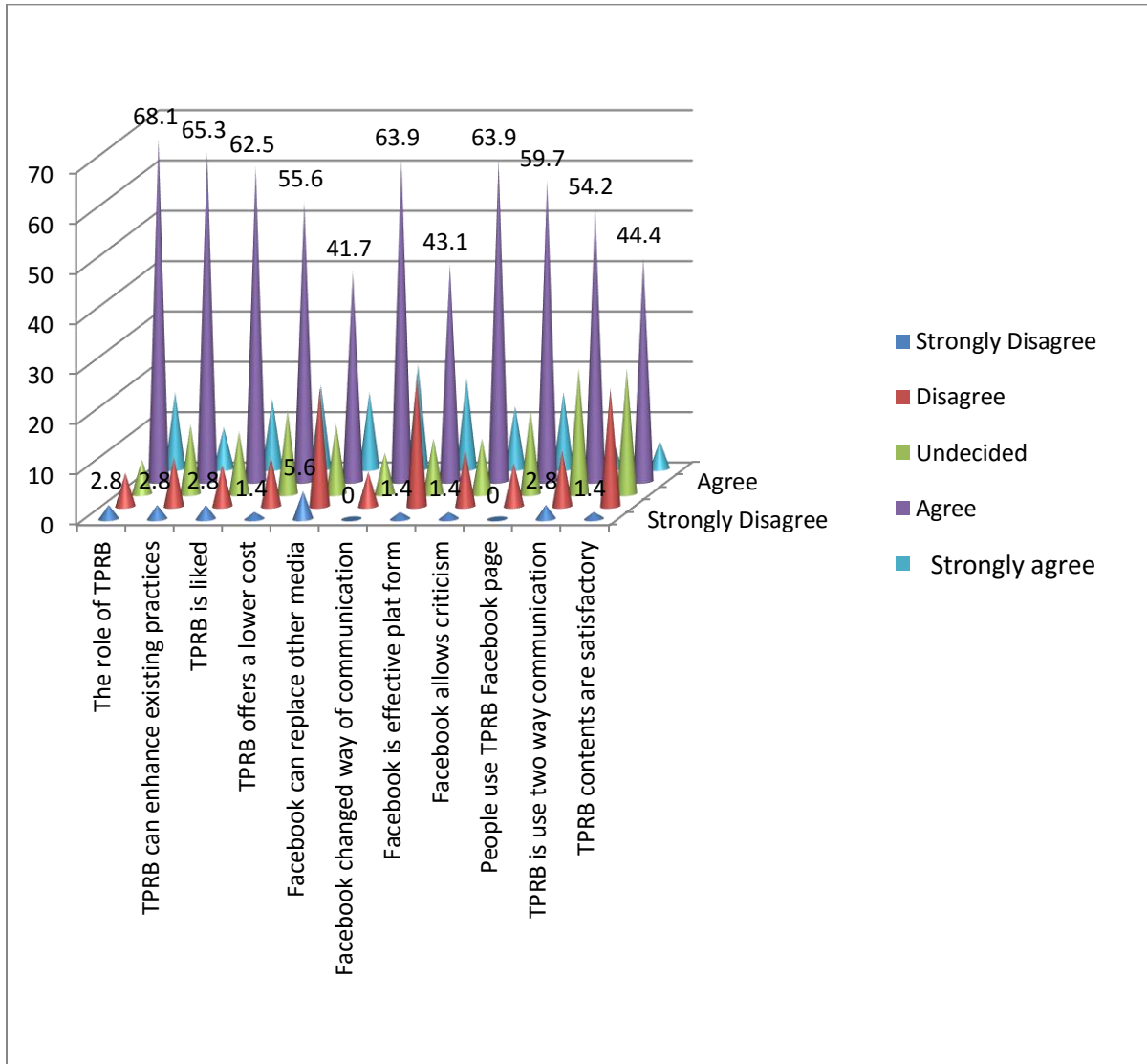
With regard to the educational level of respondents the higher number 44(61.1%); respondents have reported that they are into MA/MSC group. Whereas, there was a small number only 1(1.4%) respondent was in to others Group. Thus, these data indicated that the majority numbers of the respondents have MA/MSC. Thus, this implies these respondents attended in formal education and easily understand this study. Thus, since the majority respondent were educated, it was easy for them to adapt any circumstance in relation to PR.

4.2. Existing practices of TPRB

The researcher analyzed the existing practices of TPRB by using a Likert scale method. Using Likert scales are the popular methods of collecting data for survey, these are used for measuring attitudes which require respondents to choose a statement from a number of statements that range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' (Zikmund, 2003).

Therefore, the researcher used a Likert scale that adopted a 5 point scale for this study, instead of a 7 point scale because, 5 point scales reduce the level of frustration among respondents and increases the rate and quality of the responses (Prayage, 2007).

Figure 4.5 Existing contents of TPRB Facebook page (N=72)



Source: Own survey, 2019

Questioner one: The Role of TPRB in Information Communication

With regards to the Tigray Public Relations Bureau (TPRB) Facebook page play its role in relationship and information communication between state government and regional people as well as the region and outside stakeholders. As indicated in the above figure the majority respondents about 49 (68.1%) respondents confirmed that agreed. This was also consolidated by the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. But the small number 2 (2.8%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Questioner two: TPRB Facebook Page enhances Existing Practices

This refers to the TPRB Facebook page has enhanced the existing practices of Public Relations using Facebook. From the above figure, results show that about 47 (65.3%) respondents have agreed. On the other hand, about 2 (2.8%) respondents have strongly disagreed. Thus, this implies that the TPRB Facebook page has enhanced the existing practices of Public Relations by using Facebook.

Questioner three: TPRB Facebook page is liked?

In confirming the Facebook page of Tigray Public Relations Bureau is liked? As stated in the above figure the majority number about 45 respondents (62.5%) were agreed in TPRB Facebook page is most liked page. However, about 2 (2.8%) respondents have strongly disagreed. Thus, this implies that greatest number of the respondents was agreed that TPRB Facebook page is liked by most people.

Questioner four: TPRB Facebook page lower cost way of relationship

According to the above figure implied that 40 respondents (55.6%) agreed on the issue of Tigray Public Relations Bureau Facebook page offers a lower-cost way of relationship building between organizations and the public, and 1 (1.4%) respondent asserted that strongly disagreed. The implication of this data is TPRB Facebook page offers a lower – cost way of relationship building between organizations and the public.

Questioner five: TPRB Facebook page can replace other social media in message delivering

As shown in the above Figure, about 30 (41.7%) respondents have agreed in the Tigray Public Relations Bureau Facebook page can replace other media in message delivering to target audience. However, about 4 (5.6%) respondents confirmed that strongly disagreed with above ideas.

Questioner six: Facebook is an effective platform

In regards to Facebook is an effective platform in approaching target audience compared to other media, as portray in the above figure, about 31 (43.1%) respondents have agreed, whereas about 1 (1.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that the majority of respondents has agreed on the idea of Facebook is an effective platform in approaching target audience compared to other media.

Questioner seven: Facebook allows criticism

According to the above figure shows those 46 (63.9%) respondents have agreed in Facebook allows an organization to respond instantaneously towards criticisms. However, about 1 (1.4%) respondents have asserted that strongly disagreed. Therefore, the greatest number of respondents has agreed on the aforementioned issues.

Questioner eight: People use TPRB Facebook page

As depicts in figure about 43 (59.7%) respondents have agreed on the question of People use Facebook to get information from TPRB Facebook page. However, about 6 (8.3%) respondents confirmed that they did not agree on use of Facebook to get information from TPRB Facebook page.

Questioner nine: What kind of way of communication TPRB Facebook page is used?

With regards to the above question as indicated in the above figure the majority respondents about 39 (54.2%) respondents confirmed that they agreed the TPRB Facebook page used two way of communication. This was also consolidated by the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. But the small number 2 (2.8%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Questioner ten: TPRB Facebook page contents are satisfactory

As indicates in the above figure about 32 (44.4%) respondents asserted that the Contents of TPRB Facebook page is satisfactory. But, about 1 (1.4%) respondent assured that strongly disagreed with above point. Thus, the majority numbers of the respondents are confirmed that the TPRB Facebook page contents are satisfactory.

4.2.1. How often use TPRB Facebook page

Table 4.1: How often use TPRB Facebook page

Items	Frequency	Percent
Never	1	1.4%
Rarely	7	9.7%
Sometimes	24	33.3%
Often	13	18.1%
Always	25	34.1%
Total	72	100%

Source: Own survey, 2019

The above table indicated that 25 (34.1%) respondents assured that used TPRB Facebook page always. But, there is only one respondent he never used TPRB Facebook page. Therefore, TPRB Facebook page has many users used always.

4.2.2. The Kind of Social Media Most Use

Table4.2: The Kind of Social Media Most Use

Items	Frequency	Percent
Instagram	1	1.4%
YouTube	1	1.4%
Facebook	66	91.7%
Total	68	95.5%

Source: Own survey, 2019

The above table shows that the majority 66 (91.7%) respondents confirmed that Facebook is among one of social media frequently used than other social media like Instagram and You Tube. Therefore, Facebook has a vital role in public relation.

4.2.3. TPRB Facebook Page Design is good enough?

Table4.3: TPRB Facebook Page Design is good enough?

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	40.3%
No	40	55.6%
Total	69	95.9%

Source: Own survey, 2019

As stated in the above table the majority 40 (55.6%) respondents asserted that TPRB Facebook Page Design is not good enough. The reason behind that as confirmed by the respondents are it is not attractive, ordinary, lack of professionals and standards not included all Facebook utility and the logo layout and integration problems. However, about 29 (40.3%) respondents asserted that TPRB Facebook Page Design is good enough. Because, it is easily accessible, the news is short and precise and it has organized idea and expressive photographs.

4.3. The major contents uploaded on the TPRB Facebook page

According to the respondents' response almost all identified that the most contents uploaded on the TPRB Facebook pages are political agendas of the government. However, some respondents confirmed that press release, conferences, expire news, socioeconomic agendas are the contents which uploaded on the TPEB Facebook page. Therefore, political statements of the government are the major contents uploaded on the TPRB Facebook page.

4.3.1. TPRB Mission, Vision and Values are being reflected in its use of face book page

Table 4.4: TPRB Mission, Vision and Values

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	34	47.2%
No	33	45.8%
Total	67	93%

Source: Own survey, 2019

As the above table indicates 34 (47.2%) respondents reported that agreed with TPRB Mission, Vision and Values are being reflected in its use of face book page. But, the rest 33 (45.8%) respondents reported did not agreed on the TPRB Mission, Vision and Values are being reflected in its use of face book page. Thus, TPRB Mission, Vision and Values are being reflected in somehow in its use of face book page.

4.3.2. The Role of TPRB Facebook page in promoting communication between the people and state government

Table4.5: The Role of TPRB Facebook page

Items	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	69.4%
No	19	26.4%
Total	69	95.8%

Source: Own survey, 2019

As it is portrayed in table, the majority respondents 50 (69.4%) confirmed that

TPRB Facebook page play its role as a public relation tool in promoting communication between the people and state government as well as between the state government and outside of Tigray stakeholders. To the above idea, 19 (26.4%) respondents confirmed that TPRB Facebook page did not play any role as a public relation tool in promoting communication between the people and state government as well as between the state government and outside of Tigray stakeholders. Therefore, the role of TPRB Facebook page in relation to the aforementioned issues is very weak.

4.4. Challenges and Opportunities of TPRB Facebook page

PR is no easy job to handle. It never has been, but due to the rise of the Internet and social media, it seems to have become increasingly challenging to get the right story to the right people. Of course, Public Relations are an amazing field to work in, but there are some tough challenges PR professionals face.

4.4.1. Challenges of TPRB Facebook page

To regain the confidence of consumers, who trust peer – to – peer recommendations and expert opinions more than publicity, organizations and brands must now appeal to influencers to distribute and amplify their message. With ad blocking options, the relationship with influencers is even more important than the issues of public relations.

The major challenges of TPRB Facebook page reported by the majority respondents are:

- Lack of competency (knowledge, attitude and skill), available technologies and materials
- Denied reward for those who are doing to the level of their best

4.4.2. Opportunities of TPRB Facebook page

- It is cheap and effective, provides a platform what our customer to talk with each other and helps people to participate in political agendas or current issues.

4.4.3. The Advantages of TPRB Facebook Page for the region

As Facebook has over 700 million users who spend more than 700 billion minutes a year on the site, the possibilities for a public relations campaign are endless, according to an August 2011 article by Sarah Skerik of PR Newswire. However, Skerik also reports that using Facebook for public relations can hurt a company as much as it helps. Social network users in general do not surf those sites to be bombarded with ads, so you need to educate yourself on your audience before you can promote your product or service on Facebook.

Accordingly, the majority respondents reported that TPRB Facebook page has the following advantages for the region.

- It provide current information to its followers
- All the information uploaded may help to balance misinformation and disinformation which are disseminated by the so called Activists.
- It can counter all lies, rumors and can help on building consensus and reflecting the positive image of the Tigray people and their region.
- Encourage relationship between peoples and government officials.

4.4.4. Suggestion for the future of TPRB Facebook Page

- It needs fundamental reform and restructuring its all aspects otherwise it will be out of competition. Therefore, every stakeholder and all concerned bodies should stand on the side of the new leadership on undertaking the proposed reform.

4.5. Response from the Interviewee

In this research mixed methods of data collection were applied. Under qualitative part in-depth Interview is utilized. So, as it is already stated in chapter three, in-depth interview involved 8key informants with different backgrounds and experiences. Informants are grouped in to two categories as experts (key informants) and social media popular activists. Whether it is semi-structured or

in-depth, interviews are made to supplement the questionnaire by filling the gaps left not covered adequately as it simply attempts to address only basic questions.

4.5.1. Key informants' interview

In the in-depth interview session, the interviewees were asked about whether latest information continuously uploaded for readers\viewers in the TPRB Facebook page

I have interviewed four key informants and one expert from TPRB Bureau. And their response is analyzed as follows:- To this matter, at the Tigray Regional State Public Relation Bureau deputy head was asked about the first question of interview guide.

What the major contents are and whether latest information continuously uploaded for readers\viewers in the TPRB Facebook page, below is the answer. First I have interviewed interviewee one, he stated that they are uploading and disseminating information daily. They post photographs with caption, scripts, information and the like. But he explained that he was not satisfied with those contents. Because, as to him they know they are in the 20 1st century .Competition is very high and they have to load a lot of information in quality and quantity manner to compute with Facebook pages of other countries. As much as possible they are trying to upload varieties of information concerning politics, economic as well as cultural issues of the Tigray region (Communication Deputy Head, personal interview, May 1st, 2019).

On the other hand, Directorate of capacity building empowering media and PR said that, they started this Facebook page recently and while information is uploaded, it is difficult to say it is uploaded regularly relative to the current level of social media and needs of the users. As to him, they are trying to upload different kinds of contents regularly but, since they don't have a lot of followers (79,000 most recently) and also because some of these contents are uploaded via their YouTube page the contents are not being uploaded as much as they should

be (personal interview, May 02, 2019).

According to his point of view, the page mainly uploads big agendas and events which may be helpful and interesting to politicians, policy setters and managers of different bureaus. But in relation the uploaded contents may be rather strong and may not be appealing to the younger age group of population. So he thought that, the contents that they post should be audience specific posts .Meaning they should know what to post to politicians, educated people, and the youth etc. (Personal interview, May 03, 2019).

According to interviewee five and most of the respondents replied that there are uploaded different contents like videos but majority uploaded content is event based. He thought that recently there is improvement and it depends on the type of the posts to be uploaded. But in other types of posts it may not be that much satisfactory and the posts lack bit attractiveness (Personal interview, May 03, 2019).

Another interviewee for the study replied that, “I think up until 01 year ago the runners of the page and the bureau didn’t really believe Facebook was that much powerful tool of releasing information and communicating with the general public and used to tell their followers not to believe anything being posted on Facebook let alone post latest information themselves. In the past year, there has been an improvement but it’s still very weak page and I don’t see a lot of latest information being posted there”.

“I think what people using Facebook find most interesting and time worthy are different videos, images and sometimes audios as they can easily get the information they need and I believe a page like this should be using such kind of ways to communicate with the population but what I am used to seeing on this page is generally texts which are event based like happy holidays! (Personal interview, May 06, 2019).”

On the other hand, interviewee one and two (key informants from the bureau) believed that their viewers are interested on the current affairs. And they are also

trying to manage all the current, regional, country wide and international issues. So, when people were gave them their feedback, on the information they load mostly they are very highly interested on the current issues of the country as well as of the region. But there is lack of capacity in the manner of professionals, as well as organizational structure problems. What the office thinking is that, it needs to reform all the multimedia outreach but also the whole structure of the bureau. Then after they added some amendments are come to the organogram and they will try to designate professionals of the multimedia like web designer, web editor as well as other professionals' .So they are intended to reform the whole structure (Communication Deputy Head personal interview, May 01, 2019)

Another interviewee replied, “Yes but is mainly event based. I.e. it is mostly texts although such a platform is expected to mainly contain videos, cartoon, and pictures” (Interviewee 07, May 05, 2019).

Interviewee four replied,” Yes, we’ve started this FB page in addition to a YouTube page a year back and whenever there’s new information it’s posted within minutes” (Interviewee 04 may 05, 2019)

Are you satisfied with the contents uploaded in the Facebook page? What is good (successful) content for viewers?

As interviewee six explained,” Well, as I tried to mention earlier I’m not satisfied by the page at all because I feel like. It also needs allocating enough resources like Wi-Fi, and infrastructure to really make it a strong and powerful page that can sense the feeling of the population” (Interviewee six may 07, 2019)

Interviewee seven replied, No. we should see government stands, history of the region, language, identity. Science and technology, natural resources, in general all things that describe the region. This is the main and probably only FB page for this region (Personal interview, May 04, 2019).

According to interviewee five, No, I can’t say that because so much is expected

from such a page (Personal interview, May 04 2019).

Interviewee four replied, not completely because we still have a long way to go but we've also come so far in a short period of time. So I think its okay (Personal interview, May 05, 2019).

As interviewee three replied ,No. because as I mentioned earlier it's not doing a good job in promoting tourism, technologies, agriculture, education in general a lot of sectors (Personal interview, May 06, 2019).

Factors prevent information from reaching the audience

According to the deputy head explanation, Lack of Credibility is one of the fundamental factors that remain as a challenge in the era information society. The audience needs variety of information. The main obstacle of SM in general FB in particular is, it is suffering from fake news .Because as to him, and some people said that the 21st century is an epoch of the so called civil journalism. Everybody can have an access; can load any rumors as well as any factual information. So, the one is that the fake news are spreader ,as well as there is some information like hatred information , rumors etc. are uploaded .So, the audience is dissatisfied and anger on the rumors as well as other fake news which are uploaded on different media. In their case, he explained they are not doing that .They are trying to upload and post credible information. Because, he added their intention is not to misinform their audience. He believed they have to give the right information at the right time and at the right place. He explained, that is what they are trying to do (Communication Deputy Head, personal interview, May 01, 2019).

Another interviewee added that” the current Facebook page is not verified well, which can lead it to be easily confused with other fake pages and I stress this verification highly because it's the only way to differentiate it from fake pages” (Personal interview, May 04, 2019).

Interviewee seven stated that, generally for any FB page internet access is

mandatory .Because the target audience should be familiar with using the internet and should also have a device with an internet access. The internet connection is usually slow and also the electric power is also a problem as it comes and goes. And above all you need to understand contents that will attract and get engagement from people. Sometimes it feels like you're reading a magazine because the posts are really long and that may bore the reader (Personal interview may 04, 2019).

According to interviewee five, one is the language used by the organization may be grammatically incorrect or the information posted may be vague and confusing because I have seen this once. It was posted 2 weeks back. The main technical difficulty is the language used in the texts uploaded but the quality of the videos is outstanding. The number of followers and likes is even lower than some influential individuals in this region and this might be due to the fact that news is not posted regularly on the page (Personal interview, May 04, 2019).

Another interviewee stated that, one of the main problems is that there are as much false and offensive news as there are true. So you should know the reliable sources so that you are not fooled into believing wrong information. Also I think the rules and regulations of what to post and the like should be stronger in Facebook and social media in general. I think the government should take this seriously (Personal interview, May 08, 2019)

Technical difficulties that prevent from uploading information

One key informant from TPRB explained, number one is network in Ethiopia in general is not available to go with the highly competitive world at this time or moment. So, number one technical problem is network. The other one is materials is not available to upload here in the office. Because, they have so many constraints of materials. Such as Video and other editing machines as well as other necessary materials for the job by itself (Communication Deputy Head, personal interview, May 01, 2019).

Moreover, interviewee two added that, they do have these difficulties because at

“woreda” level they lack employees with the necessary technological knowledge and expertise in addition he explained that, lack of internet over there which makes it difficult for them. The other difficulty at the main bureau level is the lack of center information despite being bureau of information (Personal interview, May 02, 2019).

The main objective having Facebook page

Interviewee four stated that, “the objective is to inform different groups of population living here or abroad about the different activities happening in the region. Another is posting the government’s stand on different issues” (Personal interview, May 05, 2019).

According to interviewee seven, “ generally the FB page of any organization is to provide media materials such as news, information about the organization to the public and when the page is that of public relation bureau it’s expected to go beyond that to provide the government’s stands, generation shaping. But what I’m mostly accustomed to seeing on this page is providing event based information and not the things I mentioned above” (Personal interview May 04, 2019).

According to interviewee six, it’s widely known Facebook is a very popular and powerful way of socializing with people and it’s used widely all over the world and in our country as well as there are an estimated 14 million Facebook users in Ethiopia meaning any information released is at their hands for these people and others around them. So without Facebook it’s very hard to communicate with your people as an organization and government which is why US president Donald J. Trump said “I wouldn’t be a president now if not for social media” and also why the Ethiopian PM, and also the leader of TPLF Dr. Debretsion G/Michael has opened his own FB page already getting more than 74,000 likes with in the first week (Interviewee six may 07, 2019)

Advantage of social media presence for the region

Any media could play positive role in any mission it is employed for, if it is used appropriately. In this case experts at the Tigray PR Bureau and popular activists from different media were asked about the merit of SM specifically Facebook page.

Interviewee one explained, among the interesting role SM plays is that it is obvious that it is new medium. He introduced clearly about it by saying “we have to use it unless and other wise if we are trying to compute with the other world .with traditional media such as radio and TV we cannot”. Explaining this as he mentioned earlier SM in general FB in particular gives people an opportunity to promote themselves. It also gives them chance to build their positive image in the world. So, as to him, if they manipulate as well they can bring benefit to the region. They can aware that the world and the investors can came to this region. Because, at this time Tigray has a lot of potential in tourism. In this case we are not benefited in all this potentials. So, we can use it for image building. And it gives us room to reach consensus on different regional, country wide and international issues. So, it is up to us how to use it. If we use it, we are beneficiary. If we don’t use it, we will lose (Communication Deputy Head, personal interview, May 01, 2019).

Interviewee six explained it’s a very, very big tool in creating the political landscape of the region and could also be a very powerful tool in the upcoming elections. It can have a great effect into convincing the people that you deserve to win as a government (Interviewee six may 07, 2019)

Another expert replied that, conveying reliable information to the population is also help advertise different places for tourism purpose and also has economic and political advantages (Personal interview, May 05, 2019).

Interviewee three stated that, Social media has both advantages and disadvantages because it depends on the understanding of the users. Second is a lot of unethical and false information is posted on social media by so called activists which can lead to hatred among different populations. So PR may come

into use in correcting these misunderstandings which can better the social media (Personal interview, May 06, 2019).

Another interviewee from key informants said that, “there have been a lot of advantages. One is improving the people’s information level. It has also encouraged different events happening and the relationship between the populations. It has also improved the credibility of the government. We played a role in creating a positive image of our region. And above all, it has encouraged the populations and especially the youth participation in politics” (Personal interview, may 01,2019)

4.5.2. Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

One of the research questions to be addressed in this study is to find out what opportunities and challenges TPRB FB page face while using social media to implement public relations as a PR tool. Here are the opportunities mentioned by the respondents’ of the open ended questions.

(1). The main opportunity in using social media for public relations FB page is:

The presence of social media as a platform to disseminate information for the target audience and the opportunity to gather information easily from different pages created by various stakeholders and organizations and in a fast way comparing to the other means. As the interviewees, open ended questions and from the FGD have analyzed using of social media for public relations FB page has the following opportunities:

- It helps to transmit information regarding the various activities.
- It gives freedom of expression and informing of new information.
- It’s cheap and effective, provides a platform with what our customers to talk with each other, participate in political agenda.
- It increases active participation at the battle of cyber revolution to youth.

- It's main source of credible information. Not only to FB users it can be used also by media organization if they updated it frequently. Because Its information is real and fact.
- It narrows the gap of information released from the private face bookers and information from the government.
- Its alternative medium for the public to get information. Because, at this time huge number of people searching information on Facebook to get timely information.
- The time itself demands scientific technology and PR experts.
- Most people use social media. Especially for those who have smart phones.
- Because of the current issues of our country the page is acceptable by the people of the region.
- Having an appropriate time for fb use.
- It enhances public communication worldwide.
- Give fast response about current and burned issues.
- Within short period of time you can frame your message etc. are among the respondents mentioned opportunities.
- The above respondents' have explained the benefit they get from using social media and the TPRB FB page use social media to make their activities faster by disseminating information to their followers as well as to make their customers to help them to get full information .

Using of social media is important to implement public relations activities and about the reachable of various target audiences worldwide.

The experts of face book page in the FGD session also explained about this issue as follows.

“Our presence on social media and Facebook in particular, has provided us a platform and an opportunity to reach out and share information to a wider audience - not only to Ethiopians living in Ethiopia, or living in Tigray region but also Ethiopians or Tigrayans in

the diasporas as well as people in other countries who have an interest what is going on in Tigray” (FGD, May 15, 2019).

It is unthinkable to reach everyone without the presence of new media which has brought this simple way to address different audiences of a certain organization or institution to achieve its desired goal/s. having addressed its followers and/or friends all over the world to achieve their objectives by doing so. Without this technology it might be difficult to talk about the reachable of various audiences in different location at the same time.

One FGD participant said that” the effectiveness of the social media in terms of cost and time to implement public relations work.

“It is free of cost and can reach many of our targeted audience with relatively in short time when compared to other instruments that we are using. It also allows interaction with the audience and it can be distributable”. In addition, “It is important to disseminate information, rectify the falsified” (FGD, May 15, 2019).

Determinant factors for conveying information to the people

According to interviewee six, one challenge is recruiting the personnel with right qualities for running such a page including writing skills, understanding the public’s needs etc. the second is, not having the resources and budget to run such a page.

(Dean of global college of journalism and communication, Interviewee six may 07, 2019)

And from the open-ended questions the researcher found different challenges. Like,

- Lack of competence, (knowledge, attitude, skill)
- Lack of available technology and materials.
- Lack of fringe benefits and reward for those who are doing to the level of their best.
- Lack of posting consistently

- Technical challenge
- Content effectiveness, time management, internet capacity, lack of skilled man power or expertise.
- Fake news is fabricated.
- Still no structure and permanent employees
- No facilities like tablet phones, transport access,
- Network and electric problem
- Delay on uploading new information
- Lack of much attention given
- Only one way communication
- It's not more active and flexible
- It's not include external information
- Dynamism-modernism- selective on one issues
- It's only for networked area and for fb users
- There are many fb pages that are similar to the official page .(it should be verified)
- Lack of update, latest information
- It's not known by every youth of Tigray
- knowledge based messages are not properly addressed
- When TPRB FB page posts the positive news or achievements of the government, people are forced to search other bloggers to find the real news. Because, issues are pro government, not of public.
- Sometimes we don't get timely information on (TPRB FB page).
- The information posted on the FB page is lack of detail information.
- Competition in the 21st century is a challenge by itself .Because they are so many media platforms.
- Lack of qualified PR specialists.
- TPRB FB page is not known by majority of FB users.

- Lack of management in mobilizes the weredas, zones, and kebelles. Because of this no participation in the Facebook page. Etc. is among the challenges TPRB FB page faced.
- Lack of credibility (social media in general)

Most of the interviewees raise their questions about the credibility of new media. Generally, As a basic limitation of the new media it lacks accuracy and hard to be credible because the platforms of new media gave the chance to anyone to distribute information whatever they want and this leads to confuse users to choose the truth. Because mostly the information are not verified, therefore the new media's largest limitation can be said it is less credible and not accurate. As one of the interviewee said, "One of the main problems is that there are as much false and offensive news as there are true .So you should have to know the reliable sources .And you are not fooled into believing wrong information. Also I think the rules and regulations of what to post and the like should be stronger in Facebook and social media in general. I think the government should take this seriously".

Generally, they suggest that, TPRB FB page has a big home work to be as source of credible information and upload credible information in quality and quantity manner in order to satisfy the interest of the society.

As Birhane Tadesse (2017) cited in his research work , titled " new media influence on newspaper reading habit; because of privacy issues, content accuracy, reliability, and other related concerns, some observers have predicted a trouble for online news in future (Abdulla, Garrison, Salwen, Driscoll, and Casey, 2002). Generally, because past researches revealed that people are less likely rely on the media they do not perceived as credible. Therefore, credibility is crucial for the new media (Johnson and Kaye, 1998).

How many followers does the page have?

As interviewee four replied, they are more than 60,000 people follow it (Personal interview, May 05, 2019).

Can we say that the page has reached the desired targeted number of followers relative to the region's population?

Interviewee seven replied that , “we can't .Because the number of followers and likes is even lower than some influential individuals in this region and this might be due to the fact that news is not posted regularly on the page” (Personal interview May 07, 2019).

4.6. Focus Group Discussion Response

1. When was the FB page of TPRB started?

It started in February 19, 2018.

2. What inspired you to create this page?

The reason for it is because the world currently relies highly in digital media and communication. The main goal is to deliver information directly and fairly easily to the public which allows us to get feedback too. It also allows the government and the bureau to achieve its goals in public relations.

3. What are the contents uploaded?

News, government stands, press conferences, daily events in different forms as texts, videos, pictures.

4. How many people were there when it started and how many are needed generally?

There were 3 in total at the beginning. And the needed number depends on the size of the platform and how much it plans to achieve and currently there are 6 experts working for this page.

5. Is the page currently sponsored and are the posts boosted?

It's not currently sponsored but the number of likes is still increasing well and about the issue of verifying the page it has been verified recently because that's an important thing.

6. What advantages does this new medium have for the region and the country as a whole?

It allows direct communication with the people and it is time and money saving. It also allows people to make informed decisions and get true news. In general it gives an unlimited freedom. It also allows to increase technological knowledge and can address people from anywhere using this media instead of being in an office necessarily. So this is an easy media with a broad coverage.

7. What problems and challenges have you faced?

Inadequate number of experts, financial difficulties, infrastructure, and technical deficiencies are faced as problems. The other problem is running this page requires you to be online 24/7 which may interfere with your social life so it might get boring a bit.

8. As a bureau, individual and government how can these challenges be solved?

As a bureau increasing the number of necessary experts and infrastructure and the required financial aid to run the page because it requires mobile data.

9. What initiatives have been taken to help, motivate the experts who run the page?

As a bureau there has been nothing of such sort done. Rather there are actually challenges that we face from the bureau. There has not been even a recognition given to us.

10. What efforts have been made so that the page is widely known to the target audience?

There have not been many things done just for the sake of this fb page and this is not our (the experts') responsibility obviously. There is even some staff of this bureau that is not familiar with the page at all. They may know it exists but they don't take the small initiative to go on fb and follow the page.

Also the one thing I'd like to stress is this page is not an entertainment or marketing platform and the upload posts are generally in conformation with the goals, mission and objectives of the bureau and the government and since most Facebook users are young adults these might not be interesting and attractive because they might prefer sensitive stuff.

11. Since most of the followers are middle age group do you try to work on entertainment in addition to the regular news like the other media do?

Well we're more of PR tool rather than media so we're mainly concerned about strengthening the public's relation with the government and we might post some entertainment news as long as it conforms to our mission but that's not our priority.

12. What's the relation of this page with Tigray's worldwide news outlets residing abroad and stakeholders?

We've not made such an assessment but we get different opinions and suggestions to the government from different people and media outlets through us.

13. Are you aware of who shares the information and which government sectors are following the page and its feed?

With regard to media we know whether they mention us as the source or not because we know the news, we share but other things we don't know exactly.

Most of our followers are aged 25-34 of which most being males including in other age groups

About the government sectors its availability is dependent on access to internet and some of the bureaus send us letter of notification and invitation and request for media coverage.

14. Which posts are popular and embark wide reactions among the followers?

Among the shared news and information, short things and timely information and videos are preferred.

15. Do you share long news which involve see more and how is the reaction?

Yes. The reaction depends on the agenda and you can estimate how much of the information is transmitted from the comments generated. But long news and big sized videos don't generate much response and for this matter we go into fight about the formats it should to be written.

With regard to big sized videos, because most of the followers are mobile data consumers it's difficult to see it through till the end.

16. What is the duration of most the videos posted?

Usually its 50 minutes but it can be as long as one and half hour and as short as 15 minutes

17. Is there a question and answer panel?

No but in the website page there is

18. What technical difficulties do you face?

Internet discontinuity and electrical black out.

19. What do you think is the benefit of this page to the region and its people?

The people want to lead their life based on the information they get. And for this we are playing our part by sharing daily news and also to bring the government and the people together.

20. Are the mission vision and goals of the bureau shared on the Facebook page?

For those who ask on comment it replies immediately. Though there is about us section we are not using that currently.

21. What are the missing things to make this page better and main source of information in the future and what is the effort towards it?

The perception of its importance as a backbone to the bureau is growing and we are trying to incorporate servers and hub and increasing the man power. We have come to believe the information has to be collected in person sometimes and we should work on promoting our tourism to the outside world digitally too.

Finally u share some news from other media outlets, why is that? And if there is something you want to say? We only share formal news which we think are important.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

The study intends to assess Social Media in Public Relations in relation to TPRB Facebook page. In order to achieve this general purpose, both quantitative and qualitative data have been used. The study predominantly depends up on survey data, and accordingly data have been collected from PR practitioners from different work places.

The study also reveals that there are different existing contents in the TPRB Facebook page. Accordingly, the majority respondents confirmed that agreed on the Tigray Public Relations Bureau (TPRB) Facebook page play its role in relationship and information communication between state government and regional people as well as the region and outside stakeholders. The majority of respondents has agreed on the idea of Facebook is an effective platform in approaching target audience compared to other media.

The major challenges of social media in TPRB Facebook page reported by the majority respondents are: Lack of competency (knowledge, attitude and skill), available technologies and materials, denied reward for those who are doing to the level of their best etc. In addition, this study found fundamental opportunities of used TPRB Facebook page for people. For example, it is cheap and effective, provides a platform what our customer to talk with each other and helps people to participate in political agendas or current issues.

5.2. Recommendation

In general, this page should become much bigger because it's expected to be the source of information and news to all other media in the region. So it needs a better organization, skill and expertise. There are a lot of fb pages who have good experience like dire tube, laza Tigrigna, Dimtsi weyane, Daniel Birhane at an individual level etc.

Well the internet connection can be solved by the bureau. Maybe for the audience it also depends on the government. The other thing is to give trainings to the runners on how social media works and how to attract audiences.

The researcher believe that the social media should be institutionalized at the bureau and it should be run by experts because it feels like it is controlled by it graduates. Social media by its nature attracts different experts with different and specific specialties. E.g. being a regular journalist is not enough and you should be an online journalist. The ICT expert should also be someone with clear understanding of new media platform. The other issue is having the adequate materials and infrastructure. We don't see regular interviews too. What I'm trying to say it should have an expert for every topic that is posted.

One is improving their technological expertise and also improving the IT infrastructure. They should also have editorial to know what things to post and what to not as people may get offended.

The current Facebook page is not verified which can lead it to be easily confused with other fake pages and I stress this verification highly because it's the only way to differentiate it from fake pages.

To improve this page further and make it more successful, one thing is to sponsor it on Facebook to boost it so that it reaches to a larger number of users who might find it interesting.

One is increasing the human resource by hiring more than 20-30 experts and writers, second improving the infrastructure by bringing a lot of computers, and a specified room for this. IT experts should also be brought to improve the interface of the page. Another thing is the information posted should have continuity and conclusiveness by bringing different ideas, making different interviews with influential people. This allows different views, opinions and perspectives can be entertained which allows the people to choose from a plethora of ideas. This improves the credibility of the page.

It depends on making the posts uploaded quality and using the right content which is appealing to the specific target audience.

In addition, further research is recommended for identifying the advantages of implementing social media in organizations by PR practitioners.

Reference:

- Abdullah Özkan (2015). The Role of Strategic Communication Management in Nation Brand building. Vol.5, issue 4. Istanbul University, Turkey.
- Balancing Act (2014, August). *The Sub-Saharan African Media Landscape--Then, Now and in the Future.A report by Balancing Act (Telecoms, Internet and Broadcast in Africa).*
- BLED, (2014) the key elements of a project communications strategy: www.clayscommunications.eu
- Breckenridge, D. (2012). Social media and public relations: eight new practices for the PR professional. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Briones, R. L., Kuch, B., Liu, B. F., & Jin, Y. (2011). Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships. *Public Relations Review*, 37, 37-43.
- Carrabis, J., Cass, J., Gillin, P., Nacht, R., & Peverill-Conti, G. (2008). New Media, New Influencers and Implications for Public Relations. *Society for New Communications Research*, 11.
- CIPR. (2004). www.ipr.org.uk/direct/news.asp?v1=factfile accessed 10 July 2004.
- Enhancing Promotional Strategies With in Social Marketing Programs: Use of Web 2.0 Social Media. *Health Promotion Practice*, 338.
- Committee to Protect Journalists (2010). *Attacks on the Press in 2010: A World Wide Survey*. New York: Committee to Protect Journalists.
- Cutlet, S.M., A.H. Center and G.M. Broom. (2000). *Effective Public Relations*; 8th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dubois, A & Gadde, L (2012), "Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research." *Journal of Business Research* vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 553-560.
- Eikermann, S, Hajj, J & Peterson, M (2009), "Web 2.0: profiting from the threat." *Journal of direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp.293-295.
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen M& Graebner, E (2007) "Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Eisenhardt & Kathleen M (2009), "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 532-550.
- Ethiopian News Agency (2012, June, 17). Horn affairs. Accessed on October, 30, 2015, from: a horn affairs website:

<http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/06/17/ethiopia-internet-users-no-reached-2-5-million-minister-says/>

EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme (2017) Developed by
- VIP Design,

[https://www.culturepartnership.eu/en/publishing/communication-course/lecture-4-the-](https://www.culturepartnership.eu/en/publishing/communication-course/lecture-4-the-basic-elements) basic-elements - on line lecture

Freitag, A. R., & Stokes, A. Q. (2009). *Global Public Relations: Spanning borders, spanning cultures*. Oxon: Routledge.

Fombrun, C.J. and C.B.M. Van Riel. 2006. *Essentials of Corporate Communication*. London: Routledge.

Gillin, P (2009), *Secrets of social media marketing: how to use online conversations and customer communities to turbo-charge your business*, Quill Driver Books, Fresno, CA.

Grunig, J.E. and T. Hunt. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Human Rights Watch (2014). *They know everything we do: Telecom & Internet Surveillance in Ethiopia*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Internet Live Stats (2014, September 16). *Internet users by country (2016)*. Retrieved June 19, 2016, from
<http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users-by-country/>

Institute of Public Relations 2004. *What are Public Relations?* London: Institute of Public Relations.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53, 59—68.

Kathleen Pequeno (October 31st, 2014), *Five central elements of strategic communications planning for nonprofits*,
<https://kathleenpequeno.com/2014/10/>

Khokhar, T. (2015, October 20). *World Bank open data*. Accessed on June 19, 2016, from: <http://beta.data.worldbank.org>

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B.S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54, 241-251.

- Kim, E., & Johnson, T. L. (2011). *Social Media in Public Relations: Tweeting, Facebooking & Blogging*, Oh, My! Public Relations Society of America-Educators Academy (pp. 76-86). Orlando, Fl: PublicRelations Society of America.
- Kothari, C. R, 2004: *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Age International New Delhi, India
- Kruckeberg, D., &Starck, K. .1988. *Public relations and community: A reconstructed story*. New York: Praeger
- Lidiya K, Creator of Let's Reach Success. (2013-2017). <https://letsreachsuccess.com/strategic-communication/>-Online course June West, .2017. *Strategic Communication to Inform or Persuade*, University of Virginia, Darden School of Business. <https://ideas.darden.virginia.edu/2015/02/strategic-communication-to-inform-or-persuade/><https://www.socialchorus.com/six-components-successful-communication-strategy/>
- Lovejoy, K., Waters, R., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Engaging Stakeholders through Twitter: How Nonprofit Organizations are Getting More Out of 140 Characters or Less. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 313- 318. Retrieved November 3, 2012, from <http://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/1106/1106.1852.pdf>
- Mangold, W. G., &Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52, 357-365.
- McCorkindale, T. (2010). Can you see the writing on my wall? A content analysis of the Fortune 50's Facebook social networking sites. *Public Relations Journal*, 4(3), 1-13.
- MengistuDargie (2007). *The State of Women & Media in Ethiopia: A Survey of Journalists Working in News Papers & News Agencies*. (Master's thesis, University of Addis Ababa). Accessed from: <http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/4941/1/36.%20Mengistu%20Dargie.pdf> Society of America.
- Owyang, J. (2006, August 21). Internet usage in Third world countries? [Web Log Post]. Retrieved from <http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2006/08/21/internet-usage-in-third-world-countries/>

- Oyvind Ihlen, B. Van Ruler, and M. Fredriksson. (2009). Public relation and social theory: key figures and concepts. By Routledge, New York.
- Patel, L. (2010, July). The rise of social media. Retrieved from http://www.astd.org/TD/Archives/2010/Jul/Free/1007_TheRiseOf.htm
- Perez, S. (2012, Dec. 3). Mobile Drives Adoption Of Social Media In 2012: Apps & Mobile Web Account For Majority Of Growth; Nearly Half Of Social Media Users Access Sites On Smartphones. TechCrunch. Retrieved from <http://techcrunch.com/2012/12/03/mobile-drives-adoption-of-social-media-in-2012-apps-mobile-web-account-for-majority-of-growth-nearly-half-of-social-media-users-access-sites-on-smartphones/>
- Phillips, D., & Young, P. (2009). Online public relations: a practical guide to developing an online strategy in the world of social media. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Pratik Dholakiya, 2016. The Role and Influence of Social Media on the Modern PR Industry, PR mention
- Prayag, G., 2007. Assessing international tourists' perceptions of service quality at Air Mauritius, International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management, 24(5), pp.492-514.
- Public Relations Society of America. 2004. About Public Relations. New York: Public Relations.
- Ralph Tench and Liz Yeomans. (2009). Exploring public relation. Second edition. Navaro, Spain.
- Rich Schell Ph.D, .March 21, (2017). Successful Communication Strategy: Five Elements, Rice University: <http://glasscock.rice.edu/blog/>
- Salanova, R. (2012). Social media and political change: The case of the 2011 revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. Retrieved from http://icip.gencat.cat/web/.content/continguts/publicacions/workingpapers/2012/arxiu/wp_2012_7_rsalanova.pdf
- Skjerdal, T. S. (2011). Journalists or activists? Self-identity in the Ethiopian diaspora online community. Journalism, 12(6), 727-744. Doi:10.1177/1464884911405471
- Tesfaye Alemayehu (2013). Social media as an alternative political forum in Ethiopia: The case of Facebook. (M.A. thesis, University of Addis

Ababa). Retrieved from
[http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/8932/1/Tesfaye%20Alema
yehu.pdf](http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/8932/1/Tesfaye%20Alema%20yehu.pdf).

Taprial, V. and Kanwar, P., 2012. Understanding social media. Book boon
Thackeray, R., Neiger, B. L., Hanson, C. L., & McKenzie, J. F. (2008).

Theaker, A. (2004). The Public Relations Handbook (2nd ed.). Abingdon,
Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis.

Waters, R. D., Burnett, E., Lamm, A., & Lucas, J. (2009). Engaging stakeholders
through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using
Facebook. Public Relations Review, 102-106.

Zikmund, W.G., 2003. Sample designs and sampling procedures, Business
research methods, 7, pp.368-400. ed Methods Research, 3(2), pp.95-108.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Part I INSTRUCTIONS:

(For PR experts, PR practitioners, popular activists or journalists and stakeholders)

Dear Respondent,

Please answer this questionnaire based on what you think about the Facebook page of TPRB.

This is a questionnaire that attempt to measure the use of social media in PR: The case of TPRB Facebook page. The items of the scale are given in statement form. You are requested to read each statement carefully and give your response by putting a tick (√) mark only that option which you find that is most appropriate and true in your case. There is no right /wrong answer. All the information given will be used for academic/research purpose only and will be always kept with the greatest confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

I agree to take part in this survey

Part I. Respondents Personal Profile

Directions: Please supply the needed information:

Age ____ Gender _____ Length of Service: _____

Highest Educational Attainment: Below grade ten 10+1 10+2

10+3/diploma BA/BSC MA/MSC others

Field of study -----

SN	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	TPRB Facebook page play its role in relationship and information communication between state government and regional people as well as the region and outside stakeholders?					
2	TPRB Facebook page has enhanced the existing practices of PRs using Facebook					
3	Facebook page of TPRB is liked?					
4	TPRB Facebook offers a lower – cost way of relationship building between organizations and the public.					
5	Facebook can replace other media in message delivering to target audience.					

6	Facebook has changed the way an organization communicates with the audience.					
7	Facebook is an effective platform in approaching target audience compared to other media					
8	Facebook allows an organization to respond instantaneously towards criticisms					
9	People use Facebook to get information from TPRB Facebook page?					
10	TPRB Facebook page is used two-way communication?					
11	The contents uploaded on the TPRB Facebook page are satisfactory.					
12	How often do you use the Facebook page of TPRB?	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always

13	The kind of social media you use?	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube	Twitter	Facebook
----	-----------------------------------	-----------	----------	---------	---------	----------

Part II- Open ended questions

1. Do you think the design feature of Tigray communication affairs Facebook page is good enough?

- A. yes
- B. No

1.1. If your response is "Yes" how?

1.2. If your response is "No" why?

2. What are the major contents uploaded on the Facebook page?

3. Do you think the Bureau's mission, vision and values are being reflected in its use of the Facebook page?

- A. yes
- B. no

3.1. If your response is "No" what is missing?

4. What public relations model is reflected in the Facebook communication of the PR body?

5. Does the Facebook page play its role as a public relations tool in promoting communication between the people and state government as well as between the state government and outside of Tigray stakeholders?

A. yes

B. no

5.1. If say "Yes" explain

5.2. If say "No" explain

6. Do you think large\huge number of publics of TPRB living at different places in the globe participate on Facebook page

A. yes

B. no

6.1. If your response for question number "6" is yes are they satisfied with it or not?

7. What are the challenges and opportunities of TPRB Facebook page?

8. What advantages does the presence of the Tigray communications affairs Facebook page gives to the region as a whole?

9. What do you think/suggest for the future about Tigray PRs Bureau Facebook page should be?

10. Do you have any other idea?

Thank you!

Interview guide (for managers and experts)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all the questions honestly and exhaustively. All the information given will be used for academic /research purpose only and will be always kept with the greatest confidential.

- What is your educational background?
 - What is your work experience?
 - What is your role in the organization?
1. Are latest information continuously uploaded for readers?
 2. What is the main objective of the facebook page?
 3. Are you satisfied with the contents uploaded in the Facebook page? What is good (successful) content for viewers?
 4. What efforts are made so that this uploaded information reaches the target

audience?

5. What are the obstacles that preclude/prevent this information from reaching the audience?

6. Are there any technical difficulties that prevent the successful uploading of information? If your response is yes, what solutions can you suggest?

7. What public relations model is reflected on the Facebook communication of the PR body?

8. Does the Facebook page play its role as a public relations tool in promoting communication between the people and state government as well as between the state government and outside of Tigray stakeholders?

9. To what extent do the PR experts, stakeholders and different publics of TPRB at different places participate on Facebook page?

9.1. What advantages does this give to the region as a whole?

10. Are the Bureau's mission, vision and values are being reflected in its use of the Facebook page in different Languages?

11. What do you think/suggest for the future about Tigray PRs Bureau Facebook page should be?

12. Do you have any other idea about the topic?

Thank You!

Interview guide (for managers and experts)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all the questions honestly and exhaustively. All the information given will be used for academic /research purpose only and will be always kept with the greatest confidential.

- What is your educational background?
- What is your work experience?

- What is your role in the organization?
1. Are latest information continuously uploaded for readers?
 2. What is the main objective of the Facebook page?
 3. Are you satisfied with the contents uploaded in the Facebook page? What is good (successful) content for viewers?
 4. What efforts are made so that this uploaded information reaches the target audience?
 5. What are the obstacles that preclude/prevent this information from reaching the audience?
 6. Are there any technical difficulties that prevent the successful uploading of information? If your response is yes, what solutions can you suggest?
 7. What public relations model is reflected on the Facebook communication of the PR body?
 8. Does the Facebook page play its role as a public relations tool in promoting communication between the people and state government as well as between the state government and outside of Tigray stakeholders?
 9. To what extent do the PR experts, stakeholders and different publics of TPRB at different places participate on Facebook page?
 - 9.1. What advantages does this give to the region as a whole?
 10. Are the Bureau's mission, vision and values are being reflected in its use of the Facebook page in different Languages?
 11. What do you think/suggest for the future about Tigray PRs Bureau Facebook page should be?
 12. Do you have any other idea about the topic?

Thank You!

Focus Group Discussion Guide

For FB and IT experts, PR Experts, Bureau Deputy Head

1. When was the FB page of TPRB started?
2. What inspired you to create this page?
3. What are the contents uploaded?
4. How many people were there when it started and how many are needed generally?
5. Is the page currently sponsored and are the posts boosted?
6. Are you using this page as a tool of online PR?
7. What's the relationship of the page with the 52 other weredas?
8. How many weredas are currently active and functional?
9. Are contents uploaded regularly in a programmed manner or it's just random?
10. What advantages does this new medium has for the region and the country as a whole?
11. What problems and challenges have you faced?
12. As a bureau, individual and government how can these challenges be solved?
13. What initiatives have been taken to help, motivate the experts who run the page?
14. What efforts have been made so that the page is widely known to the target audience?
15. Since most of the followers are middle age group do you try to work on entertainment in addition to the regular news like the other media do?
16. What's the relation of this page with Tigray's worldwide news outlets residing abroad and stakeholders?
17. Are u aware of who shares the information and which government sectors are following the page and its feed?
18. Which posts are popular and embark wide reactions among the followers?

19. Do you share long news which involve see more and how is the reaction?
 20. What is the duration of most the videos posted?
 21. Is there a question and answer panel?
 22. What technical difficulties do you face?
 23. What do you think is the benefit of this page to the region and its people?
 24. Are the mission vision and goals of the bureau shared on the Facebook page?
 25. Finally you share some news from other media outlets, why is that?
- And if there is something you want to say?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

