



**Organizational reform and the location of public
relations at the federal executive organs in Ethiopia:
Challenges and prospects**

**A thesis submitted to
School of Journalism and Communication
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic
Communication**

**By
Mengistu Lamaro**

**July 2021
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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**July 2021
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Mengistu Lamaro, entitled: **Organizational reform and the location of public relations at the federal executive organs in Ethiopia: Challenges and prospects** and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Public Relations and Strategic Communication) complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Abstract

Organizational reform and the location of public relations at the federal executive organs in Ethiopia: Challenges and prospects

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Addis Ababa University, May 2021

The federal executive organs in Ethiopia went through structural and functional reforms aimed at making them fit to the socio-economic and political reforms in 2018. The impact of this reform on the public relations sector at both central government and federal executive organs did not get adequate attention. This study aimed to examine the impacts of organizational reform on the public relations processes in the federal executive organs of Ethiopia. The result of this study is supposed to inform the concerned parties about the status quo of the PRs sector along with the existing challenges and thus initiate them to respond accordingly. A quantitative research design was employed to conduct a descriptive survey on the case at hand. Through a quantitative analysis of data collected from different sources using a combination of instruments, the study found that the organizational reform actions introduced in 2018 affected the roles and functions of PRs in the federal executive organs more seriously than the structural location of the process. Even though the national public relations sector leading organization was dissolved by law, the public relations units remained at the usual location accountable and directly reporting to the executive management of their respective organizations. However, functionally, the public relations were pushed out of the decision making management team, missed opportunities to access decisions they were supposed to inform the public on timely manner. With some emerging issues and lacking of resources as well as enabling environment which affect the day to day practices of the public relations functions, therefore, the practitioners limited themselves to insignificant routines than core public relations functions. In tackling the issues affecting their functioning, the public relations practitioners should, therefore, have to stride further in practicing their functions in a professional manner so that they can get recognition by the key stakeholders. Moreover, the practitioners should focus on key public relations roles might help them get noticed and sought after. The Press Secretariat department should resume the undergoing reform initiatives, and support the public relations sector professionalism by fully implementing the sector plans and programs handed over from the GCAO.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIPR	Chartered Institute of Public Relations
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples Republic Democratic Front
GCAO	Government Communication Affairs Office
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
JEG	Job Evaluation and Grading
PM	Prime Minister
PP	Prosperity Party
PRs	Public Relations
PS	Press Secretariat
PSD	Press Secretariat Department
qtd.	Quoted

Declaration

I, Mengistu Lamaro, declare that the thesis entitled “Organizational reform and the location of public relations at the federal executive organs in Ethiopia: Challenges and prospects” is the novel record of the independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Arka Abota. This has not been submitted earlier elsewhere for the award of any diploma, degree or fellowship.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

As the old saying goes, there is nothing so constant as change. Indeed, the constancy of change becomes more and more apparent as we move further into this new millennium, and the rate of change seems to increase on a daily basis. In this regard, Zorn et al., (2000, p. 516) have argued that organizations must “organize for continuous change, to become a flexible organization that can adapt quickly to environmental changes.” Further, Zorn et al. (2000) believe that we should perhaps question the wisdom of this mantra, but the fact remains that in terms of rhetoric and action, change is likely to remain a central concern in organizational life. Although change is an enduring feature of organizational life, the degree and impact of that change can vary substantial. Sometimes, the change is huge and life-altering, as in the case when an organization merges with another organization, possibly forcing layoffs, job redefinitions, and massive shifts in the organization’s mission and processes (Miller & Barbour, 2012).

In Ethiopia, Public Relations as a distinct business process came into existence in very recent time. Unlike media and other related fields of study like journalism, the emergence and development of Public Relations has not been a topic of debate and deliberations as it was in other nations where it emerged earlier. Some of the most available scholarly works, for instance, relate it to the titles bestowed by the crown, namely Minister of the Pen- the Emperor’s spokesman and speechwriter in 1940s to 1950s (Tamrat, 2002).

However, the research of Zemedkun (2014) traced the history of public relations in Ethiopia to the Dergue Regime (Zemedkun, 2014). Zemedkun (2014) also underlined that Ethiopia has had an elaborate government public relations set up with the establishment of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting immediately after the coming into power of the Dergue regime in 1974 (p. 35).

Following the downfall of the Dergue regime in 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized power. During the transition period until 1995, EPRDF took some political reforms including the drafting constitution, and subsequent legal frameworks. During this time, “EPRDF sought to use the media to explain and encourage acceptance of the constitution” (Stremlau, 2014:231). Later on, a distinct office

named as the Government Communication Affairs Office was established in 2008. Following this, all public service organizations (here referred as the executive organs) of the federal and regional state governments have established their own PRs set ups though names of the department varied widely. The public relations practices as well focused on “making consensus” (Tamrat, 2002).

Since then, development of the discipline and regulation of the practices through different policy statements and legal frameworks came as an agenda of practitioners and policy makers (Wubishet, 2006). In the meantime, the discipline is welcomed by academicians as a field of study and research (Chala, 2017). While the PRs set up was operational at different administrative tiers from the federal to districts, and even kebel in some cases, it went through changes in naming, size, roles and responsibilities, and structure, among others (Zemedkun, 2014).

Most recently, a new function, named as the “Press Secretariat” was established at the office of the current Ethiopian Prime Minister in November 2018, and this brought GCAO- a big organization with multiple functions, powers and duties that stabilized through time in more than a decade’s time- into an end. Taking into account the deliberations about the 2018 executive organs restructuring, the reforms that took place to the PRs processes, impacts of the reform on the PRs roles and functions, and challenges facing (if there is any) were assessed in this research.

1.2. Problem statement

Having stated that public relations makes an organisation more effective when it is part of the strategic constituencies, Grunig, Dozier, and Grunig (2002, p. 151) underlined “battle exists in some organisations in identifying the location and functions of the Public Relations.” Seitel (2004) also points out that Public Relations in many organisations suffer the impact of downsizing and decentralization in recent times. Both of these in turn lead to the shrinkage of once-large operations to the formation of smaller departments. This further poses the question whether the Public Relations processes in various organizations are affected in a similar manner despite what the best way to organise for public relations in an organisation is still debatable.

Perhaps, the subject of structure as it manifests in the public relations context has not entirely escaped attention by the Public Relations scholars. Most notably the question and significance of structure, particularly at the organizational level, has attracted the attention of scholars in the “Excellence” study (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002), and other studies about structure in the public relations department context (Vercic, Zerfass, and Wiesenberg, 2015; Jerry Swerling, Kjerstin Thorson, and Ansgar Zerfass, 2014). On the other hand, it has been largely in the context of other mainstream debates such as Public Relations reporting and access to the dominant coalition and leadership influence or power within organizations has been the focus of scholars from Public Relations perspectives where organizational or functional structure has been examined (Grunig et al., 2002; Berger and Reber, 2006).

In about more than half a century in Ethiopian, the public relations still seems less stabilized; less professionalized. Following the education and training of this profession as a distinct field of study appeared in HEIs even most recently, the true nature of public relations in different regimes has not been well studied and documented irrespective of the discourses have been examining public relations in the general communications framework following the development of media, which in a country is relatively more advanced (Ministry of Information, 2003, p. 4). The existing works also have limitations in depicting the current status quo, particularly at the federal level. After an extensive quantitative and qualitative data analysis, for instance, Zemedkun (2004) assessed the practice and challenges of public relations in Ethiopian federal government offices. In this study, it was concluded that the public relations practices at the offices was limited to trivial activities like organizing meetings, looking after travelling process of higher officials and writing minutes that impede public relations to move forward and contribute to mutual intelligibility between the government and the public. Zemedkun’s (2004) study also added lack of standard and professional leadership from the central government as a bottleneck in the sector. Yet the study found out the sector, unlike the past regimes in Ethiopia, transformed through creation of distinct departments in almost all organizations at the federal and regional levels, because GCAO implemented various initiatives to transform government public relations in Ethiopia. It is about four years later that another structural reform took place in the federal executive organs he studied their cases, and so the past study cannot reflect the current situation.

In the case study that explored the practice of government PRs in the Office of the Prime Minister, Zewudu (2019, p.60) concluded that “the office practices a Public Information Model that mainly focuses on one way communication.” Moreover, the fact that the study found out the Press Secretariat to which the responsibility of leading the national government communications through presses as well as PRs still faces challenges such as “the political appointment of managers and practitioners, negative image of the public towards government communication, limited communication and flow of information with regional states and other stakeholders, and lack of professionalism” (Zewudu, 2019, p.vi) implies the PRs profession in Ethiopia lags far behind when one sees in lens of contemporary theories and models in the field. Moreover, it is unlikely to assume the PRs sector can function effectively amid the situation in which a cabinet-mister led Press Secretariat Department in the Prime Minster Office itself has not yet got rid of challenges. Further, the researcher has not come across well-defined researches that have explored the location of Public Relations process in the federal executive organs in Ethiopia after the powers and duties of these organizations were redefined in 2018. Thus, this study looked through the impact of organizational reform on the PRs functioning in the federal executive organs with a due emphasis on its location, functions and roles.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General objective

General objective of this study was to examine the impacts of organizational reform on the PRs process and functions in the federal executive organs of Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

The study had the following specific objectives:

- a) To map the location of the public relations process in the federal executive organs;
- b) To identify the public relations functions and roles that the current reform change affected most;
- c) To identify the challenges public relations practitioners are facing after the reform; and,
- d) To define the prospects of the public relations in the federal executive organs based on the findings.

1.4. Research questions

This research answered the following questions:

- 1) Where is the public relations department structurally located in the federal executive organs?
- 2) How and to what extent did the 2018 organizational reform affect the ways the public relations roles and functions have been executed?
- 3) What challenges are the public relations practitioners facing after the 2018 organizational reform?
- 4) Is the outlook of the PRs positive?

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to the public relations process at the federal government executive organs in Ethiopia. Based on the nation-wide organizational reform that re-defined the powers and duties of the executive organs in 2018, the changes that took place in terms placement of the public relations process and issues that affected the PRs practices were assessed in line to the contemporary theories and models applicable in the field.

Proclamation No.1097/2018, which defined the powers and duties of federal executive organs, was used as a basis to embark in the study, because it was the most recent legal framework that also affected the PRs process structurally and functionally. Besides the change in accountability through transfer of rights and obligations from the former GCAO to the newly established Press Secretariat Department in the office of Prime Minister, the proclamation also defined the number of Federal executive organs in which the public relations process was functioning. Therefore, this study was delimited to the FDRE executive organs whose powers and duties were defined in Proclamation No.1097 in November 2018. However, few of the Federal executive organs were headquartered out of Addis Ababa while most were located in Addis Ababa. Thus, the study targeted at the organizations located in Addis Ababa. Moreover, as the mandate, accountability and structure of the federal executive organs is subject to change at any time when the federal Civil Service Commission recommends based on research, new organs are made since

then. Due to time and financial limitations, however, the federal government executive organs that were established by Proclamation No.1097/2018 and headquartered in Addis Ababa by September 2018 when the current study planned were only included in the study.

Besides the federal executive organs in which the public relations process, which this research focused, was a common function, the Press Secretariat department in the office of PM to whom the rights and obligations of the former GCAO was transferred, and the FDRE Civil Service Commission that led the reform project were included in this study.

With regards to time, the study traced the status of the public relations functions in the federal executive organs since the powers and duties of the organs was redefined by law in 2018, and extended to assessing the status quo until the data collection ended in April 2020.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study examined the status and role of public relations process in the light of reform that re-defined powers and duties of the federal government executive organs. Therefore, the study was believed to:

- help the public relations practitioners and prospects by providing overall information about the environment in which the PRs operates;
- provide information about the challenges and prospects of the public relations process in the public sector organizations at the federal level;
- add understanding to the existing body of knowledge about the public relations sector in Ethiopia and the roles it is playing in past and now;
- assist the decision makers in the federal executive organs to maximize the roles of the PRs as an integral part of the whole organizational environment; and,
- equip the current practitioners and prospects with up-to-date body of knowledge as well as practical functions of the process so that they can successfully play their roles for the overall interest and success of their respective organisations.

1.7. Limitations of the study

The current research work has a few limitations. The federal executive organs located out of Addis Ababa, newly established organs and state universities were not included in the sample. As the thesis focused only on the federal executive organs in Addis Ababa, therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the other organizations at the lower administrative tiers and those excluded from the study. Moreover, opinion of the key participants from HEIs, particularly the PRs and Strategic Department, and former GCAO leadership positions was not included because of the travel restrictions due to coronavirus. Including more organizations and those key individuals might in the future lead to better results.

1.8. Organization of the study

The report of this study is compiled in five chapters. Chapter one dealt with the problem and its approach whereby background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, significance, delimitation, definition of key terms were presented. In chapter two, reviews of the related literatures and studies were treated. Chapter three dealt with the research methodology. Data presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings were presented in chapter four. Finally, in chapter five, summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations were presented. Lists of reference materials used during the study and appendices were also attached to the body of the report.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literatures

Public relations is a complex profession and an emerging industry that attracts divergent views from multiple disciplines. Delimited to the scope of this research, however, this chapter begins with the definition of the concept of PRs, and then integrates its ideal roles and functions with practices in Ethiopia. Eventually, the chapter presents contemporary theories and models that influence the practices of PRs in such a way one can infer whether the PRs developed though time and if constraints are facing following the ongoing organizational reform.

2.1. The Concept of public relations

Public relations practices in the society is regarded as old as the human society itself irrespective of the fact the function and naming has not been recognized as it is being used now a days. Moreover, public relations was once a new profession globally, and its roles and functions were misunderstand by people. This in turn led to conceiving and defining the term in different ways in different times.

Ivy Lee and Edward Louis Bernays, who were credited with being the founders of PRs, first described PRs in the early 1900s as “a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures, and interests of an organization” (qtd. in, Tench and Yeomans, 2009, p. 10).

Having collected 472 different definitions of the PRs during 1900 and 1976 period, Harlow (qtd. in Fall and Hughes, 2009, p. 3) added his own long-winded definition as:

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

According to the World Assembly of Public Relations Assciations (1978), PRs is “the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling

organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organization and the public interest” (qtd. in Robert L. Heath, 2001, P. 192).

In late 1980s, however, the definition changed. With this regard, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) have provided grounds for the re-conceptualization of public relations. Grunig and Hunt thus defined Public Relations as “the management of communication between an organization and its publics” (p.3).

Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006, p.5) defined public relations as “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends.” In a similar vein, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (n.d) defined PRs as “the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It’s the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.” In this study, however, the student researcher argues public relations is a distinct discipline and an indispensable communication tool which needs to be executed by senior staff aimed at strategically communicating in two ways.

In summary, the different views and definitions of PRs presented in this section imply the term did not have a universally agreed definition till now. One can also note from the above set of definitions that the emerging views about the PRs discipline can be roughly grouped into two- One views PRs as a communication and management function while the other views it as a distinct discipline. Further, the definitions put light on what tasks the PRs are presumed to perform and what places can the department hold in an organization. Hence, the wide variations in defining the concept also indicates debates still goes on defining the roles and functions of PRs and placing the department in an organizational system which in turn might be causing challenges to the practitioners.

2.2. Organizational reform: Concepts and strategies

Organizational reform is a common phenomenon globally. With the objective of creating transparent and accountable civil service organisations for which their performance can be evaluated based on the results they produce rather than on the inputs they consume,

Western countries started to reform their public service organisations in early 1980s (Flynn and Strehl 1996 qtd. in Tesfaye and Atakilt, 2012, p.89).

In developing nations, however, the causes of organizational reform are external. It was the pressure of international financial institutions to restructure their civil service organisations. During the 1980s, African countries were suffering from the growing burden of external debts, rapid population growth, continuous drought and protracted internal conflicts (ECA 2003 qtd in Tesfaye and Atakilt, 2012). Structural Adjustment Programme was initiated in the mid-1980s with the objective of reducing the role of the state in production activities and service provision. Since the 1980s, the international organisations including their allies have initiated different major programmes that they believed would change the African economic condition.

After such initiatives in different time, in 2000s, the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with the aim of eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and the development of a global partnership for development. The recent economic, social, political and technological changes have shaped the nature and pace of public sector reform in Africa (Jones and Blunt, 2020). Ohemeng (2009) also argues that the local ideas have had their role in the implementation of the public organizations reform in different nations.

Globally, governments implement different strategies to reform public sector organizations so as to improve performance. According to Liou and Korosec (2009), there are four strategies commonly practised when such measures are intended. These common measures are decentralization, commercializing, privatization, and contracting out. Decentralisation is a process of creating autonomous organisations, increasing managerial autonomy by reducing the administrative controls through the devolution of budgets and financial controls, creating new forms of corporate governance and board of director's model for restructured public service organisations, and the right to hire and fire employees. Implementing this strategy, for instance, the Customs and Excise, and Internal Revenue Departments in Ghana and Uganda were totally separated from the civil service to form separate agencies in the 1980s (Tefaye and Atakilt, 2012). Benchmarking from these nations, Ethiopia has also exercised establishing Ethiopian Revenue and Customs

Authority by merging the Ethiopian Customs Authority, the Ethiopian Inland Revenue and the Ministry of Revenue (Minwiyelet, 2015).

Commercialising is a process of creating a public enterprise that can operate in the market and compete with other public organisations and private companies (Steven, et al., 2008). For example, organisations like the Ethiopian Airlines survived the global competition in airlines business since its establishment in 1945 because it runs by strategies focusing on commercializing. Similarly, the administrative and operational wings of Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA) were given distinct functions of one competes in the market, and the other supports through supervisory and regulatory role on behalf of the government (Abraham, 2020). On the other hand, privatisation is the sale or leasing of some government services with the belief that this strategy might improve the efficiency of it (Abraham). Having launched in 1995, the ownership of many public enterprises transferred to the hands of private sector in Ethiopia.

Finally, contracting out is a process of arranging contractual agreement between the government and the management of public agencies. In this strategy, the government and the management of an agent specify “the standards of performance or quantifiable targets that should be accomplished over a stated period of time” (Rhodes, et al., 2012). Contracting can also be management contracts by which the government outsources the management but retains the ownership right of the organisation. For instance, the Ethiopian government outsourced the management of Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) to a French company since November 2010. From the points raised in this sub-section, one can learn reform is inevitable and practicable in various modes globally since a long time.

2.3. Public service organizations’ reform in Ethiopia

In recent times, particularly starting from 1993, the organizational reform Ethiopian public service organizations have revealed two major phases. Until 1998, structuring of the public service organisations took place to match their structures to the then introduced Federal Political System of Administration after the downfall of the Dergue regime. At that time, reforms in the public service organizations aimed to improve the efficiency of public service delivery (Ministry of Civil Service, 2015). Moreover, new organizations

were formed, either by splitting from the existing or being established from the scratch, as an instrument to facilitate the ongoing political change. Government Communication Affairs office was among such political instruments which was reformed to build the image of the new political leadership and get by in the policy changes (Ministry of Civil Service, 2015).

The second phase of a bit systematized reform started in late 1990s. Following the problems identified by an independent consultant group regarding the problems of the civil service, a civil service reform programme with five components (improving the capacity of the top Management System, civil service ethics, efficiency of service delivery, expenditure management and capacity of Human Resource Management) was introduced. All these programmes were considered crucial in creating accountable and responsible civil service that can promote the development effort of the country. Short term trainings were used as primary instruments to enhance the capacity of civil service employees. At the government communication sector for instance, the FDRE Government Communication Affairs Office was solely entitled to train its PRs practitioners at all administrative tiers, and its certificate was mainly considered as a criteria to join the department as well as to promote in the career (Shimelis, 2017). Surprisingly, the certificate is the most sought after till now and important more than an academic degree!!

Irrespective of these major features of organizational reform in Ethiopia, the post-EPRDF era public service organizations reform was introduced by means of the Regulation No.1097/2018. The reform began by restructuring the former “Ministry of Civil Service” into a commission, namely, the ‘Civil Service Commission’ as a federal executive organ as stated in the Regulation No.1097/2018, article 32(1), “The Civil Service Commission is hereby established.” Moreover, the regulation states the Commission shall have the powers and duties, among others:

(g) to review and decide on the appropriateness of the internal organizational structures of Federal Government offices; provide necessary support in conducting reform studies; conduct studies and make recommendations to the Government on mandate, accountability and structure of Federal Government institutions;

- accountable to the Prime Minister (33/3(b))

According to clause 33/23 (a-e), the following executive organs became accountable to the Commission:

- a) the Civil Service University
- b) the Meles Zenawi Leadership Academy (later changed into African Leadership Excellence Academy)
- c) the Ethiopian Kaizen Institute
- d) the Ethiopian Management Institute
- e) the Public Servants Social Security Agency

As stipulated vividly in Article 34 (“Reorganization of Federal Executive Organs”) of the Regulation No.1097/2018, the Council of Ministers is “empowered, where it finds it necessary, to reorganize the Federal executive organs by issuing regulations for the closure, merger or division of an existing executive organ or for change of its accountability or mandates or for the establishment of a new one.”

In the course of this reform, GCAO, the Executive Organ of FDRE whose powers and duties were defined in the Council of Ministers Regulation No. 158/2001, later amended in Proclamation (No. 916/2015), was one of the 28 executive organs whose rights and obligations were transferred to other organs in the new proclamation (clause 36). Accordingly, the rights and obligations of the Office were transferred to the Press Secretariat Office (Proclamation No.1097/2018, clause 28).

2.4. Public relations in Ethiopia: features and challenges

In the above section, the causes and forms of organizational reform were discussed. Hereafter, the emergence and development of public service organizations in modern Ethiopia, and how the PRs brought up in these organizations were discussed.

Very few scholars have written about Public Relations in Ethiopia (e.g., Zemedkun, 2004; Tamrat, 2002). These scholars agree that In Ethiopia, public relations as a distinct business process came into existence in very recent time. Unlike media and other related fields of study, the emergence and development of Public Relations has not been a topic of debate

and deliberations as it was in other nations where it emerged earlier. Some of the most available scholar works, for instance, relate it to the titles bestowed by the crown, namely “Minister of the Pen”- the Emperor’s spokesman and speechwriter in 1940s to 1950s (Tamrat, 2002; Zemedkun, 2004).

In some cases, the some recent researches trace the history of Public Relations to the Dergue regime in Ethiopia (Zemedkun, 2004). These publications underline Ethiopia has had an elaborate government public relations set up with the establishment of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting immediately after the coming into power of the Dergue regime in 1974.

The Old EPRDF era featured rather better developments. Alike it was in most African countries, 1990s brought multiple challenges of bad image for Ethiopia as it proceeded by the 1980s draught and war crisis during the Degue regime. Thus, the downfall of Dergue Regime and emergence of the new social, political and cultural realities exerted positive influences on the practices of Public Relations. After the turbulence of political transition, the government was promising to be transparent as in the growing democratization paradigm. Thus, the profession started out with the practitioners playing the role of government spokespersons explaining the challenges in economic, political and social arena in the country the use of propaganda and ‘spin’, what Jethwaney and Sarkar (2015) describes as the intentional manipulation of public opinion without regard for what is accurate. There was the need for someone to constantly explain the state of affairs to the consumers and also to the government.

Since late 1990s, public relations got high position in every sphere of the commercial, social and political life in Ethiopia. Practitioners have started operating as in-house corporate public relations officers performing multiple functions that include programming and counselling, media relations, organizing, writing, production of media messages, research and evaluation, training and advising executives and management on dealing with the media, and management. Moreover, as Shimelis (2017) noted public relations practiced within the context of “developmental communication” (p. 15). As a result, it has been acknowledged as an important function with a wide range of communication activities in organizations, first in public but gradually in the private ones.

The PRs practitioners played very important roles in the new democratic Ethiopia. They are involved in promoting the democratic process and explaining changes to both the public and organizations. As communicators, they have the task of building trust between the citizens and government, and between those with growing political power and those affiliated with the fallen regime. Consequently, the role of media relations has increased in order to take the various messages to the people.

While stating the importance of professional PRs education, Jethwaney and Sarkar (2015) stated Education and training of professional public relations practitioners is an important tool and a point of departure in highlighting what is and what is not public relations among individual practitioners, managers, and members of the general public. In developing countries, lack of professional education had been a major bottleneck of the development of the profession and thus the PRs was believed to be “something anyone can do”. Moreover, the practitioner him/herself had been “hand-picked by the boss” (Musoke, 2000). However, formal PRs education training was a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia, particularly in late 2000s. Before the official opening of such departments, the former Government Communication Affairs office was training the practitioners in two methods. One was in-house short term training through which practitioners are trained by the elites and invited media specialists from higher education institutions, mostly Addis Ababa University. GCAO had a wing, namely the Research and Capacity Building General Directorate, which had been coordinating training activities for practitioners at the national and regional levels. Available official reports indicate the Office trained more than 1,800 PRs and Communication practitioners during GTP I and GTP II (2010/11 to 2019/20) though the Office collapsed in 2018.

Second, the Office was sending individuals to foreign training and education institutions annually through scholarships. With the good relationship the Office established with embassies of different countries in Ethiopia, more than 250 individuals were benefitted from such training, most of which were provided by China and India (Shimelis, 2017).

Another wing in the office, named as the Federal and Regional Relations General Directorate, based on merit, used to select practitioners for training, deploys certified practitioners, and even fires based on their performance. For this unprofessional malpractice, which also exposed the department to power abuse, many used to complain

this wing (Zemedkun, 2004). Nowadays, the number of training and education institutions, both private and public, who train in PRs increased.

Nevertheless, the ethics of the PRs profession fell under question due to the power abuses and malpractices in the government structure. Since the practitioners had to explain issues within the realm of the government, they kept lying as they were trained to be loyal to the policy of the government which in turn created scepticism towards the spokesperson. With the rise of social activism, private press and public awareness, however, manipulation of public opinion to benefit government policy put the practitioners' individual reputation at stake. It was in such time that the recent political change came into existence, and deactivated the whole structure nationally.

No different from the situation in any country globally, Ethiopia has its narrative regarding social, cultural, economic and political setup. As each of these issues have been, and will be, influencing the practices of PRs, a glimpse of the current situation is discussed in this section. March 2018 transition transformed Ethiopia in multiple ways. This time might be referred as the marker of an "old" and "new" Ethiopian even within one government system. To promote successful political and social change, civil institutions, organizations and business communities had to confront issues such as human rights, freedom of association, freedom of speech and a basic concept of humanity. In terms of communications and organizational change there has been a shift toward consensus-seeking at all levels of government and between the government and the general public.

The political transformation has opened up a range of opportunities for the country in general and for those institutions like media under huge political influence in particular. The media, for instance freed from waiting for positive responses from the PRs to access information. It could directly contact the top management of any organization including the Prime Minister without seeking permission. Following the dissolving of the national PRs leading GCAO, the newly established Press Secretariat launched initiatives that ease media access to top management, and thus the former PRs or communication structures lost much of their roles intentionally. Though the socio-economic and political changes are not yet consolidated and the reform is still going on, such developments have had a significant impact on the practices and functions of public relations in the country.

Irrespective of the fact that the roles and importance of public relations reached to the extent it is a vital function for the existence of an organization for about a decade when the former Government Communication Affairs Office was operational, researches have been indicating that there were instances that PRs lacked adequate recognition from both management and the public (Chala, 2017). Some in management refused to recognize its importance to their organizations.

Even in organizations where management recognizes the importance of public relations, practitioners are not accorded management functions. They struggle with a small staff, inadequate budget, and limited freedom and flexibility to plan and implement their programs. Similarly, the public continues to hold a negative view of, and low regard for, the profession. Lack of adequate education and professional training opportunities continue to be major obstacles. Additionally, the educational standard for practicing public relations remained very low and not well structured.

Generally, this sub-section has presented the nature of public relations in different political situations in Ethiopia. Owing to a history of political and economic instability, the rise, growth and vibrancy of any profession particularly the growth of a profession based on democratic and participatory values of two-way symmetrical models of communication (Grunig, 1992), which are largely burgeoning in a stable economic and political environment, was mired and could not blossom to its full potential. However, various aspects of the less-normative usage of the public relations profession are observed given the nature of the socio-political and economic climate that prevailed at the time as will be observed in the three periods discussed in this paper.

2.5. Public relations theories and models

This study bases its theoretical framework on the system's theory so as to provide a theoretical underpinning to examine the role of Public Relations within organisations. The theoretical approach of the systems model is adopted because it provides a detailed explanation as to how all parts of an open system need to work together for the overall success of the system. Moreover, with the assumption of the open system, ingredients of the excellence study were used to determine the impact the reform had on the practices of

the public relations at the federal government organizations. Each of these concepts was discussed in the following section.

2.5.1. The systems theory and its application

2.5.1.1. The basics of systems theory

As Tench and Yeomans (2006) postulated in the systems theory, organisations are not free floating bodies unaffected by what is around them; rather, they are “affected by and in turn affect the environment in which they operate” (p. 26). The organisations, as a set of subsystems, affect each other and jointly interact with the external environment.

Lubbe and Puth (2002) qtd. in Veena P. Rawjee, et al., 2012, p. 7746) defined a system as “a set of objects or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole.” Organisations have to adjust and adapt as they change from within and as the environment changes. They form part of a social system that consists of individuals or groups such as suppliers, local communities, employees, customers and government, who all interact with it. Public relations is there to develop and maintain good relationship with these publics to help the organisation achieve its objectives.

Rawjee, et al. (2012, p. 7746) also added that the systems approach is “one of the most fruitful approaches to public relations management. This approach illuminates the part which public relations plays in the effective operation of the organisation”. For an organisation to be successful, it needs to operate as an open system. It has been noted that the organisation which has the greatest potential for ongoing success is one that interacts actively with its environment.

Tench and Yeomans (2006) suggest that by taking a systems perspective, it can be seen that Public Relations professionals have a boundary-spanning role. They work at the boundaries within organisations, working with all the internal subsystems by helping these subsystems with their external communication by both providing expert advice on what and how to communicate and by helping them with implementation.

Similarly, Seitel (2004) further claims that public relations’ practitioners function at the edge of an organisation as liaisons between the organisation and its internal and external publics. In other words, Public Relations practitioners have one foot inside the organisation and one outside. As ‘boundary managers’, public relations practitioners

support their colleagues by helping them communicate across organisational lines both within and outside the organisation. In this way, public relations professionals also become systems managers, knowledgeable about and able to deal with complex relationship inherent in the organisation.

Tench and Yeomans (2006) maintain that the Systems Approach offers a framework which places and positions the public relations process logically within the ambit of the organisation's operations. Moreover, Cutlip, Center, & Broom (2006 (2006) maintain that applying the open systems approach to public relations calls for purposeful sensing of the environment to anticipate and detect changes that affect organisational relationships with publics. Public relations must be selectively sensitive to specifically defined publics that are mutually affected or involved by organisational policies, procedures and actions. An open systems approach to public relations has the capacity to initiate corrective actions within organisations and direct programmes to affect knowledge, predisposition and behaviour of both internal and external publics. The outcomes sought are maintenance or achievement of goals that reflect the mutual interest of organisations and their publics. Thus, organisations employing open systems public relations maintain their relationships by adjusting and adapting themselves and their publics to ever-changing social, political and economic environments.

2.5.1.2. Application of the system theory in public relations

The open systems model, when applied to public relations, emphasises the primary role of communication in an organizational system. Cutlip, Center, & Broom (2006) maintain that applying the open systems approach to public relations first and foremost calls for purposeful sensing of the environment to anticipate and detect changes that affect organisational relationships with publics. Public relations must be selectively sensitive to specifically defined publics that are mutually affected or involved by organisational policies, procedures and actions.

Cutlip, Center, & Broom (2006) postulate that the open systems approach gives public relations the role to recognise changes in the organisation's social settings and advise clients or employees how the organisation should change itself and respond so as to establish a "common meeting ground" (p. 190). Public Relations professionals are agents and managers of change, both inside and outside their organisation. They plan and

facilitate organisational and social adjustments and adaptation using, primarily, communication. Public relations has an important management role to play, through communication of perceptions and strategic relationships between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholder'. Consequently, public relations exists, and all modern organisations regardless of size, complexity and needs should be concerned with public relations. It should be emphasised that good public relations is the conscious effort to inform and be informed, provides knowledge, understanding, goodwill and good reputation. Stone (1995) further notes that public relations exists to keep institutions alert to an ever shifting environment of circumstances and public opinion. Public Relations is, therefore, an on-going activity and a part of a policy of ongoing communication. It must anticipate problems and eliminate causes before problems arise. Organisations ought to acknowledge the importance of public relations, its functions and how public relations can help improve communication within an organisation.

Tench and Yeomans (2006) also confirm that systems refer to the theory that describes how organisations work in terms of interlocking and interdependent systems of communication. It embraces both the internal and external environments. Systematized organisations tend to be authoritarian, highly structured and reactive in nature. Based on this, public relations should, therefore, know the ends towards which the organisation strives. From the systems perspective, public relations may even play a role in the definition of desired objectives. Public relations incorporates thorough and effective communication within the organisation and with the environmental publics.

Viewed in this perspective, public relations' essential role is to help organisations adjust and adapt to changes in their environment. Furthermore, public relations should take a strategic role and be part of management in order to better manage, influence and enhance an organisation's relationships with its stakeholders. The above also justifies the role of public relations by highlighting that public relations should be at the heart off all activities within an organisation. Consequently, the public relations practitioner is responsible both to the institution and to its various publics. He or she distributes information that enables the institution's publics to understand its policies.

A close examination of the systems theory reveals that public relations operates within and across different departments within an organisation. The theory explains and

illustrates how the public relations process unfolds at both the organisational level and how it is carried through to the various departments. Furthermore, the theory helps to understand where the PRs is located within an organization and how it functions in line to the contemporary theories and models.

Based on the theoretical ground discussed above, this research investigates existing perceptions of the positioning of the public relations function, with the aim of examining the role of public relations within the selected organisations. The literature from this chapter is, therefore, used to formulate an instrument to examine the role of public relations within organisations.

2.5.2. The excellence study

Conducted by a team of researchers, who wondered how Public Relations must be practiced and the communication function organized for it to contribute most to organizational effectiveness (Grunig, 2000), the excellence study identified the value of excellent public relations to the larger society as well as to specific organizations. It was concluded in the study that organizations are effective when they choose and achieve goals that are important to their self-interest as well as to the interests of strategic publics in their environment (Grunig et al., 2006), and public relations plays crucial roles in the organizations on condition that its practices is guided by certain principles. The research therefore identified 14 generic principles of excellent public relations, which were later consolidated into nine. These generic principles Grunig and his colleagues developed (Vercic et al. 1996 qtd. in Tench and Yeomans, 2006, p. 121) were:

1. Involvement of public relations in strategic management. An organization that practices public relations strategically develops programs to communicate with strategic publics, both external and internal, that provide the greatest threats to and opportunities for the organization.
2. Empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management. In effective organizations, the senior public relations person is part of or has access to the group of senior managers with greatest power in the organization.
3. Integrated public relations function. All public relations functions are integrated into a single department or have a mechanism to coordinate the departments. Only in an integrated system of public relations is it possible for

public relations to develop new communication programs for changing strategic publics.

4. Public relations is a management function separate from other functions. Many organizations splinter the public relations function by making it a supporting tool for other departments such as marketing, human resources, law, or finance. When the public relations function is sublimated to other functions, it cannot move communication resources from one strategic public to another as an integrated public relations function can.
5. Public relations unit headed by a manager rather than a technician. Communication technicians are essential to carry out day-to-day communication activities. However, excellent public relations units must have at least one senior communication manager who conceptualizes and directs public relations programs.
6. Two-way symmetrical model of public relations. Two-way symmetrical public relations is based on research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with strategic publics. Excellent public relations departments model more of their communication programs on this model than on the press agency, public information, or two-way asymmetrical models. However, they often combine elements of the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models in a “mixed-motive” model.
7. A symmetrical system of internal communication. Excellent organizations have decentralized management structures that give autonomy to employees and allow them to participate in decision making. They also have participative, symmetrical systems of internal communication with employees that increases job satisfaction because employee goals are incorporated into the organizational mission.
8. Knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical public relations. Excellent programs are staffed by professionals- people who are educated in the body of knowledge and who are active in professional associations and read professional literature.
9. Diversity embodied in all roles. The principle of requisite variety states that effective organizations have as much diversity inside the organization as in the environment. Excellent Public Relations includes both men and women in all

roles, as well as practitioners of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

10. Organizational context for excellence. Excellent public relations departments are nourished by participative rather than authoritarian cultures, activist pressure from the environment, and organic rather than mechanical management structures.

Generally, theories of excellence and the ten principles are very relevant to this study. As further discussed in the excellent study, dominant coalition in an organization refers to “the group of senior managers who control the organization” (Grunig, 2000). The excellence study maintained that because the dominant coalition makes the organization’s key strategic decisions, the senior public relations practitioner should have a seat in top management meetings or at least direct reporting relationships to senior managers. Unless the Public Relations function is empowered by the dominant coalition and included in the strategic decision making process, it cannot enact its role as a counsellor, who helps the organization to consider the issues of the organization’s strategic publics (Grunig et al., 2006).

Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) pointed out that the dominant coalition also can affect the way public relations functions are structured. By citing L. Schneider’s research, Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) explained that according to the power control theorists, the dominant coalition within an organization seeks structures that optimize its self-interests in power and control. Scholars also explain that the dominant coalition’s view on public relations will affect an organization’s choice of public relations models (Shrivastava, 2007). In sum, the dominant coalition’s support is critical for effective Public Relations in many aspects. The level of the dominant coalition’s support for public relations will affect the way a public relations function is structured, the extent to which public relations participate in the strategic decision-making process, and the selection of public relations models.

Regarding integrated public relations function, as suggested by Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) the excellence researchers conducted an extensive organizational literature review in search of the normative structure for effective public relations functions. According to Rhee (2004), Public relations should be placed high in the organizational

hierarchy in order to participate in strategic decision-making that affects the organization's internal and external relationships with publics. Further, Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, (2002, p. 412) proposed that a public relations function should be integrated within a single department so that the practitioners can seek power through acquiring hierarchical authority, control of resources, and network centrality, eventually contributing to organizational effectiveness.

A detail insight into a two-way models of public relations described in the excellence study implies that it is likely for the Public Relations department to be perceived as more important than other departments (Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, 2002). In the two-way symmetrical model, communication is balanced in that it adjusts the relationship between the organization and its publics through negotiation and compromise. The practitioner of this model uses planned communication to manage conflict and to improve understanding with publics. It uses research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics. In the symmetrical model, "understanding is the principal objective of Public Relations" rather than one-sided persuasion (Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, 2002, p. 289). The two-way asymmetrical model is characterized by unbalanced, one sided communication. Practitioners of this model use social science theory and research on attitudes and behaviours to persuade publics to accept the organization's point of view or to behave as the organization wants. Overall, Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002, p. 292) argued that the two-way symmetrical model of communication is the normative model and is an ethical approach to organizational effectiveness more than other models of public relations.

Generally, the two-way communication model is well accepted and widely practiced in recent times. The model requires public relations practitioners to play diverse roles in their organization guided by the principles of excellence. With this, I will be discussing major roles and functions of public relations in the following section.

2.6. The roles and functions of public relations

Public relations is a distinct profession with multiple roles and functions to play in an organizational system. Basing a research theoretical framework on the systems theory, Ki, et al., (2015, p. 320) identified that public relations performs surveillance and information-

distribution roles. In addition it has an important role to govern and maintain an organisation as an open system and ensure that an organisation is adaptable and flexible to all changes within the environment and remains stable at all times.

According to Rawjee, et al. (2012) it should be noted that the open systems approach gives Public Relations the role to recognise changes in the organisation's social settings and advise clients or employees on how the organisation should change itself and respond to establish a "common meeting ground". Public relations professionals are agents and managers of change, both inside and outside their organisations.

Seitel (2004) argues that, although modern public relations initially developed as a tool used in power struggles in America, its role in present day society is vastly different because we are living in a complex society and are confronted by a knowledge explosion which is fuelled by advanced technology, which changes the role of public relations. In short, as institutions have grown larger, they have been forced to refine their methods of communicating with their publics. This, therefore, is the role of public relations practitioners today, to interpret institutions to the public's they serve and to promote both the image and reputation of these institutions.

Rensburg and Cant (2009, p. 49) affirm Public Relations "does not exist as a function on its own. It is an integral part of the communication function of an organisation. Public relations affects almost everyone; all of us practice public relations in one way or another." Underpinning this perspective, are a variety of activities that are basic and endemic to the public relations perspective.

Lubbe and Puth (2002 qtd. in Rhee, 2004) further maintain that public relations practitioners are involved in a variety of work assignments or functions which may include research, strategic planning, counselling, internal education, communication, evaluation, media relations and placement, organising, writing, editing, production, speaking, training, management of the public relations function with regard to personnel, budget, and action programmes, among others.

Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier (2002) reinforce that the public relations' professionals add value to an organisation when they develop communal relationships with all publics affected by organisational behaviours, not just those who give the organisation something

in return. Apart from all the other activities of the public relations function, such as community relations, fundraising, crisis communication, and corporate social responsibility, communal relationships are important if organisations are to be socially responsible and to add value to society as well as to clients. Public relations also plays a societal role in that it helps organisations survive in their social environments by working on relationships with publics in order to bring about social and economic change and development.

Wilcox et al. (2003) postulate that apart from playing a managerial role, public relations plays operational, reflective and educational roles within an organisation. The operational role is responsible for preparing means of communication for the organisation in order to help the organisation formulate its communication strategies. This role is also concerned with communication plans developed by others and is aimed only at the implementation and evaluation of the communication process. The reflective role is there to analyse changing standards and values in society and discuss these with members of the organisation in order to adjust the standards and values of the organisation. Tench and Yeomans (2006, p. 40) suggest that the educational role aims “to increase the communication competence of employees.”

Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier (2002) further maintain that the public relations’ function also supports other organisational functions, such as human resource management (relationships with employees and unions), lobbying (governmental communication), and financial management (investor relations and other financial relationships with stakeholders such as analysts and shareholders).

Tench and Yeomans identify two dominant public relations roles: the communication manager and technician (2006, p. 29). Accordingly, the communication manager is the PRs practitioner who plans and manages public relations programmes, advises management, makes communication policy decisions and oversees their implementation. On the other hand, the communication technician, who is not involved in organisational decision making, but who implements public relations programmes such as writing press releases, organising events or producing web content. Technicians are the ‘doers’.

Tench and Yeomans (2006, p. 29) further note that there are two other roles, sitting between the manager and technician. The first role is the media relations’ role, a highly

skilled job requiring profound knowledge and understanding of the media. The second role is the communication and liaison role, meaning the individual who represents the organisation at events and meetings and creates opportunities for management to communicate with internal and external publics.

2.7. Locating public relations within organisations

As discussed above, public relations has a lot to do in an organization. One may, however, raise a question inquiring what would be the best enabling place for the process to carry out these roles and functions efficiently.

The place of PRs refers to an organizational structure. It indicates the superior-subordinate relationships within an organization. According to Grunig (1992), structural issues are often less regarded in most PRs studies. Thus, Grunig recommended these issues need to be included in studies so as to understand communication management, because both are intertwined (1992, p. 99).

Organizational structure is determined by multiple factors such as strategy, size, technology, environment, power and culture (Rhee, 2004). Culture, for instance, is more significant in such a way that, as identified in the excellence study, it indicates the intention of power control depending on the type of management. Authoritarian culture, which is characterized by centralized decision-making power at the top, conflict among different functions in pursuit of self-interest, little flexibility for employees' innovativeness or participation, treatment of employees just as workers, and resistance to ideas from outside the organization. The other is participative culture that supports team work and collaboration among different functions, treats an employee as a whole person and not just as a worker, and is open to ideas from the external and internal environment. Grunig (1992) explained that an organization's culture and environment affect who will become power holders within the organization. The power holders-the dominant coalition-also choose a structure and concomitant communication system for an organization (Grunig, 1992, pp. 566-567). Similarly, Steven, et al. (2008) argued that an organization's structure depends largely on the dominant coalition's decisions to maintain and enhance its power and control.

Grunig (1992), however, pointed out that power can be used in symmetrical ways, to increase power of everyone in the organization. He described this type of power use as empowerment. Grunig theorized that empowered organizations would be more likely to practice excellent Public Relations (1992). In other words, participative culture provides more supporting environment for excellent public relations.

Tench and Yeomans (2006, pp. 27-28) argue that apart from all the external and internal considerations, the location of public relations within an organisation depends on a variety of other factors such as the position of the most senior practitioner, the tasks allocated to the discipline, and how it is situated in relation to other disciplines. The position of the senior Public Relations practitioner provides a good indication of how the function is regarded within organisations.

Seitel (2004) maintains that when managing an organisation's public relations' system, practitioners must demonstrate comfort with the various elements of the organisation itself; must be the interpreter of the organisation, its philosophy, policy and programs, all which emanate from top management. Therefore, public relations must report to those who run the organisation. Moreover, Seitel (2004) underlined it can be argued the strongest public relations department is one led by a communications executive who reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Skinner et al. (2004) reinforce that public relations is regarded as, and should of necessity be, a management function. This obviously refers to Public Relations practiced at an advanced level by experienced practitioners. Seitel (2004) states that as a management function, public relations is in a position to evaluate internal and external opinions, attitudes and needs on an on-going basis; advise management regarding their possible effect and to act as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and in directing new courses of action.

Wilcox and Cameron (2009) maintain that in a changing environment, and faced with the variety of pressures, executives increasingly see public relations not as publicity and one-way communication, but as a process of negotiation and compromise with a number of key publics. In many organisations, top-level management perceive public relations as primarily a journalistic and technical function (media relations and publicity). In large scale mechanical organisations of low complexity, there is also a tendency to think of

Public Relations as only a support function of the other departments. Such perceptions by top management severely limit the role of the public relations' departments as well as its power to take part in management decision making. Instead, public relations is relegated to being a tactical function, simply preparing messages without input on what should be communicated.

In order for an organisation to function effectively, Skinner et al. (2004) maintain that public relations managers need to be positioned at management level so that they are responsible to top management and serve all departments of the organisation. Ideally, the public relations manager should have a board of director status, as this happens in the world's successful companies. Moreover, Wilcox and Cameron (2009) postulate that the role of public relations in organisations often depends on the type of organisation, the perceptions of top management, and even the capabilities of the public relations executives.

To sum up, the literature has shown that public relations is an important, if not an integral, part of an organisation. However, public relations should be with top management, where public relations can take up a more strategic role within an organisation and be involved in strategic decision making. Given the number of roles that public relations can play within an organisation, public relations as a subsystem within an organisation should be a department that functions to contribute to the greater well-being of the organisation as a whole.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the research methodology employed in this study. It explains the necessary research steps, the instruments used to gather data and the procedures followed in the administration and co-ordination of the research instrument.

3.1. Study setting

The research was conducted in the federal executive organs. Most of these organs were located in the capital city, Addis Ababa, while few were out of Addis Ababa. In terms of naming, the organs were labelled as minister, commission, agency, office, and authority. Hierarchically, certain number of these organs was accountable to some other organizations. In this way, 142 federal government organizations were meant to be accountable to other 26 organs as stipulated in proclamation that defines the powers and duties of the executive organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Proclamation No.1097/2018). It should also be noted that mandate, accountability and structure of the federal government institutions can be changed at any time based on the study and recommendations of the Civil Service Commission. Further, some of the organs, for instance the Government Universities, are generally considered as a single organ but encompass many universities distributed in different regional states.

Nevertheless, the public relations process, which this research focused, was a common function in all of the executive organs, because the rights and obligations of the former Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO) was transferred directly to the Press Secretariat department in the office of Prime Minister (PM). Therefore, as indicated in the delimitation of the study, the federal government executive organs headquartered in Addis Ababa were included in this study.

With regards to time, the study traced the status of the public relations function in the federal executive organs since the powers and duties of the organs was redefined by proclamation in 2018, and extended to evaluating the status quo to date.

3.2. Research approach

According to Creswell (1997, p. 249), the research approach refers to “the entire process or research, from conceptualizing a problem to writing the narrative, not simply the

methods such as data collection, analysis and report writing.” In a similar vein, Yin (2003, p. 20) adds the research approach is “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions.”

With this in mind, this research aimed to examine the impacts of the 2018 organizational reform on the place and functions of PRs in the federal executive organs. The study incorporated the organizational reforms to date, and considered the issues the practitioners raise about their career’s status quo. To this end, a quantitative research design was used. According to Kothari (2004), the quantitative research design enables to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of all parties that involve in an issue. Hence, the researcher preferred this design to get a deep insight of all parties that involve in the execution of public relations in government organizations.

There are numerous theories and models of PRs, ranging from the oldest propaganda model to the recent two way asymmetric one (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier (2002). This study, however, adopted the approach which assumes that PRs is a two way communication between an organization and its public. Moreover, the study examined the challenges the PRs practitioners were facing through analysis of the problems in terms of effectively executing their roles and responsibilities and so the PRs excellence theory was adopted for this study.

3.3. Population, Sampling and Sample Size

Any research problem relates to a specific population. A population is a group of potential participants to whom a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study. Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005) states that the population is the study object and consists of individuals, groups, organizations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. Based on this understanding, the population of this research includes the PRs practitioners at the federal executive organs, Civil Service Commission, and the Press Secretariat department of the PM office. Each of these sampling units was selected for its significance to this study as stated in the problem statement section. The PRs practices at these organizations would help to understand better how the profession is being functioned nationally. As the accountability of the PRs sector was transferred to the Press Secretariat department in the PM office, it was a must to include this office to evaluate what had been

going on regarding the sector's leadership at national level. Eventually, the Civil Service Commission was the organization that led the reform issues and so it was included in the study.

The entire group of the federal executive organs is too large to include in this single study. Thus, the researcher made use of a sample of participants who would represent the whole research population. As Swetnam (2000, p. 42) suggests, a sample is "the subset of a population selected to participate in a research study." In line to this, sample participants were selected from the study population as follows.

First, the federal executive organs were selected using a probability sampling method, namely a simple random sampling. Hence, a sample size of 40% of the 149 federal executive organs, i.e. 60, was taken as a sample. Regarding the actual research participants from each executive organ, it was determined to involve two individuals from the PRs process of each of the sample organization. Thus, the heads, or the delegate senior PRs practitioners in some organizations, are purposively included in the sample group. In order to include the voices of the line staff, however, a non-probability sampling technique called accessibility sampling (Kothari, 2004) was implemented, because the numbers of line staff practitioners vary widely across the executive organs, and the staff were working from home during the period of data collection. Hence, besides the team leader, an available individual from each organ was taken directly and involved in the study. In this way, 120 participants from the PRs process took part in this study.

With regards to selection of participants from Civil Service Commission and the Press Secretariat, a purposive sampling method was employed. This method, as Welman, et al. (2005) affirm targets the individuals thought to be most central to the research questions. Creswell (1997) also asserts that purposeful sampling means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (p. 125)." Therefore, the director of Research and Organizational Reform in the commission was purposively involved in the study, because it was this directorate that recommended re-structuring of the federal executive organs at the time. Meanwhile, one person, i.e. the head of Press Secretariat department in the office of PM, was also purposively involved in providing data for the study. Generally, 121 individuals took part in this study.

3.4. Method, tools and procedure of data collection

The study incorporated both primary and secondary data. Each of the data sources and tools were discussed below.

3.4.1. Primary data sources and tools

Primary data is a type of data that is collected directly from main sources through techniques such as interviews, surveys, experiments, and so on (Creswell, 1997). In the course of this study, primary data were collected from the sample participants selected from the 3 units, namely, the PRs process at the federal executive organs, Civil Service Commission, and, the Press Secretariat department in the Office of PM. With regards to tools, semi-structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interview (KII) were employed.

3.4.1.1. Semi-structured Questionnaire

Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the sample public relations practitioners in the selected federal executive organs. The questionnaires were developed based on the main concepts, theories and models discussed in the chapter of literature review. This instrument is preferred to others as it is less difficult to administer, and analyze data. In this regard, Kothari (2004) adds the instrument has the same wording in the same order to all respondents and so the questions are simple to administer; inexpensive to analyze.

3.4.1.2. Key Informant Interviews

According to Creswell (1997), Key Informant Interview KII is a useful instrument to gain a deep insight of participants and to collect information from people who have first-hand knowledge about the issue at hand. Thus, KII was employed to gather data from the participants selected from Civil Service Commission, and Press Secretariat department.

3.4.2. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data were collected from internet based pages of the sample organizations, proclamations that defined the roles and responsibilities of the organizations, and academic research works. With regards to data collection, a document content review technique was used to extract data from these sources. According to Bowen (2009), a qualitative document review has been used as a popular method in researches. It focuses

on analyzing and interpreting its content so as to assess what had been applied in the actual setting. Content, as Deacon, et al., (1999) presented refers to words, meanings, symbols, pictures, ideas, themes and any messages that can be communicated.

3.5. Procedure of data collection

Data collection begun by obtaining relevant official documents and statistical data from the sources mentioned above. The data collection was delimited to the thematic areas pre-determined based on the research objectives outlined in [section 1.3]. Survey questionnaires were administered through email following email and phone discussion with the practitioners. Based on the participants' preference, some were delivered the questionnaire by hand.

The interview questions were personally administered by the researcher face-to-face. The participants were briefed beforehand on the objectives of the study. The most important advantage and reason for choosing interviews for this research is that interviews are a flexible method of data collection. The researcher could also explain and expatiate on questions, in case they were not clear to respondents.

3.6. Pilot study

The semi-structured survey questionnaire was first administered and tested before the final data collection. The pilot study was aimed to identify problems and make necessary corrections before the actual study is conducted, because it is often suggested before employing new tools to gather data. Welman et al. (2005, p. 148) propose it is useful to “test it out” a new measurement instrument before administering it to the actual sample. Thus, the questionnaire was administered to eight public relations practitioners (five department heads and three senior experts) selected from eight federal government organizations. Based on the pilot test, the use of different words as PRs and communication, length of the questionnaire and use of ambiguous words were identified. Thus, the wording of PRs department changed to public relations and/or Communication department. Three items whose responses were supposed to infer from other questions were avoided, and easy words were replaced to avoid ambiguity.

3.7. Method of data analysis

Despite this study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data, a quantitative method was employed for analysis. The qualitative data were converted to numeric forms so that consistency could be kept in data analysis. The qualitative data gathered through interview and document analysis were used to triangulate the responses. The analysis of survey data was carried out using the SPSS (version 21) so as to generate the out puts, and present the result on tables, charts and figures. Meanwhile, the data obtained from document sources were used to triangulate the result of the quantitative data analysis. Regarding content analysis, an interpretive document analysis approaches were used.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 28) postulate that the validity of a measurement instrument is “the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.” Whereas reliability is the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured has not changed. In line to this, the validity and reliability of the data collection tools and results were addressed appropriately. At the questionnaire construction level, copies of a questionnaire with 25 items were administered for 19 PRs practitioners from five organizations. Following the procedure of item development (Kothari, 2004) reliability was tested. Thus, 21 items which had a high discriminatory power remained.

At the analysis stage, the research triangulated the result with the findings of earlier studies to ensure validity. In this process the accuracy of the data was confirmed thorough checking. Lee and Lings, 2008) maintain that triangulation is one way in which one can try to enhance validity. Therefore, the findings of this study were valid as data triangulation was used to corroborate findings based on the three different approaches employed. With regards to reliability, 99% of the questionnaires were filled and returned as an indicator. Moreover, the researcher worked out to check the result was confirmed in other studies in which the subject was analyzed.

To ensure content validity, the instruments were developed after the researcher studied the related literature. An expert in the field, the researcher’s supervisor, also scrutinized the

data collection tools and compared them with the objectives of the study. The questions were valid as they were interlinked with the objectives and also related to the overall study. Finally, limitations of the dissertation were reflected so that further studies can get into the subject deeper to enhance the validity of the findings.

3.9. Ethical considerations

All possible ethical issues were given a due consideration in the course of this study. Welman et al. (2005) mention that the people being studied must know the nature of the study and be willing to participate in it. Since the data sources were officials from high level government organizations, anonymity of their identity was kept as promised before requesting for the data. Participation in this research was entirely based on their free will, and each of the participants signed a consent form [See Appendix II].

Chapter Four: Data presentation, analysis and discussion

This chapter presents analysis of the data gathered from the participants. The result is discussed, and then compared to the literature review. The analysis incorporates responses of 119 survey participants (99.17% response rate) along with the self-reports of participants from FDRE Civil Service Commission and Press Secretariat department in the Prime Minister office. Report and analysis of the data gathered from all sources was presented below sequentially.

4.1. Type of structural changes organizations faced

During the recent organizational reform, federal government executive organs were restructured- some merged; others split. Moreover, new organs were established while some of the existing ones dissolved. Hence, in an item, the participants were provided with questions about the type of change that happened to their organization. Responses of the participants were presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Changes took place on the organizations PRs is operating

Responses	f	%
Newly established	3	2.52
Merged with other	6	5.04
Split from another organization	11	9.24
No change took place	99	83.19
Total	119	100

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Table 1 above depicts that 99(83.19%) organizations included in the sample did not go any change during the recent organizational reform. While 11(9.24%) participants were from the federal executive organs that split from other organizations, 6(5.04%) were from those who merged to existing ones and the rest 3(2.52%) were from newly established federal government entities. These responses imply the reform affected mainly few executive organs structurally as more than 83% PRs were from the organizations to which no change took place.

4.2. Variations in naming of the PRs process

Some researches indicated the name of a unit in an organization that carries out the functions of the PRs differs significantly, due to the stigmas associated with the term Public Relations (Castelli, 2007, p. 61), or, in some cases, due to the fact the profession itself is not yet stabilized (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2003). So the name of this department varies considerably (Castelli, 2007). In Ethiopia as well, earlier researches (Tamrat, 2002; Zemedkun, 2004) indicated such naming variations exist across the organizations at different administrative tiers, and organizations. Common names of the PRs processes at the organizations included in this study are presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Variations in names of the PRs processes

Responses	f	%
Public Relations	21	17.65
Public Relations and Communications	33	27.73
Government Information Communication	46	38.65
Corporate Communication	4	3.36
Other	15	12.6
Total	119	100

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

As one can learn from Table 2 above, there are numerous variants of the names of departments in federal government organizations at which the public relations activities are executed. In most organization, however, the department is known as “Government Information Communication” (38.65%). This is followed by “Public Relations and Communications” (27.73%), “Public Relations” (17.65%), and “Corporate Communications” (3.36%). There are also variants of names which the participants did not mention (12.6%), but later it was learnt that naming such as “media relation,” and “Press Secretariat,” were being affixed to a process that discharges communication activities.

4.3. Background of the participants

The participants of this research vary greatly in work experience. General background in terms of gender, experience in the PRs sector and their familiarity with the organization they currently work in are presented below.

4.3.1. Gender of participants

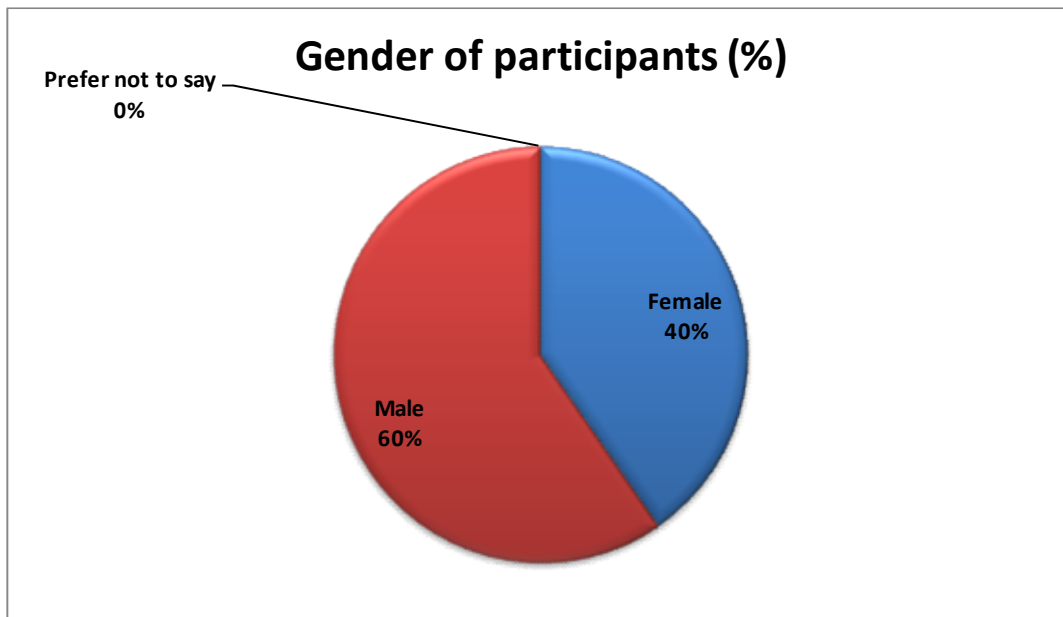


Figure 1: Gender of participants

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Fig. 1 showed that the majority of the respondents (59.66 %) were male whereas only 40.34% of the respondents were female. Some researchers showed gender has an impact on decisions (Agarwal, et al., 2009 qtd in Abraham, 2020). Thus, gender was likely to affect the PRs practitioners' decision in the federal executive organs in Ethiopia.

4.3.2. Positions held by the PRs

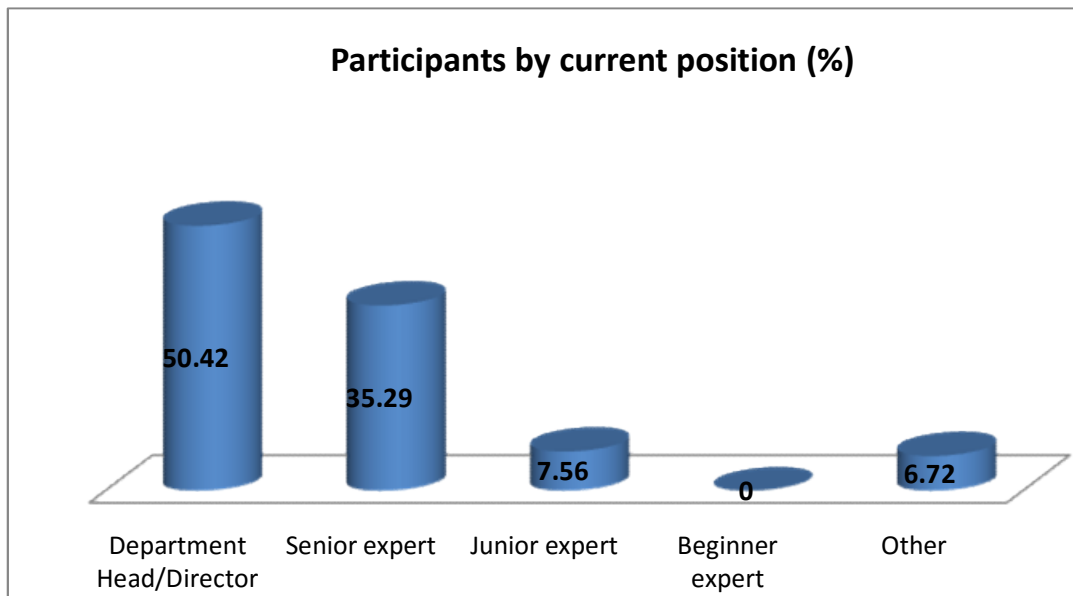


Figure 2: Current position of participants in PRs process

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

In terms of the position the sample PRs practitioners were holding in their department, 60(50.42%) were department heads; 42(35.29%) were senior level expert; 9(7.56%) were junior experts; and, 8(6.72%) were in the category of “other.” None of the participants were beginner experts. Moreover, there were some organizations in which the employee deployment did not take place until the time this data collection took place. Generally, the PRs practitioners had sufficient experience in the public relations and/or communication functions, because the level of assignment according to the current Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) assignment is directly related to an employee’s relevant work experience.

4.3.3. Work experience

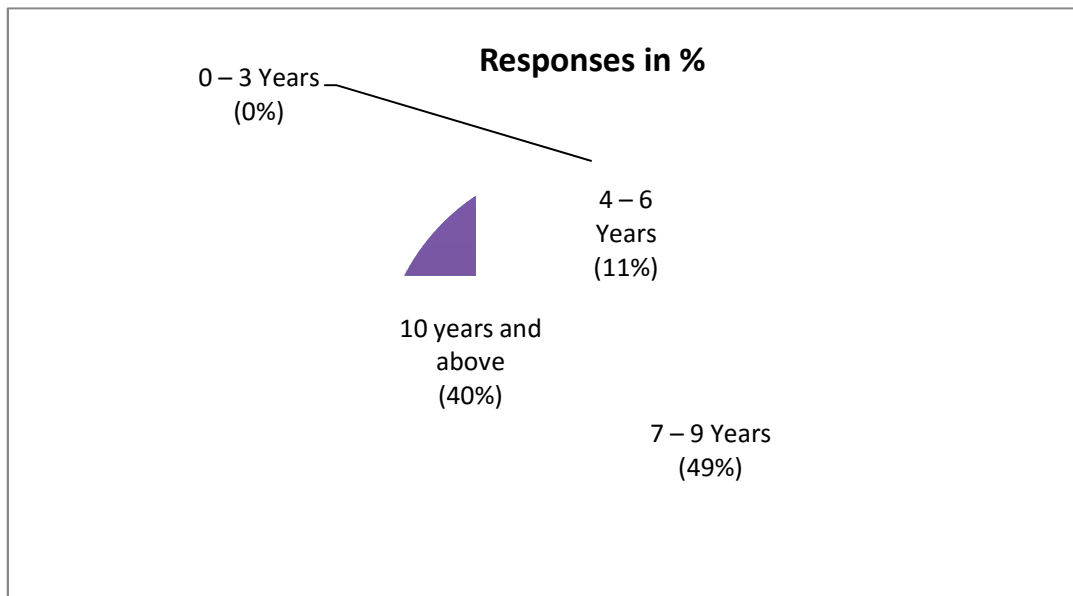


Figure 3: Participants' work experience in the PRs process

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

As Fig. 3 depicted, none of the participants had 0-3 years' experience in PRs/Communication Department. Those who had 4-6 years' experience account 13 (10.92%). Meanwhile, 58 (48.74%) of the participants had 7-9 years of work experience as the PRs while the rest 48 (40.34%) had 10 ears and/or more experience in executing the PRs functions.

The data about the experience of practitioners in PRs related function and the position they fill in the PRs process go hand in hand. The sample practitioners are experienced and thus they held the senior positions in their respective organizations. Moreover, the fact that most of the sample practitioners held the senior expert and the department head position while the junior and beginner positions were vacant implies either the organizations are not giving a due attention to filling the vacant posts- this also implies no body worries whether the department is fully staffed or not) or the department heads are not requesting the concerned HR department to fill in the required staff (may be lack of planning). Moreover, it is the salary/benefits that held the experienced practitioners in this department, because they cannot hold the same position in other department for they had such experience only in public relation or communication.

On the other hand, beginner practitioners did not want to stay in this department even if they had relevant professional background, because they are oriented and learnt during their stay in this department that the department has not had positive reputation. Therefore, some of the practitioners went to another department that require 'related' professional background (because salary, as per JEG, is the same with their beginner experience which ever organization or department they join).

According to Skinner et al. (6), PRs must be practiced at an advanced level by experienced practitioners for it is a management function. This in turn depends on how long a practitioner did stay in an organization. In this regard, looking deeper into the experience of the practitioners in the current organization, an item was prepared to seek information on when they joined the current organization. As shown on Fig. 4 below, 77(64.71%) have been in the same organization since 2009. 21(17.65%) of the participants joined their current organization in 2010 and 16(13.45%) did so in 2011 E.C. There are 5(4.2%) participants of this study who joined a new, and of course newly established organization in this year. Besides this response affirm the practitioners are experienced and stayed for fairly long time in their current organization, it also implies there is a limited trade of practitioners between the PR and other departments.

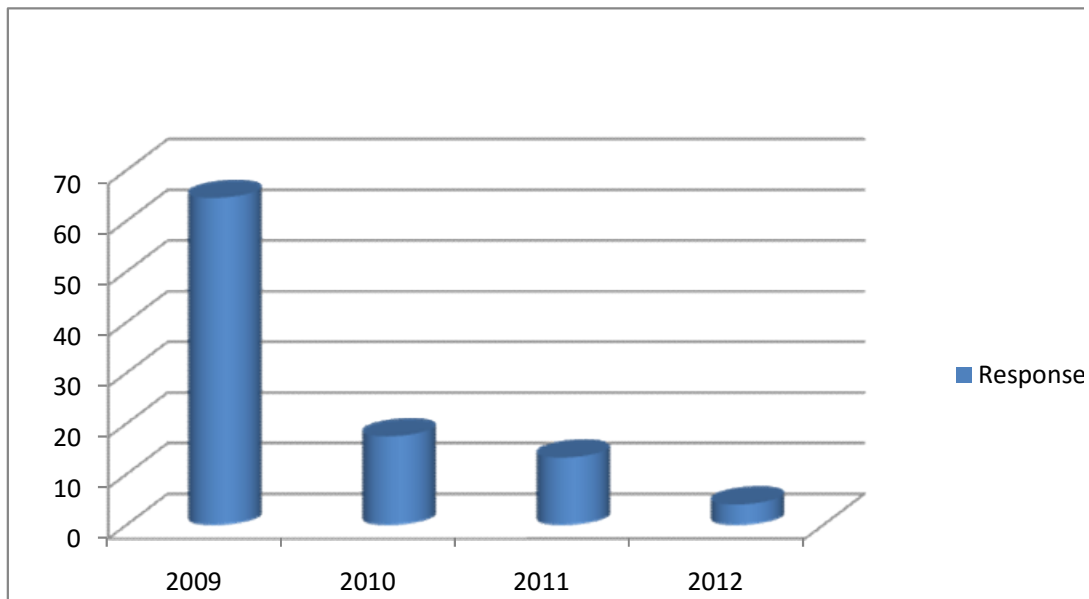


Figure 4: PRs experience in their current organization

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

4.4. Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) and the PRs

Even though the Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) initiative begun few years ago, it was fully implemented following the recent organizational structure. Thus, the impact it had on the size of the PR department, its functioning was assessed in the following items.

As learnt from the responses of the participants, the PRs practitioners in 72(60.5%) organizations included in this study were deployed as per the JEG standard. The remaining 47(39.5%) were not yet deployed when this data was collected. Nationally, this initiative aimed to standardise the deployment of the civil service employees in the country based on their professional background and experience. Moreover, the primary principle of this initiative was “equal pay for equal job” and thus the employees are assigned job positions based on certain key proficiencies.

Implementation of JEG has another implication for the PRs practitioners, because it determined the size of staff in the PRs department of the federal executive organs.

Table 3: Number of staff in the PRs /team based on JEG

Staff Size	Allowed		On Job	
	f	%	f	%
1 to 3	0	0	59	49.58
4 to 6	90	75.6	55	46.23
7 to 9	11	9.24	5	4.2
10 and/or more	18	15.13	0	0
Total	119	100	119	100

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Despite the fact the deployment was not fully executed in all sample organizations, the federal executive organs are entirely covered in the JEG study and thus the required manpower is defined. PRs process has vacant positions in most of the organizations. As Table 4 above depicts, 90 (75.6%) organizations were allowed 4 to 6 staff. While 11 (9.24%) were allowed 7 to 9 and 18(15.13%) were allowed 10 or more staff. The table further illustrates, the PRs departments of all sample organizations are primarily allocated more than three staff.

With regards the number of personnel currently working at the sample federal government organizations, however, 59(49.58%) have 1 to 3 employees, and 55(46.23%) have 4 to 6 staff. While 5(4.2% of the sample organizations have 7 to 9 employees, none has ten or more recruits in the PRs department.

This part of the data analysis particularly implies, the PRs departments of more than 84% sample organizations are executing their daily activities under the shortage of required personnel. More specifically, 59(49.58%) processes under investigation have less than four (4) employees, which the current JEG has never indicated as sufficient in any organization.

The reason for the gap between the staff allowed and on job, as learned during interview with selected senior practitioners, is that some of the PRs practitioners in the PRs processes before the deployment were migrated to other departments for the reason that they did not gain adequate respect from the staff including the top management for the roles they are playing in their organizations, and their importance is under looked. As a result, the PR department in most organizations is under staffed. This in turn forces the existing practitioners to be busy with some trivial, technical roles. Moreover, as the interview revealed, some people believe PRs should be used only when needed, such as in cases of organizing a corporate event, or confronting a crisis. However, Lawrence et al. (2003, p.158) underlined “Having permanent PRs unit is tantamount to having someone who knows an organization’s history and its products well”. Such a professional would have plans in place to deal with PR situations such as crises when quick responses are required.

4.5. Level of education

Level of education was another issue this study addressed. The majority of the respondents (about 62.18%) are undergraduate degree holders. The next highest number (29.41%) refers to graduate degree. 7(5.88%) are at the level of diploma or equivalent and 1(0.84%) holds PhD. Only two respondents failed to respond to the question related to their education (Table 5).

Table 4: Highest level of education the PRs hold

Level of Education	f	%
PhD	1	0.84
Graduate degree	35	29.41
Undergraduate degree or equivalent	74	62.18
Diploma or equivalent level	7	5.88
High school complete and/or below	0	0
Total	117	98.32

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

4.6. Field of study for their most attained level of education

In Ethiopia, unlike the past times in which researchers (for example, Zemedkun, 2004; Zewdu, 2019) found out most practitioners are from the field of study non-relevant for the PRs and/or communication seems much improved. Following the opening of the Public Relations and Communication department in Addis Ababa University, most PRs practitioners in and around Addis Ababa city started their graduate study in this field of study. The former GCAO was also sponsoring those PR practitioners whom the Office itself brought from different woredas and deployed in various federal government organizations after a short term EPRDF policy training in earlier times. Since those scholars signed commitment to serve in the same organization and department after graduation for double the time they spend on on-job graduate study, there are professional practitioners in most organizations.

When it comes to the respondents' field of study, some 31.09%, which could be considered as the majority, graduated in Journalism and Communication. Those participants with the training in Language and Literature constituted 28(23.53%) of the total respondents. In addition, some 23(19.33)% of the respondents came from Public Relations and Communication fields of study, which established in few HEIs most recently, and other social science disciplines constitute about 22(18.49%) of the practitioners participated in this study. The number of participants whose educational background is different from those listed above constituted about 9(7.56%) (Table 6).

Most of the PRs functions require technical skills including writing contents fit to the media. To this end, fields of study that can equip with practitioner with such skills are often required. With this regard, some scholars advise Journalism and/or Communication

fields are preferable (Zemedkun, 2004). Perhaps, the profession was first practiced by former journalists even in the countries like the USA and Europe where it was first conceived (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). However, when this profession developed and got mature, distinct PRs practitioners that specialize in PRs emerged in line to the expansion of PRs education and training. In the federal government organizations, there are public relations practitioners whose field of study is less relevant to efficiently execute their day to day activities.

Table 5: Field of Study for most recent attained level of education

Field of Study	f	%
PRs and/or Communication	23	19.33
Journalism and/or Communication	37	31.09
Language and/or Literature	28	23.53
Other Social Sciences	22	18.49
Other	9	7.56
Total	119	100

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

4.7. Public relations practices and roles

The functions and roles of public relations are changing rapidly. Through time, even the definitions of the profession itself has been modified and expanded, adding new words and concepts that define what the PRs actually is and is not. Thus, the participants were provided a list of roles that define what they are doing in the organization they are working now. This part of the survey aimed to assess the degree to which the practitioners are trusted to execute their roles independently and freely. In this regard, Table 7 presents to what extent the PRs execute their roles and functions independently.

Table 6: Independence of the practitioners to carry out their functions and roles

Roles and functions		Almost always	Often	Some- times	Seldom	Never
Research	f	0	9	67	37	6
	%	0	7.56	56.3	31.09	5.04
Media relation	f	24	21	44	30	0
	%	20.17	17.65	36.97	25.21	0
Organizing	f	1	28	71	13	6
	%	0.84	23.53	59.66	10.92	5.04
Writing	f	28	43	40	8	0
	%	23.53	36.13	33.61	6.72	0
Production	f	3	19	75	10	12
	%	2.52	15.97	63.02	8.04	10.08
Provide speech for others to address meetings	f	69	32	14	3	1
	%	57.98	26.89	11.76	2.52	0.84
Media monitoring	f	9	17	82	8	3
	%	7.56	14.29	68.91	6.72	2.52
Lobbying	f	11	16	71	21	0
	%	9.24	13.44	59.66	17.65	0
Paid advertisement campaign for a product and/or service publicity	f	2	4	42	41	30
	%	1.68	3.36	35.29	34.45	25.21
Relationship management	f	9	13	93	4	0
	%	7.56	10.92	78.15	3.36	0
Manage corporate social responsibility activities	F	0	2	35	80	2
	%	0	1.68	29.41	67.23	1.68

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

The above table illustrates some of crucial roles the PRs practitioners are assumed to execute. Regarding research, which in this context refers to the gathering information about public opinion, trends, emerging issues, political climate, media coverage, concerns of consumer and environmental special-interest groups, and so forth, none of the participants tended to practice it almost always or often. While 67(56.3%) sometimes do research, 37(31.09) do seldom and 6(5.04%) do research never.

Media relation, which is about contacting the news media, magazines, freelance writers and trade publications with the intention of getting them to publish; or broadcast news and features about the organisation; or even responding to media requests (Castelli, 2007), is done by majority (36.97%) of the participants. While 21(17.65%) of the participants often do media relations, 24(20.17%) do the function almost always, and 30(25.21%) seldom. Nevertheless, there appeared no response about doing this function never.

Arranging events such as media conferences, conventions and exhibitions, celebrations and other corporate programmes is among the key function areas of the PRs (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). Among the participants of this research, most (59.66%) sometimes do carry out the organizing of corporate events and programs, 28(23.53%) do often, 13(10.92%) seldom, and 6(5.04%) never.

Writing is another key function area of the PRs. PRs spend much of their time engage in writing news releases, newsletters, correspondences, reports, booklets, radio and television copy, film scripts, etc (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). In this regard, 28(23.53%) almost always, 43(36.13%) often, 40(33.61%) sometimes, 8(6.72%) seldom, and none never do the PRs writing.

PRs communication requires creating multimedia such as art, photography, and design for online and offline prints. This area of function might need additional skill development training, but in no ways it can be escaped. Thus, the participants of this research were asked how often they do it. Accordingly, significantly low number (2.52%) reported production is done in the PRs department almost always. While 19(15.97%) do production often, majority reported it is the function they do sometimes. Similarly, 10(8.04%) seldom, and 12(10.08%) never engage in production.

The PRs either speak oneself or arrange for others to address meetings or media (Jethwaney and Sarkar, 2015). In this research, 69(57.98%) do speaking almost always, 32(26.89%) often, 14(11.76%) sometimes, 3(2.52%) seldom and 1(0.84%) never engage in activities related with making or delivering speech.

Another area of PRs role in an organization is media monitoring. This role is often aimed to get an insight and adjust the PRs activities plan (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). The responses of participants indicate, 9(7.56%) almost always, 17(14.29%) often, 82(68.91%) sometimes, 8(6.72%) seldom, and 3(2.52%) never do media monitoring. Regarding lobbying, 11(9.24%) almost always, 16(13.44%) often, 71(59.66%) sometimes, and 21(17.65%) seldom execute the role. None of the participants reported they never do lobbying.

Advertisement management is one of the roles of PRs. The PRs often arrange campaigns to promote product and/or service of their respective organization (Ibid, p.37). Regarding this kind of publicity, significantly small number, i.e. 1.68% and 3.36% reported they always or often advertise. Majority, 42(35.29% and 41(34.45%) respectively do this sometimes and seldom. 30(25.21%) also reported they never play the advertisement management roles.

As the system theory which this research is founded vividly stipulates, organizations operate in a society composed of publics (Grunig et al. 82). Therefore, the organizations are required discharge their responsibility in the society. This role is often given to the PRs for they are in charge of establishing appropriate relationship with all significant publics including the society. 80(67.23%) participants of this research replied they seldom discharge corporate social responsibility roles. While 35(29.41%) do this sometimes, an equal number of participants (1.68%) engaged in this role often and never.

Generally, this part of data focused on to what extent the PRs practitioners are empowered to execute a given set of roles, or whether the current organizational reform affected the practitioners' freedom to execute their roles professionally and independently. As illustrates in Table 7 above, significant majority of the practitioners focus on function areas such as writing, delivering speech on various occasions or preparing speeches for other officials in their respective organizations. Similarly, functions of similar nature such as writing, media monitoring and organizing in sum exercised by the PRs independently.

On the other hand, priority areas of the PRs such as research, media relation, management of advertisement and corporate social responsibilities are discharged to a lesser extent by majority of the PRs practitioners. Thus, in order to develop, maintain, grow and nurture mutually beneficial relationships between your organisation and its significant publics, the PRs should rather focus on key roles such as relationship management, research and publicity of the services or products their respective organizations are meant to deliver.

Result of the selected documents also confirms to the points that the PRs practitioners are focusing on less significant functions. Among the PRs departments included in the sample, the annual report of the year 2018/19 was collected from twenty. The reports of 16 departments that fulfil the Civil Service Commission BSC planning guideline were qualified for analysis. Based on their plan-performance, only 2(10%) were ranked as high (average performance is higher than 75%), 12(60%) were moderate (between 74 and 51%), and 4(20%) were low (performed below 50% of their plan).

Further insight into the specific areas which the PRs processes performed below their plan also indicated functions such as publication of research manuscripts, media visit, responses to information inquiries, placement of advertisement, and getting more followers on social networking pages.

4.8. Domain of the PRs roles

Besides measuring the extent to which the PRs practitioners are left independent to carry out their roles within their organization's framework and existing regulations, it was attempted to verify in this survey what domain of practitioners they really were. Responses about the PRs domain were summarized in the Fig. 5 below.

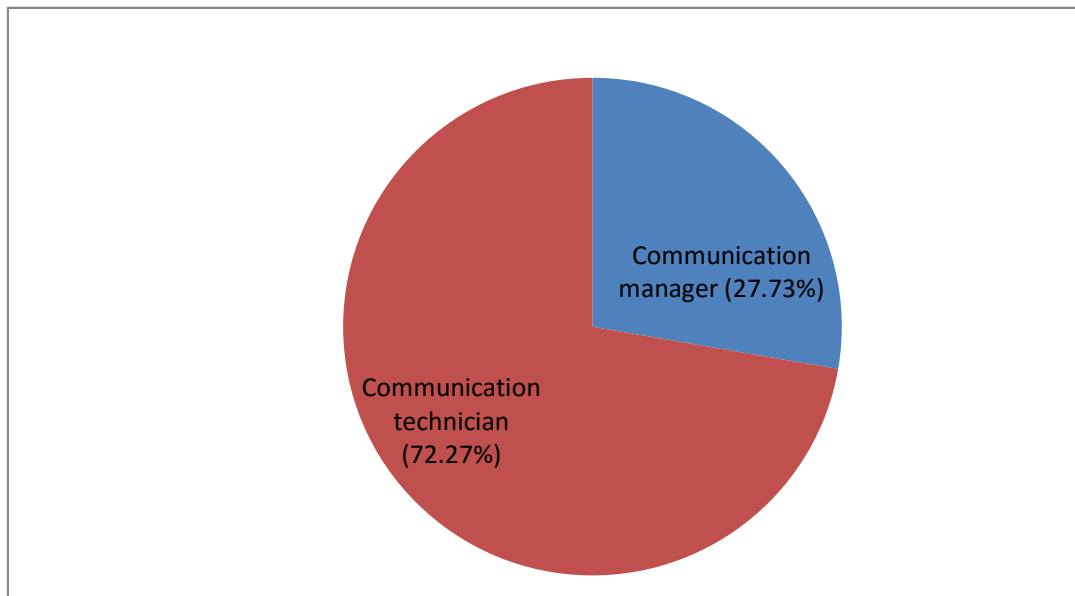


Figure 5: Domain of the PRs roles

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Fig. 5 depicts 33(27.73%) of the study participants assume themselves as “communication managers” and the remaining 86(72.27%) place themselves in the domain of communication technician. One can infer from number that some of the practitioners who hold the position of manager even assume they are “technicians” instead of “managers.” According to Miller (2012), communication managers are those who plan and manage public relations programmes, advise management, make communication policy decision and oversee the implementation of the overall communication activities in their organization. On the other hand, the communication tasks that define the practitioners who assume the position of “technician” are by nature technical and more specific. Thus, communication technicians implement public relations programmes such as writing press releases, organising events or producing content for different media. Moreover, such employees do not involve in organisational decision making (Jethwaney and Sarkar, 2015). Hence, the responses of participants bear out the practitioners’ self-belief is likely derived from their roles, or vice versa. Since the practitioners in most organizations are engaged in technical routines more than planning and managing key communication activities, they are forced to believe they are technicians.

While the study involved managers and senior PRs practitioners but they confirmed themselves as technicians implies, they are pushed down to non-decision-making places

after the recent organizational reform. In other words, the PRs were not part of the decision making tier of their respective organizational management. Moreover, the reporting relationship between the PRs department and the next higher management implies the practitioners are accountable to non-decision-making management who is not taking part in the decision making meetings (in some cases), and thus, neither the PRs nor their supervisors voice was heard (see table 8 below).

4.9. Reporting relationship

Based on the assertion of Skinner et al. (2004), heads of the PRs ought to be positioned at management level, because only this enables to be responsible to the executive management of an organization. In favour of this, Seitel (2004) also positions PRs professionals should “enjoy enough autonomy to deal openly and honestly with management”. In line to this, responses of the participants about to whom they report was summarized in the Table 7 below.

Table 7: Manager in charge to whom the PRs heads report to

Whom do you directly report to?	f	%
Top most senior official in your organization	23	38.98
Second top head official	21	35.59
Head of Office of the senior official	15	25.42
Management board	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	59	100

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

This question was directly presented only to the PRs department heads and acting heads, because experts by default report to the top most senior official in their organization, while 21(35.59%) and 15(25.42%) report to the second top head and to the head of office of the senior official respectively. This implies the federal executive organs vary widely in recognizing the roles of the PRs, because the more its importance is recognized, the direct relationship the top most management creates with the department.

As a means to further investigate the issue, the interviewees were provided related questions. “It was about function grouping; not inter-departmental set-up,” the participant from Civil Service Commission argued. In a similar line, the PS participant stated “the

department has no procedure and legal basis to pass directives and define accountability set up in each executive organ.” In addition to this, both interviewees underlined the decision making management group in any organization supposed to be composed of the heads of each department yet the senior management may set the exact number either by including more individuals depending on the issue that required decision. From these analyses, it was comprehended that the PRs in more than 70% organizations were accountable to the top most management of their respective organizations. Hierarchically, the PRs process was situated just below the top executive management or the like.

4.10. Questions relating to the reform, challenges and prospects

In today’s dynamic world, it is an indispensable for organizations to go through reforms. Reforms may however end in positive or negative result. With this thought that the PRs practitioners reflected on whether the recent organizational reform brought negative impact on the efficiency in practices of PRs in their organization.

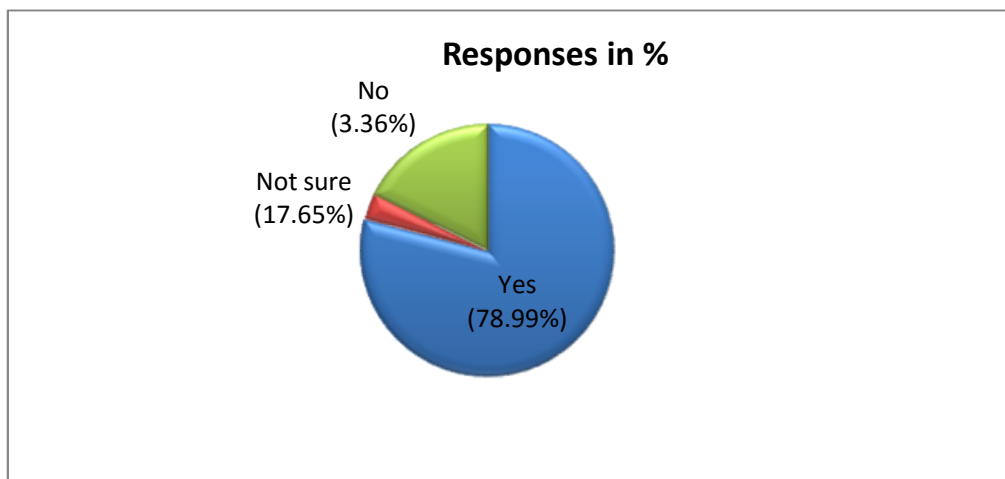


Figure 6: Participants’ belief about organizational reform

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

As one can see on Fig. 6 above, 94(78.99%) of the participants believed the organizational reform brought negative impacts on their process. However, 21(17.65%) were not sure of the impact while 4(3.36%) did not think the impacts were negative. From this response, one can infer that the process have not been performing differently both before and after the reform or the practitioners favour the reform with the hope it may bring positive

impact at a time. Leaving this for further investigation, the responses of that majority who believed the reform negatively impacted their functions analyzed.

4.11. PRs functions the reform affected

As learnt from the foregone discussion, 94(78.99%) believed their process's functionality was affected negatively. In this item, therefore, the major function areas the PRs think the reform affected were specified (Table 9).

Table 8: PRs functions the organizational reform affected most

Items	Responses, n=94									
	A great deal		Much		Some How		Little		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct access to executive management decisions	44	46.81	11	11.7	28	29.79	4	4.25	7	7.45
Direct relation with/accessibility to media staff	37	39.36	14	14.89	31	32.98	6	6.38	6	6.38
Budget to execute the department plan	45	47.87	25	26.6	19	20.21	1	1.06	4	4.25
Collaboration with other departments within the organization	13	13.83	8	8.51	40	42.55	12	12.77	21	22.34
Connection with significant public (other than staff and media)	28	29.79	35	37.23	29	30.85	2	2.13	0	0
Authority/power to execute tasks/responsibilities independently	61	64.89	16	17.02	17	18.08	0	0	0	0
Career development/Promotion	9	9.57	46	48.94	20	21.28	11	11.7	8	8.51
Staff size	31	32.98	42	44.68	17	18.08	2	2.13	2	2.13
Ownership of technological equipment	33	35.11	32	34.04	22	23.4	7	7.45	0	0
Horizontal and vertical relationship with other organizations	72	76.6	8	8.51	10	10.64	3	3.19	1	1.06
Benefits other than salary	26	27.66	20	21.28	40	42.55	5	5.32	3	3.19
Approaches of communication as one way or two ways	18	19.15	28	29.79	33	35.11	11	11.7	4	4.25
Providing PRs functions to other departments or individuals	6	6.38	13	13.83	25	26.6	17	18.08	33	35.11

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

As shown on Table 9, 94 participants who felt the reform negatively affected the functions were engaged in identifying the PRs roles the reform affected. For the first item about the way the PRs used to directly access the executive management decisions, 44(46.81%) reported it was affected to a great extent; 11(11.7%) much; 28(29.79%) somehow; 4(4.25%) little and 7(7.45%) reported never. For the item about the impact of reform on direct relation with or access to media staff, 37(39.36%) a great deal, 14(14.89%) much, 31(32.98%) little, and equally 6(6.38%) replied little and never respectively.

Regarding budget to execute the department plan, 45(47.87%) responded a great deal, 25(26.6%) much, 19(20.21%) somehow, 1(1.06%) little, and 4(4.25%) never. For the item

of collaboration with other departments within the organization, 13(13.83%) a great deal, 8(8.51%) much, 40(42.55%) somehow, 12(12.77%) little, and 21(22.34%) never.

Connection with significant public (other than staff and media) was another item in the questionnaire. The participants' responses were: 28(29.79%) a great deal, 35(37.23%) much, 29(30.85%) somehow, and 2(2.13%) little. No responses were obtained for never. Authority or power to execute tasks/responsibilities independently gained 61(64.89%) a great deal, followed by 17(18.08%) somehow and 16(17.02%) much while none responded both little and never.

Career development and benefits other than salary were other items that have personal touch with the participants. For the former item, 9(9.5%) replied a great deal, 46(48.94%) much, 20(21.28%) somehow, 11(11.7%) little, and 8(8.51%) never. Similarly, 26(27.66%) a great deal, 20(21.28%) much, 40(42.55%) somehow, 5(5.32%) little, and 3(3.19%) never were obtained for the item of reform impact on benefits other than basic salary.

Resources like the human personnel and technological equipments are other areas the participants reflected on. With regards to the human resource, participants believed the reform affected by 31(32.98%) to a great deal, 42(44.68%) much, 17(18.08%) somehow, and equally 2(2.13%) little and never respectively. In similar vein, the impact on ownership of technological equipment gained 33(35.11%) a great deal, 32(34.04%) much, 22(23.4%) somehow, 7(7.45%) little and no 'never.'

Eventually, items about communication approach and role assignment were provided. The item of PRs communication gained 18(19.15%) a great deal, 28(29.79%) much, 33(35.11%) somehow, 11(11.7%) little, and 4(4.25%) never. The item of PRs functions was responded like 6(6.38%) a great deal, 13(13.83%) much, 25(26.6%) somehow, 17(18.08%) little, and 33(35.11%) never.

On the other hand, participants of the interview reflected on what the intension of reform was and what kind of changes were deliberately introduced to the PRs system. The participant from FDRE Civil Service Commission revealed that the structural reform primarily aimed at reshaping all federal Executive Organs in such a way they can "accommodate the newly introduced socio-economic and political change agendas." Moreover, the current reformist leadership has "commitment to interact with the citizens at

grassroots levels without any need to channel through third party when possible... and even media can access the executive organs' decisions and plans at any time..." Hence, the media and other civil organizations who were deprived of their rights in past system had to enjoy their right to the extent they demand. This, on the other hand, permits minimizing unnecessary bottlenecks that make the process of accessing information and reaching executives.

Regarding challenges the reform might bring, the interviewee from the FDRE Civil Service Commission argued the structure sustains except the transfer of duties to a new department- though organization-based amendment might take place in later times. If organization have interests to look through and amend to fit to their demand, his organization (Civil Service Commission renders support technically without forcing in any way). For the same question, the PS head however, admitted it would be too difficult to discharge all the roles the GCAO used to play at his department's current organization. The GCAO was independent and fully mandated to perform the roles as per its establishment proclamation, but the current department is narrow in size, and has its primary objectives. Thus, it will have to re-examine the duties to make it fit with what priority areas are.

The assertions in interview vividly reflect the structural reform in the case of the PRs is vague. The actions were unjustifiable and so the impacts were severe. The fact both the PS and Civil Service Commission did not put consolidating the sector's on-going reform indicated the PRs sector and its functions were not yet priority agenda not only at organizational level but also at national government level.

4.12. Issues affecting the PRs functioning

Besides the organizational reform which the participants believed to have negative impacts on their functioning, few items were also included in the questionnaire to identify the issues affecting the PRs communication functioning. The responses were summarized in the Table 9 below.

Table 9: Issues affecting your PRs functioning

Issues	Res- ponses	Degree of Impact				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Inconsistency in clearly defining the roles and functions of public relations	f	10	20	39	29	21
	%	8.4	16.81	32.77	24.37	17.65
Negligence to recognizes PRs as a critical management function that supports all other management functions	f	46	43	13	17	0
	%	38.65	36.13	10.92	14.29	0
Denial to involve Public relations department heads in decision making activities	f	60	33	16	9	1
	%	50.42	27.73	13.44	7.56	0.84
Lack of professional and technical skill among the PRs practitioners	f	8	12	52	34	13
	%	6.72	10.08	43.7	28.57	10.92
Lack of information about the national communication strategy/direction	f	18	20	38	37	6
	%	15.13	16.81	31.93	31.09	5.04
Knocking down the PRs department from Core process to support function	f	4	8	52	31	33
	%	3.36	6.72	43.7	26.05	27.73
Absence of public relations strategy and guideline	f	38	46	21	4	10
	%	31.93	38.65	17.65	3.36	8.4
Structural problem that downsized the required manpower	f	17	42	40	14	6
	%	14.29	35.29	33.61	11.76	5.04
Lack of professional manpower in the department	f	5	7	30	39	38
	%	4.2	5.88	25.21	32.77	31.93
Insufficient budget to execute department plan	f	28	41	16	21	13
	%	23.53	34.45	13.44	17.65	10.92
Nonexistence of public relations association	f	10	7	58	26	18
	%	8.4	5.88	48.74	21.85	15.13
Mistrust from staff/other departments on the PRs department	f	59	38	12	8	2
	%	49.58	31.93	10.08	6.72	1.68
Intension of the top management to use the public relations function for the purpose of propaganda	f	31	68	14	0	6
	%	26.05	57.14	11.76	0	5.04
Loose relationship between the central government communication leadership and the PRs/Communication departments at the federal government organizations	f	41	36	30	10	2
	%	34.45	30.25	25.21	8.4	1.68
Lack of integration between the PRs departments at HEIs and the PRs departments in the federal government organizations	f	26	21	33	9	30
	%	21.85	17.65	27.73	7.56	25.21
The shifting of public to rely on the information sourcing from the social activist	f	19	28	31	19	22
	%	15.97	23.53	26.05	15.97	18.49

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Table 9 portrays the responses of PRs practitioners about the issues affecting their functioning. In order to easily identify the impact of each issue on the functioning of the PRs, a summation method was used to compare the responses above and below the medium. Thus, regarding inconsistency in clearly defining the roles and functions of public relations process, 10(8.4%) replied it had very high impact, 20(16.81%) high, 39(32.77%) medium, 29(24.37%) low, and 21(17.65%) very low. In other words, roughly half of the participants (low and very low responses) indicated the issue had relatively low impact on their functioning, while only about 25.2% replied it had high impact.

Responses about “negligence to recognizes PRs as a critical management function,” 89 (74.79%) in sum replied it had high impact, and only 17(14.29%) indicated the impact of this issue is low in sum. Similarly, to the item about denial to involve PRs process heads in organizational decision making, 93(78.15%) in sum replied it had high impact and, among the rest, only 10(8.4%) affirmed the issue has low impact on their business.

Lack of professional and technical skill among the PRs practitioners was another issue in the list. While 20(16.8%) replied the issue had high impact, 47(39.5% in sum) replied the issue affected high. In similar vein, the impact of “lack of information about the national communication strategy/direction” got equally 38(31.93%) for high and medium, 43(36.13%) low.

Regarding the fact the PRs department was knocked down from core process to support, 14(11.76%) replied high, 52(43.7%) medium, and 64(53.78%) low. Absence of public relations strategy and guideline was ranked to have 84(70.59%) high, 46(38.66%) medium, and 14(11.76%) low.

The other two items were about lack of resources. Thus, insufficient budget to execute department plan, and structural problem that downsized the required manpower were analyzed. Regarding the budget, 69(57.98%) replied high, 16(13.44%) medium and 34(28.57%) low. For the issue of structure, 59(49.58%) replied high, 40(33.61%) medium and 20(16.8%) low. In the meantime, lack of professional manpower was reported to have 12(10.08%) high, 30(25.21%) medium and 77(64.7%) low.

In the other category of the issues, non-existence of the PRs association, and lack of integration between the PRs process in the federal executive organs, HIEs, and that of the

PS department. The item of PRS association received 17(14.28%) high, 58(48.74%) medium and 44(36.97%) low. Regarding PRs process and HEIs, 47(39.5%) high, 33(27.73%) medium and 39(32.77%) low responses obtained. For the item organizational PRs process and the national PS, the responses were 77(64.71%) high, 30(25.21%) medium and 12(10.08%) low.

Mistrust of other departments and their respective staff on the PRs process, and intension of the top management in instrumenting the PRs process for propaganda were also in the list of issues. 97(81.5%) high, 12(10.08%) medium, and 10(8.4%) low responses were observed for the impact of staff mistrust; 99(83.19%) high, 14(11.76%) medium and 6(5.04%) low for top management intension. Finally, the shifting of public to rely on the information sourcing from the social activists more than the PRs gained 47(39.5%) high, 31(26.05%) medium and 41(34.45%) low in the responses.

In winding up the responses of this section, one can grasp from the analysis of the issues the participants thought to have impacted their functioning, the issues were diverse in range. Weighing the degree of impact each item in the set of issues revealed, the most severe issue relates to the management and staff within the organization the PRs operated. As replied by more than 80%, the top management intension and mistrust from other department staff were ranked on top of the impacting issues. Perhaps, the day to day activities of PRs practitioners in any organization requires cooperation of the staff in their organization itself. Regarding this, Jethwaney (2009) notes that one of the hardest and most important tasks of a public relations department is for the practitioner to explain and convince top management of the relevance of public relations in advancing effective corporate communications. Jethwaney (2009) further notes that the latter requires the expertise of a well-trained practitioner who understands the profession and can effectively articulate the strategic communication issues, roles and contributions of public relations to management. Thus, the challenges of PRs emanated from the internal environment.

The issues ranked next were also directly related to the internal environment. Receiving 78.15 and 74.79% high responses respectively, denial to involve the PRs in decision making and refusing to the process's importance recognized to be other serious challenges. Similarly, absence of PRs strategy and guidelines, loose relationship between the organizational PRs and that of the central government held the next level of severity in

impacting the PRs functioning. Then, one can see from the data that resource issue including budget and staff size were identified to have constrained the PRs functioning.

On the other hand, issues such as inconsistency in defining the process's roles and functions (42.06%), lack of practitioners' skill (39.5%) and status of the process as core or support (53.8%) were identified as challenges having low impact on the PRs functioning. The interview with the PS head in the PM office also confirmed that the recent organizational reform after implementation of JEG was intended to ensure processes and practitioners as well as organizations hold different status mainly based on their functions instead of labelling as support or core.

During the interview, the impact of 'incomplete' legal arrangements as seen in both the constitution and Access to Information law mentioned. Although the citizens' right to access was guaranteed by law, the role of making information in the possession of the government executive organs was given to the PRs by delegation instead of formally passed law. This had been an issue until the recent reform but even in the current reform, it remained a loop- the reform did not respond these issues.

In addition to this, the usual forums on PRs functions and regular meetings between the PRs of federal executive organs and that of the national leading organization did not continue. Lack of resources and suspect by organizational management to let the practitioners carry out their functions independently are also other obstacle. From this, one can learn that the reform was unplanned and incomplete as it did not bring solution to the challenges in past times. Moreover, as Chala (2017) states, the PRs practitioners are still supposed to carry out technical functions rather than managing actively participating in key decisions at the highest level of the organization.

4.13. Impact of emerging issues

Besides the issues discussed above, the PRs expressed their thoughts about the impact of emerging issues, particularly, the growing activism on social media, had on the PRs practices. Their responses were summarized on Fig. 7 below.

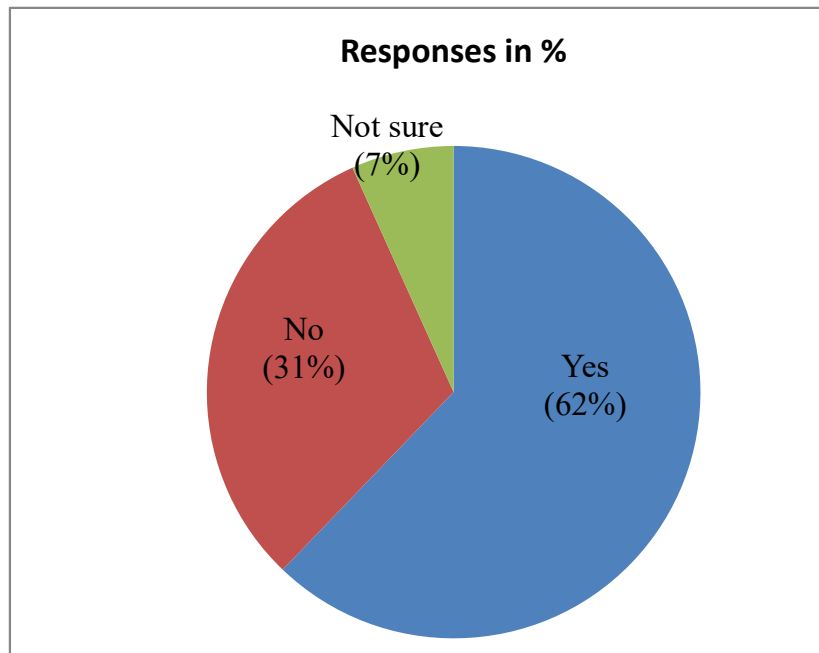


Figure 7: Responses about impact of emerging issues

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Fig. 7 showed most (62.18%) PRs practitioners believed social media activism had impacts on their practices. While 37(31.09%) replied activism did not impact their function, 8(6.72%) were not sure about it. In line to this, the participants' responses were cross-check with follow up items to see how they defend their organizational reputation from the impact social media activism. Regarding the responses of those who believed the issue had impact, ways of dealing with it were facts checking, providing information to the public on timely basis on social media, staying responsive to traditional media inquiries, partnering with influential bloggers/social media writers/.

According to Shrivastava (2007), social media activism has a growing impact on the day to day functions of the PRs, but the PRs act or react to the issue in different ways while keeping in mind silence sometimes may work better. Among the ways the PRs can deal with and handle the impacts of activism, providing information on timely basis, and using all the platforms suitable to reach the public are the best ways so that organizational transparency can be promoted in such a way that the public build trust on the organization (Jethwaney and Sarkar 115). Thus, it was attempted to identify to what extent the PRs were using various types of PRs communication tools were presented below.

4.14. PRs communication tools and how often they are used

Public relations is generally the process through which an environment can be created for effective communication. Such communication with both internal and external public can be done using various tools or media. In this part of analysis, the PRs practitioners reported how often they were using a set of tools so that the student researcher can deduce whether their choice was affected by the reform in any manner. The participants rated their responses from “Far below” to “Far above” (Table 11).

Table 10: The use of new media as communication tool

Items	Res- ponses	Far below	Slightly below	Met expectations	Slightly above	Far above
Organizational website	f	61	27	16	9	4
	%	51.26	22.69	13.44	7.56	3.36
Twitter	f	16	17	43	19	24
	%	13.44	14.29	36.13	15.97	20.17
Facebook	f	6	11	21	51	30
	%	5.04	9.24	17.65	42.86	25.21
Instagram	f	56	21	33	7	2
	%	47.06	17.65	27.73	5.88	1.68
LinkedIn	f	44	43	17	6	9
	%	36.97	36.13	10.92	5.04	7.56
Broadcast media (Radio & Tv)	f	31	26	51	7	4
	%	26.05	21.85	42.86	5.88	3.36
Print media	f	7	50	26	16	20
	%	5.88	42.02	21.85	13.44	16.81
International broadcast media	f	74	38	4	3	0
	%	62.19	31.93	3.36	2.52	0
House journals/publications	f	31	8	23	34	23
	%	26.05	6.72	19.33	28.57	19.33
Outdoors	f	5	16	27	35	36
	%	4.2	13.45	22.69	29.41	30.25
Total		119				

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

Table 10 illustrates that the participants seemed to use different types of media to carry out their PRs communications. The type of media the participants of this research reported to have been using above the expectation were Facebook (68.07%), and outdoors (59.66%), journal publications (47.9%). On the contrary to this, the above table depicts international broadcast media (94.12%), organizational website (73.95%), and, from social media types, LinkedIn and Instagram 73.11% and 64.71% respectively were used below the

expectations (50% in this case). Meanwhile, local broadcast and print media were also used by about 48% of the organizations.

Table 11: Organizational presence on internet-based pages

Items	Responses, n=30	
	f	%
Organizational website	21	70
Twitter	4	13.33
Facebook	20	66.67
Instagram	2	6.67
LinkedIn	3	10

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

One can learn from Table 11 that most of the federal executive organs once built a website as a tool of PRs communication. Similarly, the organization created social networking pages such as Facebook. However, the other prominent tools such as Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn were less widely used by the sample organizations. The other critical issue observed was that the websites of more than 90% organizations which had home pages on website were obsolete. With this, one may wonder if the federal executive organs could achieve primary objectives of the PRs communication- building a trustworthy relationship between their respective organization and its significant public, and do execute it in a two-way symmetric approach (Tench & Yeomans, 2009, p. 150). Referring to the responses of participants about their roles of PRs in their organizations, the tools widely used as revealed from analysis of the data in this section, however, the process is not at the capacity of excelling in its functions. It has been put aside as an insignificant unit of the organizational system and stuck in multiple challenges.

4.15. Relationship between the organizational PRs and national PRs management

The guidance and leadership of a central unit is a pre-requisite for the development and standardization of a public service organization. Affirming to this, Miller (2012) argues it is mainly through a formal and interactive relationship between the organizations at various administrative tiers that public services can be delivered efficiently. The case for the PRs sector is also the same. During the reform as well the roles and responsibilities of coordinating the national communication system was transferred to the PS. In this

research, therefore, the participants rated the roles of the national PRs/communication leading organization (Press Secretariat department in this case) in terms of its responsibilities (Table 13).

Table 12: Relationship between the organizational and national PRs organs

Expectations from the Office		Responses				
		Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
coordinating the PRs/communication planning and implementation of practitioners at various sectors and organizations at federal levels	F	1	9	10	58	41
	%	0.84	7.56	8.4	48.74	34.45
developing the PRs/communication policies, strategies, ... and defining roles of practitioners	F	2	17	8	60	32
	%	1.68		6.72	50.42	26.89
monitoring, evaluation and feedback on the national PRs/communication practices	F	0	5	21	27	66
	%	0	4.2	17.65	22.69	55.46
defining standard for resource (HR, material, ...)	F	0	0	27	28	64
	%	0	0	22.69	23.53	53.78
developing capacity through building and sustaining relationship with education and training institutions locally and internationally	F	0	1	7	81	30
	%	0	0.84	5.88	68.07	25.21
assisting in setting up a vibrant PRs professional association	F	4	6	9	80	19
	%	3.36	5.04	7.56	67.23	15.97
supporting professional development in the PRs/communication sector	F	1	3	0	71	44
	%	0.84	2.52	0	59.66	36.98

Source: - Prepared by the researcher from the data gathered through survey, 2020

As presented in Table 13 above, the participants rated the efforts of the national PS in coordinating the PRs/communication planning and implementation of practitioners at various sectors and organizations at federal levels as good (8.4%), fair (8.4%) and poor (83.2%) in sum. Regarding developing the PRs/communication policies and strategies, and defining roles of practitioners, the PS's performance was rated as 15.97% good, 6.7% fair and 77.3% poor.

In terms of monitoring, evaluation and feedback on the national PRs/communication practices, the PS department was rated as 4.2% good, 17.65% fair, and 78.15% poor. Referring to the function of defining resource standards and facilitating capacity building, the PS department's roles were rated significantly below the expectation- rated as poor by more than 75%.

Finally, the participants evaluated supportive roles of the PS department. The responses were the same- the roles of the PS department in assisting the PRs in the federal executive organs in setting up a vibrant professional association, and gaining professional status were generally rated as poor by 83.19% and 96.64% of the participants respectively.

During the interview, the PS department head admitted that the department currently focussed on coordinating the press more than the PRs units, because of the urgency in reaching wider public to create consensus on legibility of the current ‘reformist’ government measures in fundamentally changing the socio-economic and political landscape of the destabilized Ethiopia. Even though it was more than a year later this data was collected since the reform took place, the process was not finalized because of priority given to other agenda as the PS head reported. Moreover, the interviewee added, “... structural change was mainly the first stage, proposed to be followed by extensive trainings to the practitioners to wash their mind, which was tuned to be ‘propagandist’ looking after the image of ruling party instead of professional PRs communication practices in past two decades.”

With regards to the ways forward, the PS head pointed out there was an intension of reviewing the its roles and responsibilities, and also redefining the roles of PRs in various sectors and organizations in line to the on-going changes within the government structure. The time, according to the PS head, would be in ‘short time.’

It was also learned in the earlier sections that loose relationship among the key parties such as the national coordinating body, i.e. the PSD, HEIs and PRs processes was among the issues the PRs thought to have been impacting their functioning.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

In the preceding chapter, data collected from diverse sources have been analyzed. In this chapter, summary of main contents of the study, conclusions drawn from the data analysis and recommendations are presented.

5.1. Conclusion

Organizations in today's dynamic world are operating under pressure. Due to internal and external forces that affect their operations, the organizations change in form and function. Similarly, organizations that are funded by the public financing and preside over by the government are also operating under this general condition. Such organizations are due for change and reform following changes in the government policies and strategies, because they are the instruments to achieve the political mission.

In Ethiopia, the federal government executive organs have been undergoing changes structurally, among others, in different times in order to respond to the reforms government went through. In the same fashion, the powers and duties of the executive organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia were redefined in 2018. Consequently, some new organs established; some others split; and even others demolished. Further, the functions in some organizations changed to accommodate with the new situation. The national PRs sector was the one impacted by such reform process. During the recent nation-wide public service organizations structural reform in particular, the former Government Communication Affairs Office that had been in charge of leading the national PRs sector and coordinating the public relations functions at the federal executive organs dissolved. The powers and duties of the GCAO were transferred to a newly established department, namely the Press Secretariat, in the Prime Minister office. Public relations in the federal executive organs have therefore been functioning in this umbrella circumstances since November 2018. In this thesis, thus, the impacts of the recent organizational reform the federal executive organs underwent had on the practices of the public relations communication practices was examined.

General objective of the study was to examine the impacts of organizational reform on the PRs process and functions in the federal executive organs of Ethiopia. With this regard, the study had the following specific objectives; these were:

- a) To map the location of the Public Relations process in the federal Executive Organs;
- b) To identify the PRs functions and roles that the current reform change affected most;
- c) To identify the challenges Public Relations practitioners are facing after reform; and,
- d) To define the prospects of the PRs process based on the findings.

To achieve these research objectives, a quantitative research design was employed to conduct a descriptive survey on the case at hand. In line to this, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through semi-structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interview. The questionnaire was administered to 120 public relations practitioners at the federal executive organs which were selected through simple random sampling. Interviews were carried out with the head of the Press Secretariat department in the FDRE Prime Minister Office, and a Research and Organizational Reform Director in the FDRE Civil Service Commission. These interviewees were also selected purposively for they were primarily concerned with the issue at hand. The sample, therefore, comprised 121 participants.

The survey data collected from the PRs participants were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 21. The qualitative data generated through interview were coded, categorized and re-narrated in line to the survey responses. Eventually, the findings were identified in line to the specific research objectives and questions pre-determined. The following conclusions were drawn based on the data analysis:

- a) Structurally, the public relations process in the federal executive organs situated just below the senior executives. In most cases, the heads of PRs process directly report to the top executive management. However, the PRs were not involved in the meetings of the executive management at which high-level organizational decisions were made.
- b) The PRs practitioners in the federal executive organs had sufficient experience for they had been in the same industry for long time, were well educated and capable of doing their communication functions professionally. However, significant majority of the practitioners were focusing on function areas such as writing,

delivering speech on various occasions or preparing speeches for other officials in their respective organizations. Similarly, functions of similar nature such as writing, media monitoring and organizing in sum exercised by the PRs independently. However, priority areas of the PRs such as research, media relation, management of advertisement and corporate social responsibilities were performed to a lesser extent by majority of the PRs practitioners. Without freely engaging with the public and conducting interactive activities like research, the PRs were not able to make a two-way communication and thus the two-way symmetric model of PRs communication was not being employed. The self-disclosure of the PRs practitioners as identifying themselves as communication managers also confirmed to lack of independence to execute some important PRs functions. Thus, it can be concluded that the recent reform put the PRs in fear of performing their functions independently.

- c) The issues impacting the PRs functioning in the federal executive organs were multifaceted. The PRs in the federal executive organs still suffered from lack of adequate recognition internally from both management and staff, and, externally from the media. PRs is still not seen as a vital tool by some organizations, and thus the management continue to place the process out of the key decision making circle. As a result, the practitioners cannot execute the roles and functions as prescribed in their job description. Moreover, the PRs teams suffer from shortage of staff, budget, and working under pressure of limited freedom and flexibility to plan and implement their programs. The PRs teams in the federal executive organs have inadequate resources. They were understaffed. Moreover, the PRs practitioners are heavily dependent for any decision on the top management to whom they report. Due to delay in decision and approval to carry out key functions, the practitioners have been focusing on the routines that do not require them get approval to proceed with. Social media activism is among the emerging issues affecting the functioning of the PRs excellence. While few PRs practitioners reported to have been dealing with the issue by enhancing organizational openness through timely information feeding using diverse media, most PRs practitioners, regarding media utilization, focus on limited digital tools. With this, therefore, it is questionable whether the PRs could achieve the primary objectives of the PRs

communication, i.e. building a trustworthy relationship between their respective organization and its significant public.

- d) Even though the Press Secretariat department is shouldered with responsibilities of high importance to promote the PRs sector nationally, its performance is rated significantly below the expectation. Lest the department handed over the former GCAO functions that gave recognition for the importance of the PRs sector in the national development agenda, the Press Secretariat department has not been able to keep most of the crucial functions running. Thus, the interaction between the PRs in the executive organs and the PS is almost muted. Moreover, due to the fact that the ex-office shrunk and down-sized, the practically tested and accepted sets of strategies to establish a vibrant PRs sector across the country is grounded. This in turn is causing some veteran PRs practitioners leave the sector looking for an environment that enables them to grow and promote better. Generally, there are numerous issues haunting the PRs processes and thus deter ring functioning of the processes.
- e) In spite of the issues challenges the functioning of the PRs in the federal executive organs, the PRs sector has a positive future outlook, especially as the practitioners in the federal executive organs were well trained in relevant fields of study and experienced in implementing the PRs communication programs. Even though the 2018 reform initiative have affected the national PRs leading organization in terms of structure and size, the PRs processes in the executive organs remained as they had been. Their roles and responsibilities were also maintained lest the executive management the executive organs are offering limited recognitions for the processes, and thus the PRs practitioners are not discharging their responsibilities independently and to the extent they are expected to. With the overweighing enabling conditions in place, thus, the PRs can flourish in future.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from data analysis, the student researcher suggests the following recommendations:

- a. Despite the fact the PRs practitioners in the federal executive organs are adequately trained and have sufficient experience to carry out their roles effectively, they have to stride further to excel in their performance so that they can get recognition. While the Press Secretariat department head needs to create awareness among the cabinet ministries who lead the federal executive organs, the practitioners at the organization level should outshine in implementing appropriate theories and models in their day to day work, including detaching from the past spokesman role that represented the interests of one stakeholder to the contemporary two way communication. As this requires the development of multiple skills including strategic planning, evaluation, research and so forth, the practitioners should go through professional development.
- b. Guiding policy and strategy are essential for standardization and professionalism of the PRs practices. It is also the principles and values in such policy documents that guide and direct the sector's development. Thus, the Press Secretariat department, along with other concerned stakeholders, must finalize ongoing initiatives of development of the legal arrangements such as policies and guidelines.
- c. In order to develop, maintain, grow and nurture mutually beneficial relationships between their respective organisation and significant publics of the organizations, the PRs should rather focus on key roles such as relationship management, research and publicity of the services or products their respective organizations are meant to deliver.
- d. Revisiting the relationship between key stakeholders, particularly the central government PRs structure and the PRs processes in the federal executive organs, stronger allies should be created to illuminate misconceptions and promote the role the PRs could play in an organization. In this regard, strengthening the ongoing movements to establish the PRs association should be supported by the HEIs

offering the PRs courses through awareness creation for the prospect PRs and capacity building support in later phases.

- e. Getting buy in the importance of PRs in their respective organizations, the PRs practitioners should convince the executive management fulfil resources, financial, human and material, and reach the significant public through alternative media so that they can stay competent in today's turbulent communication environment led by social media activism.
- f. Malfunctioning of the national PRs leadership, which overtook the long-term PRs professionalization plans and programs from the former GCAO due to the recent organizational reform, along with lack of guiding legal frameworks and independent professional association, among others, are deterring professionalism of the PRs. Hence, the Press Secretariat department should resume the reform, finalize implementation and support its professionalism. In this regard, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities, setting standard for required resources, and setting the profession free from government intervention so that it can check and balance its performance through independent professional association are pre-requisites for development of PRs in Ethiopia. While strengthening the freedom the news media practitioners have started enjoying since the dissolving of the GCAO which used to control and twist the information sources as well as channels, the Press Secretariat department should also reinforce professional public relations practices in Ethiopia.
- g. Future researchers should survey the opinion of the general public and executive management so as to come out with more comprehensive research outcomes about the PRs sector development in the post-EPRDF era and in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Public Relations Practitioners' Questionnaire

Introduction

Dear valued participant,

I am the graduate student in Addis Ababa University Schools of Journalism and Communication. I am studying “Public Relations and Strategic Communication [PRSC] in the school with the ID. No. GSE/1954/10.

With the dissertation topic, “Organizational Reform and the Location of Public Relations in the federal Executive Organs in Ethiopia,” I am focusing on the Public Relations/Communication practices of the federal government Executive Organs after the re-definition of the roles and functions of the Executive Organs since 2018 (2011 E.C), referred as “recent organizational reform” in this questionnaire.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect primary data from the Public Relations/Communication process heads and the practitioner experts at sample organizations.

The dissertation aims to examine the challenges and prospects of the recent organizational reform on the PRs process (or department).

I require about 30 minutes of your time to fill in this questionnaire. You are given the assurance by the student researcher that your responses will be confined to the use of the study and confidentiality will be strictly observed at all times.

In the mean time, your response to this email will be considered as an informed consent to take part in this research.

If you have any inquiry regarding this questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact me by Email: mengelam2004@gmail.com or Cell phone: 0911 02 25 22.

I would like to thank you for your invaluable time and information.

Mengistu Lamaro

Part I: General Questions

1. Name of your organization: _____
2. In line to the recent organizational reform, which one describes the status of your organization:
 - a) Newly established
 - b) Merged with other
 - c) Split from another organization
 - d) No change took place
3. Full name of the PRs department: _____
4. Your gender: a) Female b) Male
5. Your work experience ONLY in the PRs/Communication process/Department:
 - a. 0 – 2 Years
 - b. 3 – 5 Years
 - c. 6 – 9 Years
 - d. More than 9 Years
6. When did you join the current organization?
 - a. in 2012 E.C
 - b. in 2011 E.C
 - c. in 2010 E.C
 - d. in 2009 E.C or before
7. Are you deployed at the PRs/Communication department based on the Job Evaluation and Grading (JEG) initiative?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Number of staff in the PRs/communication department based on JEG:
 - 8.1. Allowed: a) 1 - 3 b. 4 – 6 c. 7 – 9 d. 10 or more
 - 8.2. Actual working: a) 1 - 3 b. 4 – 6 c. 7 – 9 d. 10 or more
9. Your current position/grade/rank:
 - a. Department Head/Director (Either assigned or delegate)
 - b. Senior expert- Level IV or V
 - c. Junior expert- Level III
 - d. Beginner expert- Level I or II
 - e. Other (if you are not deployed based on JEG)

Part II: Questions relating to the PRs/Communication Practices and Roles

10. The following roles define the everyday activities the PRs/Communication practitioners assume. How do you rate the degree you have been executing each of the following functions independently and free?

1= Almost always 2= Often 3= Sometimes 4= Seldom 5= Never

S.No	Roles and functions	1	2	3	4	5
10.1	Research (gathering information about public opinion, trends, emerging issues, political climate, media coverage, concerns of consumer and environmental special-interest groups, and so forth)	1	2	3	4	5
10.2	Media relation (contacting the news media, magazines, freelance writers and trade publications with the intention of getting them to publish; or broadcast news and features about the organisation; or responding to media requests, ...)	1	2	3	4	5
10.3	Organizing (arrange media conferences, conventions and exhibitions, to open-house days, anniversary celebrations, events, contests, awards programmes, ...)	1	2	3	4	5
10.4	Writing (news releases, newsletters, correspondence, reports, booklets, texts, radio and television copy, film scripts, ...)	1	2	3	4	5
10.5	Production (creating communication using multimedia including art, photography, and design for brochures, booklets, reports, corporate advertisements, and occasional publications) or producing web content	1	2	3	4	5
10.6	Speaking (either speaks yourself or arranges for others to address meetings)	1	2	3	4	5
10.7	Media monitoring	1	2	3	4	5
10.8	Lobbying	1	2	3	4	5
10.9	Advertisement campaign for a product and/or service publicity	1	2	3	4	5
10.10	Relationship management (develop, maintain, grow and nurture mutually beneficial relationships between your organisation and its significant publics)	1	2	3	4	5
10.11	Manage corporate social responsibility activities	1	2	3	4	5

11. Which one domain of the PRs roles defines you well? You are a:
- communication manager
 - communication technician
12. Who do you directly report to?
- top most official in your organization (eg. Minister, CEO, ...)
 - Second top head official (eg. Deputy minister)
 - Head of Office of the Minister
 - Management board
 - Other (Please specify) _____

Part III: Questions relating to the reform, opportunities, challenges and Prospects

13. Do you think the recent organizational reform brought any negative impact on the efficiency in practices of Public Relations/Communication in your current organization?
- Yes
 - No
 - May be

14. If your answer for Q. No. 14 above is “Yes”, indicate the major function areas you think the reform affected. Rate your responses for the following scales:

1= A great deal 2= Much 3= Somewhat 4= Little 5= Never

S.No.	Items	Responses				
		1	2	3	4	5
14.1	Access to executive management decisions	1	2	3	4	5
14.2	Direct relation/access to media	1	2	3	4	5
14.3	Budget to execute the department plan	1	2	3	4	5
14.4	Recognition from top management	1	2	3	4	5
14.5	Collaboration with other departments within the organization	1	2	3	4	5
14.6	Connection with public (out of staff and media)	1	2	3	4	5
14.7	Authority/power to execute tasks/responsibilities independently	1	2	3	4	5
14.8	Career development	1	2	3	4	5
14.9	Promotion	1	2	3	4	5
14.10	Staff size	1	2	3	4	5
14.11	Ownership of technological equipment	1	2	3	4	5
14.12	Horizontal and vertical relationship with other organizations	1	2	3	4	5
14.13	Benefits other than salary	1	2	3	4	5
14.14	Nature of communication as one way or two ways	1	2	3	4	5
14.15	Providing PRs functions to other departments or individuals	1	2	3	4	5

15. What issues are affecting your PRs/communication? Please circle a response for each item on the following table as indicated.

S.No.	Issues	Degree of Impact				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.1	Inconsistency in clearly defining the roles and functions of public relations	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.2	Existence of other departments that share major PRs roles	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.3	Negligence to recognizes PRs as a critical management function that supports all other management functions	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.4	Denial to involve Public relations department heads in decision making activities	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.5	Lack of professional and technical skill among the PRs practitioners	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.6	Lack of information about the national communication strategy/direction	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.7	Knocking down the PRs department from Core process to support function	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.8	Absence of public relations strategy and guideline	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
15.9	Structural problem that downsized the required manpower	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low

16. To what extents are the following issues are affecting your PRs/communication function?
Please circle a response for each item based on the scale of impact as indicated.

S.No.	Issues	Degree of Impact				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.1	Lack of professional manpower in the department	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.2	Insufficient budget to execute department plan	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.3	Lack of adequate working equipment	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.4	Nonexistence of public relations association	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.5	Mistrust from staff/other departments on the PRs department	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.6	Intension of the top management to use the public relations function for the purpose of propaganda	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.7	Loose relationship between the central government communication leadership and the PRs/Communication departments at the federal government organizations	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.8	Lack of integration between the PRs/Communication departments at Higher Education Institutions and the PRs/Communication departments in the federal government organizations	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
16.9	The shifting of public to rely on the information sourcing from the social activist	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low

17. Do you think activism on social media has had impact on the PRs/Communication practices in your organization?

- a. Yes b. No

18. If your answer for Q. No. 18 above is “Yes”, how are you dealing with this trending issue?

19. How often do you use each of the following PRs/Communication tools to provide updates to your public? Comparing to your annual plan, rate how you have been providing information to your public using the scales. Please UNDERLINE or CIRCLE your responses as:

1= Far below 2= Slightly below 3= Met expectations 4= Slightly above 5= Far above

S.No.	Items	Responses				
		1	2	3	4	5
19.1	Organizational website	1	2	3	4	5
19.2	Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
19.3	Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
19.4	Instagram	1	2	3	4	5
19.5	LinkedIn	1	2	3	4	5
19.6	Broadcast media (Radio & Tv)	1	2	3	4	5
19.7	Print media	1	2	3	4	5
19.8	International broadcast media	1	2	3	4	5
19.9	House journals/publications	1	2	3	4	5
19.10	Outdoors	1	2	3	4	5

Part III: Items about the relationship between the organizational PRs and national PRs/Communication management

20. How do you rate the roles of the national PRs/communication leading organization (Press Secretariat Office in this case) in terms of the following roles? Please UNDERLINE or CIRCLE your responses as:

1= Very good 2= Good 3= Fair 4= Poor 5= Very Poor

S.No.	Expectations from the Office	Responses				
		1	2	3	4	5
20.1	coordinating the PRs/communication planning and implementation of practitioners at various sectors and organizations at federal levels	1	2	3	4	5
20.2	developing the PRs/communication policies, strategies, ... and defining roles of practitioners	1	2	3	4	5
20.3	monitoring, evaluation and feedback on the national PRs/communication practices	1	2	3	4	5
20.4	defining standard for resource (HR, material, ...)	1	2	3	4	5
20.5	developing capacity through building and sustaining relationship with education and training institutions locally and internationally	1	2	3	4	5
20.6	assisting in setting up a vibrant PRs professional association	1	2	3	4	5
20.7	supporting professional development in the PRs/communication sector	1	2	3	4	5

Part IV: Final Remarks

21. Finally, can you tell me a little about yourself?

21.1. Your highest level of education _____

21.2. The field of study for your most attained level of education _____

===== Thank you =====

Appendix II: Survey Participant Consent Form

Purpose and Procedure: This questionnaire designed to collect data for the thesis to fulfil the requirements of MA- Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

The information gathered is solely for the academic use, and all respondents will be kept confidential and anonymous. It would be appreciated if you would take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at +251 911 02 25 22 or email: mengelam2004@gmail.com. Thank you!

Voluntary Nature of the Study/Confidentiality: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to complete the study at any point during the survey. Your personal information or name will not be revealed or shared.

Contacts and Questions: You may ask questions regarding this study at any time. If you have further questions or would like to know the results of the study, please leave your email address below.

Email: _____

Statement of Consent: I state that:

- I have read the above information
- Any questions and concerns, regarding survey, have been addressed.
- I give consent to participate in this study
- I understand that this study will not involve any greater risk than those ordinarily occurring in daily life.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____