



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES OF TWO
ETHIOPIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: ADDIS ABABA AND JIJIGA
UNIVERSITIES**

**BY
ZEMEDKUN NIGUSSIE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS**

JUNE, 2019

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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DECLARATION

I, Zemedkun Nigussie hereby declare that this MA Thesis is the result of my own work and that all sources have been accurately reported and acknowledged ,and that this document has not been previously , in its entirety or in part ,submitted to the Addis Ababa University or any other University in order to obtain academic qualifications.

Zemedkun Nigussie

Signature _____

Date _____

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Relations Practices of Two Ethiopian Public Universities: Addis Ababa and
Jijiga Universities**

Zemedkun Nigussie

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
CCD	Corporate Communication Directorate
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency
FBC	Fana Broadcasting Corporate
HLI	Higher Learning Institutions
IAD	International Affairs Directorate
JJU	Jijiga University
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
SRTV	Somali Region Television
OERPC	Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communications
PR	Public Relations
UCAA	University College of Addis Ababa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Abstract

This study was designed to be conducted on the organizational communication and public relations practices of two Ethiopian public Universities. In this case, Jijiga and Addis Ababa Universities were selected for the study. Purpose of this study was to show what the organizational communication and public relations practices of higher learning institutions seem, especially in different generation Universities. Therefore, this study focused on comparatively studying the organizational communication and public relations practices of Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities. Exploratory research design was employed as it helps to get a deeper insight in to the problem under study. Samples were taken through using both questionnaire and interview methods of data collection. The two Universities Journalism and Communications instructors, communication directors and team leaders were purposively chosen and stakeholders of the two Universities were selected by using systematic random sampling technique. By analyzing the data collected from 90 respondents and four informants, the researcher has found out that the two Universities public relations practices are not as effective as they are supposed to be. According to the findings, the communication directorates of the two Universities do not have internal trust and are considered less important to the Universities. However, the Universities' public relations practices from the stakeholders' side was seen highly helpful and satisfying. Generally, the finding of the study has shown that Addis Ababa University' External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate and Jijiga University's Corporate Communication Directorate, according to this finding, were effective in communicating their external stakeholders, but have shown gaps in addressing their internal stakeholders.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This chapter presents about background of the study(which gives the overall meaning of what institutions are and how they work) and the organizations (explains about the historical background of the two universities under study), statement of the problem (elaborates the justification behind studying the two Universities organizational communication and public relations practices), objectives (clearly puts what objectives are designed to be achieved by the study), research questions (provides the questions designed to be answered by the study), significance (importance of the study), scope (the delimitation), limitations and organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the study

Institutions have existed as old as the humans' existence. The family, religion, education and the like can be considered as institutions as they have certain unique ways of doing things. It is not the institutional buildings that one calls institutions, rather individuals who establish institutions and exercise regular interactions and perform activities. The activities and unique ways of portrayals individuals perform make institutions functional and effective. The marriage systems, the political systems and so many others do have institutions; all having their own ways of practicing things and possess rules and regulations that govern them (North, 1990). Institutions are the kinds of structures that are mostly related to the social realm. The increase in recognizing the role institutions play in the social realm involves the recognition that much of human interaction and activity is structured in terms of open or inherent rules (Geoffrey, 2006, P. 2).

Academic institutions are those institutions including Universities and other institutions involved in educational career and research works. Among these institutions, higher learning institutions are the major sources for the emergence of new, innovative and life changing policies and strategies. Moreover, based on logical reasoning, these institutions provide directives for governments or organizations to make changes on their organizational practices, if needed.

Higher learning institutions, by far and large, are believed to have the potential to establish strategic policies and ways for organizations to use in order to make job career easy and effective. In this comparative study issues related to organizational communications and public relations practices are seen in the settings of Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities. The present study has also covered how much the Universities have effectively exploited their potential in developing a system of organizational communication and well-organized ways of public relations practices. The study looks in to the current status of the two Universities organizational communications system and how they practice public relations and the challenges they are confronting. Lastly, the study would come up with recommendations that benefit both institutions under the study.

1.1.1. Background of the Universities

Ethiopia has more than 40 higher learning public Universities operating in different parts of the country. Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities are among these public Universities. These two Universities, like other sisterly Universities, have been playing their role in contributing for the creation of competent and academically capable citizens to meet the needs of the country's workforce demand. These Universities, as any other institutions possess, do have aspirations and visions to reach on. In this regard, Addis Ababa University's Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communications (OERPC) and Jijiga University's Corporate Communications Directorate (CCD) are in charge of introducing institutional vision, mission, strategies, reforms and new changes taking place to employees and external stakeholders through their public relations and communication practices of their respective Universities. In this regard, the PRs of an organization has to start developing a good relationship with their internal publics and the internal public's understanding created about the institution can help develop the external public's understanding and view of the institution.

Addis Ababa University (AAU), established in 1950, is among the first-generation Universities. During its establishment, its name was 'University College of Addis Ababa' (UCAA) and started by enrolling 33 students only. Addis Ababa University, according to the 2010 data, has enrolled 53, 820 students in undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programs and has 2,833 academic

and 5,385 support staff. AAU is not only a senior University, but also an institution with big name and center for tremendous changes, contributing for the country in teaching-learning, research and community services, (Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communication, 2017).

After the reorganization of AAU, 2012 marked the merging of the Office of Communication with the Office of External Relations and Partnerships. The office, by the nomenclature, is in charge of establishing and coordinating university wide partnerships and collaborations with national and international Universities mainly by communicating the goals and overall performance of AAU through various ways of media. The office has two team leaders: the external relations and partnerships team leader (has three practitioners) and communications team leader (has two senior PR and communications officers and two assistant PR and communication experts). There are also camera-persons, secretary, messenger and driver as support staff (OERP,2017).

On the other hand, Jijiga University (JJU) is a second-generation University which was established in 2007. During its establishment year, the University enrolled only 719 students. Currently, its student enrollment reached 21,379 under 54 departments and has 996 academic and 758 support staff. JJU has brought remarkable contributions in filling the gap of professional graduates in the Somali region. Though, JJU was the only higher learning institution in the region (until the establishment of Kebridehar University very recently), has played a leading role in teaching-learning, research and community services to the surrounding community, JJU facts and figure (2017). The University's Corporate Communication Directorate (CCD) is responsible for making all university community and external public well-equipped with necessary information, making elaborations on policies, goals and strategies of the University.

Thus, the present study taking the two Universities as its focus examines how the public relations and communication activities are performed, and also would attempt to indicate the overall practice of PRs and strategic communication practices in these institutions. This is because both Universities represent two different generations of Universities in the country, as a result, the

study hoped to come up with the state of practices of the public relations and communication activities of the offices with regards to contributing for organizational change and development through handling their activities in professional lines of communication.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Higher learning institutions are one of the development engines of a country since they are the sources for qualified and competent graduates to the market. Especially, in countries like Ethiopia, where more than 41 % of the population is under the age of 15 and 28 % are aged from 15 to 29, higher learning institutions are expected to have effective ways of delivering courses and making citizens competent, USAID Fact Sheet (2017, P.1). To do so, institutions are not only supposed to hire proficient academicians, dedicated management staff and putting all the needed resources in place, but also should have to establish and exercise effective organizational communication systems. If all these are used in an organized manner, institutions may be able to perform better. But how will all the above things get done should be the question. Organizations by one or another way spend the working days communicating. To know how an institution communicates and performs, it is good to check by asking questions like; how messages are exchanged between the management and employees? How are messages disseminated to subordinates? How policies and strategies are clarified to staff and stakeholders? Are the vision, goals and strategies well understood by the staff and stakeholders? And all these and other issues can be well addressed through activities of PRs and strategic communication. If an institution attains its vision, goals and strategies, it demonstrates that the organization has effectively communicated itself to the staff and students as its internal public and also to its external stakeholders. Because staff performance and stakeholder's engagement are highly dependent on how they perceive and understand the institutional goals and strategies. In such cases, PR practitioners, in cooperation with other members of the organization, do have a role to play in promoting and building reputation of the organization and create a better understanding to both the internal and external public on what the organization stands for.

Corporate Communication Directorates of organizations while focusing on disseminating information and introducing new changes and reforms taking place in their institutions, they

ought to get engaged in the activities of strategic communication which requires carrying out research works in order to figure out whether things are done as per the plan or differently and whether aspired successes have been achieved so far or not.

From what has been discussed above, one can easily infer that the importance of PRs and strategic communication is not questionable when one thinks of a successful organizational management. From this perspective, the present study looked into some related research works conducted by local researchers in Ethiopia to come up with what research gaps has to be filled by the present study.

A study conducted by Frehiwot (2015) on the practices and challenges of communication on the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission indicated that the PR practices of the ministry lacks organization of activities and clear guidelines. Shimelis (2017) conducted a study on the Federal Government Communication Affairs Office's PR practice. The study revealed two major findings; the first is that the office's image in the minds of the public is distorted and the second is that though achievements were made to renovate government PR, what has mainly emerged was modification in form than change in work content. Behailu (2018) was another researcher who studied the PR practice in Addis Ababa City's three selected sub-cities. The study found out that there were gaps in communicating organizational aspirations to the public and in enhancing government and public interest to meet. The researcher recommended that higher learning institutions to train professional PR practitioners to fill the gap in the professional PR practice.

The researcher's recommendation implies that the PR practice is still in its lowest level of development in the country and the practice is more of traditional. Since the traditional practice of PRs lacks strategic planning and executing activities, it has limitations in many respects. Since there are gaps at country level, one can imagine that the problem may exist in other ministries and institutions. This reason can push interested individuals to get engaged in further research in PR practices and organization communications.

As mentioned above many studies were done on PR practices of ministry offices and government communications, but the student researchers didn't dwell on studying organizational

communication system and the role of PR in the various organizations, especially universities. In Ethiopia, it seems that researchers, of course for different reasons, do not give much weight in studying the PR practices and roles of corporate communications play in higher learning institutions towards achieving effective institutional communication and management.

As a result, the present study takes two higher learning institutions, one from first generation and one from second generation Universities of the country so as to find out the state of practice of organizational communication system and the role of PR in different generation Universities. These two Universities are selected for the study due to the reason that the researcher has previous exposures to see the PR activities of the two Universities, and found it relevant at least to represent one from first and one from second generation Universities among the 45 Universities of the country.

1.3. Objectives of the study

This thesis has both the general and specific objectives. The general objective is the overall objective that the study aims to address and the specific objectives are aimed at particularly addressing issues the study intended to deal with.

1.3.1. General objective

The broad objective of this study is to comparatively study the organizational communication and public relations practices of Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- comparatively explore the explicit roles played by the public relations in building the images and reputation of the Universities
- comparatively analyze the organizational cultures of the two Universities
- find out how organizational communication strategies are designed for supporting the success of organizational policies and strategies in AAU and JJU.

- Comparatively assess whether or not the organizational communication organs of AAU and JJU practically follow the public relations process in conducting research and evaluating their performances

1.4. Research questions

This study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the roles played by the corporate communication of JJU and Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communication of AAU in building image and reputation?
2. What is the kind of organizational cultures that the institutions practice?
3. Are the communication strategies of the institutions appropriately designed to support the success of institutional policies and strategies?
4. Do the organizational communication organs of AAU and JJU practically follow the public relations process in conducting research and evaluating their performances?

1.5. Scope of the study

The focus of the present study is to find out the organizational communication systems and PR practices in two Ethiopian public Universities. Since, it is difficult to cover all public Universities operating throughout the country, limiting the scope is essential. Therefore, this study covered Jigjig and Addis Ababa Universities. So, public Universities other than these two Universities are not included in the study. Besides, in the study, only academic staff from Journalism and Communication school and department, and the staff from the corporate communication/ public relations directorates of the Universities are included from the internal publics together with limited active stakeholders of the Universities for the study's purpose.

1.6. Significance of the study

Researchers usually conduct studies for making contributions in the area they cover. Based on this belief, the researcher of this study expects that the study provides the following three major significances. First, the study is expected to provide additional insight on the area of higher learning institutions' PR practices and organizational communications system. As a result, the

study is hoped to shed light and provide valuable information regarding trends of communication systems and PR practices in higher learning institutions. Second, the study also indicates the gaps in the PR practice and institutional communication system, and provides ways for improvements, policy options for future improvement and decision making in higher learning institutions communication practice. Third, the findings of this study may also be used as a reference or resource material as it provides valuable information. Additionally, it motivates other researchers to engage in investigating the area for further findings.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study is not able to cover some more public Universities so as to benefit from the wider assessment of the Universities in the country. This was, in fact, due to time, finance and other factors, which limited the study to cover only Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities. Besides, during the data collection period the problem the student researcher faced was critical, but with the support gained from the research advisor, staff and friends the study has now come to end. In addition, carrying out a comparative study taking two geographically distant Universities in the country with more than 600 Kms distance is also difficult, but with the strong effort made by the student researcher, the study comes into its present form. Generally, the limited number of Universities included in the study and limited numbers of study subjects are the major limitations for this study.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized under five chapters: of the five chapters, chapter one gives an introduction to readers about what the research deals with, the second chapter is devoted to review of related literature. In this part includes scholarly ideas that are related to the topic under study. The third chapter discusses the methodology of the study. This chapter is aimed at showing what methods and study designs are used to conduct the study. The fourth chapter deals with interpretation and analysis of data collected through different methods of data collection. The fifth chapter covers the conclusion and recommendation points of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter makes a review of relevant literature that is found to be useful to provide some context in which the present study can be conducted. As a result, topics with regard to organization and organizational communication, corporate communication, public relations, etc are treated in this part. Besides, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study are presented in this chapter.

2.1. Organization and Organizational Communication Defined

Organization, by definition is many things to many people. Different scholars do have their own differing means of understanding and defining the term ‘organization’. According to Hatch (1997), an organization is a social unit that encompasses groups of people that are collected together to work in collaboration for the attainment of organizational goals and targets. For Senior and Flaming (2006), an organization is a coalition of individuals, people or groups who try to influence others to achieve certain objectives by passing through various processes and using technologies in a structured manner. Senior and Flaming differ from Hatch, in defining the term ‘organization’, for Hatch, organization is seen as a social unit having people in it and those people work together to achieve certain goals; however, Senior and Flaming defined what an organization mean by elaborating it as a collection of individuals who not only work for a similar goal attainment, but also requires members of the organization to try to influence others for succeeding their goals.

Miller (1995) defined an organization as an entity having five critical features-namely, the existence of a social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinating activity, organizational structure, and the embedding of the organization within an environment of other organizations. He focused on five key considerations while defining an organization; the collection of individuals, the goals that individuals working in organizations and the organizations possess, the structure (not only the hierarchy, but also team structures within the organization) and the existence of the organization in the social environment. Organizations, for Keyton (2005), are the building blocks for a society. Any society’s collective economic change

and societal lives are influenced by the ways in which organizations operate. This implies that to bring about a change in the holistic economic and societal arena, the role an organization plays is of great importance.

According to the above definitions, though all the scholars didn't see and defined the term in a similar way, but the concept could be easily understood by considering points like an organization incorporates individuals with shared organizational dreams, goals and visions, that it requires structural framing, needs to work in the social environment and tries to convince others to the better organizational goal achievement.

To better achieve organizational goals, strategies and policies, an organization needs to communicate them. Sandra (2004) clearly puts that without communication nothing takes place in an organization. She strengthens her argument by saying that people are the heart of an organization and communication is at the heart of the people. In this sense communication is decisive and key for organizations. The failure as well as success of any organization highly depends on how it communicates. However, it is specific across organizations depending on the size, the culture and its area of involvement.

According to Weick (2001) anyone who is interested to study or make discussion on organizations should keep in mind two basic assumptions to be addressed. The first assumption views organizations as open social systems. Any activity taking place in organizations is done through the participation of its members. The members of the organization process and communicate information from both the internal and external sources. Organizations does not have memory of sorts. Individual members of organizations come and go, but organizations preserve knowledge, behaviors mental maps, norms, values over time. The information organizational members shared and captured get a differing organizational interpretation far from individual members of the organization. Members of the organization (employees) pass the information from one to the other through creating chain of interconnection among them. The process through which employees used to share and exchange information among them establishes an organizational -level interpretation which will also be passed to others for further interpretation.

The second assumption says the organizational-level interpretations more commonly show the views of upper-level managers. Executives of organizations, being in charge of strategic operation of the organization do have double chances to either deliberately or accidentally influence what the organizational interpretations will become. Top-level executives, in most organizations, are relatively small in number compared to other employees; however, their influence is disproportionately high on the entire organization. This is because of the fact that the top-executives are given the responsibility of analyzing information drawn from different sources, working units, and functions for developing an interpretation that cumulatively speaks for the organization in general.

Communication is specific to each and every company and every organization has its own communication system depending on its area of involvement and organizational culture. Communication, in organizations, is a dominant activity that takes place in their working setting. Management theory experts who are concerned on organizational study agree on the need for improved communication. Nelson and Harris (2008) argue that by only being aware of the need for better communication does not always translate in to use. Rather knowing what leads to poor communication and devising a way for improving the communication activities of the organization should be the focus.

Communication, as defined by Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007), is the lifeblood of all organizations: serving as a medium through which companies large and small access the vital resources they need in order to function. They continued by elaborating that communication is the lifeblood of all organizations by the way it serves as a medium through which large and small organizations access the vital resources, they need in order to operate. Primary resources like labor, capital and raw materials that organizations acquire can be attained through communication and they build up valuable stocks of secondary resources like legitimacy and reputation that enable them to function.

As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) cited in Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007), there are two ways by which organizations secure their access to these resources: one of the ways is making direct negotiation of the prices and terms on which a resource is purchased. In this case the buyers and

sellers make direct communication as it requires familiar skills of communication. The second way organizations use to have control over resources is by influencing indirectly the context within which these exchanges occur. That is why communication is seen as the heart of organizational performance. They added that “the success of an organization’s efforts to acquire resources and to influence the context within which it carries out its activities depends heavily on how well and how professionally a company communicates with its resource holders”, Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007, p. 2)

Although communication is highly important for the very existence of organizations, it is common for us to refer to the organization separately from the communication processes that sustain it. There are questions to be raised before defining organizational communication, as Keyton (2005) points out that without communication, there could be no ways for an organization to create products or provide services, market or sell its products and services, respond to the concerns of its customers or clients, respond to the demands and influences of external stakeholders, coordinate employees, and plan and manage its internal affairs.

The scholar stressed on the importance of communication for organization and in plain words said that organizations cannot exist without communication. The above-mentioned questions imply that any organization that wants to operate and sustain if only it communicates. (Keyton, 2005, p.12)

Organizational communication, by definition is, “a complex and continuous process through which organizational members create, maintain, and change the organization”, This definition of organizational communication, according to the scholar, can help address two important issues; firstly, it is good to keep in mind that members of an organization participate in this complex process. Communication is not the only responsibility of managers, though the managers create and send the messages, their subordinates and peers create meanings from those messages. Secondly, the process is transactional in which all parties play the sender and receiver functions to create mutual and shared meanings of messages. Another definition of organizational communication is provided from the view point of seeing communication as consequential and defined it as a continuous and complex process through which organizational members create,

maintain, and change the organization “by communicating verbally, non-verbally, electronically, and in writing with individuals and groups of people engaged in roles as internal and external stakeholders”. Keyton (2005, p.13). This definition views the concept ‘organizational communication’ from the perspective of real communication experiences in the organizational settings. As it has been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, one cannot see the two concepts separately; organization and organizational communication, rather they are inextricably linked to one another. Communication is not something that is imposed on organizations, instead organizations emerge from communication, making all communication organizational. (Ibid)

An organizations communication system is the multiple tactical and strategic media it relies on to communicate with its stakeholders, as well as the message content it chooses to diffuse through those media, as Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007, p.2) defined. A communication system encompasses public relations, marketing communications, investor relations, and employee communications; in addition, it includes the kinds of institutional communications an organization makes that are created to influence how issues are framed and the public debate that results about it.

2.2. Corporate Communications

Once the definition of communication and organizational communication is provided, it is good to see for what a corporate communication stands for. Corporate communication, in simple term is ‘a management framework to guide and coordinate marketing communication and public relations’ (Cornelissen, 2007, P.76).

Another more detailed definition of corporate communication is given by the same scholar that says that:

Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework and vocabulary for the effective coordination of all means of communications with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favorable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent.

(Cornelissen, 2004, p. 23)

For Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007), organizations are networks of people who communicate with each other. Almost in all organizations, communications flow horizontally and vertically, internally and externally, formally and informally, linking employees internally to each other, to various layers of management, and to the many external resource-holders of the organization.

Horizontal communication structures, as Cornelissen (2007) argues are important as it allows organizations to respond fast to emergent issues, provide control and ensure that consist messages are being sent out through all the various communications channels. The horizontal structures of communication allow for establishing cross functional work team and flexibility and possess various forms including multidisciplinary project teams or tasks, standardized work processes and council meetings. The teams can be categorized as natural work team and the task force team. The previous is a permanent team that work together on a continuous manner and the latter is created for addressing specific tasks or projects. Task force teams are collected to manage issues or whenever crisis situations happen in the organization and this task force at the end of the day should formulate adequate responses and communicate them to the key stakeholders of the organization.

In addition to the above, Organizations, also use differing tools to document work activities across disciplines and department in visual and standardized formats like flow charts, process maps and checklists. Through documenting activities undertaken by different communication practitioners, organizations create a shared understanding among the different communication practitioners about the process of integration. In addition to using more explicit and formal documented work processes, integration occurs through more informal channels. Most of the interactions among communication practitioners are made through informal means of communications like e-mailing, phone and etc. Organizations not only pave the way for the informal interaction to take place among the communication practitioners, but also to let the practitioners to be physically closer to each other. Cornelissen (2007) elaborates on this by saying that:

Companies can facilitate such informal communications by placing communications professionals physically close to one another (in the same building), by reducing symbolic differences such as separate car parks and cafeterias, by establishing an infrastructure of e-mail, video-conferences, and other electronic communication channels, and by establishing open access to senior management (p.80).

In big organizations, it is essential that communication practitioners from different disciplines frequently meet at internal conferences and meetings, where they can get collected and know one another, create network for further communication and share ideas.

Council meeting is also another horizontal structure are often practiced in multinational corporations, Council meetings usually comprise representatives of different communication disciplines such as employee communication, media relations, and marketing communications. These disciplines discuss on the strategic issues regarding communication and evaluate their past work performances whenever they meet in council meetings.

The communicators' council meeting provides several benefits, among these: it gives the opportunities for communicators worldwide to develop personal relationships, coordinates communication projects, paves the way to share best experiences from each other's mistakes, assists members to have an understanding about the company, gives training, improves the status of communication in the company and empowers professional to be more committed to the organization in general.

Though organizations do possess varieties of communications flows, not all of the communications in an organization are work-related, nor are they necessarily relevant to fulfilling organizational objectives. However, all communications activities in general have a determining role on the participants and observers about the organization and its activities and also affect the organization's image, brand, and reputation.

2.3. Types of communication

According to Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007) there are three classifications of communication activities within organizations. Namely, this includes management communications, marketing communications and organizational communications.

Management communications: this type of communication is labeled as the most strategic cluster and it is a communication that takes place between the management body of the organization and its internal and external audiences. The management level consists of all employees with authority over the acquisition and retention of key resources in the organization. In this type of communications, senior managers are not the only participants, but also various levels of business-unit and department managers within the organization. Managers are in charge for executing major functions in their organizations. Management is often described as “accomplishing work through other people.” this role of management includes planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling. Managing is only possible and successful with the consent of those being managed. It is impossible to manage someone who does not want to be managed. As a matter of this fact, a manager’s role is to continuously persuade individual subordinates that the goal of the organization is worth fighting for. To this end communication is one of the most important skills a manager must have in order to gain acceptance for the organization’s goals. The point that must be clear here is that management communication is not only a task that takes place at the top of the organization. All levels of the organization according to Van Reil and J. Fombrun (2007, pp. 14-15), rely on communication in order to:

- ✓ Develop a shared vision of the company within the organization;
- ✓ Establish and maintain trust in the organization’s leadership;
- ✓ Initiate and manage change process;
- ✓ Strengthen the identification of employees with the organization.

For sharing the vision of an organization to its employees, for developing trust to both the management and overall employees of the organization, for handling progresses taking place in the organization and for establishing a sense of belongingness of employees to their organization, communication is the key. It is because of this people are convinced that the success of managers

and organizations depends to a large extent on the degree to which managers efficaciously involve themselves in to the task of communicating. Especially, top management has a determinant role to play in representing the organization to both its internal and external public. Even in situations where top managers are skillful in acting as figureheads of the organization, communication is too important to them. In this case, communication specialists are required to assist managers in improving effectiveness of their communication skills, *Ibid*.

Marketing communications: According to Van Reil and Fombrun (2007, P.16) marketing communication is the second type of communication which is a form of communication that works on assisting the sales of products, services and brands of the organization.

Organizational communications: this is the third type of communication which encompasses public relations, public affairs, investor relations, corporate advertising, environmental communication, and internal communication. As Van Reil and Fombrun (2007, p.16) organizational communications denote heterogeneous group of communication activities that have four characteristics in common:

- ✓ Organizational communications are aimed at corporate audiences, such as shareholders, financial journals, investment analysts, regulators.
- ✓ Organizational communications have a long-term perspective and do not directly aim at generating sales.
- ✓ Organizational communications apply a different style of communication compared with marketing communications; exaggeration and puffery are limited and messages are more formalistic.
- ✓ Organizational communications are generally initiated by external parties. External pressures generally compel the company to reveal information that would not have been shared otherwise.

From this it can be said that, organizational communication is a broad concept that include a wide range of activities those aiming at communicating both the internal and external

stakeholders, and the communications professional follow should be more of formal as it determinant for the overall relation that the organization develops with stakeholders.

2.4. Corporate communications as a management function

Corporate communications unlike other communications focuses on the organization in general and takes up the role of presenting the organization to both its internal and external stakeholders. A central concern stemming from this understanding of corporate communications is the need for organizational structures, rules, routes and effective procedures that actually facilitate this process of decision making and execution concerning corporate communication.

The existence of structures, routine activities and serious of procedures in organizations makes the need for communication practitioners to work across all areas of internal and external communications. The internal and external communications handled by the communication practitioners needs to be coordinated enough to project a clear, consistent and forceful image of the organization to the stakeholders. This is to mean that corporate communications is not simply an umbrella term for the many different communications disciplines in an organization, but it is a management function that actively charged with overseeing and coordinating the work done by practitioners within each of them. Communication practitioners (public relations practitioners), to this end, are highly responsible to activate, establish a link between the internal working units with the external stakeholders of their respective organizations.

According to Cornelissen (2004) corporate communication, in addition to its management function, is a managerial profession from the public relations professionals' perspective. Public relations professionals, to work and survive in it, are required to have a number of management competencies in line with their vocational skills. The concept of strategic management enters into and elaborates on, both these levels. At the level of the profession, the adjective 'strategic' in strategic management suggests that professionals need to be able to reflect upon their practice and critically understand what they do, and have to maneuver and devise communications programmes that supports the attainment of organizational objectives. The other use of the adjective 'strategic' is it role in which the corporate communication is viewed as a management

function whereby it is used in and for organizations. From a strategic perspective, organizations need to realize, how corporate communications can work to the highest degree; and how it can be used for organizational objectives and to increase organizational success.

For an organizational perspective, the key questions should be, knowing how the management function of corporate communications can be used to meet organizational objectives, how the management function needs to be organized, and what resources are needed to be in place to strengthen its performance. Corporate communication, as the nature of ‘strategic management’ suggests, is valued for its strategic input into decision making and the overall organizational strategy, not just for its operational excellence in managing communications resources and programmes.

Corporate communications strategic management function works more on organization-wide and involves on communication activities where it is integrally connected to corporate objectives and with generally more long--term organizational goals (Cornelissen, 2004, pp. 21-22).

2.5. Characteristics of corporate communications as a management function

Corporate communication is characterized by different aspects. These characteristics are worth study and they are treated here in the following manner.

2.5.1. A Management function

A management function requires communications practitioners to look at all communications in a holistic manner, and to link the communications strategy to the corporate strategy and corporate objectives. Communications is as such not seen as a (Cornelissen, 2004, p. 22) fragmented range of tactics that are employed impromptu, but as a strategic and planned set of actions that follow from the overall corporate strategy.

2.5.2. A managerial framework

It is used by an organization to build reputations and relationships with stakeholders in its environment. This does not necessarily mean that communications disciplines, and the practitioners responsible for them, are integrated into one and the same department. Corporate communication offers a managerial framework that goes above and beyond departmental

boundaries, and enables the coordination of the work of the communications practitioners involved, *Ibid*.

2.6. Public relations: its definitions and conceptual foundation

Public relations, as a professional area of work, is in use in a range of companies, industries and organizations. The involvement of public relations practices in different organizations has helped for the development and usage of differing public relations skills and competencies by the practitioners. As a result of the differences in the practitioners' skills and competency areas, public relations have no universally agreed definition. Scholars and public relations practitioners, since their area of involvement differs, the definitions they provided for public relations also differ. Harlow (1976) was known for he has collected 472 definitions of public relations and finally coined a new definition by himself, which says:

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinions; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Harlow, 1976, p.36).

This definition of Harlow put the position of public relation in an organization as a management role. Other scholars, like Grunig and Hunt, defined public relations differently, but in short sentence. Public relation, according to these scholars, is 'the management of communication between an organization and its publics' (1984, p.6). Later on, Grunig (1997) improved this definition in one sentence by saying that a public relations is 'an organization's managed communications behavior.' For Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000), the success or failure of an organization highly depends on the function of the public relations organ of an organization. According to cutlip etal (2000), public relations is 'the management function that establishes and

maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends.’ (Cutlip et al, 2000, P.6).

Public relations practitioners’ view of the concept is more based on the real-life day - to- day practice of public relations activity. They often use the term ‘public relations’ interchangeably with other terms like corporate communication or organizational communication. (Grunig 1992; Hutton 1999). Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2006) admitted that many practitioners associate public relations with the media relations, although some others realize its role as management function that guides the interaction of the organization with its publics. As the roles and functions public relations practitioners undertake in different organizations has varied ways, so will be their view and definition of the term.

2.7. Management and organization of public relations and its position in organizations

Practicing public relations is unique across organizations, by the fact that the ways in which an organization manages, structures and undertakes its public relations activities is unique and different. Public relations, in some organizations, is used in a very narrow manner; typically to support sales and marketing activities of an organization. In some organizations it is viewed as a standalone activity being located within the human resources or marketing departments of the organization. Public relations also work under a number of pretexts: like corporate communication, corporate affairs, public affairs, communication management, public relations, reputation management and it still expands itself every time (Tench and Yeomans, 2009, p.20).

Public relations position in organizations highly depends on factors such as the position of the most senior public relations practitioner, the duties given to that specific function, and how it is placed in relation to other functions. The placement of the senior public relations practitioner best indicates how the function of the practitioners is regarded within the organization. Grunig and Hunt (1984) call public relations valued when the function of the public relations practitioners is within the dominant coalition. The dominant coalition (top management) are

groups of individuals who determine what the organization's goals should be and it is these individuals who make decision on the fate of the organization.

2.8. Public relations and stakeholders

Practicing public relations in an effective manner helps an organization to have healthy performance. It is through the process of communication that an organization meets its stakeholders from around the environment and the public relations organ of the organization makes things possible for an effective relationship between an organization and its stakeholders. Public relations is, therefore, thought as the communication and action on the part of an organization that supports the development and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and the groups with which it is interrelated. (F. Lamb and B. McKee, 2005, p.1).

Especially, in the contemporary world, organizations have come to recognize that they need to communicate with their stakeholders to develop and protect their reputations. But, before discussing the details of stakeholders and stakeholder management, it is better to define what a stake is and what stakeholders are. According to Edward Freeman (1984) a stake is an interest or a share in an undertaking that can range from simply an interest in an undertaking at one extreme to a legal claim of ownership at the other extreme. Cleland (1986), views stakeholder in a narrower way: he defines it as individuals or institutions that are either under or beyond project manager's authority, and directly or indirectly get affected by the project's outcome, and have share or stake or an interest in project. Another definition views a stakeholder as individual, group, or organization who may affect or be affected by, or perceived itself to be affected by decision, activity, or outcome of a project, who may be actively involved in the project have interests that may be positively or negatively affected by the performance of completion of the project" (PMI, 2013, 29). The Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in 1963 defined stakeholders as "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist". Edward Freeman (2004), known for providing a broad and classic definition which says that a stakeholder is "those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the organization". This definition of stakeholder seems more of organization-oriented as it highly stresses on organizational success

and failure. Due to this, the academic sphere prefers to use Freeman's definition which was provided in 1984 where he defined it as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization objectives". In this definition, the phrase "can affect or is affected by" enable individuals who are not part of the organization and groups to develop a sense of stakeholder of an organization.

2.8.1. Stakeholders Relations

In order to distinguish the different categories of stakeholders of an organization, considering groups of people who have identifiable relationships with the organization is of great importance. According to Friedman (2006) the main groups of stakeholders are the following: customers, employees, local communities, suppliers and distributors, shareholders, the media (radio, television and print media), the public in general, Business partners, Future generations, past generations (founders of organizations), academics, competitors, NGOs or activists—considered individually, stakeholder representatives, stakeholder representatives such as trade unions or trade associations of suppliers or distributors, financiers other than stockholders (bondholders, creditors), competitors, Government, regulators and policymakers.

These groups of stakeholders are groups with diverse demands from the organization and an organization should be capable enough to address their demands. In this case, organizations need to boldly work on stakeholder management. As Freeman (1984) suggests, managers must develop and enforce processes which satisfy all and only those groups who have a stake in the business. An organization with strong stakeholder management will be able to manage, integrate and protect the best interest of employees, customers, suppliers, stakeholders and the communities. This not only enables organizations to sustain their long-term success, but also establishes a mutual relationship with groups who do have concerns on the organization. Freeman also added that Multinational Corporations should distinguish important stakeholders and less important stakeholders. Organizations have to work on limiting the number of stakeholders and in order to know important stakeholders; Freeman recommends the following questions to organizations:

- Who are our current and potential stakeholders?
- What are their interests/rights?
- How does each stakeholder affect us?
- How do we affect each stakeholder?
- What assumption does our current strategy make about each important stakeholder?
- What are the “environmental variables” that affect us and our stakeholder?
- How do we measure each of these variables and their impact?
- How do we keep score with our stakeholders?

Through raising the above questions, an organization can be able to identify who the stakeholders should be and know how to reach the best possible results that are done based on mutual relationships and benefits of an organization and its stakeholders.

2.9. Media relations

The corporate communication, as most people understand, is the one in charge of working the media. Media relations is about managing the communication and relationships that an organization has with its media stakeholders. From the viewpoint of corporate communications, the news media are seen as important channels for generating publicity and since their media coverage may influence many important stakeholders including investors, customers and employees. Practitioners of corporate communications also see the media as an important pathway or conduit for reaching out their stakeholders, rather than considering as stakeholders or audience themselves (Cornelison, 2004). Communication practitioners of organizations use a wide range of tools and techniques to obtain news coverage and to monitor reporting on their organization over time. Among these press releases, press conferences, interviews, online newsrooms and media monitoring and media research are the main. These tools are discussed in the following manner.

2.9.1. Press release

The aim of press releases is to transfer news to journalists so that it can be made public. Press releases are more likely to be used and placed in a news medium when they refer to newsworthy events or items that are current and have a human interest or appeal, when the release is written in a factual (as opposed to judgmental) manner and with a clear heading and lead (first paragraph) into the topic.

2.9.2. Press conference

Another tool of disseminating information to the news media involves inviting journalists to a press conference. Press conferences are normally organized around fixed periods in the calendar when organizations release financial results or share corporate information at the annual general meeting with shareholders. Incidentally, there may also be ad hoc press conferences around an issue or crisis (e.g product defects, accidents) in order to provide journalists with up-to date information. An important element of the press conference is that it allows journalists to address questions to the company executives gathered at the event. Interviews Journalists often request an interview with official spokespersons or with the CEO or other senior executives of the organization. For this purpose, communication practitioners need to offer executives advice and training on news angles in relation to corporate themes and on specific guidelines regarding the interview format. Such guidelines may consist of advising staff to keep 'control' of the interview by asking the journalist to call or come at a prearranged time, to brief them about the interview topics in advance, and to supply them with a copy of the interview transcript and final article so that facts, opinions and attributions can be checked.

2.9.3. Media monitoring and research

The most common type of media research consists of monitoring media relations efforts. Two of the most commonly used monitoring techniques are gate-keeping research and output analysis. In addition, many corporations also use syndicated media monitoring services such as Carma International and Media Tenor.

(a) Gate-keeping research

A gate-keeping study analyzes the characteristics of a press release or video news release that allow them to ‘pass through the gate’ and appear in a news medium. Both content and style variables are typically examined. For example, previous research has found that press releases dealing with financial matters (e.g., annual results) are more likely to be used than those dealing with other topics. Press releases that are aimed at the specific interests of the newspaper to which they are sent are also more likely to be published than general releases. Editors furthermore typically shorten news releases and rewrite them to make them easier to read before publication.

(b) Output analysis

The objective of output analysis is to measure the amount of exposure or attention that the organization receives as a result of media relations. Several techniques can be used in output analysis. One way is to simply measure the total amount of news coverage (i.e., total number of stories or articles) that appears in selected mass media. In addition, it is also possible to examine the tone (positive or negative) of stories or articles. Many communication practitioners systematically collect press clippings (copies of stories or articles in the press) and record the degree of exposure in terms of column inches in print media, the number of minutes of air time in the electronic media or the number of sites on the web.

2.10. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.10.1. Theoretical framework

2.10.1.1. Corporate communication theory

Is used for this specific study since the theory has range of concerns in an organization’s issue. The theory gives stress to both the organization’s internal issues, organizational issue and stakeholders interests. Corporate communication is not a theory only, it is also a practice. The theory plays a key role in the process of integrating the public relations with the strategic management of an organization’s reputation (Harrison, 1995; Jackson, 1987). Corporate communication theory is fundamentally concerned with the “integration, coordination and orchestration” of all communication (Christensen et al., 2008, p.387) to do

with an organization's reputation, brand, organizational identity, stakeholders, shareholders, publics and markets.

The corporate communication theory is the appropriate theoretical foundation for studying organizational communication and public relation inquiries. Since the aim of the research is also to study how the universities are using their corporate level public relations organs. Therefore, the corporate communication theory is used as the baseline for conducting this study.

2.10.1.2 Systems theory

The systems theory was first coined by Ludwing Von Bertanaflyin 1968 that he used it in the field of biology. Later on, it was used in the field of social science. A system, by definition, is a set of interacting units that endures through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to change pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states.

It was in the 1960s and 1970s that the systems metaphor got more attention in the use and understanding of the processes of organizational behavior and communication. Organizational theorist, with strong devotion and commitment, contributed for the development of the systems theory. Among these, Katz and Kahn (1966) wrote about the social psychology of organizations. The two scholars in 1978 argued that organizations should be conceptualized as complex systems requiring interaction among component parts and interaction with the environment in order to service.

Generally, systems theory helps the researcher to see how the communication practices of the university are operating in a patterned way and how they are treating the diverse needs of its internal and external stakeholders.

2.11. Conceptual Framework

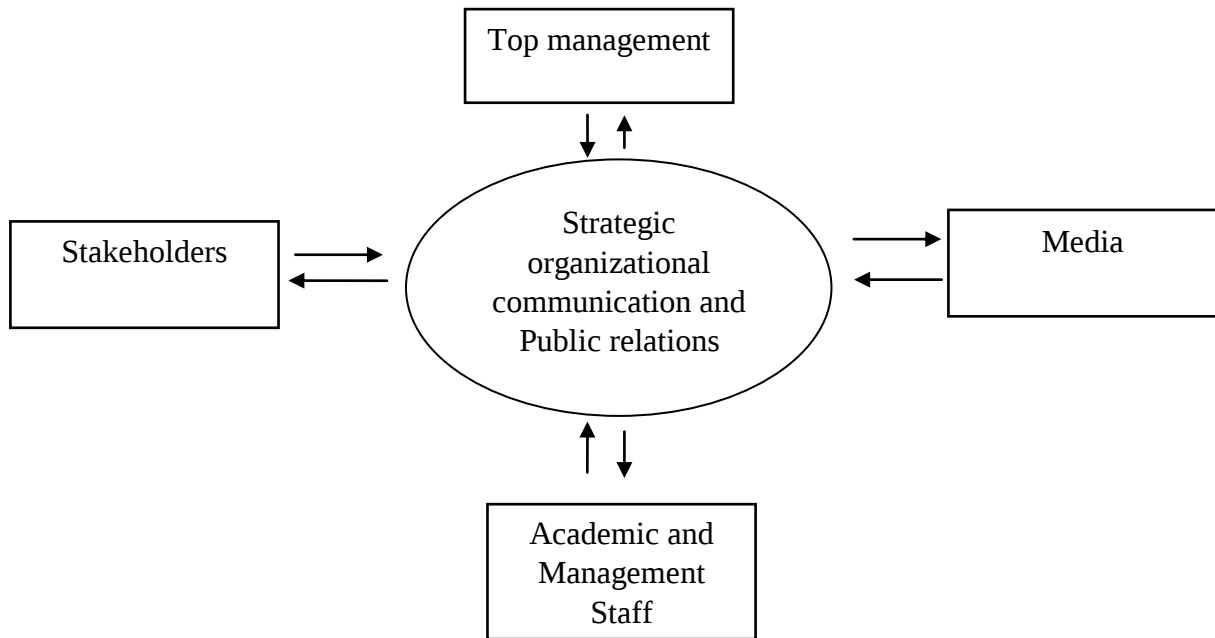


Figure 1. Integrated Organizational communication and public relations model (Designed by: the researcher)

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

This part of the study discusses the study design or the plan of action used in the study. It also incorporates the tools used for collecting data and the methods applied for taking sample from the general population. Additionally, the sources for data and the methods applied for making the final analysis of the data collected through using different methods are clearly put under this topic.

A methodology, according to Van (1990) is a philosophical framework and the essential assumption of a research. Cresswell and Clark (2007) also view a methodology as a framework that relates to the entire research process. Having this in mind, under this methodology part, the detailed description of the study design, the techniques used for sampling, data sources and methods of data analysis are provided.

3.1 Study design

Study design is an arrangement of all the conditions that the study passes through from collecting the data to the analysis stage of the research process. Putting the necessary steps to be done in procedurally helps a researcher to effectively handle every step of the study process. According to Khotari and Gaurav (2014) a study design it is a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis data. Girma (2014) supports this argument by saying that a research design's function helps a researcher to collect, interpret and analyze data with minimal effort, time and money. Cresswell (2003) calls a study design as a plan of action for associating the philosophical assumptions with the specific methods used in the study.

This study, therefore, uses exploratory research design as it helps the researcher make a detailed view on the study area. In view of this fact, this study uses various methods of data collection (questionnaire and interview) within a similar time-frame, through triangulating the data which is usually set by bringing different methods so as to help the researcher validate and strengthen the findings. The student researcher has tried to merge the data sets obtained from the qualitative and

quantitative methods to best understand the problem and use the data results in the interpretation and analysis part.

As far as the study is concerned in analyzing the organizational communication systems of two public institutions, deeper investigation, and discussions of ideas of the study participants is of great importance. Additionally, triangulation study design is helpful to get engaged not only in to the context but also gives a holistic view of the situation as it includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. It also generates rich data and enables the researcher to have a deeper insight on the status of the study area and shows what really exists related to the situation under study, (Cresswell & Clark, 2007).

3.2 Tools of Data Collection

In the study, interview and questionnaire were used for gathering data. Under the qualitative method, an in-depth interview was conducted with the directors and senior public relations and communications officers of the two universities. On the other hand, questionnaires were distributed to Journalism and Communications academic staff of the Universities as internal stakeholder and active stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations of the Universities.

According to Kumar (2011) an interview is a method that allows an exchange of ideas and information between the interviewer and the interviewees. The researcher has chosen interview for it provides in-depth information from the informants and additionally, it helps to supplement the information gained from the interviewees with observing the nonverbal reactions during the course of interviewing. Questionnaire, on its part, is less time, human and resource consuming, and offers greater anonymity for respondents. Since there is no face-to-face interaction of the researcher with the respondents, it increases the possibility of gaining accurate information for the study.

3.2.1 Sampling method

Sampling is crucial for any kind of research as it is the way through which a researcher selects the sample population for the study. In this case two sampling techniques were used for extracting samples: purposive and systematic random sampling. Purposive sampling method was used for sample selection because it helps the researcher select samples based on their closeness and understanding on the topic under study. Purposive sampling, known by different names like judgmental and deliberate sampling is a technique under the non-probability sampling. According to Khotari and Gaurav (2014) purposive sampling enables a researcher to select samples from the Universe based on the sample's knowledge, understanding and concern on the study area. Therefore, the researcher believes that taking samples from Addis Ababa University's Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communication and Jijiga University's Corporate Communication Directorate are important for the study. On the other hand, systematic random sampling was used in extracting samples from external stakeholders. Systematic random sampling is part of probability sampling that allows every member of the population to have an equal chance to be included in the sample, (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). In this case, the list of the Universities' stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental organizations who are actively working with the two Universities) was used for selecting samples among them and questionnaires were distributed to the selected samples.

3.2.2 Sources of data

The present study collected its data by using both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was gathered by conducting interview with the Corporate Communications Directorate and External Affairs Directorate of Jijiga University and External Relations, Partnerships, and Communications Directorate of Addis Ababa University.

3.2.2.1. Primary sources of data

Primary data is an original and firsthand data that the researcher directly collects from the sources. For generating primary data, in-depth interview, and questionnaire were used as primary data sources.

3.2.2.1.1. In-depth interview

An in-depth interview was used for this study as it is conversational and face-to-face it allows the researcher to observe non-verbal responses from the interviewees and also it generates detailed data. Accordingly, an in-depth interview was conducted with AAU's OERPC communication team leader and External relations and partnerships team leader, and JJU's Corporate Communication Directorate vice director and the University's International Affairs Office director, a total of four interviewees were contacted.

3.2.2.1.2. Questionnaires

Administering questionnaires was the other primary source of data. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to two types of respondents; the two Universities Journalism and Communications academic staff and major stakeholders. As it has been mentioned in the sampling technique, samples from University staff were taken based on purposive sampling. Therefore, 15 respondents from Journalism and Communications academic staff are taken from each University, a total of 30 respondents from the two Universities. Regarding the stakeholder, 10 actively working stakeholders were taken as sample respondents (each stakeholder's three employees were covered with questionnaire), a total of 60 respondents. Therefore, the sum-total of respondents chosen in this study are 90 and four interviewees.

3.2.2.2. Secondary sources of data

The study also used secondary data sources, including published materials from the two institutions under study so as to indicate the organizational aspects and also to support the

analysis and discussion section. Moreover, the study has also made a review of the relevant literature so as to give a sufficient background for the study.

3.3. Method of data analysis

After collecting all the essential data through in-depth interview, questionnaire and review of document, data analysis was done. To conduct the data analysis, qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were used. According to Daymon and Holloway (2005, p.13) ‘qualitative research methods tend to be associated with words as the unit of analysis, whereas quantitative methods tend to be linked with numbers.’

The data generated from the in-depth interview were analyzed and presented in the form of non-statistical, descriptive and exploratory way. On the other hand; data collected through questionnaire were analyzed in a quantitative manner. Therefore, questionnaire data presentation was made by employing figurative presentations in terms of charts, tables, graphs and the like. SPSS software version 20.0 was used to analyze the data collected through questionnaire. Since this study used triangulation study design, the data sets brought from the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed by merging the data together for a better understanding of the topic under study. In this case, data collected through interviewing and distributing questionnaires to both the internal stakeholders (Journalism and Communications instructors) and external stakeholders (organizations who actively work with the two Universities) were analyzed by triangulating their responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter comes up with data analysis and discussion of the data collected from both primary and secondary sources which were collected by using interview and questionnaire. The study has used interview data collected from Corporate Communications Directorate and International Affairs Office of Jijiga University and Office of External Relations, Partnership and Communication of Addis Ababa Universities. And questionnaires responses of actively participating stakeholder organizations and Journalism and Communications instructors' of the two Universities are incorporated in the analysis part of this chapter. Therefore, the researcher has used triangulation method to analyze data obtained from both the informants and respondents, as shown below.

4.1. Analysis and discussion of data gathered through conducting interview with the two Universities communication office directors and team leaders

As indicated in the sub-topic 4.1, this part presents about the analysis of interview responses of the two Universities communication directors and team leaders. For better understanding, therefore, interviewees are coded as interviewee JJU1, interviewee JJU2, interviewee AAU1 and interviewee AAU2. Interviewees JJU1 and JJU2 are informants from Jijiga University, whereas, interviewee AAU1 and AAU2 are informants from Addis Ababa University.

4.1.1. Understanding about Public relations and Organizational Communication

Interviewees were asked how they define the term public relations and its relation with organizational communications. Interviewee JJU1 defined it by saying:

Regarding public relations, my view is that public relations is the interaction we have with both our internal and external customers. Public relations for me is the way that enable us to transparently inform our internal and external customers about the services we deliver and the daily routine activities that we undertake.

He continued by saying that ‘public relations has a strong role in an organization, but showing what has been done is also the other task.’ He added that ‘many organizations perform well, but are unable to communicate what they do. Especially, public relations either at governmental, non-governmental institutions, or at higher learning institutions, public relations organs do have a pivotal role to play’. However, as the interviewee elaborated, there is a huge gap at national level when observing the role being played by the public relations. The interviewee typically discussed that there is a gap in the public relations practice of Jijiga University. Public relations, as he defined, is all about communicating and reaching out the public.

Regarding the question that says “how do you understand organizational communication and its relation with that of public relations?” interviewee JJU1 said that there is no difference between the two concepts. He continued by saying that:

public relations (exceptionally) has both internal and external customers. The public relations, through using diverse media outlets disseminate information. However, organizational communication typically works on the organization’s communication, plus it works on organization to organization relation.

The above interviewee has clearly mentioned that public relations do not deal only about issues of interaction; rather it addresses the customers who are outside the organization. It is through the public relations that an organization promotes itself, introduces its vision, mission, strategies and also its products and services to anyone who is in need of those.

In addition to this, another interviewee JJU 2, defined public relations as:

My concept about public relations is that it is the mouth of the government that means the University. It is actually the role of the public relation to build the image of Jijiga University in any way it can take part in the transformation of the University. So, my literal definition of the concept of public relations is that it is the method that leads developmental activities of Jijiga University.

From his expression, one can understand that public relations play an important role in an organization by amplifying the image of the organization through informing its daily progresses and activities to the public. Every activity undertaken in the organization and the progresses made in the organization can be shown to the public through the public relations works.

Furthermore, informant JJU2 from the Corporate Communication Directorate, elaborated that the public relations is an organ of the University that is in charge of communicating the activities undertaken in the University to both the internal and external stakeholders of the University. The interviewee added that public relations is also responsible for interconnecting the different directorates, offices and working units of the University to enable them effectively communicate the goals, strategies and plans of Jijiga University.

His definition implies that public relation works on developing the good image of the University and focuses on informing the daily routine activities or events that take place in the institution. This understanding of the concept public relations lacks concepts like establishing mutual understanding and benefit, and the enabling role of the public relations profession in the attainment of organizational goals.

With regards to Addis Ababa University, according to interviewee AAU1, a public relations, by definition, is “the communication of an organization with its internal and external stakeholders.” The interviewee elaborated saying that: “the relationship an organization develops with both its internal and external community is termed as public relations. It is through the public relations

practice that the University promotes its mission, vision, duties and goals to all concerned bodies of the University.”

Interviewee AAU1 was also asked another question which says how do you understand organizational communication and its relation with public relations? Interviewee AAU1 responded that there is no difference between the two concepts by saying: “there is no big difference between the two concepts. Public relation is viewed as, even by many staff members of the University, office that serves as the mouthpiece and propaganda tool for the government.”

As the interviewee AAU1 mentioned, this perception was developed by the fact that mostly the public relations of the University exert much effort only on preparing defensive mechanism or response whenever certain problems occur within the University. Since the public relation is involved in shaping the views of others on the University and developing the good image of the University, people view the practitioners and the public relation practice as simple tools for propagating the views of the University only and ignore the views of others, as the interviewee mentioned.

The researcher asked interviewee JJU2 how he understands organizational communication and its relation with public relations. The interviewee replied by mentioning that there is a strong relation between the concepts of public relations and organizational communication. As to the interviewee JJU2, public relations was used to be called organizational communication in the past and currently it is named as communications. Public relations is one of the section or unit of organizational communication. As mentioned in the review of related literature in the second chapter of this thesis, organizational communication, being one of the types of communication, includes public relations, investor relations, internal communication and the like. Though we can't see the two concepts separately it is good to consider organizational communication is a much broader concept that encompasses different communication types in it, including public relations.

Still, informant (AAU 2) from Addis Ababa University views organizational communication and public relation as they do not have difference. For the interviewee, the terms organizational

communication and public relations are concepts used interchangeably. The current naming of public relations implies that it was called an organizational communication in the past. So, the interviewee concluded that the two concepts are almost similar in the context of the Addis Ababa University's External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate.

The above responses given by interviewee JJU2 and interviewee AAU2 were similar on the relation between organizational communication and public relations. However, though there are similarities between the two concepts, organizational communication is a concept that covers a wide range of activities that public relation.

4.2. Tools of communication in the Universities

Interviewees were asked a question that says 'what are the tools of communication you rely on to reach your public? As the interviewee JJU1 explained the tools of communication by saying:

the most commonly used tool of communication that Jijiga University's International Affairs Office uses is mobile communication. Since there is no line number in the directorate, mobile communication has been most widely used as a tool for discussing our issues with the stakeholders of the University. Especially, internal customers are addressed through mobile communication.

As the interviewee elaborated, mobile communication is the easiest way of communication and makes life simple. There is a possibility of keeping in touch with individuals on time by using cell phones. In addition to using mobile communication, e-mail communication is also used. But e-mail communication is mainly used for external customers who do have stakes with the University. As the interviewee mentioned e-mail communication has proven to be very effective and successfully used by the directorate to communicate with the different internal and mainly external stakeholder of the University. Institutions working with the University engage in an e-mail communication whereby up-to-date information exchange is made to deal issues of common interest, as the interviewee explained. In this communication, the top management of the University are part of the discussion as they are notified by the copy of the e-mail exchange

made between the University's International Relations Directorate and customers (both internal and external).

Based on the e-mail exchange results the team of the University's International Affairs Office and the top management makes personal visits to the institutions they established relations whenever there is a need to do so. To get in to having a physical visit, the institutions is supposed to pass through several e-mail exchanges which paves the way for further mutual understanding and move on to a better relationship. Whenever the relations get better, the University receives invitation letters from the organization to have a visit.

In such cases, as the interviewee discussed, there are certain constraints that come to be challenging to sustain the relationship. From among the constraints, travel expenses and other related issues make the process more problematic.

As the interviewee JJU 1 explained, e-mail communication is mostly used to communicate with the external partners of the University and the University community is communicated by using mobile communication. This shows that the internal publics of the university are communicated through mobile communication (mostly schools, directorates, offices) and also through media. Especially, the regional television is widely used to reach both the internal and external stakeholders.

On the other hand, interviewee AAU1 discussed that the University's External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate mostly relies on using the University's website as the major means or tool for informing things happening in the University. According to the response of the interviewee, website is mostly used, but in situations like the University hosts big events (like graduation), besides using the website, media organizations are also used. Media stations are invited to give coverage, since the University website may not address all type of publics, when the University hosts big events including the graduation ceremony.

Moreover, the interviewee elaborated that anyone who visits the official website of the University will find helpful facts about the University as every activity the University performs

is posted on it. However, media houses are used to broadcast giant happenings taking place in the University. The other tool is the use of the University Face book and twitter account to provide facts to the social media users of the University community and other stake holders. The other is posting captioned photographs on four screens that is designed to inform the University's internal community and guests of the University. Addis Ababa University Community radio is also one of the ways used to inform the public (both internal and external) community. The radio station is established to serve the development of the university through providing up to date information to the University community.

Interviewee AAU 2, on her part, said that the University's External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate is most widely using the institutions official website to address both internal and external stakeholders. Previously, the directorate was publishing newsletters, brochures, agenda and the like, but, as the interviewee said, such publications are banned by the Federal government.

The above responses of informants from the institutions indicate that institutions use different tools for communicating their internal and external stakeholders. What matters is not the type they used; rather how much the stakeholders are addressed should be the concern of the practitioners.

4.3. Communication and organizational culture

Informants were asked to discuss the communication and organizational culture their institution uses. The interviewee JJU1 began his response by saying that "it is a complex term to describe." And he defined an organizational culture as "a sense of values, belief systems and the rules and regulations in which the organization operates". The interviewee added that every organization has its own distinct values that should be well communicated to every member of the organization from the lower level of the employees to the top to make them interconnected. Everyone in the organization or anybody who feels concerned about the organization should cherish the value and should also be dictated with that organizational value.

He continued his response by elaborating that “an organizational culture is also about setting a standard that shapes the value of the customer service provider and the value of leaders. Whenever such things are set to be standardized there will be a way for the leader, service provider to have determination to the organizational culture.

As he mentioned, organizational culture has qualitative impacts on organizations. He specifically discussed that Jijiga University has gaps in setting up standards for having organizational culture. A lot has to be done by investing on the development of organizational culture. It has to have a leadership role to transform the institution in to an institutional culture, a culture that governs the overall actions of the University.

In the current situation, Jijiga University is highly influenced by traditional cultural institutions of the surrounding community. This shows that there is no standard in this regard. Since informal rules do have the potential to influence the decision-making process of the University, the way out from this is setting up standards that guides and governs the organization, as the interviewee mentioned.

The interviewee told that there are range of informalities that he has observed in the University; as an instance he mentioned that it is not unusual to see individuals who are lining up in the president’s office seeking for informal way of making influence on the decision making. It is difficult to say that the organization is operating by being loyal to the organizational culture and formal standardized ways of doing things.

The interviewee continued by saying that, since the community’s informal rules are influencing the decision-making process of the University, it is difficult to label the University’s culture is highly formal and standardized. The ranges of informalities brought challenges to both the organization and its organizational culture. Ideally, no formal organization is supposed to be governed by informal rules, rather should be ruled by the organization’s formal rules and standardized culture.

The interviewee added that one of the requirements for having an organizational culture is to have a high set of bureaucratic structure. He talked about standardization by saying that:

The absence of standardized bureaucratic structure makes it difficult to establish a formal organizational culture. In general, for realizing a strong organizational culture organization must work on establishing a strong bureaucratic institution to help for the efficiency and effectiveness attaining its institutional goals.

Another interviewee, AAU1 from Addis Ababa University, on her part, responded about the above question by saying:

Since Addis Ababa University is an age old prestigious higher learning institution and is considered as an institution that has international recognition and acceptance. Our University is one of the leading institutions in the country and has scored three centers of excellences in health, railway, and water.

Even though, interviewee AAU1 added, the University has achieved several successes in different areas of competencies, the interviewee said that there is no institutionally well organized and patterned culture of communication that interconnects all directorates, colleges and working units of the University to work for the attainment of the vision, mission and strategies of the institution.

From the above discussions one can argue that organizations should only be governed by the formal rules and regulations. Unless an organization realizes a strong and sustainable working system, it becomes hard for that organization to operate and reach to its organizational goals. Based on this fact, Jijiga University, as a formal public University, has to devise a way to practice formal means of giving services to the community. Addis Ababa University also need to develop a communication system that serve as a platform for integrating the diverse colleges, schools and working units of the University. Higher learning institutions like Jijiga and Addis Ababa Universities ought to place for the creation of new thinking and scientific ways of administration.

The interviewee (JJU2) from Jijiga University, on his part, said that there is no a clearly defined organizational culture in the University, but said that:

the University is engaged in providing community-based services like providing materials to high schools, coaching high school students on science and technology subjects, on attracting international partners to participate in the university's holistic development activities (both on staff and student development).

Though the interviewee mentioned the University's involvement in different activities, the response does not tell about the organization culture. This indicates that the University does not have a clear organizational culture that makes the institution unique and different from other institutions.

4.4. Use and relevance of public relation process in the Universities

This sub-topic covers the informants' responses on the question which says "how is the public relations process relevant to your communication work?" Interviewee JJU1 of Jijiga University said that there is no question on the importance of public relations for institutional work. The interviewee told that there is a gap in the practice of public relations and he discussed what the office is doing by saying:

the International Affairs Office is working in modernizing the communication practice of the institution and my office has sent a request to the American Embassy for training assistance on public relations that will be provided to Corporate Communications Directorate of Jijiga University, Journalism and Communications graduating class students and Somali Regional State leaders.

The interviewee said little about the public relations process, but agreed on that the office is not following the public relations process in general and he added that they mainly do communication activities whenever there are tasks to be undertaken.

But it is known that following the public relations is crucial for knowing where an organization is, deciding from where to start and what to do in the future. However, the above response of the interviewee shows that there is a clear gap in the use of public relations practice.

Interviewee AAU1 of Addis Ababa University also said that the office does not follow the public relations process to perform their communications activities. Interviewee AAU2 of the same institution, said that the office doesn't follow the public relations process. She said that the office does not have a clear structure by saying that:

as I told you that the public relations structure come to our office very recently and what has been practiced was the public relations organ was working alone. That public relations office has served for many years. Therefore, this Office was named as Communication Office and there was no clear public relations structure. As a result of this we are not familiar with the public relations process. But when there are events or issues to be handled, we discuss as a team and discuss with our director to decide on it.

As it has briefly been discussed in the second chapter of this study, following the public relations process is highly important for any public relations practitioner so as to be familiar with the situation, to scan for the environment and plan for addressing the problem or to identify opportunity areas ahead. But from the data obtained from the interviewees none of them follow public relations process and this implies that the offices are doing their activities in a traditional way. This, ultimately, affects the performance of the offices and things are done without knowing whether they are well performed or not.

4.4. Media and Stakeholder Relations

Interviewees were asked to share their experiences in establishing relations with the media houses and other stakeholders or partners. Interviewee AAU1 of Addis Ababa University discussed that the University follows mainly two ways to release information to the media. The interviewee further elaborated her response by saying that “when we organize events in the

University, media houses are invited to give coverage and additionally in times of press conferences and press releases the University's higher officials disclose our University's activity or stand on the issue under coverage." The interviewee continued her response by saying:

When the University hosts events, the responsible body of the event gives interview to media houses and in circumstances when our University wants to make announcement on graduation ceremonies or aims to announce students' registration dates, or if the University hosts big events, raw data are also given to media stations.

And the interviewee added that often news that is written by the University's communication practitioners is given to media organizations for them to transmit. This, of course is more of informal way of providing information to the media organizations depending up on the personal relationship of the public relations of the University with the media personalities.

Interviewee AAU 2, on her part, added that information about the University is sent to media houses through this directorate except Debre Zeit campus. She further explained by saying:

as I told you most of the tasks related to issue of media and disclosing information about the University are handled by our Office. Any issue in this regard passes through our Office. Since the University has a number of campuses, there are situation where the schools and colleges manage by themselves. For instance, it is difficult to ask for Debre-Zeit campus to pass any activity through our Office as the campus is far from Addis Ababa city. As a result of this the campus manages issues by calling media houses and disclosing information whenever needed.

She added that press releases, press conferences and big announcements pass only through the External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate. Majorities of the colleges write request letters to the directorate to facilitate for media coverage and the directorate contacts the media through writing formal letter and often by mobile phone. However, in some situations,

colleges who do have budgets for certain projects discuss with media professionals to get coverage for their projects or events they organized.

This is, of course, an informal way and colleges are not the right body to contact media. The office should be in charge of calling media as well as giving information regarding the University. In this regard the office lacks commitment in informing all the colleges, schools and directorates to have an understanding that any process of calling a media is the mandate of the External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate.

Interviewee JJU1 of Jijiga University said that they release information about Jijiga University through the use of various media outlets. As he explained range of media are used both from the conventional and social media streams. He said that: when our University organizes events, we primarily invite the mainstream media organizations to give us coverage. The interviewee mentioned that Jijiga University has got many media coverage in the year 2011 by saying that:

As I said earlier, we use range of media houses including public and private media stations. But if you ask me with which media station we mostly rely on, SRTV is very closer to us. And we most frequently work with this media station as long as we are operating the Somali region. We disseminate news and programs prepared in Somali and Amharic languages.

He also that “in this academic year, we have got 14 hours of live media coverage in the Ethiopian Television (ETV).” But, as the interviewee mentioned, the University frequently uses the Somali Regional Television (SRTV) to disseminate information about the main events taking place in the University. As he said, events taking place in the University are given media coverage in two way: one is by calling for journalists when there are events to be covered, the other is giving converge by the University’s crew which will later on be transmitted on the one-hour weekly airtime of the University’s program on SRTV.

According to the data obtained from interviewee JJU1, the following are the media stations that the University works with. That includes Somali Region Television (SRTV), Ethiopian Television (ETV), WALTA, FANA, and Ethiopian News Agency (ENA). In general, the interviewee said that all private and governmental mainstream media houses are considered to be stakeholders of the University. However, the above media stations are the media organizations that the University mostly works with. SRTV, the regional media, is the most frequently used media as the station is available to the University and works in the surrounding community's language.

Interviewees were also asked a question that says “in what way are you establishing relations with stakeholders?” Interviewee JJU1 responded to this question by saying:

we encourage individually-initiated relationships to be established. That means, what we need is not to have only organization to organization relations, rather we mostly prefer the relation to be handled by individual initiations. We believe that, signing an MOU does not have benefit unless individuals own the relationship.

As interviewee JJU1 pointed out, before the relationship of a certain organizations becomes institutionalized, it has to pass through individual personalities who initiate the idea of establishing the theme of relationship. The University, the interviewee explained that, believes that a relationship that is initiated by staff of the University lasts longer than the relationship that emanated from the University's management. Due to this staff mates are encouraged to establish individually initiated relationship with organizations. The interviewee elaborated that individually initiated relationships are recommended by the University's management as the University believes that this kind of relationship has no problem of sustainability. But, in relationships established by organization-to-organization lacks sense of ownership by the University staff which at certain point faces failure. As a result of this reality, the interviewee added that, staff members of the University are encouraged to generate ideas that can pave the way to jointly work with organizations and establish relationships. In this way, the University

shows the willingness and commitment to cooperate to members of the University staff who work on bringing up relationships and partnerships with other organizations.

The researcher raised a question on the point that who will finally own the project or (the already established relationship) – the University or the staff? The interviewee JJU1 replied that the main intention of letting staff members establish relationship is to motivate them generate project idea that enable them to have a sense of ownership on the relationship. The work of the University here is giving assistance whenever there is a need from the staff to make things in place for them. Additionally, the university works on institutionalizing the relationship in order to safeguard the project from failure.

If a staff starts a relationship with a certain organization, the institution (University) at certain point makes the relationship from individual relation to grow (transform) to organization-to-organization relationship and this helps to the sustainable achievement of projects.

Addis Ababa University has more than seventeen media organization stakeholders, but among these some are close to the University who actively involved in giving coverage to events taking place in the University. Addis Ababa University has many active media stakeholders that includes Sheger FM 102.1, Addis Admas Newspaper, Afro FM 105.3, Fortune Newspaper, Capital Newspaper, Walta Information Center, Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, Ethiopian News Agency, Ethiopian Press Agency, Fana Broadcasting Corporate, Oromia Radio and Television Agency, Zami FM 90.7, Bisrat FM 101.1, Addis Ababa University FM 99.4, Ethiopian Broadcasting Service.

Among the above listed media organizations, the University most frequently contacted media, as the interviewee mentioned, are not more than 11 in number. According to the result obtained from the interviewee, the media station those who closely work with the University are the Ethiopian Television, FANA Broadcasting Corporate, Sheger FM 102.1, Afro FM 105.3, Zami FM 90.7, Oromia Radio and Television Agency and Walta Information Center.

Informant from AAU (interviewee AAU1) state about the way their organization establish relations with stakeholders. According to the response, the ways of establishing partnerships and relationships with stakeholders differs. The initiative for establishing relationships might come from colleges, schools or individual staff of the University. Colleges, schools, or staff members may get something important to develop relationship with a certain organization or institution they met on a conference, or contacted on an e-mail exchange.

In whatever area they met, the concern of the University is not who initiated the idea of establishing partnerships, rather what benefit will the University gain from the partnerships, will the relationship to be established go with the binding legal rules and regulations of the University will be seen.

By considering such issues the University's responsible body for establishing the partnerships signs a memorandum of understanding on the areas of cooperation to be made. In this process the External Relations, Partnership and Communications directorate in collaboration with the concerned college or school works with the University's legal issue advising directorate in order to legally bind the partnerships. All partnerships the university establishes have to pass through this process. According to the interviewee the colleges or schools are owners of the projects that come from the already established partnerships.

Ownership is basically based on the demands of the colleges or schools. For instance, if the partner of the University is an organization that works on health issues, the college of health sciences will be the owner for the project. On the other hand, if the partner is going to assist the University on agricultural issues, the college of agriculture becomes the owner of the partnership.

The University works with partners on issues like staff exchange, student exchange, research exchange. The partners who establish relationships with the university have some goals to achieve. The interviewee discussed an example that there are partners who themselves demand for sharing experiences from Addis Ababa University. They discuss their area of partnership, like enabling their students to share experiences from other Ethiopian Universities.

Interviewee AAU1 said that the owners of the partnerships are colleges and the researcher raised a question that if the ownership goes to colleges and most probably the one who brought the idea of the project is an individual staff. So, what will the fate of the project if at certain point in time that staff leaves the University? Won't this bring a project failure? Or is there a rule to entertain this problem?

The interviewee responded to the question by saying that:

this is the challenge that the University currently faced and a going on problem. Previously memorandum of understanding was signed at college level and when the university's External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate started to operate the issues of partnerships, signing memorandum of understanding started to be signed in a circular manner. Currently, the office is working to minimize the problem by putting witnesses during the process of signing the memorandum of understanding with partners.

In cases where the memorandum of understanding is to be signed on big financial assistance, the university's vice president for academic and research and technology transfer makes follow-up on it. The witnesses (from both sides) who are brought to see the signing of the agreement are responsible to

The researcher asked that who the active and inactive stakeholders of the University are, the response that the researcher got was that the office is working on identifying the active from the inactive stakeholders. This response shows that the University does not have identified which stakeholders are currently actively working with the University and which stakeholders are inactive. The same was true for Jijiga University too, since the interviewee said that the active and inactive respondents are still not yet identified.

If an organization does not know with which stakeholders is currently working it becomes tough to know how much progresses have been achieved with stakeholders. The responses gained from

informants of the two Universities indicates that little focus has been given in identifying their stakeholders and this actually affects the mutual benefits as well as success of the Universities with their respective stakeholders.

In addition, the informant AAU1 was asked about what ways do they follow to call for media. In calling media letter is the most widely used way for inviting media stations. The letter of invitation for giving media coverage is given to the media station by going to the station's offices. Sometimes e-mail is used to those media who are familiar with using their e-mails for contacting the University. In this tough and busy world, wasting time and resource of the University by going to send letter of cooperation to media station. Rather it will be better if other ways like e-mailing could be time and resource saving to the University.

From this one can understand that the University has gaps in introducing the use of e-mail as a means for communicating both the internal and external stakeholders including media and international partners. A system should be developed that connects both parties (the University and its internal and external stakeholders) to communicate effectively with saving time through e-mail. E-mail communication not only saves the time of both concerned bodies but also resources like car fuel.

Furthermore, Jijiga University's corporate communication directorate makes situations possible for identifying what issues to be given media coverage, what kind of events should be organized and on what issues press releases to be given by the University management. As interviewee JJU2 said, the directorate uses the regional television for disclosing different issues that has been undertaken in the different directorates, offices and working units of the University. The other way the University follows to release information is through organizing events on diverse issues and the events organized in the University will be given media coverage if they are big events, if they are not the university's corporate communication directorates camera crew give coverage to it that will later on be used for different publications that the university produces.

The Somali Regional Television is the most frequently used media organization that gives coverage to events or any other issue undertaking in the University. The other means of releasing

information about the University is the official Facebook page of the University. Any activity taking place in the University will be posted on the official Facebook page of the University. In line with using the regional television station, organizing events and using the official Facebook page, the University has also relationships with other media organizations like Ethiopian Television (ETV), OBN (Oromia Broadcast Network). The University's Corporate Communication Directorate calls for conventional media houses on big events that the University hosts like international conferences, partnership discussions and graduation events.

As mentioned above, all government media organizations are considered to be the media stakeholders of the University. However, the focus of this study is to cover those stakeholders who are currently actively participating in interacting with the University. Among these media houses: Somali Region Television (SRTV) the Ethiopian Television (ETV), FANA Broadcasting Corporate, Ethiopian Press Agency and WALTA TV. These media organizations are contacted through formal invitation letters whenever the University has big events, conferences or graduation ceremonies to have media coverage.

The Corporate Communication Directorate of Jigjig University, previously especially prior to this year was responsible for facilitating the establishment of relationships and partnerships with other institutions. At present, beginning from this year, the Office of International Affairs is responsible for establishing partnerships with other organizations. As the interviewee said that there was an overlap of task between the International Affairs Directorate and the Corporate Communication Directorate. The two offices are working in collaboration whenever there is a need to cooperate, however as the interviewee mentioned, the International Affairs Directorate is highly responsible for establishing and maintaining the relationship of the University with international partners.

Regarding how the University establishes relationships with stakeholders, as the interviewee said, the University bases its relationships with stakeholders by considering what are the needs of the University on achieving quality education, what assistances are currently required and look for those organizations that can fill the gaps. Organizations who are willing to provide

assurances and cooperate for the attainment of the University's vision. As an example, the interviewee said that the stakeholders of the university participate on assisting research activities that scholars of the University engage in especially by funding and giving educational opportunities to both the academicians and students of Jijiga University.

The above responses obtained from the two Universities informants show that the institutions do have range of media house opportunities to rely on that they can use in their course if working to inform the public about any activity undertaken in their respective Universities. And the good thing that this study found is that individual initiatives are appreciated in the process of establishing partnerships with other institutions. This should be strengthened, of course with the participation and support of the top management, to inspire the individuals who engage in such activities.

4.5. The Public Relations Process and Research

Interviewees were asked a question that says "do you believe in the importance of public relations research?" and followed by another question that says "have you conducted any public relations research so far?" Interviewee JJU1 responded that public relations research is an important part of an institution's existence. He stressed on the point that if an institution does not have public relations, it means that the institution does not exist. He said that "public relation is important by itself. It is part of the University's existence and part of the University's structure. Since having public relations is a matter of existence."

His response towards the importance of public relations research indicates that the interviewee has an understanding on the role that public relations researching plays on an organization's communication. In addition, interviewees were asked about whether they have conducted any research so far in their organization. As the interviewee JJU1 said no research has been conducted so far. As mentioned in the second chapter of this study, literature of the study, conducting a public relations research is the key to know where exactly an organization is, to identify gaps that hampers the organization, and then helps to plan on how to bridge the already identified gaps and succeeding organizational plans and strategies.

In the case of Jijiga University's corporate communication directorate, since no research has been conducted, it is difficult to know what achievements have been achieved in the public relations works of the University and what challenges are obstructing the University's organizational communication and public relations practices, how stakeholders feel about the communication they have with the University, and the feedbacks of the internal staff of the University is not also known. Interviewee AAU1 from Addis Ababa University replied, on the same question, by saying that:

since the emergence the public relations structure is a recent occurrence in our Office, we did not have engaged in practicing the public relations process. But what we do is that, when events or new happenings occur, we discuss about them with our director in order to reach on deciding the issue is needs coverage or not. We discuss about the good and bad sides of the issue and then decide on it.

The above response provided by informant AAU2 indicates that the Office does not follow the public relations process to perform their communications activities. As it has briefly been discussed in the second chapter of this study, the public relations process is highly important for any public relations practitioner so as to be familiar with the situation, to scan for the environment and plan for addressing the problem or to identify opportunity areas. But from the data obtained from the interviewee no public relations process has been followed and this implies that the office is doing its activities in a traditional way. This, ultimately, affects the performance of the office and things are done without knowing whether it is well performed or not.

Of course, conceptually public relations work should begin from researching to know what the current situation looks like, what the problems or opportunities do exist. Once doing this, the second step of the public relations is preparing a strategic action plan that the public relations has already identified and the third is communicating the plan and finally conducting an evaluation. Without identifying the problem, planning for a strategic way of practicing the public relations campaign, acting up on the plan to action and making evaluation, it is impossible whether public relations work was successful or unsuccessful. In the current situation of the public relations

work of Jijiga and Addis Ababa Universities, the public relations work is not given much consideration and things are done traditionally.

The above responses of the two Universities informants demonstrates that the public relation practice and organizational communication of the two Universities has critical gaps in using the public relations process which of course affects the overall effectiveness of the corporate communication activity of the University. It is impossible for any public relations practitioner or manager to know whether the work done was successful or ineffective, whether the organization has effectively communicated its vision to employees and stakeholders.

4.6. Public Relations as Advisory to top management

This part discusses the responses of informants for the question which says “do you have any advisory role to the University management?”

As the interviewee JJU1 responded, since the International Affairs Office is member of the University senate, the office is considered to have a role to play as an advisor to the top management. The office, according the interviewee, is part of the supervision team that is organized to supervise the offices under the University’s president office. This supervision team evaluates the work activities of the offices those operating under the president office.

The above response shows that the office has been given considerable position to have a say on the discussions made by the University top management. However, this should be seen seriously when it comes to the reality of decision making. Being a participant when others are deciding does not show that the one called to ratify the decisions made by others rather anyone who has got the chance to participate in the discussion should also be given the right to have an equal opportunity in making decision.

Addis Ababa University’s External Relations, Partnerships and Communications does not have an advisory role to the top management. As interviewee AAU1, the office has a **supportive role** to the management and she mentions her reason by saying “because of the fact that tasks directly

come from the top management to our Office.” The interviewee told to the researcher that a day prior to this interviewee a letter sent from the president office commands the External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Office to facilitate an event which will be held on the next day. The interviewee clarified that situation by saying:

as you can see, we are busy of organizing the event to meet the deadline. The problem is that when any order comes to our director from the president Office, he directly commands us to execute the task. It is very difficult to organize an event within a short period of time, but things get done because of the reason that the top management ordered us to do so. Honestly speaking, except some members of the top management, the majorities do not have the understanding that our Office has to the University.

It is believed that practitioners should have an advisor role and participate in any issue that the top management engages in. However, the reality on the ground is completely different from the theory. This is because the lacks of understanding of the top management about the role communication plays in enhancing a holistic organizational performance. As mentioned in the literature part of the study that an organization’s goals, strategies, policies will be amplified and well understood both by its internal stakeholders (employees) and external partners through communicating. Unless an organization communicates its vision, mission, goals and strategies, it is impossible to hit the target. In this regard, Addis Ababa University’s top management has to give a concern for the communication practitioners in order to fill the gap.

4.7. Corporate Communication/PRs Role in Decision Making

Informants were asked a question about how the top management approaches to a new public relations proposal made by the directorate. As the interviewee AAU1 said that “we mostly do not go to the top management of the University. It is our director who contacts the top management if there are issues to discuss about with them.” She continued her response by saying that “but in routine activities we go to give media coverage to the events and in such situations, we contact the top management.”

Interviewees' were also asked what position of the public relations organ has in the University with regard to decision making. Interviewee JJU1 said that "the International Affairs Office is part of the top management of the University, however, is not a member of the ultimate decision makers of the institution." From the response of the interviewee the researcher has found out that the International Affairs Office is not in the position of decision makers, rather assists the decision-making process. As mentioned clearly for the above question, the office has been given the chance to participate in University's higher meetings and discussions; however, this does not indicate that the office is part of the decision maker.

In addition, a question was posed for AAU's informant (interviewee AAU2) about how the top management of their organization approaches a new public relations proposal prepared or submitted to it. According to the response obtained from the interviewee, the top management of the University welcomes whenever there are new ways of thinking or approaches coming from the Office of External Relations and Partnerships and Communication. The top management, as the interviewee told, is positive towards new ideas and are also open to see changes.

From the above response, one can understand that the understanding of the top management towards new thinking, approaches and projects is in the right track that an organization has to be. This also shows that the University is well adoptive to change since the situation (based on this specific response) indicates that the organization is supportive and cooperative to those who walk towards change. Additionally, organizations who are cooperative to their employees change initiation are supposed to be learning organizations that they are willing to see new ways of doing things and this aggregately enriches to move towards becoming productive organization.

The interviewee from Jijiga University (interviewee JJU2) said that the public relation organ of the University is not playing an advisory role, rather there is a person who is assigned to serve as the executive advisor for the University's top management (the president) and the executive advisor of the president also follows up other offices and directorates performance.

The Corporate Communication Directorate is operating under the President's Office and is considered as part of the top management of the university. The interviewee said that the Corporate Communication Directorate is part of the top management committee and the directorate participates in any of the meetings that is undertaken in the University. The interviewee said "since the office has been chosen to have part in any of the top management discussions, the office is considered as part of the top management." He added that the directorate has a vote and have a say on issues whenever there are meetings in any issue. The informant responded two contradicting responses, he said that the Corporate Communication Directorate is not playing an advisory role and secondly, he said that the directorate is part of the decision makers.

The researcher asked a question whether the top management of the University is change adaptive or not. The interviewee said that they are somewhat adaptive to new changes, but it is difficult to say that most of them have a better understanding on the importance of communication works of the University. Due to this reason the office is not performing with full potential to further strengthen the organizational communication.

4.8. Recommendations provided by informants of the two Universities for the general improvement of public relations practice

Informants were asked a question that says "what is your recommendation for the future improvement of public relations practices?"

Interviewee JJU1 from Jijiga University stressed on the point that the presence of public relations is crucial for the existence of any organization like other organs including the finance and other sections and he recommended the following:

- Public relations should be practiced professionally as it is an area where an organization promotes itself to both the internal and external stakeholders,
- Since a public relation is considered as the five sense of the organization, practitioner should be active enough to communicate things happening in the University.

Besides, interviewee JJU2, on his part recommended by saying:

as there are several numbers of working units in our University and thousands of students to be addressed with communication activities, the current structure could not address them. Therefore, I recommended every working unit of the University to have a public relation and some changes to be undertaken. Public relations should be institutionally organized and the public relations organ of the University should play a decision-making role.

According to the interviewee, every working unit of the university should have its own public relations, currently the public relations of the University is a centralized public relation, serving many thousands of students and the University academic and management staff which is very challenging and less effective.

On the other hand, interviewee AAU1 calls for the improvements of the following:

The Office should grow to the Vice President level and her reason is that to Office will be financially independent. She mentions by saying:

Our Office should grow to the Vice President level. Why I said this is due to the problem we are facing. When we want to execute a single issue that needs finance, we are supposed to pass through different processes and the problem of finance has affected our Office a lot. Financial independence is basic as it allows us to work actively. That means we are not supposed to consult the president for every simple issue.

4.9. Analysis and Discussion of Quantitative Data obtained through distributing questionnaire to internal and external stakeholders of the Universities

This sub-topic covers the analysis and discussion of responses gathered through distributing questionnaires to both the internal (Journalism and Communications instructors) and external (organizations those who are actively working with the Universities) stakeholders of the two Universities.

The data obtained from questionnaire distribution are used to be triangulated with the interview results. The questionnaires of this study are of two types: namely questionnaire designed for the two Universities Journalism and Communications instructors, and a questionnaire designed for stakeholders. In this study, 15 Journalism and Communications instructors are chosen from each University to be respondents from both institutions and 10 actively working stakeholders are also chosen from the two universities. Each stakeholder was given three questionnaires (three employees of the stakeholder participates in filling questionnaires), a total of 30 responses from each University. Therefore, in this analysis, responses of 30 Journalism and Communications instructors (15 instructors from each University) and 60 responses (30 responses from each institution) were analyzed. As discussed in the methodology part of the third chapter, the data obtained from the respondents were triangulated with the interview result. In general, the total number of respondents taken from both Journalism and Communication instructors and stakeholder organizations is 90.

4.9.1. Analysis and discussion of data obtained from Journalism and Communications instructors

Table 1 Respondents Gender, age and educational backgrounds of Journalism and Communications instructor of the Universities

Jijiga University				
		gender of the respondents		
		Male	Female	Percent
age of respondents	20-24	9	-	60
	25-29	4		26.6
	30-34			
	35-39	2		13.3
	40-44			
	45 and above			
educational background of respondents	Bachelor Degree	9		60
	Master's Degree	6		40
	Total	15		

Addis Ababa University					
Age of respondents			Gender of respondents		
	Years of service as an academician	-			
25-29		-			
30-34		-	Male	Female	
35-39		-		Total	
40-44		12-14 years	1		1
		15 and above years	1		1
		Total	2		2
45 and above	Total	3-5 years	1		1
		12-14 years	1		1
		15 and above years	10	1	11
			12	1	13
Total		3-5 years	1		1
		12-14 years	2		2
		15 and above years	11	1	12
		Total	14	1	15

Source: prepared by the researcher

The above table shows that six respondents (40%) who hold bachelor degree are in the age range from 20 to 24, there is on master's degree holder whose age is under the category of 25 to 29, and the rest two (13.3%) master's holders are under the age range of 35 to 39. From this we can understand that majorities of the respondents are young instructors whose age ranging from 20 to 24. As it is indicated in the above table, five (33.3%) male respondents who are between 20 and 24 do have two years of experience; two (13.3%) respondents do have six to eight years of service in Jijiga University.

On the other hand, three (20%) respondents who are between the ages of 25 and 29 have two years of experience and one (6.6%) respondent has six to eight years. A respondent who is in the age range from 35-39 has service of three to five years and another respondent with similar age range has 9-11 years of experience. Generally, the lowest age of respondents and work experience are 20-24 and 9-11 respectively.

The responses collected from Addis Ababa University's Journalism and Communications instructors indicates that majorities of the instructors are with more than ten years of experiences as academicians. According to the response, ten (66.6%) instructors, in an age of 45 and above, have 15 and above years of experiences. one (6.6%) instructor whose age ranges from 44 to 45 has an experience of 12-14 years, one (6.6%) instructor under the age of 45 and above served

from three to five years. The years of academic services as well as educational backgrounds of Addis Ababa University are much greater than Jijiga University. This is due to the reason that Addis Ababa University is one of the age-old public Universities that has such high-ranking academic staff.

Table 2 Respondents levels agreement on the public relations activity of the Universities

	Generally, how do you value the PR activity of the University?	Frequency	Percentage
AAU	Highly successful		
	Successful	2	6.6
	Moderately successful		
	Neutral	3	10
	highly unsuccessful	10	33.3
JJU	Highly successful	2	12.5
	Successful	4	25.0
	Moderately successful	1	6.3
	Neutral	6	37.5
	highly unsuccessful	2	12.5
	Total	15	100

Source: prepared by the researcher

Figure 1 (Jijiga University)

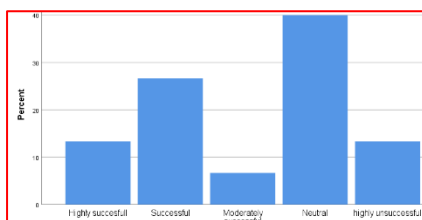


Figure 1 (Addis Ababa University)

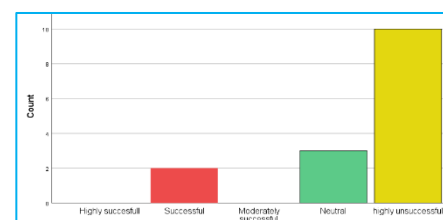


Figure 2. Respondents' levels agreement on the public relations activity of the Universities

Out of the fifteen respondents, taken from Jijiga University, six respondents (40%) stayed neutral from labeling the public relations activity of the university, four (26.7%) of them said it is successful, two respondents (13.3 %) of them responded that the public relations activity in general is highly successful, one (6.7%) the public relations activity is moderately successful and the rest two respondents (13.3%) chose highly unsuccessful. Two extreme responses, highly successful and highly unsuccessful, are chosen by equal number of respondents.

On the other hand, Addis Ababa University's respondents, responses show a differing result. No respondent has labeled Addis Ababa University's External Relations, Partnerships and Communication Directorate's public relations activity as highly successful, ten respondents (66.6%) have chosen that the public relations practice of Addis Ababa University is highly unsuccessful, three respondents (20%) chose neutral that they are not interested to judge the practice as successful or unsuccessful, but the majorities and only two respondents (13.3%) view the public relations practice of AAU as successful.

If we see the response results from the above table, majorities of the respondents have either chosen highly unsuccessful or neutral. This indicates that the public relations practices of the two Universities have gaps in executing public relations works in the University in order to reach the internal as well as the external publics. The two Universities, according to the response results, have gaps in showing up their works to their respective institutional members. The staff members of the institutions should be the first to glorify the names of either the public relations work of the directorates or the Universities in general. However, if members of the institution, in this case Journalism and Communications do have certain confusions and do not generally view the public relations work as successful, the images of the two Universities will be in question.

Table 3. Respondents' feedback on communication tools

Do you receive communication tools from the communication office?	Responses	Frequency	Percent
JJU	Yes	8	53.3
	No	4	26.7
	Difficult to say	3	20.0
	Total	15	100.0
AAU	Yes	1	6.6
	No	12	80
	Difficult to say	2	13.3
	Total	15	100.0

Source: prepared by the researcher

The second question is used to question whether the instructors have received communication materials from their respective universities' public relations organs. According to the above response, twelve (80%) from Addis Ababa University said that they do not receive communication materials, on the other hand, eight (53.3%) respondents from Jijiga University have chosen yes, four respondents (26.7 %) from Jijiga University have chosen that they do not receive materials. Those who said that it is difficult to say yes or no are three (20%) from Jijiga and 2 (13.3%) from Addis Ababa and one (6.6%) respondent from Addis Ababa University have chosen yes.

Based on the above result it is possible to conclude that Jijiga University's Corporate Communication Directorate has distributed public relations material better than Addis Ababa University's Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communication. Majorities of the respondents from Addis Ababa University (80%) have shown that the University has limitations in publishing and distributing communications materials to both internal and external stakeholders. In the interview results of this study, the researcher has mentioned the responses of both Universities research interviewee responses. The interviewee from Addis Ababa University's Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communications has mentioned that they have problems with publishing public relations material because of the fact that government has banned publications. This may have affected Addis Ababa University's communication with both its internal and external stakeholders and the questionnaire responses might be one of the implications for this.

Table 4. The role played by the public relations in introducing institutional plans, policies and strategies of Universities

Rate the role played by the PR in introducing institutional plans, policies and strategies of the University		Count	Percent
Jijiga University	Very high	1	6.66
	High	2	13.3
	Moderate	2	13.3
	Low	6	40
	Very low	4	26.6
Addis Ababa University	Very high	0	-
	High	0	-
	Moderate	2	13.3
	Low	9	60
	Very low	4	26.6

Source: prepared by the researcher

The third question is to know the feedbacks of instructor respondents of the two Universities on the role of public relations practice in introducing institutional plans, policies and strategies of the institutions. According the data obtained from Jijiga University, six (40%) and four (26.6%) chose low and very low respectively, two (13.3%) of them said that the public relations role is high, two (13.3%) chose moderate, only one respondent (6.6%) labeled the University's public relations practice has a very high role.

The response obtained from Addis Ababa University also indicates the same; only two respondents responded that there is a moderate role, the rest nine (60%) and four (26.6%) respondents chose low and very low respectively. This shows that the public relations works done so far are not effectively handled by the directorates and the institutional plans, policies and strategies are not introduced. As mentioned, also in other questions above, the problems of the directorates' in inviting academicians which helps for developing strategic public relations practice was also problematic. Due to this, the two directorates have gaps in promoting and introducing organizational policies and strategies. Knowing the vision, mission, policies and strategies of an organization helps members of the employee to work effectively. In this case, communication is important, whereby it serve as a way to exchange ideas on how to execute

activities and achieve the vision of the organization. But, the two Universities lack such activities as less concern has been given to introduce the institutional vision, policies and strategies.

Table 5. Responses on the public relations work of the Universities

What do you think about the work of PRs work of the University?		Frequency	Percent
JJU	Serve as a tool for propaganda	2	13.3
	Informs the community about institutional progresses	7	46.7
	Works on building trust among University community	4	26.7
	Nothing is visible	2	13.3
	Total	15	100.0
AAU	Serve as a tool for propaganda	1	6.7
	Informs the community about institutional progresses	6	40.0
	Works on building trust among University community	1	6.7
	Nothing is visible	7	46.7
	Total	15	100.0

Source: prepared by the researcher

According to the data obtained from respondents of Jijiga University, seven (46.7 %) said that it is working on informing the University community about institutional progresses, four (26.7%) respondents said that the public relation work is more of related with building trust among the University community. Two respondents (13.3%) responded that the public relations work is serving as a propaganda tool, the rest two respondents (13.3%) responded that nothing is seen as a public relations work.

The data obtained from Addis Ababa University indicates that seven (46.7%) respondents said that no work of public relations is seen in Addis Ababa University, six respondents(40%) see the public relations work as informing the University community about institutional progresses, only one (6.6%) respondent view the public relations work as tool for propaganda, another one respondent (6.6%) said that it works on building trust.

This indicates that the role of public relations is seen as a tool for propagating the interests of certain elite either the Universities top management or the government. Whatever the influencer is, what should be considered is that public relations should be practiced professionally. During the researchers stay with the interviewees from both Universities, they said that they are not free enough from the top management. Depending on giving coverage for events, and being far from strategic way of practicing public relations affects a lot, one of the negative impacts comes from members of the organization. As it can be seen in the above results, public relations practices of the two Universities is seen as a tool for propaganda, and being viewed in this way means a lot. Among the role public relations plays, building trust is at the top, but the situation on the ground shows that how the public relations is viewed is different from the theory.

Therefore, the result indicates that there is a clear gap and these organs of the Universities need to work not by defending themselves from those who give them comments, rather taking in to consideration the points and shaping the future is much more important.

Table 6. Public Relations practitioners act of the profession

Do you think that the PRs practitioners of the University act as professionals?	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Jijiga University	Yes	4	26.6
	No	4	26.6
	Difficult to say	7	46.6
	Total	15	100.0
Addis Ababa University	Yes	0	0
	No	6	40.0
	Difficult to say	9	60.0
	Total	15	100.0

Source: prepared by the researcher

The above question aims to elicit responses of the instructors whether the practice of public relations is professional or not. According to the above responses, seven (46.6%) respondents chose difficult to say yes or no and equal number of respondents chose yes and no about the public relations workers of Jijiga University act as professionals. On the other hand, nine respondents (60%) from Addis Ababa University preferred to choose difficult to say and the rest six (40%) respondents chose no. From this we can understand that majorities of the respondents have chosen ‘No’ or difficult to say, which implies that the respondents do not see the workers of public relations as professional actors. As the responses from both Universities’ respondents indicate, the public relation practice is not considered as a professional practice.

Table 7. Corporate Communication Directorates roles in providing up-to-date information

Do you get up-to-date information from the Corporate Communication Directorate of JJU?	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	5	33.3
	No	6	40
	Difficult to say	4	26.6
	Total	15	100
Do you get up-to-date information from the External Relations, Partnerships and Communication Directorate of AAU?	Yes	0	0
	No	12	80
	Difficult to say	3	20
	Total	15	100

Source: prepared by the researcher

The intention of this question is to know whether the External Relations, Partnerships and Communication Office of Addis Ababa University and Corporate Communication Directorate of Jijiga University provide up-to-date information about the institution. Five (33.3%) respondents from Jijiga said that they get up-to-date information; four (26.6%) responded that it difficult to decide as yes or no. On the other hand, no response was obtained from respondents of Addis Ababa University which says ‘yes’, on the reverse, 12 (80%) of the respondents chose that they don’t get up-to-date information about their university, the rest three (20%) responded that it difficult to say that yes or no.

From these responses we can understand that majorities of the respondents from both Universities do not get up-to-date information about the institution they are working in. This implies that they are not able to know about their institutions, in other words they are not given the needed information for them to get as long as they are part of the University. Public relations practitioners are not only responsible to build the image of an institution, or simply cover routine events taking place, rather they should give sufficient information to the internal community. The sample respondents are from Journalism and Communications, a department which is supposed to work closely with public relations bodies of the two Universities, if these groups are ignored, what will happen to the rest of departments, schools and working units of the Universities who do not have a strong tie with the public relations organs as Journalism and Communications has.

In the interview analysis part, the researcher has presented the responses of the interviewees on how they address both the internal and external stakeholders of the Universities. In their response, they discussed that official website, formal letters, and official Facebook pages as major ways for providing up-to-date information to both the internal and external stakeholders. However, the responses of the respondents indicate that the two directorates have not managed their ways to address their stakeholders.

The sample respondents are not far from the University, even closer enough, working in the same University compound, but are not provided with the needed information about their institution, which is an indicative of disorganization of the public relations practices of the Universities, as they are highly dependent on covering daily routine activities happening in the Universities.

Therefore, the External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate of AAU and the Corporate Communication Directorate of JJU should work to bridge the information gap and should work in close collaboration with academicians of their respective Journalism and communications schools and departments.

Table 8. Management-employee relation of the Universities

How do you value the organizational culture of the University?		Frequency	Percentage
Jijiga University	Very strong management-employee relation	3	20.0
	Strong management-employee relation	1	6.7
	Moderate management-employee relation	4	26.7
	Weak management-employee relation	7	46.7
	Very weak management-employee relation	0	-
	Total	15	100.0
Addis Ababa University	Very strong management-employee relation	0	-
	Strong management-employee relation	0	-
	Moderate management-employee relation	5	33.3
	Weak management-employee relation	7	46.6
	Very weak management- employee relation	3	20
	Total	15	100.0

Source: prepared by the researcher

This specific question is aimed at finding the responses of instructor respondents on how they judge the organizational culture of their respective institutions, especially in relation to management-employee relations aspect. Based on their responses, seven (46.6 %) respondents from Jigjig University said that there is weak management-employee relation, four (26.6%) respondents said the employee management relation is moderate, three (20%) respondents chose that there exit strong management-employee relations, only one (6.6%) respondent chose strong management-employee relation.

On the other hand, seven (46.6%) respondents of AAU responded that there is weak management-employee relation, five (33.3%) of them chose that there is a moderate management-employee relation, three (20%) said that the management-employee relation of Addis Ababa University is very weak. This implies that majorities of the respondents have a feeling that the management employee relation is weak. Though the number of respondents taken from Addis Ababa University is high in responding that there is weak management-employee relation, there is an

indication in Jijiga University too. This shows that, based on the obtained data, there is an indication that the management-employee relation is weak and is not as it is supposed to be. It is the public relations role to serve as a bridge between the employee and the managers and the institution and the external stakeholders. Public relation has to bridge the gap that has hampered the management and employee from communicating. It is not hidden from anyone that without having a smooth communication an organization could not realize its vision, mission and strategies.

There has to exist a communication between the vision owner and the employees who work for the attainment of the vision. Public relations practitioners or communication personnel should build a bridge where by the management of the institutions establish relations with their employees. In the interview session, both Universities interviewees responded that the management of the Universities' are change adaptive and open to communicate, however, this clashes with the responses of the respondents. For the communication between the management and employees to happen, it should come either from the top management or the communicators or public relations organs of the universities. From the corporate communication perspective, it's the public relations practitioners who should handle and strengthen the communication of the employees and the management. Systems theory, too, recommends PR practitioners to build a strong tie between the management and the employees and also the organization and the external environment, in this regard, limitations are seen.

Table 9. Agreement on how the public relations work is helping the overall organizational communications of the Universities

How much do you think is the PRs work helping the overall organizational communications?	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Jijiga University	Extremely helpful	0	0
	Helpful	8	53.3
	Neutral	0	0
	Unhelpful	6	40
	Extremely unhelpful	1	6.6
	Total	15	100
Addis Ababa University	Extremely helpful	0	0
	Helpful	1	6.6
	Neutral	3	20
	Unhelpful	5	33.3
	Extremely unhelpful	6	40
		15	100

Source: prepared by the researcher

The above table indicates the replies of respondents on how they see the help of the public relations work for effective organizational communication. Out of the fifteen respondents, eight (53.3 %) chose that the Corporate Communication Directorate of JJU is helpful to the organizational communication of the institution, close to a similar number of respondents have the public relations work is unhelpful (40% of the respondents) and extremely unhelpful (6.6% of the respondents). Jijiga University's CCD is not helpful to the University's holistic

communication. On the other data, which is obtained from AAU, out of the total 15 respondents, the majorities of respondents accounting 40% (6 respondents) and 33% (5 respondents) have responded that the public relations work is unhelpful and extremely unhelpful respectively to the University's communication. And only 6.6% of the respondent chose the practice of public relations is helping the University's holistic communication. This indicates that Addis Ababa University's OERPC is ineffective in organizing the institutional communication.

Generally, both Universities communication works are less effective in helping organizational communication. This is indicative of the disorganization of PRs activities, lack of strategic view and their dependence on daily routine activities. This does not come from the practitioners only, as mentioned in the interview results, it is the top management that is making the practitioners to be busy of covering events happening. So, both the directorates of the Universities and their top managements have to share the problems and work on making the PRs work more strategic.

Table 10. Agreement of respondents on how much the directorates are open for academicians

How do you rate the AAU's OERPC's role in inviting Journalism and Communications instructors to provide professional assistance to the communication activities of the directorate?	Strongly agree	Frequency	Percent
	Agree	0	
	Neutral	4	
	Disagree	6	
	Strongly disagree	5	
	Total	15	
How do you rate the JJU's CCD's role in inviting Journalism and Communications instructors to provide professional assistance to the communication activities of the directorate?	Strongly agree	2	13.3
	Agree	3	20
	Neutral	0	0
	Disagree	6	40
	Strongly disagree	4	26.6
	Total	15	100

Source: prepared by the researcher

Among the fifteen respondents of Jijiga University, six (40%) respondents have chosen neutral, five (33.3%) respondents disagree, two (13.3%) of them agreed on the idea that the Corporate Communication Directorate of the University is open enough to work with Journalism and Communications, the rest two (13.3%) strongly disagreed on the idea. The above data indicates that most of the respondents consider that the Corporate Communication Directorate of the university is not openly calling for academic staff of the university to provide for valuable participation and professional guidance on the communication works.

The same is true in Addis Ababa University as the data obtained indicates, out of the fifteen respondents, six (40%) respondents strongly disagreed on the idea that the directorate invites academic staff to have part on the communication works, still five (33.3%) respondents chose strongly disagree and the rest four (26.6%) respondents stayed neutral. None of the respondents from both Universities' samples indicated the existence of open environment from the communication directorates.

Based on the above data, the two Universities' communications organs are working without the participation of Journalism and Communications academicians. In a country like Ethiopia, where the growth of public relations is in its infancy stage, undertaking a public relations work or project not only affects the office, but also the growth of the profession becomes highly stagnant. Therefore, the External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate of Addis Ababa University and Corporate Communication Directorate of Jijiga University have developed a system of interaction that connects the directorates with the departments. Doing so, improvement in the interaction of the department of Journalism and Communications and the directorates.

The above data shows the responses of respondents whether the directorates invite academicians to have part on the work done by the directorates. The responses indicate that a closed environment where by academicians are ignored from having professional participations in the public relations works of the Universities.

Out of the fifteen respondents, only two respondents from Jijiga University strongly agreed on that the Corporate Communication Directorate invites instructors, three respondents also have

chosen agree. However, six respondents chose disagree on the point that there is no open environment and four respondents strongly disagreed. This indicates that more than ten respondents (accounting 66.6%) of the respondents taken from Jijiga University said that the directorate does not invite academicians to participate.

Though the number differs, respondents taken from Addis Ababa University have also indicated that the External Relations, Partnerships and Communications Directorate is not open to academic staff of Journalism and Communication. From the fifteen respondents, seven (46.6%) respondents have chosen disagree and strongly disagree, four (26.6%) chose neutral, and the rest three (20%) chose agree and only one (6.6%) respondent chose agree, and this implies that the same trend is taking place in Addis Ababa University, like Jijiga University.

The data obtained from the two universities, as clearly listed above, is indicative of the situation that how the two universities directorates working and entertaining academicians. The response of both universities demonstrates that little consideration is given to professionals and professionally handling activities. Unless professional ways are followed, it is tough for the offices to be effective as it is supposed to be.

4.10. Weaknesses of the public relations practices of the Universities

Since the two institutions differ, the weaknesses the academicians identified also differ. Therefore, the weaknesses of the two directorates are briefly discussed separately in the following manner.

Weaknesses of Addis Ababa University's Office External Relations, Partnerships and Communications as mentioned by internal stakeholders (Journalism and Communications instructors):

- The directorate has ignored the internal stakeholders, the administrative staff and academic ones. They feel that the authorities are the only publics for them,

- The management lacks communication with its workers as well as very strong professional support for the teaching learning process,
- The public relations practice lacks credibility by the staff of the University and is not systematic and lacks strategic elements,
- It does not inform the university community as it should be,
- The public relations lack visibility in its work,
- Employees of the university do not have good image about the management
- They did not make themselves known to the community, because they are not doing tangible activity that reaches to the community
- There is no regular communication about the success and challenges, efforts of the University

Weaknesses of JJU's Corporate Communication Directorate as mentioned by internal stakeholders (Journalism and Communications instructors):

- The directorates workers are not proactive,
- The directorate is not well structured
- Lacks professional practice of public relations and management problem,
- Lack professional trainings, the office does not closely work with the Journalism and Communications work,
- They do not provide up to date information and the University community doesn't get communication tools
- The current practice of public relations is not planned and organized; the workers are simply event reporters than to be strategist

4.10.1. Recommendations of instructor respondents for the improvement of the relationship

Recommendations given by Journalism and Communications instructors for the improvement of AAU's Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communications

- They should communicate with students, academic and administrative staff, should identify core problems and communicate it back to the officials.
- They should create a forum for top management and employees to have discussions that are consistent,
- Assigning professionals who fit the position
- Professionalism of public relations is very important,
- Since communications is understanding of the participants engaged in the communication process, the public relation organ of the University should work hard to bring this understanding between the internal and external publics,
- The public relations must be done in the professional lines
- They need to approach the university community positively and work together for common success. Moreover, they are expected to facilitate the flow of information from up to bottom and vice versa
- It has to redesign to its peak in order to communicate regularly with the University community to establish two-way symmetric public relations communication.

Recommendations given by Journalism and Communications instructors for the improvement of JJU's Corporate Communications Directorate:

- The directorate should work professionally, serve as a bridge between the University management and the University community,
- They should conduct research before they do other activities,
- The directorate should be reorganized,

- The directorate should plan in collaboration with Journalism and Communications department
- The practitioners should get trainings,
- Based on the formative assessment, a clear public relations strategy containing implementation guidelines should be developed. An on-job- training should be also given to the staff working at the Corporate Communication Directorate

4.11. Analysis of external stakeholder respondents of the two Universities

In this section, analyses of sixty questionnaire responses were made. As mentioned, briefly in the methodology part, ten stakeholders from each University were chosen, and three questionnaires were distributed in each stakeholder organization (one for the top manager, one for the communication practitioner and one for an employee). Therefore, thirty questionnaires were distributed for each University, a total of sixty questionnaires for the two Universities.

4.12. Establishment of relationship of the Universities and stakeholders

Respondents were asked when their organization started communicating with the Universities. Majorities of the stakeholder respondents of the two Universities wrote on the questionnaire that they do not exactly know when the relationship has begun, however some respondents said that the relationship started since the establishment. To mention some of them, employees of Ministry of Education responded that the relationship of the Addis Ababa University and the Ministry has existed as old as the establishment of the University. Respondents from Zemen Bank, is a bank that Addis Ababa University is a shareholder with, traces back the starting of the partnership to five years.

On the part of Jijiga University, respondents from the Somali Region Women and Children Office bureau responded that the partnership of the two organizations is since the establishment of Jijiga University. Respondents from the Somali Region Education Bureau responded that the relation of their bureau and the University has got improvement in the last five years. However, most of the respondents don't know the exact date when their relationship started.

4.13. Main themes of stakeholder-University relationship

This question means different to different stakeholders or organizations, therefore, the main theme of areas of partnerships that the two organizations have will mentioned separately for the two Universities. Their responses are briefly discussed in the following manner.

Stakeholders of Jijiga University:

Stakeholder respondent from the regional Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) said that their bureau has a stake with the University, especially for upgrading teacher's education especially in health and agriculture studies.

Respondents from the region's Women and Children Office responded that the area of cooperation is on empowering girl students and affirmative action in order to bring girls to a better stage.

The response obtained from the region's health bureau indicates that the main cooperation area of the University and their bureau is training assistance for building capacity of the region's health care service delivery.

According to the response gained from the region's Education bureau, the area of cooperation on achieving quality education by providing quality educational short-term and long-term training to the region's teachers. Respondents form the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Jijiga Branch office, responded that the University and their organization work on enabling students to have financial services without challenges, for instance, they mentioned providing banking and ATM machine services in the University compound.

On the part of Addis Ababa University's stakeholders:

Respondents from EBC responded that the two organizations relationship has a long history since both organizations are among the age- old organizations in the country. They mentioned

the relationship and area of cooperation among the two institutions are media coverage to promotion and advertising and sponsorship.

The respondents from Addis Ababa City Education Bureau mentioned that since their office is working on education, there is a strong relation with Addis Ababa University. They mentioned that they upgrade their education; they use the University's library for reading books.

Zemen Bank, as the respondents mentioned, is a banking organization that works with Addis Ababa University in cases like facilitating examinations for trainee bankers. So, the University cooperates in recruiting new bankers by preparing professional questions on banking.

Table 11. Relations of the Universities with stakeholder organizations

How do you value your organization's relationship with the University?		Frequency	Percent
JJU	Highly successful	7	23.3
	Moderately successful	8	26.6
	Successful	9	30.0
	Unsuccessful	3	10.0
	Highly unsuccessful	3	10.0
	Total	30	100.0

AAU	Highly successful	2	6.6
	Moderately successful	4	13.3
	Successful	21	70.0
	Unsuccessful	1	3.3
	Highly unsuccessful	2	6.6
	Total	30	100.0

Source: prepared by the researcher

Figure 2 AAU's relation with stakeholder organizations

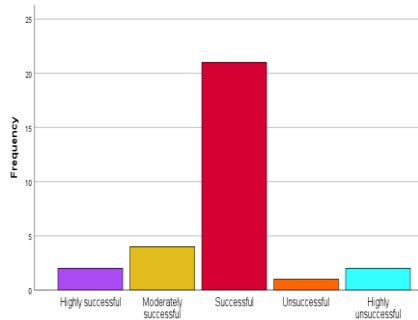


Figure 3 JJU's relation with stakeholder organizations

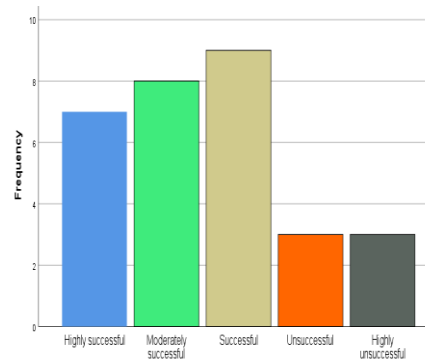


Figure 3. Respondents levels of satisfaction on the University-stakeholder relationship

Regarding the third question, out of the thirty stakeholder respondents of Jijiga University, 24 respondents (80%) have an understanding that the University has a good relationship with their organizations. Only six respondents (20%) responded that their organization's relationship with the University is unsuccessful. Stakeholder respondents of Addis Ababa University also have a positive response towards the relationship of their organizations with the University. Only three respondents (10%) viewed the relationship as unsuccessful.

The above responses indicate that both Universities stakeholder respondents do have a positive understanding on the relationships of the Universities with their organizations. This implies that the Universities have worked on having positive relations with their stakeholders.

Table 12. Challenges of stakeholders in communicating the Universities

Have you faced any challenge while communicating the University?	Responses	Frequency	Percent
AAU	Yes	2	6.7
	No	26	86.7
	I don't know	2	6.6
	Total	30	100.0
JJU	Yes	14	46.7
	No	15	53.3
	I don't know	2	6.6
	Total	30	100.0

Source: prepared by the researcher

According to the above response, fourteen from Jijiga and two from Addis Ababa Universities agreed on the point that they have faced problems while communicating with the universities. Fifteen respondents (53.3 %) stakeholders of Jigjig University and 26 respondents (86.7%) of Addis Ababa have said that they did not have faced any challenge while communicating with the Universities. From the above response of both institutions' stakeholders' point of evaluation, the Universities tie with their respective stakeholders is in a positive way. This response shows that Addis Ababa University has got better responses from its stakeholders.

But, with regard to Jijiga University, fourteen respondents (46.7%) said that they have faced challenges in communicating the University. Among the challenges, they mentioned that the University does not have contact person for having a formal way of communication, sometimes the stakeholders get confused where to go while they come for a certain work to the University. In this regard, the University has to establish a way communication that enables stakeholders to easily access information and other services without worries.

Table 13. Communication ways to communicate stakeholders

	Responses		Frequency	Percent		
What kind of communication channel are you using to communicate with Jijiga University?	Letter		18	60		
	Phone call		7	23.3		
	e-mail		4	23.3		
	Facebook		1	3.3		
	Twitter		-	-		
	Telegram		-			
	What's up		-			
	Instagram		-			
	Total	30	30	100.0		100.0

AAU		Frequency	Percent
What kind of communication channel are you using to communicate with Addis Ababa University?	Letter	14	46.6
	E-mail	6	20
	Facebook	2	6.6
	Twitter	-	
	Phone call	8	26.6
	Telegram	-	
	What is up	-	
	Instagram	-	
	Other (please specify)	-	-
	Total		100

Source: prepared by the researcher

The above question is designed to know the types of communications ways that the Universities and their stakeholders use. Among the listed options, most of the respondents, have primarily chosen letter, then phone call and e-mail accordingly. Out of the 30 respondents, 14 stakeholders (45.1 %) respondents (of Addis Ababa) chose letter and 18 stakeholder (of Jijiga University) respondents (60%) have chosen letter. This indicates that both the Universities and their respective stakeholders are following the formal ways of communication. Few numbers said they use Facebook. In the interview part, the tool of communicating with stakeholder was briefly discussed and what the interviewees told to the researcher are similar. The interviewees said that they mostly use letters, but sometimes mobile communication and e-mail are also used. So, there is a similarity between the responses of the stakeholders and communication workers of the two Universities.

Table 14. Level of satisfaction of the stakeholders in communicating with the University

Rate the communication you have with Jijiga University	Responses	Frequency	Percent
	highly satisfactory	9	30
	Satisfactory	3	10
	Moderate	6	20
	Unsatisfactory	12	40
	Highly unsatisfactory	0	
	Total	30	100
Rate the communication you have with Addis Ababa University?	highly satisfactory	2	6.6
	Satisfactory	16	53.3
	Moderate	10	33.3
	Unsatisfactory	0	
	Highly unsatisfactory	2	6.6
	Total	30	100

Source: prepared by the researcher

The sixth question inquires stakeholders how much they are satisfied in the communication they have with the Universities. According to the response result, 9 respondents (30%) said that they are highly satisfied with their communication with Jigjig University, however only two respondents (6.6%) said that they are highly satisfied in their communication with Addis Ababa University. Sixteen respondents (53.3%), more than half of the respondents said that they are satisfied in their communication with Addis Ababa University.

The responses of stakeholders and responses of Journalism and Communications instructors are different in that, the stakeholders are satisfied, in general with what they have with their respective universities. But Journalism and Communications instructors are not satisfied with the

employee-management relations they are also unhappy with the public relations and communication works of the Universities.

Based on this, we can conclude that the two Universities have given much emphasis and time to the external relations works and have shown little concern for the internal body their organizations. But the Universities should also give time and show commitment as they did for the external stakeholders.

Table 15. Respondents level of agreement on the communication model of University-stakeholder communication

	7. How do you categorize the communication model your institution has with the University?	Frequency	Percentage
Jijiga University	Two-way communication that aims to enhance the mutual benefit of the university and is stakeholders	7	23.3
	Two-way communication that aims to scientifically influence stakeholders	3	10
	One-way communication that aims to enhance the image of the institution to its stakeholders	14	46.6
	One-way communication that aims to impose the idea of the institution on its stakeholders	6	20
	Total	30	100
Addis Ababa University	Two-way communication that aims to enhance the mutual benefit of the university and is stakeholders	11	36.6
	Two-way communication that aims to scientifically influence stakeholders	11	36.6
	One-way communication that aims to enhance the image of the institution to its stakeholders	8	26.6
	One-way communication that aims to impose the idea of the institution on its stakeholders	-	-
	Total	30	100

According to the above data, out of the thirty respondents, only 6 stakeholder respondents (20%) of Jijiga University responded that the communication between the University and its stakeholders as one-way communication that targets imposing the idea of the University up on the stakeholders or anyone who engages in communication with the University. Only seven respondents (23.3%) out of thirty, said that there is a two-way communication that the University and its stakeholders follow in order to achieve mutual line of cooperation and benefit.

On the other, the response obtained from Addis Ababa University's stakeholders is different from the response of Jijiga University's stakeholders, in that, respondents of the former do have a positive response which says there is a two-way communication that targets mutual benefits between the parties engaged. Only eight stakeholder respondents (26.6%) of Addis Ababa University said that the communication between the University and its stakeholders is one-way which aims at informing the University's interest.

Both Universities have to be caring to their stakeholders' interest before trying to impose the interest of the Universities on others, and since the two institutions have diversified stakeholders, both from the internal to the external, they have to invest enough time and skills in order to devise a way to communicating their stakeholders. They should have a corporate level strategy that aims target fully, to address and communicate stakeholders.

Table 16. Respondents level of agreement on the status of relationship between the Universities and stakeholders

Do you think that the relationship between your organization and the University is based on mutual relationship and benefit?	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Jijiga University	Yes	21	70
	No	9	30
	Total	30	100
Addis Ababa University	Yes	20	66.6
	No	10	33.3
	Total	30	100

Source: prepared by the researcher

This question wants to understand the feelings stakeholder respondents have on the relationship of their organization and the respective University. According the response given above, those stakeholders of Jijiga University who said 'yes' are 21 (70%), and those who said 'no' are nine (30%), almost a similar number of stakeholders (21%) view the relationship between Addis Ababa University and its stakeholders is based on mutual benefit and relationship.

The response obtained from the two Universities stakeholders demonstrates that the stakeholders are well aware of the fact that the relationship is based on mutual interest between the concerned bodies. In this regard, the two Universities are advised to keep their position or to grow bigger by doing their level best in order to keep the positive feelings of stakeholders on them. Unless the Universities work on this, they may lose at a certain point in time. Being accepted today and sitting without doing cannot be a guarantee for tomorrow, rather it is better to be proactive before problems happen and being attached with satisfying both internal and external stakeholders.

Weak Sides of the communication between the Universities and their external stakeholder

Among the respondents of AAU, a response obtained from respondents of Zemen Bank says that in times of recruiting new bankers, the university delays in the preparation of exams. And this affects the banks activities as the position that is supposed to be covered by a new employee won't be covered until the University gets the exam ready. Another respondent said that the University sometimes its best interest only while disregarding the stakeholder's feelings and interests.

Addis Ababa University, sometimes forgets the sense of urgency, in that some issues may need immediate action. However, the University forgets the situations and needs someone to remind it to go for action. As they responded, this affects the relationship of the University with its stakeholders. Sometimes the University is unwilling to take tasks and execute them. For instance, the response obtained from Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Education shows that the University delays in doing commitments and is sometimes unwilling to provide necessary data.

Stakeholders of Jijiga University, also pointed out that some problems they faced as stakeholders: among the points, the University is not actively responding to the requests of stakeholders, ineffective communication and unclear communication, absence of a focal person who treats issues of stakeholders whenever the need arises from the stakeholder side.

4.14. External stakeholders' points of recommendations for improving their relation with the Universities

Recommendations provided by stakeholder respondents on the improvement of Jijiga University's organizational communication and public relations practice:

The stakeholders recommend that the Universities to have clear paths of communication, focal person must be assigned to specifically communicate stakeholders as they come to office without any wastage of time and money, the Universities should consider not only their best interest, but also the interest of stakeholders in such a way the relations will be healthier and better. The other point is that the Universities should well understand the interests of its stakeholders.

Recommendation points for the improvement of Addis Ababa University's organizational communication and public relations practices, as recommended by stakeholders

The University should consider issues that need immediate action and should understand and have a sense of urgency, the institutions should cooperate in giving necessary data and should avoid delaying on tasks, the University has to build a communication way that only targets and treats issues of stakeholders, working together for common goal should be an issue with high commitment.

Though the points mentioned separately for the two institutions are helpful for the respective Universities, there is no question on the importance of what is important for Jijiga University is also important for Addis Ababa University and vice versa.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This thesis was aimed at comparatively studying the organizational communication and public relations practices of two Ethiopian public Universities: Jijiga and Addis Ababa Universities. And by doing so the researcher has identified that the following major findings:

The Corporate Communication Directorate of Jijiga University and the External Relations, Partnerships and Communication Directorate of Addis Ababa University do not follow the public relations process, have never conducted public relations research to identify problems and plan for effectively handling public relations activities.

The public relations activities of the Universities lack professional practice: since the profession needs professional practice, the directorates are not as effective as they are supposed to be. Both Universities have numerous internal and external stakeholders, but they did not have identified the active from the inactive stakeholders. This is difficult for addressing their stakeholders in a strategic way.

The two directorates do not make evaluation of the material they distribute to the public. But, for executing a public relations task conducting research is of great importance. The two institutions do not have a clearly defined organizational culture, rather the interviewees discussed their team work spirit.

The questionnaire data show that 66.6 % of the respondents have responded that the public relations practice of Addis Ababa University is highly unsuccessful, 40% of respondents stayed neutral from labeling the public relations activity of Jijiga University. This shows that the directorates' public relations work is not well recognized by their Journalism and Communications academicians.

Most of the respondents view the public relations work as a tool for propaganda. This affects the career of the profession: since the success of any public relations activity highly depends upon the view of the stakeholders, missing the positive understanding and view of stakeholders negatively affects the success.

Out of the total sample, 66.6% of the respondents have valued the role of the public relations of Jijiga University as low in familiarizing institutional plan, policies and strategy is low. Nine and four respondents from Addis Ababa University have responded that the public relations practice in introducing the organizational policies and strategies as low and very low respectively.

Respondents from the two Universities indicated that the Universities have limitations in establishing a strong organizational culture that helps interconnection of the management with the employees. From the obtained data seven respondents (46.6%) of Addis Ababa University responded that the management-employee relation as weak, seven (46.6%) respondents from Jijiga University said that there is weak management-employee relation in Jijiga University.

Respondents were also asked to respond on the issue that if there is an initiative from the public relations organs of the Universities to contact and let academicians participate for the professional practice of public relations. Out of the fifteen respondents taken from Jijiga University, more ten respondents (66.6%) said that the University's CCD does not invite academicians to contribute for the professional public relations practice. Ten respondents (66.6%) taken from Addis Ababa University responded that the University's OERPC does not invite academicians to have part on the public relations work.

Stakeholder respondents of JJU, 24 respondents (80%) labeled the relation of their organization's relation with the University as successful, on the part of Addis Ababa, 27 respondents (90%) out of the thirteen chosen respondents labeled the relationship of AAU and their organization as successful.

Both Universities stakeholder respondents have shown a positive response towards their relations with the institutions, on the contrary, Journalism and Communications instructors of the two Universities are unsatisfied in their communication with the Universities.

The stakeholders of the two Universities have pinpointed some weak side of the Universities. Among these: absence of responsible focal person to communicate stakeholders, lack of strategic approach towards stakeholders is mentioned to Jijiga University. Delayed response and sometimes unwillingness to take actions, lack of considering the interest of the stakeholders is given to Addis Ababa University.

Generally, the Office of External Relations, Partnerships and Communications and Corporate Communication Directorate's limited staff number and their less concern in conducting evaluation research may have affected their strategic role to be played at corporate level. Communication works are of great importance as long as the image and reputation of an organization highly depends on the role played by communication professionals in making both the internal and external public not only well-informed, but also to enable them develop trust on the institution.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the above major research findings, the following points of recommendations are provided for bridging the gaps:

- Public relations, as a professional career has to be given the full mandate in the two Universities: to independently practice in a professional way. In this regard, the role the top management plays is important. The management has to give not only the name, but also the full mandate and power for the public relations professionals to act what the profession requires them to do.
- Professionalism should be given the priority: we may find a number of individuals who are from other professions but working as public relations practitioners. This should be shaped in a sense that by giving the priority to the professionals. This can be done in times of recruiting new staff of public relations, instead of taking someone who is far from the public relations, it is crucial and reasonable to hire the one who has the qualification of public relations.
- The Corporate Communication Directorate of Jijiga University and External Relations, Partnerships and Communication of Addis Ababa University should develop a system for addressing and communicating their internal stakeholders. They should start building their trust from within. It is evident that without developing a strong tie with the internal community, it is impossible to shine externally. Therefore, much emphasis has to be developed to address the internal community of the two Universities
- The directorates are recommended to work on shaping the blurred image they have in the minds of their internal stakeholders: as briefly discussed in the analysis of stakeholders and Journalism and Communications, there was a view that public relations as a tool for propaganda. This cannot be shaped by defending, rather by openly approaching the public and by showing the willingness to improve if problems happen.

- It will be helpful if the directorates design a communication channel to reach academic staff of Journalism and Communications. As it has been clearly shown in the research findings, the academicians are ignored from participation and the directorates have missed the professional guidance and assistance that they may get from the instructors. So, it will better if the directorates take the views of academicians in their PRs projects.
- It will better if the directorates conduct public relations researches: the finding of this thesis found out that no research has been done so far in both directorates. Since researching helps to know the gaps and opportunities, institutions are recommended to conduct research before they engage in doing the actual job. If an organization finds gaps, it enables to bridge the gap with minimum or no harm to the organization, but if the gap is left without researching, at certain point in time it affects and challenges the existence of organization. Therefore, researching will help to find solutions for the problems the current study found.
- The directorates are recommended to plan their communication strategies by inviting all concerned bodies, especially the internal stakeholders. In this case, Journalism and Communications instructors could have a strong professional closeness to the communication works of public relations practitioners.
- Public relations practitioners should be given on the job trainings to make familiar with the current trends of the world. Short term trainings enable them to be proactive enough and familiar with what is happening in the world.
- More importantly, since the two organizations are working on producing well educated professionals, they should have to also give short to middle-long term trainings.

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APPENDIX I

Interview guide for communication/ PRs Directors

1. What is your definition of public relations?
2. How do you understand organizational communication and its relation to public relations?
3. What are the tools of communication you rely on to reach your public relations?
4. Is/are there different communication tool(s) you use for addressing internal publics and external stakeholders?
5. Please tell about your organizational culture.
6. How is the public relations process relevant to your communication work?
7. Do you release information to media organizations? How?
8. Who are your media stakeholders?
9. In what way are you establishing relations with stakeholders?
10. What ways do you follow to call for media?
11. Do you believe in the importance of public relations research?
12. Have you conducted any research so far?
13. Do you have any advisory role to the management?
14. What is the position of the public relations organ/ communication directorate in the University?
15. Is the public relations of the university part of the top management/ decision making organ of the University?
16. Do you conduct evaluation on the communication materials that are distributed?
17. How do you see the approach of the top management when you propose a new public relations proposal?
18. What is your recommendation for the future improvement of public relations practice?

APPENDIX II

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS

MA PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC RELATIONS & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

A questionnaire prepared for Journalism and Communications Instructors of Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities on the thesis titled “*A Comparative Study on the Organizational Communication System and Public Relations Practices of Two Ethiopian Public Universities: AAU and JJU*”

Purpose of the questionnaire

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to know the responses of Journalism and Communications instructors of Addis Ababa/Jijiga University on the organizational communication and public relations practices of the University. You are kindly requested to provide your accurate responses for the given questions. The responses you reveal are of great importance to the research findings of this study. Feel free to respond since your responses will **only** be used for research purpose.

Thank you in advance to your cooperation!

Demographic background

Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age

☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 40-44 ☐ 45 and above

Education

☐ Bachelor Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ PhD

Year of service

☐ < 2 years ☐ 3-5 years ☐ 6-8 years ☐ 9-11 ☐ 12-14 ☐ 15 and above

1. Generally, how do you value the PR activity of the University?

- ☐ Highly successful
- ☐ Moderately successful
- ☐ Successful
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Highly unsuccessful

2. Do you receive communication tools (brochures, leaflets...) from the communication directorate of the institution?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Difficult to say

If your answer is for Q No 2 is “YES”, please list the types of communication tools you received

3. Rate the role played by the public relations in introducing institutional plans, policies and strategies.

- ☐ Very high
- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very low

4. What do you think about the work of Public Relations of the University?

- ☐ *Serve as a tool for propaganda*
- ☐ *Informs the university community about institutional progresses*
- ☐ *Works on building trust among university community*
- ☐ *Nothing is visible*

5. Do you think that the Public Relations practitioners of the university act as professionals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Difficult to say

If your answer for Q . No 5 is yes, why?

If your answer for Q 5 is No, why?

6. Do you get up-to-date information from the communication directorate?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Difficult to say

If your answer for Q No 6 is 'YES' please discuss the types of information you got

7. How do you value the organizational culture of the University?

☐ Very strong management-employee relation

☐ Strong management-employee relation

☐ Moderate management-employee relation

☐ Weak management-employee relation

☐ Very weak management-employee relation

8. What weaknesses have you observed on the Public Relations practices of the University?

9. How do you rate the approach of the External Relations, Partnerships and Communication Directorate in inviting academicians to contribute on the communication works of the directorate?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

10. How do you value the level of involvement of the External Relations, Partnerships and Communication Directorate in getting professional assistance from academicians to the communication works?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

11. How much do you think is the Public relations work helping the overall organizational communications?

- ☐ Extremely helpful
- ☐ Helpful
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unhelpful
- ☐ Extremely unhelpful

12. In general, what do you recommend for the improvement of public relations work and organizational communication in the University?

Thank you again!

APPENDIX III

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS

MA PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC RELATIONS & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

A questionnaire prepared for stakeholders of Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities on the thesis titled: *“A Comparative Study on the Organizational Communication System and Public Relations Practices of Two Ethiopian Public Universities: Addis Ababa and Jijiga Universities.*

Purpose of the questionnaire

These questions are prepared for organizations who are stakeholders of **Addis Ababa** and **Jijiga Universities**. You are kindly requested to respond sincerely to the following questions in relation to your institution's interaction with Addis Ababa/ Jijiga University. Your responses are highly helpful to the successful completion of the study. Responses are confidential and names of institutions and individuals will not be revealed in the study.

Thank you in advance to your cooperation!

1. When did you start relationship with the University?

2. What is/are your main area/s of relationship?

3. How do you value your organization's relationship with the University?

- ☐ Highly successful
- ☐ Moderately successful
- ☐ Successful
- ☐ Unsuccessful
- ☐ Highly unsuccessful

4. Have you ever faced any challenge related to communicating the University?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If your answer for Q No 4 is 'YES' please mention

5. What kinds of communication channels are you using to communicate with the University?

- ☐ Letter
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Telegram
- ☐ What is up
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

6. Rate the communication you have with the University?

- ☐ Highly satisfactory
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Unsatisfactory
- ☐ Highly unsatisfactory

7. How do you categorize the communication model your institution has with the University?

- ☐ Two-way communication that aims to enhance the mutual benefit of the University and its stakeholders
- ☐ Two-way communication that aims to scientifically influence stakeholders
- ☐ One-way communication that aims to enhance the image of the institution to its stakeholders
- ☐ One-way communication that aims to impose the idea of the institution on its stakeholders

8. Do you think that the relationship between your organization and the University is based on mutual relationship and benefit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If your answer for Q No 8 is 'YES', what are the mutual benefits have been attained so far?

If your answer is 'NO' for Q No 8, what reasons do you think have hampered the institutions from attaining of the mutual benefit?

9. What weaknesses have you observed on the communication practice of the University?

10. What is your recommendation for the improvement of public relations practice and organizational communications?

Thank you again!

List of external stakeholders of AAU included in the study

No	Addis Ababa City Education Bureau
1	FDRE Plan Commission
2	Ministry of Education
3	Ministry of Health
4	Zemen Bank
5	Awash Bank
6	Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation
7	Fana Broadcasting Corporate
8	Ministry of Science and Technology
9	Buna Bank
10	Addis Ababa City Health Bureau

List of external stakeholders of JJU included in the study

No	Names of stakeholders
1	SRS Health Bureau
2	SRS Mass Media Agency
3	SRS Education Bureau
4	SRS Agriculture Bureau
5	SRS Women and Children
6	SRS Youths and Sport Bureau
7	SRS Trade and Investment Bureau
8	SRS TVET College
9	SRS Cooperative Bureau
10	SRS Enterprise Bureau

List of interviewees (Jijiga University)

No	Name of the interviewee	Position
1	Elyas Abdi	Vice Director, Corporate Communication Directorate
2	Tingirtu G/tsaddik	Director, International Affairs Office

List of interviewees (Addis Ababa University)

No	Name of the interviewee	Position
1	Mebrat Melaku	Communication Team Leader, OERPC
2	Mihret Desalegn	External Relations and Partnerships Team Leader, OERPC