



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**

**CHALLENGES OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN
SELECTED NATIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE
INSTITUTIONS OF ETHIOPIA**

*The Case of Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity
Assessment Enterprise*

BY: TEKIA BRHANE ID.NO GSE/6762/10

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



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A Thesis Submitted to School of Journalism and Communications in Partial Fulfillment
of Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Art in Public Relations and Strategic
Communication.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work which is being presented in this thesis entitled “Challenges of Strategic Communication in selected national quality infrastructure institutions of Ethiopia: The case of Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise” is original work of my own, has not been presented for a degree of any other university and all the resources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Tekia Brhane

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Signature

Date

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
List of Tables	viii
Acronyms	ix
<i>Abstract</i>	x
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Background of the study	1
1.2. Statement of the problem	3
1.3. Objectives of the Study	4
1.3.1. General Objective	4
1.3.2. Specific Objectives	4
1.4. Research Questions	4
1.5. Significance of the Study	5
1.6. Delimitation	5
1.7. Limitations of the Study	6
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	7
2.1. Introduction	7
2.2. Theoretical Review of Literature	7
2.2.1. Strategy and application to communication	7
2.2.2. Strategy in organizations' communication environment	9
2.2.3. Strategic Communication	11
2.2.4. Definition and models of Communication	11
2.2.5. Importance of Communication	13
2.2.6. Organizational Communication	14
2.2.7. Definition and models of Public Relations	15

2.2.8.	Concepts of Quality.....	16
2.2.9.	Quality Assurance Services	16
2.2.10.	Governance and Quality Infrastructure	17
2.2.11.	The Quality Infrastructure.....	18
2.2.12.	Frameworks of NQI Institutions.....	18
2.2.13.	Principles of Quality Management System.....	23
2.3.	Empirical Review of Related Literature	25
2.3.1.	Communication Related	25
2.3.2.	Public Relations related	26
2.3.3.	Standardization related	27
2.3.4.	Conformity Assessment related.....	28
2.3.5.	Metrology related	28
2.4.	Background of Ethiopian National Quality Infrastructure	29
2.5.	Conceptual Framework for the Study.....	32
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN		34
3.1.	Research Methodology	34
3.1.1.	Quantitative Research Methodology.....	34
3.1.2.	Qualitative Research Methodology	36
3.1.3.	Mixed Research Methodology	37
3.2.	Research Design.....	39
3.3.	Population and Sample Size.....	39
3.3.1.	Population.....	39
3.3.2.	Sample Size Determination.....	39
3.3.3.	Sampling Frame	40
3.4.	Data Collection Instruments	40
3.4.1.	Questionnaire	40

3.4.2.	Interviews.....	41
3.5.	Data Presentation and Analysis	41
3.5.1.	Qualitative Data analysis.....	41
3.5.2.	Quantitative Data Analysis.....	42
3.6.	Analysis of Reliability Statistics	42
3.7.	Ethical Considerations.....	43
Chapter 4:	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	44
4.1.	Introduction	44
4.2.	Rate of Response	44
4.3.	Profile of the Respondents	44
4.4.	Practice of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions	46
4.5.	The Challenges of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions.....	57
4.6.	The Role of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions	62
Chapter 5:	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	66
5.1.	Summary	66
5.1.1.	Practice of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions	66
5.1.2.	The Challenges of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions:....	68
5.1.3.	The Role of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions	68
5.2.	Conclusions	70
5.3.	Recommendations	72
References	74
Annex: A	79
Annex: B	84

List of Tables

Table 1	Reliability Statistics.....	43
Table 2	Demographic profile of Respondents.....	44
Table 3	Description of mean score.....	46
Table 4	There is clear vision stated for strategic communication activities.	46
Table 5	The communication practitioners have enough skill needed for communication activities.	47
Table 6	The communication department has sufficient equipment used for communication activities.	48
Table 7	The Communication department has enough human power.....	49
Table 8	There is information center and every information is communicated on the right time.	51
Table 9	There are high efforts on creating positive image of the institutions in the minds of the external public.....	52
Table 10	The institution use adequate communication tools to avail information and established an on-going communication with their customers.....	53
Table 11	The institution has good relationship with its customers based on providing up-to-date press releases.....	54
Table 12	Types of communication mostly used in the two ENQI institutions	55
Table 13	Respondents' response on challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions.....	57
Table 14	Respondents' response on the role of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions.....	62

List of Figure

Figure 1:	Elements of quality infrastructure and working framework.....	23
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Acronyms

CA: Conformity Assessment

CAB: Conformity Assessment Bodies

ECAE: Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise

ENAO: Ethiopian National Accreditation Office

ES: Ethiopian Standards

ESA: Ethiopian Standards Agency

KII: Key Informant Interviewee

IEC: International Electrotechnical Commission

ISO: International Organization for Standardization

MOTI: Ministry of Trade and Industry

NMIE: National Metrology Institute of Ethiopia

NSB: National Standards Body

NQITC: National Quality Infrastructure Technical Committee

NQI: National Quality Infrastructure

OIML: International Organization of Legal Metrology

PR: Public Relations

QA: Quality Assurance

QI: Quality Infrastructure

QSAE: Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia

TBT: Technical Barrier for Trade

WTO: World Trade Organization

Abstract

This study aimed at assessing the practices and challenges of strategic communication in the two national quality infrastructure institutions of Ethiopia. A quantitative and qualitative approach was used. Data were collected from the institutions' directorate directors', team leaders' employees and top leaders' using self-administered structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide. A pilot test was carried out with 20 respondents to test the initial reliability and validity of the instrument. The final questionnaire was distributed to 107 directorate directors, team leaders and employees of the two institutions by using random sampling for the quantitative data and purposive sampling for the qualitative data. A total of 104 questionnaires were collected back. Based on the data the communication activities which were practiced in the two existing Ethiopian NQI institutions were not managed, lacked management support, there was not strategy helps to lead the communication strategically in order to achieve the institutions strategic goals and there were also lack of technically qualified personnel. This shows the communication practice of the two NQI institutions was highly challenged by the above problems and it was communicated in a fragmented way. Due to this, the information provided by the institutions cannot protect human health and safety. There were also gaps of the internal and external public's expectation to get relevant and timely information regarding the institutions. The demands of the internal and external publics were beyond the capacity of the communication departments. Accordingly, the two NQI institutions need to give more emphasis and due attention to the strategic communication. The two national quality infrastructure institutions also should work in cooperation with each other and other stakeholders towards a shared goal. Their services need also to be communicated and branded at national and international level and they should be equipped with modern communication equipment in order to increase their effectiveness in implementing quality and standardization.

Key words: Strategic communication, National Quality Infrastructure Institutions

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

The current world market competition and economic liberalization, quality becomes one of the important factors for achieving competitive advantage in the today's stiff market completion. It is very successful weapon to win the global as well as the domestic market competition. Fulfillment of all required quality requirement enables an organization to add and retain customers. Poor quality of goods or services lead to discontented or dissatisfied customers, so the costs of poor quality are not just those of immediate waste or rectification but also the loss of future sales due to the loss of the discontented customers technological innovations have diffused beyond geographical boundaries resulting in more informed customers in turn they wary much about global market (Kellermann & Paul, 2015).

Companies in the world today seek to manage the corporate's reputation in the eyes of the stakeholders. Internal Stakeholder, company while external stakeholders are customers, competitors, suppliers, and channels of distribution Companies with good reputations attract good employees, who produce new and innovative products and serve customers well. Earnings grow, employees and customers stay happy, and the strong reputation continues. On the other hand, companies at the bottom of the reputation list with low reputation ratings have their own reasoning. Bad performance causes financial problems. Both the company and its employees and the customers lose which makes the bad performance even worse (Routledge, 2002).

To build a strong reputation, an organization must have strong communication to communicate with the stakeholders. To convince and persuade them to believe in the firm without a strong communicator, no matter how much effort organization does, the stakeholders will still go to another whom able to "move" them. Therefore, a competent communication will be a great step to build an organization's reputation (Mohd & Noor, 2013).

From 2002 onwards manufacturing industry in Ethiopia has grown significantly due to government's initiatives, response to increasing public demand, and the investors increased interest in the manufacturing sector. Even if it is not as per its expectation it contributes much for the employment opportunity, of course the country is not high industrialized; nevertheless, there are few big size manufacturing industries and a number of small and medium manufacturing industries. But there has been a problem of quality (Birhanu & Daniel, 2014).

Therefore, it was in 2011 that the Ethiopian government had restructured and reorganized the former Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia (QSAE) into four legally autonomous institutions separately responsible for providing quality assurance services under the umbrella of national quality infrastructure (NQI) aiming to ensure good governance, a system free from conflicts of interest and be aligned with the international practices.

These NQI institutions provide the following services namely:

(a) Ethiopian Standards Agency (ESA) in charge of adoption and dissemination of national, international, and company specific standards; (b) Ethiopian National Accreditation Office (ENAO), responsible for issuing accreditation of technical competency of laboratories and conformity assessment bodies; (c) National Metrology Institute of Ethiopia (NMIE), providing calibration services for laboratories to assure measuring equipment meets standards; and (d) Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE), a state owned enterprise providing testing, certification and inspection services for products and services to be complimented.

Henceforth, this study is timely important to investigate the challenges of strategic communication in the two selected NQI institutions (Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise) so as to come up with the importance of strategic communication.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Strategic communication examines how organizations use communication purposefully to fulfill their mission. All types of organizations, including private and public sector, political parties, non-governmental organizations and social movements, use strategic communication to reach their goals. Centrally, strategic communication examines the communication practices of various types of organizations from an integrated perspective. It defines strategy as a multidimensional concept and understands communication as the constitutive activities of management (Finn & Winni, 2016). Strategic communication requires clarity and consistency of message. Communication professionals and other executives have to be able to talk to people inside and outside the organization (Paul, Argenti, Robert, Hawell & Karen, 2005). Communication is crucial in organization to persuade and to achieve mutual understanding by acquiring the willing acceptance of attitudes and ideas. Nowadays, no government, industry, company or organization of any kind can operate successfully without the cooperation of its publics. These publics may be both inside and outside, but mutual understanding will be a strong factor for success in every case (Black, 2004).

No matter how good an enterprise or an organization may be, if it does not communicate with its publics, it will lose out to its competitors who are using strategic communication more aggressively to ensure effectiveness of the organization. Organizations which do use communication in an organized and modern way can see the benefits in terms of increased awareness of themselves and their products or services, better staff morale, customer loyalty and shareholders satisfaction among other things (Kotler, 2002).

Even though the enabling environment created for limited scope of public relations function in Ethiopia, as emerging and inexperienced sector the issues of communication, awareness of peoples on quality and the access to information will be challenges to the institutions.

As Yowhannes, (2015) noted, the lack of awareness and accessible information on quality are critical problem in the quality infrastructure. In my observation and experience also, I

have noted that strategic communication practices in the two selected Ethiopian NQI institutions is very limited scope, do not have any strategy and every NQI institutions try to find every information by its own way, because of that there is shortage of centralized information flows. Hence, limited communication activities are offered by the institutions.

Therefore, there are problems of health and safety due to absence of consumer awareness and relevant information regarding NQI institutions service on how to protect themselves from substandard products and on how to identify the quality products and services from the market.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the practices and challenges of strategic communication in national quality infrastructure institutions of Ethiopia (Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise and Ethiopian Standards Agency) and to recommend relevant solutions to alleviate the problem.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are the following:

- To evaluate the practice of strategic communication in ESA and ECAE
- To identify the challenges of strategic communication in ESA and ECAE
- To find out the role of strategic communication in the two selected ENQI institutions

1.4. Research Questions

- i. What do the practices of strategic communication look like in ESA and ECAE?
- ii. What are the core challenges of strategic communication in ESA and ECAE?
- iii. What role does strategic communication play in ESA and ECAE?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have great importance for the institutions as well as for the public in general and for different stakeholders engaging in the sector. Particularly this study provides best working strategy in relation to strategic communication for those who are working in product quality assurance service providers and regulatory bodies.

Besides, this study provides specific policy option to the sector to solve the challenges on ensuring communication strategy; due to this the institutions can give appropriate attention to the public health, safety and environmental issues. Therefore, the mandated NQI institutions become in appropriate position to provide quality strategic communication functions on product quality assurance activities. The study also can play great role when leaders need to develop communication strategy.

In addition, this study contributes literature on strategic communication and public relations practices that can be of use to scholars and other interested parties as well as providing information for farther studies.

1.6. Delimitation

The scope of the study is delimited in assessing to the practice and challenges of strategic communication in the selected Ethiopian NQI institutions; namely ESA and ECAE. This study also bounded to assess the current practice and challenges of strategic communication and how the two institutions performed the activities of communication in a synergized manner in order to ensure quality product in the local and international market. Those selected two NQI institutions are played a great role in boosting the national economy, in protecting public health and environmental safety. Due to this, the two selected institutions are mandated and empowered to provide product quality assurance service as it is clearly mentioned in their respected regulation.

Furthermore, the study is limited to Addis Ababa where the selected NQI institutions and their core business are located.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

On the course of conducting the research, the researcher encountered some challenges that could limit to some degree. Lack of experience in research work, lack of interest of employees and institute heads to fill back the questionnaire and Shortage of related empirical study conducted regarding practices and challenges of strategic communication in the case of national quality infrastructure institutions which can serve as a base. Moreover, regarding the research methodology, this study mainly uses questioner, interviews and document review as a primary and secondary instrument to gather data but the researcher was limited to employ other method like focus group discussion due to the Covid-19. Hence, the limited use of different methodologies might influence the reliability and validity of the research. However, overcoming all the limitation, the researcher has done his best to make the study successful and achieve its objective.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review for the research. Relevant literature on strategic communication and public relations, concepts of quality and quality assurance services of the national quality infrastructure are explored, the importance of quality assurance services in governance will assess in the national quality infrastructure in general and in the selected Ethiopian national quality infrastructure institutions.

2.2. Theoretical Review of Literature

2.2.1. Strategy and application to communication

To define strategic communication need to understand the concept of the term “strategy” itself. This in turn is complemented by another two concepts that are also interesting to analyze “tactics” and “plan”. Although everyone believes they understand what “strategy” means, they do not always know how to define it correctly. Pace and Faules (1994) admits that “The concept of strategy is a term that is often ambiguously, and sometimes confusingly defined. The term strategy as part of the concept of “strategic thinking” could be regarded as a way of combining the goals to be achieved in the long term with the decisions to be made in advance, anticipating future scenarios and possible threats from the environment.

Aggerholm and Thomsen (2015) stated that, to be strategic a decision must consider how the reactions of other subjects trying to fulfil their own purposes have the potential to influence the process. Strategy is the path you map out a priority and then try to follow, acting so that your decisions adapt to the goal you set out at the start. Hence, the first step in creating a strategy knows where you are and where you are going. It is not logical to start out on a journey without knowing what your destination is.

The second step will be to coordinate your actions and available resources to try to position yourself advantageously from your opponents, i.e., to choose the right options

for the path chosen to allow you to get where you wanted in less time and more efficiently than your competitors.

Strategy makes use of tactics that will help define how the goal is to be reached. Tactics are therefore decisions that must be made in advance, but possibly reoriented and reformulated over time. Strategy must be thought out for the long term. It is impossible to establish a short-term strategy, since there would be no time to develop it in the form of tactics. Argenti et al. (2005), for instance, explain why firms which only make decisions concerning tactical, short-term communication without a strategy have difficulty competing. A given tactic may lead to the development of one or more action plans, designed to run consecutively or parallel in time, but always directed towards the same long-term goal.

Each plan may have different objectives capable of being met in the short term. Strategic communication described in this study, which differentiates strategy from tactics and tactics from action plans, follows the line laid out by Steyn and Puth (2000) in which strategy is the conception of an integrative action that helps to have a clear vision of where we are and where we are going. Its defining feature is knowledge of the goals to be attained. Strategy focuses more on the exploitation of the organization's potential strength rather than on the accumulation and application of resources. All the resources required to achieve the strategic goals. The logistics provides and allocates those resources. The tactical level refers to everything that has to do with actions or means. Tactic is the form of optimizing the use of resources and detecting the right time for their implementation.

In this sense, tactics can consider as tactical tools of communication all of the accepted techniques and means: advertising, promotion, events, informative relations with the media, financial communications plan, preparation of a visual corporate identity manual, etc. Finally, the technical level refers to all the operational decisions resulting from the tactics.

There are differences in strategy applied to communication and strategy applied to other areas of life, such as the military context. The resources available to act in the field of communication are based on the exchange of information and messages, not on physical interaction as in the case of war. This will force the firm or institution exercising strategic communication to constantly be evaluating its relationships with its stakeholders to ensure that the state of those relationships conforms to its strategic goals, and to check that the messages produced have been appropriately received and decoded (Marchiori & Bilgarov, 2015).

2.2.2. Strategy in organizations' communication environment

According to Hallahan et al., (2007) Strategy has an important role to play in the context of communication management. Some important features need to be remarked on when considering strategy applied to organizations' communications.

First, strategic communication must be managed communication. The important thing is to understand that communication cannot be strategic if it is not managed. Managing something is intervening in it, is acting on its elements to change them for some benefit. Managing communication is a case of using the resources available to some end. Managed communication is not always strategic communication, although strategic communication is always managed communication.

Second, "strategic communication" is not the same as "communication strategies". Strategic communication needs to use all the forms of communication available. Each forms of communication will be delimited by its own tactics and action plans to constitute what is often referred to as partial "communication strategies". It will be the sum of all the partial "communication strategies" that will give rise to the synergy allowing one to speak of "strategic communication". Because of the synergy, the result of the strategic communication will be much more than just the sum of the partial "communication strategies" which it may contain.

Thus, the partial objectives to be achieved with the "advertising communication strategy" will contribute to the creation of value and to the fulfilment of the strategic goals set by

the organization, but will not be equal to them. This will help the firm to gain insight into the relative weight of each form of communication, in order to estimate the profitability that might be obtained with each of them. It will also be obliged to seek coherence among all of the “partial communication strategies” so as to work towards a uniform reading of the threats, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential strengths.

Third strategic communication is necessarily linked to organization: the term strategic communication has no meaning outside the context of organizations. The term organization is here understood as a public or private firm or institution working in an organized way in the same direction to achieve some goal or mission, and to realize its corporate vision in the context of which it forms a part. In this same manner, Hallahan et al., (2007) define strategic communication as the communication made deliberately by an organization in order to fulfil its mission.

In this line, according to Argenti et al. (2005), strategic communication is: “communication aligned with the company’s overall strategy, to spotlight and strengthen its strategic positioning.” Thus, strategic positioning is defined in a complementary manner to the firm’s analytical positioning. This latter situates the firm, as perceived by its various stakeholders, in a particular place within its specific business environment as against its competitors. It is first necessary to delimit this analytical positioning in order subsequently to fix the firm’s strategic positioning, i.e., the situation it would like to be in with respect to the mental perceptions of its stakeholders, and on the basis of which it defines the strategies to follow and the goals to achieve.

Finally, taking into account all the concepts and ideas described above, strategic communication in organizations is a long term communication management effort that an organization has to make in its particular environment for its relationship with its stakeholders to benefit its progress to achieving the goals that were set based on the vision and mission of its overall strategy. Proper management of communication will allow the organization to design, develop, put into practice, and maintain its strategy at the different levels of its actions. This will help it keep its corporate strategies aligned

with the environment, ensuring consistency and continuity, and developing a line of permanent action. A result will be the projection of a positive image to stakeholders in the short term, and an enhancement of its reputations in the long term.

2.2.3. Strategic Communication

It has become more and more important for social actors and organizations to be intentional and mindful in their communication in order to be heard (Hallahan et al., 2007). This is particularly valid, as strategic communication has become increasingly virtual and international in today's world. According to Hallahan et al. (2007) strategic communication should be a "focal interest of communication scholarships". Studying strategic communication as a social science reflects on real changes in the society and on its organizational principles.

Strategic communication research aims to examine how the organizations create and exchange meaning with others: customers, employees, investors, and government officials and media representatives. Strategic communication also investigates how the organization presents itself in society as a social actor in terms of creating the public culture and in the discussion concerning the public issues (Hallahan et al., 2007). In other words, strategic communication focuses on how an organization promotes itself through "intentional activities of its leaders, employees and communication practitioners" (Hallahan et al. 2007).

2.2.4. Definition and models of Communication

Communication is a concept that everyone is familiar with. It is impossible not to communicate (Watzlawick et al. 1967). Communication is everywhere and is everything from verbal to non-verbal interactions (Griffin, 1997). Therefore, this broad notion does not have a single and simple definition as it can mean different things to different people.

When it comes to defining and designing strategic communication-based systems and activities, there are two schools of thought - the transmission-based and the dialogue-based models. The first one is often represented in a linear way (communication models

of Shannon and Weaver, Laswell) and focuses on the transmitter and the message to transmit (Shannon & Weaver, 1957; Lasswell, 1948).

This way of perceiving communication renders the receiver passive and the feedback non-existent. While it is not the model having the best results in terms of long-term relationships and satisfaction, it is currently the most widely used notably due to the advertising and marketing sector.

The second model views communication as a more complex system involving the consideration and cooperation of the "receiver" - co-construction of meanings. The latter is no longer considered as a "consumer of information" but as a social being capable of reasoning. Thus, a particular attention is brought on citizens' needs in contrast to solely transmitter's interest.

Despite the differences in applications, both models meet saying that strategic communication should be consistent, coordinated, structured, and should have a clear agenda and settled goals (Bennett & Jessani, 2011).

From the dialogue-based model better corresponds to the meaning of communication as the Latin term "communicatio" designates the action to share or to put in common. Communication holds therefore a dual meaning - to share information but also and mostly to co-create. It involves at least two interlocutors and implies a relation of giving and receiving. Ideally, these co-constructed relationships should lead to a win-win situation.

In the face of current environmental and social issues, the respect and involvement of all citizens are essential. Therefore, if responsible organizations apply this dialogue-based strategic communication, which corresponds to the concept of environmental communication by Hallgren and Ljung (2005), they are likely to increase their efficiency.

Furthermore, strategic communication demands resources including time and knowledge. Nowadays, it is not sufficient for organizations to have a website or a brochure to reach their objectives. Communication is an art and, therefore should be approached in a circular way (in opposition to linear models), through cooperation, feedback and adaptation, to be suitable for current environmental issues (Hallgren & Ljung, 2005).

The issue at stake for communication practitioners is, therefore, how communicate in a thoughtful manner, especially in a highly competitive context. This notably implies the design and implementation of a strategy that resounds within the culture of the organization and within the conscious and unconscious expectations of citizens.

2.2.5. Importance of Communication

Communication is the heart of institutions. It is the practice or a process that associates individuals, groups and organizations. It enables inputs to the organization from the environment and outputs from the organization to the environment. Tasks cannot be accomplished, objectives cannot be met and discussion cannot be implemented without adequate communication (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 1991:185). Emphasizing the significance and role of communication, Silver (1987:381) also stated that without strategic communication, organization would be little more than collection of people, resources and money unable to achieve goals.

In addition to this, communication is a vital device for effective manager of any organization. It is managerial skill of an essential foundation for effective leadership since it encompasses the management functions of planning, organizing and controlling; no manager can do well without being a good communicator. Managers can be judged by their ability of communicating effectively (Whetton and Cameron, 1995:246). In the institutional environment, communication is an important means of coordinating the activities of institute heads, supervisors and trainers (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 1991:185). According to Webb and Norton (1999:48), communication is one of the essential functions of every decision-making that link common purpose.

In general, communication among individuals and groups is vital to all due to its purposes. Many writers put it in various ways with little difference. But the one given by Hitt, Middlemist and Mathis (1989:411) is a comprehensive one. According to them, the purpose of communication in any organization can be organized in to three categories

like to express an idea, to prompt action from the listener and to support actions initiated by other apparatuses.

Therefore, for effective and efficient communication, these purposes should be understood and practiced by the main players of the two selected ENQI institutions communication practitioners and managers.

2.2.6. Organizational Communication

According to Pace and Faules (1994:21), organizational communication is a meaning, generation process of interaction that constitutes the organization. The definition has an implicit implication of senders and receivers by saying the display and interpretation respectively. Organizational communication defined as the sending of messages through both formal and informal network of a deliberately designed group that result in the construction of meaning and influence both individuals and groups (Hoy and Miskel, 1996:356).

Organizational communication can be equated with the circulatory system in the human body (Fisher, 1981:4). The human body cannot be alive without the proper functioning of the circulatory system nor can an institute be functional without communication. When the communication system stops functioning the institutes give up to existing as an institute. Therefore, the existence of effective communication system in institutions is decisive for their survival.

According to Miner, Singleton and Luchsinger (1985:241), organizational communication has many useful functions. Some of these are providing information for decision, achieving cooperation and action towards goals, instructing and changing and providing feedback to a source. Moreover, organizational communication can be divided into formal and informal communication (Aggrawal, 1994:206).

2.2.7. Definition and models of Public Relations

As defined by Grunig et al. (2002), in the broad sense public relations can simply be defined as: “management of communication between an organization and its publics”. Grunig’s model of excellence in public relations (or excellence theory) is a benchmark for success in public relations (Dozier et al., 1995; Grunig et al., 2002).

Public relations contribute to organizational effectiveness when it helps reconcile the organization’s goals with the expectations of its strategic publics by building quality, long-term relationships with strategic publics. Public relations is most likely to contribute to effectiveness when the senior public relations manager is part of the dominant coalition where he or she is able to shape the organization’s goals and to help determine which external publics are most strategic (Grunig et al., 2002).

The excellence model is characterized by three levels and the subsequent effects of those levels. The characteristics of the broader levels set out how an excellent public relations is attained in the organizational setting and form the theoretical framework for this study. Firstly, the program level: “how excellent public relations is planned, implemented, and evaluated at the level of individual communication programs aimed at such stakeholders as the media, employees, communities, customers, or investors”. This level represents the outward product of the organization’s communication and how they go about communicating with stakeholders (Grunig et al., 2002).

Secondly, the departmental level: “how public relations departments are organized and managed” refers to how the PR department can help the organization by the way it is structured and managed. It investigates into the specifics of what makes an excellent communication department and why it is important for an organization to have make use of it (Grunig et al., 2002).

Finally, the organizational level: “the organizational and environmental context most likely to nurture excellent public relations,” meaning this level is the broader consideration of organizational activities, mission, and mandate and how communication/PR should fit into the organization (Grunig et al., 2002).

2.2.8. Concepts of Quality

Quality is degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfills requirements (ES ISO 9000:2015). For us, the quality of a product or service depends on an exchange between two persons, one supplying the product or service and the other receiving the product or service. The supplier and the consumer can have diverse views on what quality is and this may lead to confusions and disputes. In that sense, quality can be understood as “the conformance with customers’ requirements or fitness for purpose”. The main point to note is that it is the consumer who defines whether a product is appropriate for use or not. If the features of a product or service do not match those required by the customer, it will not be a worthy product for the latter. For instance, a Limousine with high fuel intake will not be a quality product for somebody looking for a slight car with little gas intake. A provider can formulate specifications for his/her product based on what is supposed as the requirements of consumers and manufacture products compatible to those specifications. Nevertheless, if the compatible products are found to be unfit for use by the users, they would be considered substandard products; in this situation, the specifications have failed to take entirely into account the requests of the consumers. This brings us to say that, the customer is king. Quality is not absolute but relative. A product might be of worthy quality for somebody, but of poor quality for somebody else.

2.2.9. Quality Assurance Services

Quality assurance can be defined as part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled (ES ISO 9000:2015).

Quality assurance is a process of tests or filters to ensure that products or services pass a quality requirement. If the process is external, quality assurance often also provides an assurance to indicate that the work has passed that threshold. External processes in particular may also involve an active role for reviewers in ensuring that the work under scrutiny emerges as the best possible version of itself. If work of poor quality emerges at the end of a quality assurance process, that process has failed. Quality assurance is as a set of activities whose purpose is to demonstrate that an entity meets all quality

requirements. Quality Assurance activities are carried out in order to inspire the confidence of both customers and managers, confidence that all quality requirements are being met (ES ISO 9000:2015).

2.2.10. Governance and Quality Infrastructure

Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in mitigating of poverty and promoting development. It defines how public organizations conduct public concerns and manage public resources. In general, it is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not. Good governance is a crucial factor in shaping the framework conditions for a healthy business environment. The state provides the preconditions for an efficient administration, the rule of law, accountability, transparency of decisions, the fight against corruption and legislative tasks linked to the corresponding administrative structures, all of which act in favor of the socioeconomic system and hence the business environment. Principles of integrity, objectivity, confidentiality, professional behavior and due care should be the general foundations also applicable to the area of Quality Infrastructure. These principles and practices apply in all aspects of any Quality Infrastructure. When testing a product to assess its conformity to standards, the principles of integrity, competence, and confidentiality apply. When developing a national standard, the principles of transparency, openness and consensus apply. The inspection function and market surveillance are also directly linked to objectiveness and confidentiality (Sanetra & Marbán, 2007).

At the macro level, the government sets the framework conditions through legislation for the QI organizations, the technical regulation regime and implementation of the same. The government creates transparency by facilitating the provision of information (e.g. standards information and the WTO TBT National Enquiry Point), and by involving industry and consumer associations in QI deliberation and implementation activities. An effective and efficient Quality Infrastructure is therefore a concrete contribution to good governance (Loewe, 2011).

2.2.11. The Quality Infrastructure

The QI is generally understood to be the totality of the policy, legal, regulatory and administrative frameworks and the institutional arrangements (public and/or private) required to create and implement standardization, metrology (industrial, scientific and legal), accreditation and conformity assessment services (testing, inspection and product- and system certification) required to deliver acceptable evidence that products and services meet defined requirements, demanded either by authorities or the marketplace (Calzadilla & Miyake, 2016).

2.2.12. Frameworks of NQI Institutions

The NQI elements are closely interrelated and cannot be reliably implemented without all of them being actively working, integrated and internationally recognized. When we are in the sector of quality assurance service, we cannot implement any quality strategy with the absence of one institution from the four national quality infrastructure institutions. So that, we need to conceptualize the following four service provider NQI institutions:

2.2.12.1. Concepts of Standardization

A standard is a document that pins down the characteristics of a product or a service. These features may cover size, design, weight, environmental requirements, performance, interoperability, materials, production process or service delivery or even the protocols that allow computers or mobile phones to attach to each other. The standard may include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, and packaging, marking or labeling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method (ISO/IEC, 2004: 12).

In this sense, standards serve to describe the state of the art, point technical developments in the right direction at an early stage, define the requirements to be met by products and procedures, facilitate the interchangeability of technical components and set technical specifications for product testing. This gives market participants a uniform basis for assessing product quality and for goods to be labeled accordingly. Standardization promotes the rapid spread of technical knowledge and thus helps to make enterprises,

particularly small and medium-sized, more competitive and innovative. Standards do not stifle innovation or competition. Rather, they are the foundation for both. As a part of the mandatory technical regulations, standards are an integral component of the economic and legislative system and a basic element in such important areas as environmental protection and health and safety at work. The main tasks of a standardization organization are the support of the standardization process, harmonization and coordination with current working standards (Sanetra & Marbán, 2007).

2.2.12.2. Concepts of Conformity Assessment

Conformity assessment is a collective term covering the many elements required to demonstrate that a product or a service complies with stated technical and other requirements. It deals with inspection, testing, and certification services (Sanetra & Marban, 2007). These services can be provided by the manufacturer – in which case it is considered first-party conformity assessment or a supplier's declaration of conformity, they can also be conducted by the purchaser, i.e. the second party. This is an expensive option for the purchaser, so second-party assessment is generally encountered only among major purchasers operating their own inspection and testing infrastructures (Goncalves & Pueckert, 2011).

Much more acceptable, though, especially for developing economy is the provision of conformity assessment services by an organization that is independent of both the supplier and the purchaser. Such an organization would be a third-party conformity assessment body (Francis & Otto (Ed.). 2011).

2.2.12.3. Concepts of Metrology

Metrology is a technical term meaning all activities and procedures related to measurements. The ultimate goal of metrology, also defined as ‘the science of measurement and its application’ (International Vocabulary of Metrology, 2010), is to ensure correct, comparable and reliable measuring results.

Measures are not a natural phenomenon. They have to be defined, described and made known. Nowadays, these are the tasks of a national metrology institute. Measures are disseminated to users on a voluntary basis via a network of calibration laboratories, which have normally undergone a process of accreditation as proof of their competence. In the field of legal metrology, this task is also performed by the verification service that checks measuring instruments subject to legal control for compliance with the regulations, provides identifications, and punishes infringements. Protective provisions and standards are meaningless unless testing is carried out to ensure that they are being complied with (Francis & Otto (Ed.). 2011).

The tests are as varied as the areas that must be regulated. They can range from a simple visual check to testing under special laboratory conditions. The overall requirements for laboratories or other organizations to be considered capable to carry out calibration, testing and sampling are stated in the joint International Standard ISO/IEC 17025.

2.2.12.4. Concepts of Accreditation

Accreditation is a formal recognition of competence. It is universally thought of as being limited to approval by an accreditation body using requirements defined in the guides and international standards issued by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electro technical Commission (IEC), together ISO/IEC 17000 family of standards. This can be a somewhat narrow view in some circumstances and markets, where other standards may apply. For example, some countries still ‘accredit’ using state standards which are not consistent with the current international standards. For international recognition, however, the application of international standards is strongly recommended.

The main function of accreditation is to assess the competence of the remaining quality institutions, i.e. to create trust of the economic agents in the quality infrastructure. For this reason, accreditations' most salient role is to amplify the impacts of each individual quality service and of the system as a whole. For instance, as accreditation ensures the correctness and independence of the certification process, it guarantees the quality of the certified commodities to the consumer. Accreditation may also contribute to improve the quality of quality services. For instance, the evaluation of laboratories contains, implicitly or explicitly, suggestions to improve the performance of these laboratories. This represents a transfer of knowledge from the accreditation institutions to the assessed laboratories (Gilmour & Loesene, 2003).

This element of quality infrastructure is especially important in the context of international trade and globalization of value chains. On one side, as long as the buyer trusts in the certified good, he does not need to do new tests in order to assess the quality of the good (avoid double testing), and on the other side, contracts are more easily settled, the penetration in foreign markets fostered. Optimally, accreditation bodies are independent, impartial and recognized internationally. When that is so, they confirm capability, confidence, consistency, transparency and political independence. This is particularly more difficult in small countries, where accreditation institutions have insufficient income to face the costs and, therefore are more dependent on subsidies from the state (jeopardizing the objective of impartiality). In addition, the lack of practice of the staff keeps low their expertise when compared to their counterparts in bigger countries (Sanetra & Marbán, 2007).

2.2.12.5. Working Frameworks of NQI Institutions

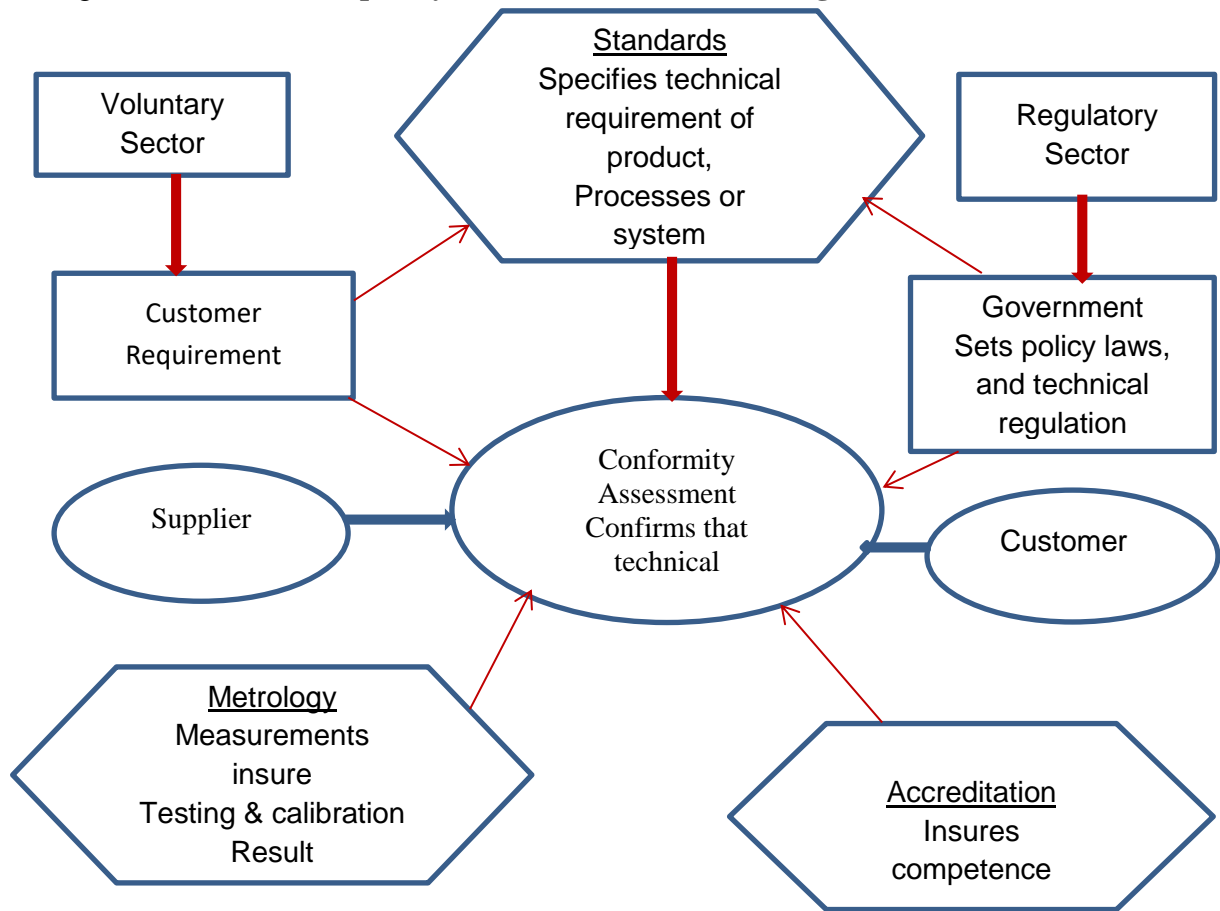
The National Quality Infrastructure is taken as the totality of the institutional framework required to establish and implement standardization, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment services (testing, inspection and product- and system certification) essential to deliver acceptable confirmation that products and services meet defined standard specifications, be it demanded by authorities or the market place. The optimum arrangement of the NQI at the national level is as much a government policy issue as a

market related service provision concern. The notion that two separate systems are required, i.e. one for the regulatory authorities and one for the market place, is outdated and leads to unnecessary duplication and inefficiency. In a modern NQI the technical competency issues as well as the required legal checks and balances, can appropriately be dealt with. But it is better to have a single and inclusive NQI will elements to serve both the regulatory authorities and the market place (Kellermann, 2011).

Quality infrastructure is a system of institutions which cooperatively confirm that products and processes meet predefined specifications. Most notably, it aims at providing technical support to companies so they can improve their production processes and at ensuring compliance with regulations or international requirements. Quality, the congruence of the actual properties with the required characteristics, is the result of the integration and coordination of a series of activities in several interrelated subjects, which are the main services of quality infrastructure: standardization, metrology, conformity assessment, and accreditation (Gonçalves & Peuckert, 2011).

It is clear that all elements of the QI are closely related. A standard, using dimensions and tolerances, cannot be defined without reference to consistent measurements. Measurements must in turn be internationally standardized to avoid expensively correspondences. A product must be submitted to testing in order to determine conformity with the requirements defined in standards or technical regulations. International compatibility requires that testing procedures be standardized, and also relies on reliable measurements. Accreditation, based on international standards, is the procedure by which the whole process becomes reliable and trustworthy, leading to international trade and competitiveness (Sanetra & Marban, 2007).

Figure 1: **Elements of quality infrastructure and working framework**



Source: ISO-UNIDO-2010

2.2.13. Principles of Quality Management System

Quality management principles that top management uses as guidance in running an organization with the aim of continual improvement of the organization’s performance are in the focus of numerous international standards, in particular ISO 9000:20015, Quality management systems.

2.2.13.1. Customer Focus

“Customer focus” is the first quality management principle and one of the key factors of successful business. The international standard (ES ISO 9000:2015, p. 3) describes this principle as follows: “Organizations depend on their customers and therefore should understand current and future customer needs, should meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations.” This standard identifies three key benefits of this

principle: increased revenue and market share obtained through flexible and fast responses to market opportunities, increased effectiveness in the use of the organization's resources to enhance customer satisfaction, as well as improved customer loyalty leading to repeat business.

2.2.13.2. Engagement of People

People are the most important factor of success and the very essence of an organization. Only comprehensive engagement of people guarantees a safe pathway to creating sustained success. The task of the organization's management is to exercise their duties professionally, consciously and responsibly as well as to discover how to include its employees into making important decisions as that will make them accept as their own, and they will feel a greater responsibility and the obligation to implement them. For instance, an economic policy cannot be effectively pursued where economy sidestep involving workers or, for example, an education policy without pupils, students and their teaching staff. In other words, active success cannot be recorded without active and fruitful participation of those who have life interest (Central Bank of Montenegro, 2015).

2.2.13.3. Process Approach

According to (ES ISO 900:2015, P. 6) "Consistent and predictable results are achieved more effectively and efficiently when activities are understood and managed as interrelated processes that function as a coherent system." The organization shall establish, implement, sustain and frequently improve a quality management system, as well as the processes needed and their interactions. The organization has to create processes necessary for quality management system and to apply them in the entire organization. It has to regulate required inputs and expected outputs from these processes, their order and joint interactions, as well as criteria, methods, including the measurements and related performance indicators necessary to ensure that the performance of these processes and their management are efficient.

2.3. Empirical Review of Related Literature

2.3.1. Communication Related

Andualem (2015) stated that time burden or pressure and information overload the most and common challenges of communication in the same selected Addis Ababa TVET institutions. The practice of institute heads mostly using the formal type of communication in their work shows their exacting performance of power chain and that they are limited to task related issues of communication. Such strictness between higher and lower level personnel hinders the free flow of information. In line with this, giving less emphasis to the informal communication in the institutions has an implication of the attitude of trainers and institute heads that was not favorable to the informal communication.

There was no planned and organized system of communication, which enables institutes to achieve their goals. Trainers and institute heads were not participating actively in the communication system. Though both formal and informal types of communication is mandatory, institutions were found to use formal type and mostly written channel of communication, yet trainers did not support this. This implies that there was no smooth relationship among trainers and institute heads. In the case of this, there cannot be free flow information in the institution (Andualem, 2015).

Annah (2014) noted that communication has critical function in organizations, from the very small to the very large. Even one-to-one communication can be fraught with challenges and misunderstandings. By communicating purposefully and focusing on results and relationships, businesses can leverage effective communication strategies to generate solid results with multiple audiences. Communication barriers can have a large impact on a company's employees and customers. Without communication there will not be efficiency within companies.

Most of us desire to communicate effectively but in reality we do not have a keen appreciation of the communication barriers we face. Because of these, there are ample situations unable to communicate effectively. Effective managers develop skills of

identifying the barriers of communication and learn to cope with them. The principal barriers to effective communication are therefore: noise, poor feedback, selection of inappropriate media, a wrong mental attitude, insufficient or lack of attention to work selection, delay in message transmittal, physical separation of the sender and receiver, and lack of empathy or a good relationship between the sender and receiver. As a result in any given communication, the medium or media for communication must be selected (Hitt, Middlemist and Mathis, 1989).

2.3.2. Public Relations related

According to Rahel (2013) noted, the fact that the public relation department within the Ethiopian airlines established in tending to communicate both the internal and external public to resolve conflict of interest and create maximum common understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information.

This study have conclude that the PR department of the Ethiopian airlines have weakness on planning and implementing programs which readily enable them to create common understanding the overall public who had relation with the airlines. Because of the insufficient efforts that the airlines have been exerting on maintaining a regular interaction with the community trough making active participation in sponsoring social supporting activities, the airlines have failed to implement effective public relation plans which probably contribute on its attempts of building positive image with in the public's mind.

The airlines communication with the external public, even though its public relation department has been using some kinds of communication mechanisms like press releases, websites, media, newspapers, TV, Radio, internet and the like, but due to the small size facilities and resources that the PR department have as compared to the airlines overall capacity and standard PR department is not adequately performing on facilitating appropriate communication tools and installing a centralized information flows in which they could avail sufficient information and established an on-going on communication with the external publics.

2.3.3. Standardization related

Most of the current empirical studies concerning the role of standardization are at a macroeconomic level and are focused on its impacts on economic growth, trade, innovation, and development. In this subsection some of the outcomes of these studies shall be summarized.

According to Maertens & Swinnen, (2006) stated in their study analyses the impacts of EU standards on Senegal's exports of food and vegetables. The main conclusions were that, in spite of the stricter demands of EU in terms of standards, the exports from this country increased significantly; and that the existence of such standards led to structural changes in the supply chain, namely from production structure mostly based in small farms to large-scale farms, yet, as argued, with positive effects in terms of the welfare of rural households.

As Czubala, Shepherd & Wilson, (2007) noted that, the impacts of standards in 47 Sub-Saharan countries regarding the textiles and clothing industries, it was found that EU standards that differ from ISO standards restrict the level of exports from those countries to EU, but harmonized with ISO standards have no significant negative impact on exports.

Empirical studies generally hint at a trade enhancing role of harmonized standards, but there is no consensus concerning the role of country-specific standards. A review of the empirical literature on standards and trade is given by the Guash et al. (2007).

According to the study of Yowhannes (2015) the low enforcement of compulsory Ethiopian standards is critical problem in the standardization. Ineffective enforcement of Ethiopian compulsory standards of agriculture and food products, quality is compromised to a large extent in the agriculture and food products and services. This has magnificent implication for developing country like Ethiopia, primarily because of health and safety that might be degrade the socio-economic development endeavors the country registering and also affects tourism and investment attractions. Besides, it will hinder the competitiveness of the country on international market, refuting hard currency earnings.

2.3.4. Conformity Assessment related

In the study of Imhof & Lee, (2007) on assessing the impacts of certified fair-trade plantations in Bolivia, stated that some major findings: fair trade has impacts on poverty reduction and therefore contribute for the reduction of political related conflicts; it increased the competition among intermediaries as a result of the emergence of fair trade cooperatives which led to an increase of the price paid to the producers; it enabled capacity building because certified fair-trade implies constant training on organic production, management issues.

As Lima et al. (2008) stated on the study of Brazilian Agricultural and Forest Management and Certification Institute made an impact assessment study to measure the consequences of socio-environmental certification on community forest management in the State of Acre for wood production. This study shows that the impacts of this certification were relatively small, because there are already several public institutions involved with Community Forest Management. Still, some changes were noted, namely regarding the disposal of residues, awareness about the use of fire, measures to protect wildlife and degree of involvement in environmental complaints.

2.3.5. Metrology related

According to King et al. (2006) noted that, good measurements would support innovation because; the incentives to innovate depend on the capacity of the firm and consumer to measure and verify whether the product has certain special characteristics or not. He collected data from the Community Innovation survey and regarding the use of the National Measurement System (NMS) by different industrial sectors. The findings were different for product innovations and process innovations. While the impacts of good measurements were significant and positive for the former, the effects on the latter were not significant. It was also shown that the direction and magnitude of the impacts also depend on other factors that range from good testing systems to the level competition on goods and services markets.

As NIST, (2006) stated that, the American institute for standards and technology conducted a survey which enquired for measurements requirements on different sectors asking how innovation was refrained by the lack of good measurements. Two of the most notable outcomes of this study were: lacking accuracy of measurement tool is the most common problem to innovation, namely in those sectors whose dynamics lead to more technological changes, the inexistence of standards, metrics and so on, that enable the assessment of new technologies hinders significantly innovation.

2.4. Background of Ethiopian National Quality Infrastructure

The National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) guarantees reliable industry standards and norms in order to ensure high-quality products are available for Ethiopian consumers and the export sector. The NQI organizations take international standards and guidelines as their point of reference, for example to certifying Ethiopian products. In that way, the Ethiopian industry is supported in increasing its competitiveness in international markets.

Now a day, since the Ethiopian economy is experiencing alarming growth and is also becoming increasingly active in international markets, high demand for good quality of products, services and processes are increasing. To answer this, the country needs a well-functioning quality infrastructure so that international standards and industrial norms can be enforced.

Therefore, the Ethiopian Government has reformed the ENQI. This reform is supported by the German development cooperation. Also the reform was made to comply with the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), by reconstructing Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia (QSAE) into four separate organizations in February, first 2011 and put them under the direction of the Ministry of Science and Technology but at this time the NQI institutions are under the supervises of Ministry of Trade and Industry. To list, they are an Ethiopian Standard Agency (ESA), Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE), Ethiopian National Metrology Institute (ENMI) and Ethiopian National Accreditation Office (ENAO).

The Ethiopian parliament also has adopted the NQI reform, which is now being implemented. The new structure meets WTO requirements. Better quality products and services increase the consumers' standard of living and the competitiveness of the Ethiopian economy.

Ethiopian Standard Body has undergone several structural and name changes since its first birth back in 1970, and Ethiopian Standard Agency (ESA) was established after the latest restructuring, by Ethiopian Council of Minister Regulation No. 193/2010. ESA was the National Standards Body (NSB) of Ethiopia, responsible for developing, publishing and maintaining national Ethiopian Standards. It represents Ethiopia in the international standardization affairs - member of the ISO and other international and regional standardization bodies. It also, in collaboration with concerned regulatory bodies, develops compulsory / mandatory Ethiopian standards and regulations which are to be approved by the National Standardization Council. Besides, it carries out promotional activities, training and technical supports to facilitate for the implementation of standards. It is the owner of and administers certification schemes and the National Standard Mark.

The National Metrology Institute (NMI) of Ethiopia is established as per the Ethiopian Council of Ministers Regulation No. 194/2010. The Institute has a responsibility to develop a national metrology system compatible with the international metrology system and ensure technology transfer in the sector, establish and implement a system that enables to compare Ethiopian national measurement standards and certified reference materials with international measurement standards and to maintain and disseminate them, support education and research activities in the field of metrology, build national capacity for maintenance of scientific instruments and provide maintenance services, and provide technical training, consultancy and information services on scientific equipment with a view to supporting users to carry out their duties. National calibration services are also given by this institute.

Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE) was established by the Ethiopian Council of Ministers Regulation No. 196/2010 as a federally owned public Enterprise, governed by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to organize robust Certification, Inspection and Laboratory testing Services. ECAE is at present the major conformity

assessment organization in the country, providing inspection, testing and certification services to public and private industries and it is the only national certification body which has certification capabilities in the areas of the System Certification (ISO 9001) and Product Certification.

Ethiopian National Accreditation Office (ENAO) was established by the Ethiopian Council of Ministers Regulation No. 195/2010. as an autonomous federal government office having its own legal personality with the mandate to accredit the competence of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to perform specific activities, such as test, calibrations, certifications or inspections as formal third-party recognition. As the national accreditation body, ENAO is responsible to give accreditation services to laboratories (test and calibration), certification and inspection bodies, both domestic and foreign, that operate both within the borders of Ethiopia and outside .In turn, ENAO itself shall maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011 standards.

The four Institutions, which are described above, deal with the so called voluntary parts of NQI. The mandatory part of the new NQI landscape is allowed to put sanctions to substandard activities and fall under the premises of Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI). There are three Institutions under the premises of Ministry of Trade and Industry working belongs to these targets. The first is an Inspection and Regulatory Affairs Directorate, which is established to overcome the product and service quality problems and to avoid the problems observed in the prevailing market system.

The other premises of MoTI are Trade Practice and Consumer Protection Authority, which is established for the purpose of controlling unfair competition in market and to benefit consumers by getting a good quality product and service in fair price. The National Quality Infrastructure Technical Committee (NQITC) is the final premises of Ministry of Trade and Industry to discuss, which is established to avoid the coordination problem among different regulatory bodies.

2.5. Conceptual Framework for the Study

From the review of related literature strategic communication-based systems and activities, there are two schools of thought - the transmission-based and the dialogue-based models. The first one is often represented in a linear way (communication models of Shannon and Weaver, Laswell) and focuses on the transmitter and the message to transmit (Shannon & Weaver, 1957). The second model views communication as a more complex system involving the consideration and cooperation of the "receiver" - co-construction of meanings. The latter is no longer considered as a "consumer of information" but as a social being capable of reasoning. Thus, a particular attention is brought on citizens' needs in contrast to solely transmitter's interest.

Despite the differences in applications, both models meet saying that strategic communication should be consistent, coordinated, structured, and should have a clear agenda and settled goals (Bennett & Jessani, 2011).

Therefore this research is based on dialogue-based model. This model is better corresponds to the meaning of communication. Communication holds therefore a dual meaning - to share information but also and mostly to co-create. It involves at least two interlocutors and implies a relation of giving and receiving. Ideally, these co-constructed relationships should lead to a win-win situation.

Furthermore, strategic communication demands resources including time and knowledge. Nowadays, it is not sufficient for organizations to have a website or a brochure to reach their objectives. Communication is an art and, therefore should be approached in a circular way (in opposition to linear models), through cooperation, feedback and adaptation, to be suitable for current environmental issues (Hallgren & Ljung, 2005).

The issue at stake for communication practitioners is, therefore, how communicate in a thoughtful manner, especially in a highly competitive context. This notably implies the design and implementation of a strategy that resounds within the culture of the organization and within the conscious and unconscious expectations of citizens.

Strategic communication in organizations is a long term communication management effort that an organization has to make in its particular environment for its relationship with its stakeholders to benefit its progress to achieving the goals that were set based on

the vision and mission of its overall strategy. Proper management of communication will allow the organization to design, develop, put into practice, and maintain its strategy at the different levels of its actions. This will help it keep its corporate strategies aligned with the environment, ensuring consistency and continuity, and developing a line of permanent action. A result will be the projection of a positive image to stakeholders in the short term, and an enhancement of its reputations in the long term.

In this regard the conceptual framework of measurement is assessing the practices and challenges of strategic communication in selected two national quality infrastructure institutions of Ethiopia (Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise and Ethiopian Standards Agency) as per the dialogue-based model. In this model, strategic communication consists of the following issues. Strategy aligned with communication, skill and knowledge of practitioners, resource needed by communication, two ways model of communication, participatory management approach and modern equipment used for communication.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter describes and assesses the methodological background of the study which consists of research methodology, research design, population and sample size, data collection instruments, data presentation and analysis, conceptual framework of the study and ethical considerations. Moreover, it describes the details concerning the method choice that were adopted and how this approach enables the research to explore the research problem.

3.1. Research Methodology

Research methodology involves analysis of the assumptions, principles and procedures in a particular approach to inquiry. Methodologies explicate and define the kinds of problems that are worth investigating; what constitutes a researchable problem; testable hypotheses; how to frame a problem in such a way that it can be investigated using particular designs and procedures; and how to select and develop appropriate means of collecting data (Creswell, 2009).

3.1.1. Quantitative Research Methodology

Quantitative research method is the use of statistical data as a tool for saving time and resources. Bryman, (2001) argue that quantitative research approach is the research that places emphasis on numbers and figures in the collection and analysis of data. Quantitative research approach can be seen as being scientific in nature. The use of statistical data for the research descriptions and analysis reduces the time and effort which the researcher would have invested in describing his result. Data (numbers, percentages and measurable figures) can be calculated and conducted by a computer through the use of a statistical package for social science (SPSS) Connolly, (2007) which save lot of energy and resources. The use of scientific methods for data collection and analysis make generalization possible with this type of approach. Interaction made with one group can be generalized.

Since the research approach basically relies on hypotheses testing, the researcher need not to do intelligent guesswork, rather he would follow clear guidelines and objectives

(Lichtman, 2013). The research study using this type of research tool is conducted in a general or public fashion because of its clear objective and guidelines, and can therefore be repeated at any other time or place and still get the same results (Shank and Brown, 2007).

Moreover, this research approach gives room for the use of control and study groups. Using control groups, the researcher might decide to split the participants into groups giving them the same issue, but using different methods, bearing in mind the factors that he is studying. At the end of the study the groups can be gathered and the researcher can then test the hypothesis (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

The issue of researcher being bias with either his data collection or data analysis will be highly eliminated when the researcher is not in direct contact with the participants, that is, he collects his data through telephone, internet or even pencil-paper questionnaire. There is full control for alternatives such as interpretations, explanations, and conclusions. In other words, the objectivity of the researcher will not be compromised (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

Despite the usefulness of the method researcher detachment from the participants is also a weakness within the quantitative research approach. Researcher detachment means that he is an “observer” or an “outside looking in”. With this type of researcher/participant relationship, it will be extremely difficult to get the in-depth study of the phenomena within its natural settings. He will neither understand the group or individuals working with him nor will he appreciate them (Shank and Brown, 2007).

A quantitative research approach is characterized as being structured with predetermined variables, hypotheses and design Creswell, (2009). As a result of using predetermined working strategies, the approach does not require or encourage imaginative, critical and creative thinking De Vaus, (2014). Any data collected is geared towards supporting or rejecting the predetermined paradigms. This, however, shows that the tool is effective for studying what is already known instead of assisting in unravelling the unknown and revamping the known. Perhaps, findings from the studies with this tool may lead to

propounding laws and facts that can stand on their own regardless of it being true or not (Shank and Brown, 2007).

3.1.2. Qualitative Research Methodology

Berg and Howard (2012) characterize qualitative research as meanings, a concept, a definition, metaphors, symbols and a description of things. This definition clearly show that qualitative research contains all necessary instruments that can suggest recall which aids problem-solving. Qualitative data instruments such as observation, open-ended questions, in-depth interview (audio or video), and field notes are used to collect data from participants in their natural settings. The methods employed in data collection give full description of the research with respect to the participants involved. Qualitative research approach creates wider understanding of behavior. Hence, qualitative research approach provides abundant data about real life people and situations. The reliance on the collection of non-numerical primary data such as words and pictures by the researcher who serves as an instrument himself makes qualitative research well-suited for providing factual and descriptive information (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

Moreover, a qualitative research approach views human thought and behavior in a social context and covers a wide range of phenomena in order to understand and appreciate them thoroughly. Human behaviors, which include interaction, thought, reasoning, composition, and norms, are studied holistically due to in-depth examination of phenomena. The close relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants in this approach makes it easy for the participant to contribute to shaping the research. This however account for significant understanding of experiences as its participants understand themselves and also understand experience as unified.

Despite the usefulness of a qualitative research, there are still some criticisms about the method. The problems associated with using qualitative research in problem-solving instruction Johnson and Christensen, (2012) found that qualitative researchers view the social world as being dynamic and not static. In view of this, limit their findings to the particular group of people being studied instead of generalizing De Vaus, (2014).

Qualitative approach could have been good method for the study if their findings are reflective of a wider population (Shank and Brown, 2007).

The users of the approach are said to write fictions because they have no means of verifying their true statements. Since the approach is characterized by feelings and personal reports, it is believed that the approach cannot give reliable and consistent data when compared to using quantifiable figures (Atkins and Wallac, 2012).

Researchers impose their meaning and understanding of a situation to a given time and place to other people. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated that constructivists' approach is a multidisciplinary field; therefore their research is only exploratory. Finally, non-use of numbers by qualitative researchers makes it difficult and impossible to simplify findings and observations. Qualitative researchers believe that the social world (phenomena and experiences) has many dimensions; hence explanations are based on the interpretations of the researcher. In view of this, proper explanation cannot be given because the result depends on the explanation of the researcher at that time of which different researcher may give a different explanation. So, the research cannot be repeated by another researcher at another place and still get the same results.

3.1.3. Mixed Research Methodology

Mixed research methodology is a method that includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. It uses mixed data collection (numerical and text) and alternative tools (statistics and analysis). In mixed research method, a researcher combines or mixes qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language in a single study (Kothari, 2004).

The rationale behind for mixed research to apply is that neither qualitative nor quantitative methods alone are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation of the study but when used in combination, qualitative and quantitative methods complement each other and enhance complete analysis and sense of the research problem (Creswell, 2009).

Creswell, (2009) argue, that mixed methods research is more than simply collecting both qualitative and quantitative data; it implies that data are integrated, related, or mixed at some stage of the research process.

Therefore, based on the above concepts, this research employed mixed methods of a research approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data in which the researcher build the knowledge on pragmatic grounds Morgan (2007). Accordingly, this study used mixed method, which is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in the research process to understand and assess the challenges of strategic communication in the selected two ENQI institutions.

Philosophical foundation for mixed method is pragmatism. This is used in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem Morgan (2007). Pragmatism philosophical view provides basis for mixed research method. This applies to mixed methods research in that both quantitative and qualitative assumption. Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity. In a similar way, mixed methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analyzing data rather than subscribing to only one way (Creswell, 2009).

Henceforth, the research problem was identified through literature review and existing situation of the selected two national quality infrastructure institutions in Ethiopia. To come up with a solution to this problem, appropriate research questions and objectives are carefully defined. To answer these research questions and to achieve the research objectives an appropriate methodology in which secondary and primary data were collected and analyzed. By analyzing the collected data, the challenges of strategic communication were assessed and identified. Finally, based on the analysis and assessment results, clear understanding of the present status of the two selected Ethiopian NQI institutions practices and challenges of strategic communication were find-out and appropriate solutions have been proposed.

3.2. Research Design

A research design is so important if one needs to carry out a realistic and valid investigation as precise methods are crucial for different types of investigations. Therefore, every research requires a research design that is carefully tailored to the exact needs of the problem under investigation (Creswell, 2009).

A convergent parallel mixed design is a form of mixed methods design in which the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009).

This study, therefore, non-experimental descriptive types of research design to describe the practices and challenges of strategic communication of the two selected national quality infrastructure institutions of Ethiopia. Convergent parallel mixed design was used in which the researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the researcher typically collects both forms of data at the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

3.3. Population and Sample Size

3.3.1. Population

The population of the study includes public relation practitioners, top leaders, directorate directors, team leaders and employees of the ESA and ECAE were incorporated in the population of this study.

In this regard as per the two selected ENQI institutions 2019 annual report, there are four top leaders (general directors and deputy general directors) 20 directorate directors, 5 public relation practitioners, 30 team leaders and 110 employees who are working in the two institutions are the population of this study.

3.3.2. Sample Size Determination

The two deputy general directors, three PR practitioners were used in the qualitative data gathering as sample size for interview. This selection is non-probability sampling technique that is purposive. For quantitative data determination the sample size of the

ENQI employees of the two institutions were used for the quantitative data gathering specified as follows:

According to Yamane, (1967). The following formula was presented to have a scientific determination of sample size in the quantitative data. The sample size determination formula with 95% confidence level.

The calculation formula of Yamane Taro is presented as follows.

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

Where: n= Sample size required, N =Total number of populations, e = allowable error (%)

Therefore, N= 150 and e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{150}{1 + 150(0.05)^2} = \frac{150}{1.4} = 107$$

Hence: n = 107

3.3.3. Sampling Frame

A list of top-level leaders, PR practitioners and employees which are working in the two ENQI institutions (ECAE and ESA) were the sample frame of the study. .

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

3.4.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. The questionnaire was send to respondents to write down their responses to the questions. Employing questionnaire has the following advantages:

- Low cost even when the universe is large and is widely spread geographically;
- Free from the bias of the interviewer;
- Respondents have adequate time to give answers;
- Respondents, who are not easily approachable, can also be reached conveniently;

Large samples can be made use of and thus the results can be made more dependable and reliable Kothari (2004); thus, considering the above merits of the tool, it has been used to collect information from the target population of the study. Some of the questions were of sensitive nature and needed privacy. Therefore care was taken to ensure that the respondents' privacy was not compromised. In this study questionnaire was the first instrument employed to gather the quantitative data from directorate directors, team leaders, public relations practitioners and employees of the two ENQI institutions. The total numbers of respondent participants in this study were 107 who were responded the close ended type of questionnaires prepared in English language.

3.4.2. Interviews

Interview was the second instrument used to collect data which were primary and qualitative to gain detailed understanding and relevant further information from the selected respondents. They were selected purposively based on three criteria: that are having specialization in the specific area, having leadership experience, and having deep knowledge and better performance on leading the sector. Two deputy general directors and three PR practitioners totally five of the two selected NQI institutions were interviewed. These interviews were done to identify and assess the practices and challenges of strategic communication in the two selected ENQI institutions. The interviews were employing in semi-structured personal interview programed by preparing interview guide.

3.5. Data Presentation and Analysis

After the data collected from both primary and secondary data sources through qualitative and quantitative methods, the result obtained were analyzed and interpreted using qualitative and quantitative data analysis tools.

3.5.1. Qualitative Data analysis

The researcher used qualitative data analysis tool to examine raw qualitative data which are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, or paragraph and assigning codes. This helps the researcher to categorize a qualitative data into set of themes. The data then divided

into segments for commonalities that reflect categories and themes. After the data categorizes, it was examined for subcategories that characterized each category.

After applying a number of codes, the researcher sorted the data into same sort of order or sort of group. In the qualitative interview conducted with the leaders, coding with an important phrase, ideas, sentences, paragraphs and expression were delivered. Thus, the researcher used the analysis tool to categorize and make full of meaning the responses of leaders under the conceptual framework of challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI elements.

3.5.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

Based on research questions and stated objectives, the data were presented, analyzed and interpreted by strictly attending statistical procedures. Hence, SPSS statistical data analyzer software was utilized for the analysis of the data of which the frequency, descriptive statistical and reliability statistics features were specifically used to bring about a meaningful analysis. The Likert scale questionnaire part were given a scale ranging from 1 to 5 which is labeled using the five commonly known ratings namely strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree respectively, and entered accordingly in to the software so as to easily quantify the rate of respondents' perspective on the questions.

By the same token, the mean values of the Likert scale were classify as high, medium and low level of performance which were given 1 and 2 for the lower level, 3 for the medium level and 4 and 5 for the higher level of perception for those items stated positively, and the opposite is true if otherwise. Regarding data presentation, tables generated by the software were used throughout the chapter. Finally, converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results.

3.6. Analysis of Reliability Statistics

Before the actual commencement of the data collection, pilot test was made using twenty individuals from the two NQI institutions so as to check the clarity of the items as well as their relevance to address the objectives. On the other hand, to evaluate the accuracy of

the assessment, it is important to construct reliable and valid questionnaires. Therefore questionnaire and interview guide were checked up by language professionals of ECAE. On the other hand, experienced professionals of the two specialized PR practitioners commented on the tools so as to ensure their validity against assessing the challenges of strategic communication on the two NQI institutions.

The acceptable value of alpha, according to Bland (1997), ranges from 0.70 to 0.95. A low value of alpha could be due to a low number of questions, poor inter-relatedness between items or heterogeneous constructs. To this end, the Cronbach alpha of the items used for the current study was presented in the table below;

Table 1 Reliability Statistics

Case Processing Summary

Reliability Statistics

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.901	17

The result on table 1 indicates that, strong internal consistency among the items, and thus, they were inter-related and measure the same concept.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

In undertaking the study, particularly during data collection used interview and questionnaire, all sampling units were treated in an ethical manner by keeping their right to information about the general topic of the study, specific detail such as objectives, significance, their contribution to the realization of the study and other including any information they think important to them. Besides, any information obtained from the respondents was not attributed personally to them in any reports that results from the study.

Chapter 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

This chapter emphasized the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the acquired data the challenges of strategic communication in the Ethiopian national quality infrastructure institutions, the case of ESA and ECAE.

4.2. Rate of Response

A total of 107 questionnaires were prepared and distributed to different respondents of the two ENQI institutions. Among these questionnaires, 45 and 62 of them were distributed to the employees of ESA and ECAE. Out of the total (107) questionnaires distributed, 97% (104) were found to be appropriately and completely filled and given back to the data collector.

4.3. Profile of the Respondents

The background information of the respondents, i.e., gender, age category educational states and service experience is discussed as followed;

Table 2 Demographic profile of Respondents

Item/variable	Category	frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	74	71.2
	Female	30	28.8
	Total	104	100
Age	18-30	23	22
	31-40	66	63.5
	41-50	14	13.5
	51 and above	1	1.0
	Total	104	100.0
Educational states	Diploma	-	-
	Degree	76	73.1
	Masters	28	26.9
	PhD and above	-	-
	Others	-	-
Total	104	100.0	
Work experience	1-5 years	24	23.1
	6-10 years	29	27.8

Item/variable	Category	frequency	Percent
in the institutions	11-15 years	24	23.1
	16-20 years	21	20.2
	above 21 years	5	4.8
	missing	1	1.0
	Total	104	100

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

As presented in Table 2, the respondents for this research have the following demographic makeup. When we consider sex, it shows 74 or 71.2 % of the respondents were male and the remaining 30 or 28.8 % of the respondents were female. This indicated that there was male dominance in the institutions. The institutions were not gender sensitive and may hinder the effectiveness of the institutions.

As far as the age of respondents was concerned 22 % of the respondents were in the age range of 18-30 years, 63.5% of the respondents were in the age range of 31-40 years, 13.5% of the respondents were in the age range of 41-50 years and 1 % of the respondents were 51 and above years, the majority of respondents were significantly in the younger age group. This indicates employees of the institutions were energetic to accomplish the shared vision and mission of the institutions and strategic communication can help to lead the human power properly.

With regard to educational background, 73.1% of the respondents were degree holders and 26.9% of the respondents were having master degree that means 100 % of the respondents were first degree and master degree holders and this indicates that the respondents found in a good educational readiness to lead and perform the organizational activities.

Regarding work experience in the institutions, 23.1 % respondents were in the range of 1-5 years, 27.8% of the respondents were in the range of 6-10 years, 23.1% of the respondents were in the range of 11-15 years, 20.2 % of respondents were in the range of 16-20 years and 4.8% of the respondents were above 21 years. This indicates that, most of the respondents were less than 15 years' work experience.

4.4. Practice of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions

In this descriptive study the frequency of respondents and mean were described. The mean value represents the average of all respondent's response on the strategic communication of the two ENQI institutions.

Table 3 Description of mean score

Mean Score	Description
<3.39	Low
3.40 -3.79	Moderate
>3.80	High

(Source: Parasuraman et al., 1988).

In the current study, the practices of strategic communication of the two ENQI institutions were evaluated as the follows.

Table 4 There is clear vision stated for strategic communication activities.

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	disagree	51	49.1	49.1	50.0	2.98
	neutral	9	8.7	8.7	57.7	
	agree	38	36.5	36.5	94.2	
	strongly agree	6	5.8	5.7	100.0	
	Total	104	100.0	100.0		

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

From the total of 104 respondents, 49.1 % of respondents replied that the institutions had no clear vision and strategies of strategic communication. Whereas 8.7 % of respondents, they had not decided whether the institutions had clear vision and strategies of strategic communication or not. However, 42.2 % of the respondents (36.5% agree and 5.7 % strongly agree) reported that the strategic communication in the respective institutions had clear vision and strategy. In addition to this, the mean value of the total respondent's

perspective, which is 2.98, it indicates the strategic communication in the institutions is not practiced in a good manner.

Likewise, respondents from the interview revealed similar result that effective communication is a part and parcel of any successful organization. A communication should be free from barriers so as to be effective. Communication should a two-way process where the message sent by the sender should be interpreted in the same terms by the recipient. KII argue that strategic communication can help to set clear purpose of communication and to align the organization vision and mission. In the two NQI institutions there are activities of communication but there were not led strategically. Finally, this study suggests that there is need to make sure that the communication activities of the two NQI institutions require an integrated communication strategy.

Table 5 The communication practitioners have enough skill needed for communication activities.

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	disagree	41	39.4	39.4	39.4	3.19
	neutral	7	6.7	6.7	46.2	
	agree	51	49.1	49.1	95.2	
	strongly agree	5	4.8	4.8	100.0	
	Total	104	100.0	100.0		

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

As it is indicated on the Table 5, 39.4 % of the respondents disagree with the view that, the skill and knowledge of PR practitioners on the communication profession activities is not up to the required standard. On the other hand, 6.7 % of the respondents, did not decide whether the skill and knowledge of experts on communication or public relations activities is up to the required standard or not. However, 53.9 % of the respondents (49.1 % agree and 4.8 % strongly agree) replied that, the skill and knowledge of experts on communication activities is up to the required standard. As per the description of mean score the mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.19 %, indicated that the skill and knowledge of experts on communication activities in the two NQI institutions is not

up to the required standard. That means there is a problem of knowledgeable and skillful human power in the sector to perform the required strategic communication activities.

The interview held with the PR practitioners of the two ENQI institutions also revealed that, problem of knowledgeable and skillful human power in the sector to perform the required communication activities was one of the major challenges of the sector. The lack of adequate knowledge and skill on communication or public relations by the experts as well as the leadership was problems of strategic communication. As almost all the respondents argue that, we are in the global market, knowledge and skill of human should be up to the international standard, but we are not, due to this reason the services of the two NQI institutions are not communicated properly.

Table 6 The communication department has sufficient equipment used for communication activities.

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	disagree	85	81.7	81.7	81.7	2.32
	neutral	6	5.8	5.8	87.5	
	agree	12	11.5	11.5	99.0	
	strongly agree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0	
	Total	104	100.0	100.0		

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

Among the total respondents, 81.7 % disagree to the statement the two Ethiopian national quality infrastructure institutions have an up-to-date and enough equipment used in communication. Whereas 5.8 % of respondents, they have not decided whether the institutions have an up-to-date and enough equipment or not. However, 12.5 % of the respondents (11.5 % agree and 1.0 % strongly agree) replied that the institutions have an up-to-date and enough equipment used in communication. The mean value of the total respondent, which is 2.32, this indicated that, an up-to-date and enough equipment used for communication activities in the two NQI institutions are very limited.

Table 7 The Communication department has enough human power.

	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	strongly disagree	2	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.44
	disagree	76	73.1	73.1	75.0	
	neutral	6	5.8	5.8	80.8	
	agree	18	17.3	17.3	98.1	
	strongly agree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0	
	Total		104	100.0	100.0	

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

As it is indicated on the Table 7, 75 % (1.9 % strongly disagree and 75.0% disagree) of the respondents disagree with the view that, the structure, skill and knowledgeable human power in the two ENQI institutions. On the other hand, 5.8 % of the respondents, did not decide whether there is well structured and enough human power working on communication activities is up to the required standard or not. However, 19.2 % of the respondents (17.3 % agree and 1.9 % strongly agree) replied that, the structure and human power of communication is up to the required standard. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 2.44 %, indicated that the structure and human power of communication is not up to the required standard. That means there is a problem of structure and skillful human power in the sector to perform the required communication and public relation activities.

The interview held with the PR practitioner of the two ENQI institutions also revealed that, Communication has proved to be extremely important for the internal and external publics to create awareness on products and services in terms of quality and standardization. The two national quality infrastructure institutions cannot be effective and efficient to assure product and services quality in the marketplace without appropriate and up to the international standard of the communication practices. According to Bloisi et al. (2007), functioning communication is essential for achieving organizational effectiveness, and communication breakdowns cause numerous organizational problems from failure to carry out simple commands to low productivity and quality of operations. As can be seen from organizational structure, there was an established communication network in the organization. However, the Ethiopian

Standards Agency has the directorate title but has only two staff. In this regard the researcher analyzed that one communication director cannot create a good communication system, even though the director has a wonderful knowledge and communication skill. The Agency should give due attention to the communication department. The Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise has also spotted some areas of communication that are not working the way they should; these areas are information flow which is characterized as horizontal communication and impersonal channels. In these problematic areas are hindering the effectiveness and efficiency of the organizations.

It is very important to say that a structure, leadership, and communication in the two selected organizations, which are much interconnected. One area is influencing and shaping another, and changes in any one of them will have a spillover effect on others. This is very consistent with Leavitt's (1964) statement that says that structure, people, and technology are the main and the most powerful areas of organizational manipulation; tampering with any of these variables is very likely to cause significant effect on others.

The structure of the organization defines who a manager is likely to contact in a certain situation. Leadership, in turn, can change the structure completely, and can also determine the degree of communication, both vertical and horizontal. Communication acts as a glue - it determines how the decisions that are made by structural leadership are going to be implemented, and whether the organization is actually moving towards its goal. The change of any component in one area will bring changes in the other two. For instance, increased decentralization can be followed by adjustment in leadership style, which in turn can bring changes and difficulties in horizontal communication between the decentralized units.

Table 8 There is information center and every information is communicated on the right time.

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	strongly disagree	4	3.8	3.9	3.9	2.66
	disagree	63	60.6	61.2	65.0	
	neutral	4	3.8	3.9	68.9	
	agree	28	26.9	27.2	96.1	
	strongly agree	4	3.8	3.9	100.0	
	Total	103	99.0	100.0		
	Missing	1	1.0			
Total		104	100.0			

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

From the total of 104 respondents, 65.1 % of respondents replied that the information centers of the two ENQI institutions were not well established and the information were not provided on the right time and information were not communicated on the right time. Whereas 3.9 % of respondents, they had not decided whether the information center well established, and information communicated on the right time or not. However, 31.1 % of the respondents (27.2 % agree and 3.9 % strongly agree) reported that the information center in the respective institutions were established well and provided timely and the information also communicated at the right time. In addition to this, the mean value of the total respondent’s perspective, which is 2.66, it indicates the institutions information center is not established in a good manner and the information also not communicated at the right time.

Likewise, respondents from the top leader interview revealed similar result that well-established information center helps to provide relevant and timely information to the institutions customers and to the public in general. KII argue that Ethiopian Standards Agency has well established information center, but the information was documented in hard copy. In Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise, the information found in a fragmented way. There was not well-established information center.

Finally, this study suggests that there is need to make sure that the institutions need to have well-established information center, it should be up to the international standards of

similar institutions of the word. This is a vital dimension that should be dealt upon seriously as it leads to customers' satisfaction and affects service quality provision.

Table 9 There are high efforts on creating positive image of the institutions in the minds of the external public.

	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	strongly disagree	2	1.9	1.9	1.9	3.76
	disagree	9	8.7	8.7	10.6	
	neutral	5	4.8	4.8	15.4	
	agree	84	80.8	80.8	96.2	
	strongly agree	4	3.8	3.8	100.0	
	Total	104	100.0	100.0		

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

From the total respondents, few of them 10.6 % disagreed that the efforts on creating positive image of the institutions in the minds of the external publics. On the other hand, 4.8 % of the respondents did not decide whether there are high efforts on creating positive image in the minds of external publics or not. However, 84.6 % of the respondents (80.8% agree and 3.8% strongly agree) replied that there are high efforts of creating positive image of the two ENQI institutions in the minds of their external publics. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.76%, indicated that the two NQI institutions had high efforts of strategic communication by the communication departments.

The KII revealed that, there were high efforts by the PR practitioners but there were problems with the top leaders. Quality of leadership can be improved by managerial trainings and clearly communicated goals coming from the senior management. The top leaders of the two selected organizations assumed that communication is realizing the organization information and they believe that communication activities are not their duty and do not bear responsibility to make organizations more effective.

Table 10 The institution use adequate communication tools to avail information and established an on-going communication with their customers.

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	disagree	14	13.5	13.5	13.5	3.65
	neutral	10	9.6	9.6	23.1	
	agree	78	75.0	75.0	98.1	
	strongly agree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0	
	Total	104	100.0	100.0		

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

According to the above Table 10, respondents for the question whether the two NQI institutions uses adequate communication tools to avail information and establish an on-going communication with their customers, 14 (13.5%) of them said disagree, 10 (9.6 %) said neutral, and the remaining 78(75%) and 2 (1.9 %) of them said agree and strongly agree respectively. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.65%, indicated that the two NQI institutions had used moderate communication tools to avail information and establish an on-going communication with their customers. This indicates that the institutions were not effective on availing information and establishing on-going communication with its customers through using adequate communication tools. But as, the public relation manger and officers explain about the mechanisms that their department is using on making relationship with the public's. The public relation manager and officer of the institutions had stated that they are using a number of mechanisms to make a relationship with the public, customers and stake holders and among those mechanisms they were using some of them, press releases, websites, media, newspapers, TV, Radio, Internet , E-mail correspondence, Letters, face -to -face communication were what they mentioned but still public relation department have a problem to use effectively these tools because there is shortage skilled professional.

Table 11 The institution has good relationship with its customers based on providing up-to-date press releases.

Response		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean
Valid	disagree	10	9.6	9.6	9.6	3.72
	neutral	10	9.6	9.6	19.2	
	agree	83	79.8	79.8	99.0	
	strongly agree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0	
	Total	104	100.0	100.0		

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

Based on the above Table: 11, respondents for the question whether they agree that the two NQI institutions have good relationship with their customers based on giving up-to-date press releases , 10 (9.6 %) of them said disagree, 10 (9.6%) said neutral, 84 (80.8%) of them said 83(79.8%) and 1(1%) of them said agree and strongly agree respectively. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.72%, indicated that the two NQI institutions had good relationship with their customers based on giving up-to-date press releases.

The KII revealed that, nevertheless the current activities of communication are performed in a fragmented way, that means performed in the absence of strategy, there were effective enough for them to maintain good relationship with their customers and enables them to retain their customers consequently.

Therefore, the researcher indicates that, the two NQI institutions must keep up addressing their customer’s comments and complains and take corrective measure according the manager and officers of the institutions, public relation department explain that the public relation department trying its best facilitate meeting, conducting surveys and other related sessions to address the complaint and comments of the customers and the external public mainly by providing up-to date information.

Table 12 Types of communication mostly used in the two ENQI institutions

Item/variable	Response	frequency	Percent	Mean
Formal type of communication is mostly used	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.95
	Disagree	5	4.8	
	Neutral	7	6.7	
	Agree	80	76.9	
	Strongly agree	12	11.5	
Informal type of communication is mostly used	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.69
	Disagree	10	9.8	
	Neutral	13	12.7	
	Agree	78	76.5	
	Strongly agree	1	1.0	
Combination of formal and informal types of communication is mostly used	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.67
	Disagree	13	12.7	
	Neutral	9	8.8	
	Agree	79	77.5	
	Strongly agree	1	1.0	

In categorizing types of institutional communication formal, informal and a combination of the two types are the major ones. As one of legally established organizations, institutions can use either types of communication, which enables them to achieve the purpose fruitfully. In line with this understanding, in item one of Table 13 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if formal type of communication is mostly practiced in the institutions.

According to the data, 5 (4.8 %) respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 7 (6.7%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions are practiced formal type of communication or not. However, 92 (88.4 % of the respondents (76.9 % agree and 11.5 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions are mostly used formal communication type. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.95 %, indicated that the institutions are mostly used formal communication type.

In item two of Table 12 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if informal type of communication is mostly practiced in the institutions. According to the data, 10 (9.8 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 13 (12.7%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions are practiced informal type of communication or not. However, 79 (77.5 % of the respondents (76.5 % agree and

1 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions are mostly used informal communication type. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.69 %, indicated that the institutions are mostly used formal communication type.

In item three of Table 12 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if combination of formal and informal type of communication is mostly practiced in the institutions. According to the data, 13 (12.7 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 9 (8.8 %) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions are practiced the combination type of communication or not. However, 80 (78.5 % of the respondents (77.5 % agree and 1 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions are mostly used combination of communication type. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.67 %, indicated that the institutions are mostly used formal communication type.

Finally, as per the respondents mean value, all type of communication was practiced in the institutions, but the formal type of communication was used mostly in both the ENQI institutions.

4.5. The Challenges of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions

Table 13 Respondents' response on challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions

No	Item/variable	Response	frequency	Percent	Mean
1	There is lack of clear directions for strategic communication activities in line with the vision and mission of the institution.	Strongly disagree	3	2.9	3.35
		Disagree	29	28.2	
		Neutral	5	4.9	
		Agree	61	59.2	
		Strongly agree	5	4.9	
		Total	103	100	
2	There is problems of directive overlap among departments and communication department in the institutions	Strongly disagree	6	5.8	3.59
		Disagree	9	8.7	
		Neutral	8	7.7	
		Agree	80	76.9	
		Strongly agree	1	1.0	
		Total	104	100	
3	There is lack of integrated and working approach with/among different departments of the institutions.	Strongly disagree	3	2.9	3.69
		Disagree	9	8.7	
		Neutral	7	6.7	
		Agree	83	79.8	
		Strongly agree	2	1.9	
		Total	104	100	
4	Integrated and coherent messages in line with the institutions' vision and policies aren't created	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.48
		Disagree	20	19.4	
		Neutral	15	14.6	
		Agree	67	65.0	
		Strongly agree	1	1.0	
		Total	103	100	
5	There is lack of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession.	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.16
		Disagree	38	36.9	
		Neutral	13	12.6	
		Agree	50	48.5	
		Strongly agree	2	1.9	
		Total	103	100	
6	There is Lack of management support for communication activities.	Strongly disagree	5	4.8	3.69
		Disagree	5	4.8	
		Neutral	11	10.6	

No	Item/variable	Response	frequency	Percent	Mean
		Agree	79	76.0	
		Strongly agree	4	3.8	
		Total	104	100	
7	There is poor information flow from other departments to the communication department.	Strongly disagree	3	2.9	3.75
		Disagree	6	5.8	
		Neutral	7	6.7	
		Agree	86	82.7	
		Strongly agree	2	1.9	
		Total	104	100	

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

According to Table 13, the data focuses on issues related to challenges of strategic communication in the two IQI institutions. The first item of this table asked for the respondents whether there is lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication at the institutions or not. Respondents 31.1 % of the total (2.9 % strongly disagree and 28.2 % disagree) with the statement. On the other hand, 4.9 % of the respondents, did not decide whether there was lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication at the institutions or not. However, 64.1 % of the respondents (59.2% agree and 4.9 % strongly agree) replied that there was lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication at the institutions. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.35%, indicated that lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication is one of the challenges but it is not the major one.

In item two of Table 13 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if there was problem of mandate overlap with other directorates in the institutions. According to the data, 15 (14 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 8 (7.7%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had problem of mandate overlap with other directorates or not. However, 81(77.9 % of the respondents (76.9% agree and 1 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had problems of mandate overlap with other directorates. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.59 %, indicated that the institutions had moderate problem of mandate overlap with other directorates.

In item three of Table 13 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if there was lack of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions. According to the data, 12 (11.6 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 7 (6.7%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had problem of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions or not. However, 85(81.7 % of the respondents (79.8 % agree and 1.9 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had problems of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.69 %, indicated that the institutions had moderate problems of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions. This means problem of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions were the major challenges of strategic communication.

In item four of Table 13 respondents were exposed to show their opinions if there were problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies. According to the data, 20 (19.4 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 15 (14.6%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies or not. However, 68 (66 % of the respondents (65 % agree and 1 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.48 %, indicated that the institutions had low problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies. This means problem of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies were the challenges of strategic communication, but it was not the major one.

In item five of Table 13 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if there were lack of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession. According to the data, 38 (36.9 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 13 (12.6%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had problems of skill and knowledge

of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession or not. However, 52 (50.4 % of the respondents (48.5 % agree and 1.9 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had problems of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.16 %, indicated that the institutions had low problems of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession. This means problem of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession had low challenges of strategic communication.

In item six of Table 13 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if there were lack of management support for communication activities. According to the data, 10 (9.6 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 11(10.6%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had problems of management support for communication activities or not. However, 83 (79.8 % of the respondents (76 % agree and 3.8 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had problems of management support for communication activities. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.69 %, indicated that the institutions had problems of management support for communication activities. This means problems of management support for communication activities were the major challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions.

In item seven of Table 13 respondents was exposed to show their opinions if there were poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and outside. According to the data, 9 (8.7 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 7(6.7%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and outside or not. However, 88 (84.6 % of the respondents (82.7 % agree and 1.9 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and outside. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.75 %, indicated that the institutions had poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and

outside. This means poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and outside was the major challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions.

Finally, based on respondents mean value, lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication at the institutions, problem of mandate overlap with other directorates in the institutions, problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies, and lack of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession are challenges of strategic communication activities in the two ENQI institutions. But lack of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions, Lack of management support for communication activities and poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and outside are the major challenges of strategic communication of the two ENQI institutions.

4.6. The Role of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions

Table 14 Respondents' response on the role of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions

5. No	Item/variables	Response	frequency	Percent	Mean
1	The communication department provides timely and relevant information that helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institution.	Strongly disagree	1	1.0	3.97
		Disagree	6	5.8	
		Neutral	5	4.8	
		Agree	75	72.1	
		Strongly agree	17	16.3	
		Total	104	100.0	
2	Communication activities in the institution are good at in creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics.	Strongly disagree	1	1.0	3.67
		Disagree	11	10.7	
		Neutral	15	14.6	
		Agree	70	68.0	
		Strongly agree	6	5.8	
		Total	103	100.0	
3	There is a good practice of creating integrated and coherent messages in line with the institutions' vision and policies.	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.74
		Disagree	8	7.8	
		Neutral	19	18.6	
		Agree	67	65.7	
		Strongly agree	8	7.8	
		Total	102	100.0	
4	The communication department in the institution play a good role in internal communication.	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.97
		Disagree	6	5.8	
		Neutral	7	6.7	
		Agree	75	72.1	
		Strongly agree	16	15.4	
		Total	104	100.0	
5	The practices of communication activities in the institution enable to work more effectively that help to enhance the overall performance of the institution.	Strongly disagree	-	-	3.82
		Disagree	8	7.7	
		Neutral	11	10.6	
		Agree	77	74.0	
		Strongly agree	8	7.7	
		Total	104	100.0	

(Source: own survey result, 2020)

According to Table 14, the data focuses on issues related to the role of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions.

The first item of this table asked for the respondents whether they provide relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions or not. Respondents 7 (6.8 %) of the total (1 % strongly disagree and 5.8 % disagree) with the statement. On the other hand, 4.8 % of the respondents, did not decide whether there was provided relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions or not. However, 88.4 % of the respondents (72.1% agree and 16.3 % strongly agree) replied that there was provided relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.97%, indicated that relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions were provided in a good manner.

In item two of Table 14 respondents were exposed to show their opinions the communication in the institutions had a role of creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics. According to the data, 12 (11.7 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 15 (14.6%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the communication in the institutions had a role of creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics or not. However, 76(73.8 %) of the respondents (68 % agree and 5.8 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions communication had a role of creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.67 %, indicated that the institutions communication activities had a role of creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics.

In item three of Table 14 respondents were exposed to show their opinions if there was good practice of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision. According to the data, 8 (7.8 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 19(18.6%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions had good practice of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision or not. However, 75(73.5 %) of the respondents (65.7 % agree and 7.8

% strongly agree) replied that, the institutions had good practice of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.74 %, indicated that the institutions strategic communication had moderate role in creating integrally and coherently message with the visions of the institutions.

In item four of Table 14 respondents were exposed to show their opinions on strategic communication of the two NQI institutions had a good role in internal communication of the two institutions. According to the data, 6(5.8 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 7(6.7%) of the respondents, did not decide whether the strategic communication of the institutions was played a positive role in the internal communication or not. However, 91(87.5%) of the respondents (72.1% agree and 15.4 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions strategic communication had played positive role in the internal communication. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.97 %, indicated that the communication department of the institutions had played great role in internal communication.

In item five of Table 14 respondents was exposed to show their opinions on the practice of communication in the institutions enable to work more effectively overall the performance of the organizations. According to the data, 8(7.7 %) of respondents expressed their disagreement to the question. On the other hand, 11(10.6 %) of the respondents, did not decide whether the institutions communication department enable to work more effectively overall the performance of the institutions or not. However, 85(81.7 %) of the respondents (74 % agree and 7.7 % strongly agree) replied that, the institutions communication department enable to work more effectively overall the performance of the institutions. The mean value of the total respondents, which is 3.82%, indicated that the institutions communication department had played a great role in enabling to work more effectively overall the performance of the institutions.

Likewise, respondents from the PR practitioners interview revealed similar result that strategic communication can play a great role in branding of organizations. In the globalization process it has great importance to know how to use the power of strategic communication. Policy or trade will be affected by the strategic communication at

last. To reach a superior position in the global competition, these have great importance to take the correct decision in the right time, using the information effectively and behave proactively. The reason why strategic communication has such an importance is its guiding characteristic for determining “communication policies and “a road map”. On the other hand, this decides the context of “message” for the target audiences as well as “what to say”. Moreover, a vision emerges knowing “what, how, and why to say” rather than a simple communication effort. Strategic communication process has gained the role of “decoder” as it solves the more complicated mass media process. Proactive approach is required rather than reactive one. At this point, Strategic Communication aims to determine the weak points rather than searching solution after a problem emerges, to enhance and solve these at the beginning. It makes long term studies rather than one-day studies. This permanent and healthy approach paves the way for the success. Strategic Communication measures the effectiveness of messages conveyed to the target audiences and determines the perception level while it instantly changes the discourse if there is a misunderstanding or lack of effectiveness. Thus, Strategic Communication prevents misunderstanding of target audiences

According to (Özkan, 2014) stated that, strategic communication determines creating the messages, conveying the style, structuring the short and core messages, functionalizing the messages, the tools and methods choosing clear key notions and words that are repeated constantly, it also does the coordination of situations’ communication activity and policies of the an organization, vision and activities practices integrally and coherently.

Based on the interview data, literature and the mean value of the total respondents researcher conclude that, the communication activities in the two ENQI institutions had a great role in, providing relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions, in the internal communication and in enabling to work more effectively in overall the performance of the institutions.

Chapter 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results obtained through the questionnaire distributed to 104 employees of the two NQI institutions as well as through interviews of 5 top leaders and PR practitioner of the institutions, the following summary, conclusion and recommendations are given.

5.1. Summary

5.1.1. Practice of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions

The descriptive finding of the study shows that all the practice of strategic communication in Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise were not as to the level of expectation.

- ✓ Strategic communication can help to set clear purpose of communication and to align the organization vision and mission since it was mentioned by almost all the employees which were part of the study. In the two NQI institutions there are activities of communication but there were not led strategically.
- ✓ The two NQI institutions had limited an up-to-date and enough equipment used for communication activities and lack of adequate knowledge and skill on communication or public relations by the experts as well as the leadership. As almost all the respondents argue that, since we are in the global market, up-to-date communication equipment, knowledge and skill of human should be up to the international standard but all of the PR practitioners of the two NQI institutions were not PR professionals, they had lack of adequate knowledge and skill of the profession. Due to this reason and another problem the services of the two NQI institutions are not communicated properly to their customers and the public in general.
- ✓ The communication structure of the two organizations defines who a manager is likely to contact in a certain situation. Leadership, in turn, can change the structure completely, and can also determine the degree of communication, both vertical and horizontal. Communication acts as a glue - it determines how the

decisions that are made by structural leadership are going to be implemented, and whether the organization is actually moving towards its goal. As can be seen from organizational structure, there was an established communication network in the organizations, but it was very narrow and limited in human power. As per the respondent's response, all type of communication was practiced in the institutions, but the formal type of communication was used mostly in both the ENQI institutions.

- ✓ Well-established information center helps to provide relevant and timely information to the institution's customers and to the public in general. KII argue that Ethiopian Standards Agency has well established information center, but the information was documented in hard copy. In Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise, the information found in a fragmented way. There was not well-established information center.
- ✓ There were high efforts by the PR practitioners but there were problems with the top leaders. Quality of leadership can be improved by managerial trainings and clearly communicated goals coming from the senior management. The top leaders of the two selected organizations assumed that communication is realizing the organization information and they believe that communication activities are not their duty and do not bear responsibility to make organizations more effective.
- ✓ The two NQI institutions were using a number of mechanisms to make a relationship with the public, customers and stake holders and among those mechanisms they were using some of them, press releases, websites, media, newspapers, TV, Radio, Internet, E-mail correspondence, Letters, face -to -face communication.

5.1.2. The Challenges of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions:

The major challenges of the two ENQI institutions were;

- ✓ Based on respondent's data, lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication at the institutions,
- ✓ Problem of mandate overlap with other directorates in the institutions. In ECAE there were mandate overlap with human resource and marketing departments,
- ✓ Problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies, different messages created but they were in a fragmented way,
- ✓ Lack of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession are challenges of strategic communication activities in the two ENQI institutions.
- ✓ Lack of integrated working approach with different departments of the institutions,
- ✓ Lack of management support for communication activities and poor information flow to the communication department both inside the institutions and outside are the major challenges of strategic communication of the two ENQI institutions.

5.1.3. The Role of Strategic Communication in the Two ENQI Institutions

Based on the descriptive finding of the study, the major role of strategic communication in the two NQI institutions were:

- ✓ The communication department of the two NQI institutions had a role in providing relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions.
- ✓ The institutions communication activities had a role of creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics.
- ✓ There was good practice of internal communication in the two NQI institutions.

- ✓ The Communication in the NQI institutions were played a role that to measure the effectiveness of messages conveyed to the target audiences and determines the perception level while it instantly changes the discourse if there is a misunderstanding or lack of effectiveness.

5.2. Conclusions

The Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise are important institutions of Ethiopian National Quality Infrastructure that can be utilized to improve competitiveness and facilitate global trade as well as to protect human health and safety. In realizing this, strategic communication of these institutions is playing an important role. The purpose of this research paper is to assess the challenges and practice of strategic communication in the two selected NQI institutions. Thus, this conclusion is made based on the research findings.

The primary objective of the study is to determine the practices and challenges of strategic communication in ESA and ECAE. The two NQI institutions had limited an up-to-date and enough equipment used for communication activities and lack of adequate knowledge and skill on communication or public relations by the experts as well as the leadership. In the global market, up-to-date communication equipment, knowledge and skill of human should be up to the international standard but all of the PR practitioners of the two NQI institutions were not PR professionals, they had lack of adequate knowledge and skill of the profession. Due to this reason and lack of management support the services of the two NQI institutions were not communicated properly to their customers and the public in general. As can be seen from organizational structure, there was an established communication network in the organizations, but it was very narrow and limited in human power and all type of communication was practiced in the institutions, but the formal type of communication was used mostly in both the ENQI institutions.

The major challenges of strategic communication in the selected NQI institutions are lack of clear direction (vision & strategies) for activities related to strategic communication, problem of mandate overlap with other directorates in the institutions. In ECAE there were mandate overlap with human resource and marketing departments, problems of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies, different messages were created but they were in a fragmented way, Lack of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession Lack of integrated working approach with different departments of the

institutions and Lack of management support for communication activities and poor information flow in the institutions found as the major challenges of the sector.

Among others, the communication department of the two NQI institutions had a role in providing relevant and timely information which helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions. The institutions communication activities had a role of creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics. There was good practice of internal communication in the two NQI institutions and the Communication in the NQI institutions were played a role that to measure the effectiveness of messages conveyed to the target audiences and determines the perception level while it instantly changes the discourse if there is a misunderstanding or lack of effectiveness.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions and overall research findings the following recommendations are given for the improvement of strategic communication in the institutions:

- ✓ The two NQI institutions must have an interactive relationship with all of their stakeholders, not just with their partial target audiences or publics to realize their objectives. The institutions should maintain the relationship with their stakeholders through various channels and media. This need to manage the relationship through strategic communication.
- ✓ The practices of communication activities in the two NQI institutions were in a very fragmented; to solve this problem should manage their communication activities through strategic communication.
- ✓ Training and development for organization members to enhance their communication skills, knowledge, and motivation to communicate the institutions with their publics.
- ✓ The practice and structure of communication department of the two institutions should restructure to incorporate skilled and knowledgeable human power and should replace their current method of non-professional PR practices by PR professionals to hold accountable for the effectiveness of PR practices.
- ✓ To improve information flows the institutions need to have the skill of creating integrally and coherently messages with the institutions vision and policies and need to select appropriate medium. This should be solved by implementing fully the principles of strategic communication.
- ✓ The institutions internal communication practice was found in a good manner, but it needs to enhance a two-way form of communication by reducing the communication differences between managers and general employees and allowing individuals to be part of the decision-making process.
- ✓ The two quality infrastructure institutions need to give an appropriate attention to the communication department to have integrated working approach with

different departments of the institutions and should have appropriate management support for communication activities

- ✓ Strategic communication needs to have an up-to-date and enough equipment used for communication activities, technically qualified personnel and competitive salaries to attract and retain skilled staff.

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Annex: A

Addis Ababa University (AAU)
Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Questionnaire to be filled by the employees of the Two NQI Institutions

Dear Respondent,

My name is Tekia Brhane. I am currently a student of Addis Ababa University, doing MA thesis: on a topic entitled “Challenges of Strategic Communication in Selected National Quality Infrastructure Institutions of Ethiopia: The Case of Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity assessment Enterprise.”

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data regarding the challenges of strategic communication, in the case of Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity assessment Enterprise. The study is purely for the purpose of academic and thus does not affect you in any case. All of your response to the given question would be used for the research and will be kept confidential. Your frank and timely response is vital for the success of the study. Therefore, I kindly request you to respond to each question carefully.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and timely response!

Note: This questionnaire has two parts.

Part One is Personal Information and part two is a data directly related to the study

Instruction: For questions with choices, please choose one which you believe is appropriate and put “X” mark in the box found in front of your choice.

Part I: General Information

- i. Sex: A) Male B) Female
- ii. Age group: A) 18-30 B) 31-40 C) 41-50
 D) Above 50
- iii. Educational status: A) Diploma B) Degree C) MA/MSc
 D) PhD and above E) Other _____
- iv. Work experience in the institution: A) 1-5 years B) 6-10 Years

 C) 11-15 years D) 16-20 years
 E) Above 21 years

Part II. Data related to research topic

Please put “X” mark for the rate that best represents your perspective.

SA= Strongly Agree (5) **A**= Agree (4) **N**= Neutral (3)

DA= Disagree (2) **SD**= Strongly Disagree (1)

Objective 1: The practice of strategic communication in the two NQI institutions

S. N	Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
1	There is clear vision stated for strategic communication activities in the institution.					
2	The institutions’ communication practitioners have enough skill needed for communication activities.					
3	The communication department has sufficient equipment used for communication activities.					

S. N	Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
4	The Communication department has enough human power.					
5	There is information center and every information is communicated on the right time.					
6	There are high efforts on creating positive image of the institution in the minds of the external public.					
7	There is good practice in the institution towards creating common understanding with its publics.					
8	The institution use adequate communication tools to avail information and established an on-going communication with its customers.					
9	The institution has good relationship with its customers based on providing up-to-date press releases.					
10	Types of Communication practiced by the institutions					
10.1	Formal type of communication is mostly used in the institutions.					
10.2	Informal type of communication is mostly used in the institutions.					
10.3	A combination of formal and informal types of communication is mostly used in the institutions.					

Objective 2: The challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions

Please put “X” mark for the rate that best represents your perspective

S. N	Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
1	There is lack of clear directions for strategic communication activities in line with the vision and mission of the institution.					
2	There is problems of directive overlap among departments and communication department in the institution					
3	There is lack of integrated and working approach with/among different departments of the institution.					
4	Integrated and coherent messages in line with the institutions’ vision and policies aren’t created					
5	There is lack of skill and knowledge of public relation and communication practitioners on communication and PR profession.					
6	There is Lack of management support for communication activities.					
7	There is poor information flow from other departments to the communication department.					

16. In your opinion, what are the challenges of strategic communication in Ethiopian Standards Agency and Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise?

Objective 3: The role of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions

Please put “X” mark for the rate that best represents your perspective

S. N	Items	SA	A	N	DA	SD
1	In institutions, communication departments provide timely and relevant information that helps to create awareness and knowledge about the institutions.					
2	Communication departments of the selected institutions deliver employees an up dated information so as to aware them the obligations and provide them additional guidance on how to perform their duties adequately.					
3	Communication activates in both institutions are good at in creating positive reputation on the internal and external publics.					
4	There is a good practice of creating integrated and coherent messages in line with the institutions’ vision and policies.					
5	Interpersonal communication among staffs of both institutions is good.					
6	Interdepartmental communication within the organization is good.					
7	The practices of communication activities in the institutions enable to work more effectively that help to enhance the overall the performance of the institutions					
8	The practices of communication tasks enable the institutions to lead the overall of the activities strategically					

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E) Above 21 years

Part II: Top leader's and PR practitioner's opinion on related to research topic

Objective 1: The practice of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions:

1. In general, what do you think about the strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions? Do you think it is good? Are you happy with the practices? Why is that?
2. Do you think the physical facilities, equipment and appearance affected the strategic communication? How do they affect?
3. How do you ensure that the strategic communication has been served accurately as expected?
4. Do you think the reputation of the institutions in the mid of internal and external publics is positive? Do you think they are happy with institutions? Why?
5. What do you think affects the strategic communication practice of the institutions?

Objective 2: The major challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions:

6. What do you think about the general challenges of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions?
7. How do you evaluate the capacity (in terms of human resource, technology and willingness of management support for the department) of the two ENQI institutions?

Objective 3: The role of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions:

8. How do you evaluate the role of strategic communication in the two ENQI institutions?

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