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ANALYSIS OF THE e-PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION

By

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Addis Ababa
November 6, 2020

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
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A thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University, Graduate School of Journalism and Communication in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and communication: specialty in Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CIPR – Chartered Institute of Public Relations

CRM – Customer Relation Management

e-PR – Electronic Public Relations

ETO – Ethiopian Tourism Organization

ICT – Information Communication Technology

PR – Public Relations

SEO – Search Engine Optimization

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Culture Organization

UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organization

Abstract

Public Relations is considered as one of the important factors for the development and growth of tourism. With the currently popular form of communication evolves e-PR from traditional PR which is the general objective of the study. This research is aimed to analyse the e-PR in the case of Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO). This study has employed case study design and followed both qualitative and quantitative research approach. Content analysis, semi-structured interview and online analytics were employed as data collection instruments. The study employed purposive sampling. The interviewees were selected purposefully for the positions and relevance they have to the interview. A total of 3 officials were interviewed (i.e. the senior public relations, the head of digital PR and senior marketing). The contents from two social media sites (Twitter and Facebook) were selected based on the peak season for tourists to visit. Besides this, the official website of ETO has been analysed. The data gathered was interpreted thematically and described 008/-both in figures and words. The result of the study shows that the organizations although has begun using the e-PR platform, it is not yet privileged with the qualities it needs to possess. The analysis shows the strategies and activities of the PR department are at its infancy stage. The digital PR department of the organization is more engaged one-way communication more than two-way communication. The official web site is not adequately designed and is not interactive as it is supposed to.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Tourism is playing a significant role in boosting up countries' image and the country's economic development and development of a nation (Mckercher, 1995) A report by (UNWTO, 2019) states the growth rate for tourist arrivals and earnings from tourists has generated 1.7 trillion dollars exceeding the UNWTO's forecast by two years. Revenues from visitor spending have grown faster than the world economy. This makes the sector a truly global force for economic growth and development, driving the creation of more and better jobs and serving as a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship. In short, tourism is serving better lives for millions of individuals overall the world.

Technological advancements and tourism have been going hand in hand for years (Poon, 1993; Sheldon, 1997). Developments in ICTs have undoubtedly changed both business practices and strategies as well as industry structures (Porter, 2001). The revolution of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has enabled the consumer to search for destinations worldwide more easily. An increasing number of consumers worldwide are no longer dependent on travel agencies to look for information and inspiration for their next holiday. Instead, consumers make use of the Internet and browse online for inspiration about their potential next holiday destination (ETC, 2012). This, in turn, leads to tourism destinations worldwide becoming the focal point of attention for consumers' decision-making process. However, many destinations worldwide struggle with this process as their Internet and online presence might still be quite basic (Buhalis, 2000). Technological evolution has given birth to modern customers. This has led them to be associative with certain brand only when the relation is founded on trust, which requires a sustainable marketing communication and memorable experiences unlike advertisement which focuses on one-way mass communication method (Clow and Donald, 2010). To attract consumers to various choices in this highly competitive market, many marketing and management tools shall be taken into consideration. Hence, the biggest challenge of each company is to structure the right marketing communication model within its elements: advertising, public relations, direct marketing, personal sales and promotions (Coviello, Winklhofer, and Hamilton, 2006). The most

important of this tool is public relations. Public relations plays a significant role in constructing images of locations, activities, and identities (Morgan, N.J., Pritchard, A., & Abbot, S., 2001).

The technological advancement has changed how PR functions in this evolving world. As Web 2.0 came it gave birth to PR 2.0 or what is known as e-PR. It is a latest and developing concept which applies the practice of PR through the new information communication technologies (ICT). This new PR has now become enticed with tourism for promoting and marketing. With such a boom in tourism and technology exists fierce competition in marketing and promoting a country to grasp the attention of tourists overall the world. This promising new PR can be exploited for amazing results especially in a country like Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is fortunate to possess ten UNESCO registered sites, but unfortunate on how to put this in to the market. Noticing the economic loss affecting the countries capacity, the growth and transformation plan 2010/11-2014/15 prepared and approved by the federal government of Ethiopia considered tourism together with culture and cross-cutting sectors and set-up strategic directions to enhance the role of tourism and political development initiatives.

In addition, considering the pace of growth of tourism arrivals and investment in tourism as well as the potential for further development, the new growth and transformation plan for 2015/16-2019/20 has recognized tourism as one of the top five strategic economic sectors in Ethiopia. In 2013, the government of Ethiopia proclaimed federal regulation (294/2013), which established the tourism transformation council, the Ethiopian tourism organization (ETO) and the tourism board. The Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO) shares a mandate of enhancing the benefits of tourism sustainably and competitively through mobilizing and providing leadership to the tourism sector stakeholders towards the development of tourism and marketing (<http://www.ethiopia.travel/>, n.d.).

ETO that is the focus of this study has made some good efforts in maintaining with the new PR. It runs a website, and different social Medias. However, studies suggest ETO suffers from poor communication and promotion performance of the organization. A study conducted by (Robinson D. , 2016) stated that the country is losing benefits due to the lack of efficient marketing. The lack of marketing within Ethiopia is evidenced by the profound absence of tourism information at Addis Ababa's Bole International Airport. These times PR is considered as the fifth "P" of marketing

strategy: product, price, position and promotion (Wilcox et al., 2009) as cited in (Petrovici A. , 2014). In the highly competitive marketing world, the PR department faces challenges not only to promote the organization but also to be fit and forward-thinking adjacent to technological advancement.

From the main findings of a study made by (Ethiopia & World Bank Group, 2012), inside branding, promotion and awareness raising pillar, it is mentioned the negative image of Ethiopia is persistent; it renders the country less attractive as a tourist destination. It is put in the study that establishing a research-based marketing and branding tourism board is the remedy for the cause. Even though web 2.0 harnesses the two-way communication model, and pillars e-public relations, the ETO's website and its other social media pages are not active enough to maintain relationship with the public.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Ethiopia is privileged with various sites of both cultural and historical. The country is renowned for its ten UNESCO registered sites that have the potential of enticing a tourist's attention with a proper effort made. In spite of this, the country is not benefiting compared to the potential it possesses (Sintayehu, 2016; Group & Tourism, 2012; Altes, 2018).

Studies across tourism and Ethiopian tourism specifically state several problems that are dragging Ethiopian tourism back. Concerning the aim of this study: that is digital public relations of Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO), studies show several constraints for the development of tourism.

A Study made by (Sintayehu, 2016) stated in the conclusion: promotion system that the government follows is backward; compared with other countries, Ethiopian promotion is poor. In addition to this, the research studied by (Birhanu & Negussie, T., 2015) mentioned numerous problems in their studies regarding ETO. They stated ETO as a government body is rather not known by stakeholders. They stated the establishment of effective public relations could curb the constraints. Another study by (Robinson D. B., 2016) stated there is in efficient marketing to attract tourists to the country and lack of marketing of tourist attractions once tourists are in the country. The study stated "Ethiopia is evidenced by the profound absence of tourism information at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. There is a lack of signage to tourist attractions and it is almost

impossible to find brochures or maps of the city or its attractions" (P: 4). Ethiopia is suffering from a negative image that dates back years. This has been proven over many studies (Sintayehu, 2016; Robinson, 2016; Birhanu & Negussie, T., 2015; Ethiopia & World Bank Group, 2012). These studies also state marketing and destination branding is currently not receiving enough attention. Strategic Partnership with and direct involvement by the private sector is essential, as well as a parallel and complementary domestic campaign to raise tourism awareness. These studies are suggesting the tourism sector is suffering from a weak PR and could be enhanced through effective communication and promotion. Possessing effective, fast and timely public relations is now the new capacity of e-PR.

These days it is crucial to have digital communication. In (F.D.R.E. Tourism Development Policy, 2009) a strategy mentioned to increase the promotion of the country is written as:

Because it is vital to establish an ICT- supported e-business system to be competitive in the international tourism market, an Ethiopia tourism destination portal will be created so that institutions operating in the sector would obtain sufficient information, while ensuring at the same time that tourists and companies in tourist generating countries would get up-to-date information on the tourist destinations of our country (P: 18)

As to my preliminary studies, ETO policy states that it would establish a portal that gives sufficient information. However, the portal has not been created till the time this study has been done. In fact, the policy has not been revised to the current time. ETO has developed a website: <http://www.ethiopia.travel/about-eto>. But the website barely gives sufficient information. Furthermore, the organization owns some very useful and widely used social media pages: as collected on March 8:00 Am, Facebook (21,664 followers and 21,103 likes), LinkedIn, and Instagram (1,143 followers) and YouTube (601 subscribes).

In this digital world and changing PR system from the "old" to the new that is "Digital/e-PR" opportunities and features are very essential to tourism industry. This study is driven to analyse how ETO's PR department is practicing with the digital media.

1.3 Research questions

This research aims to answer the following questions.

1. How accessible is the practice of PR of the organization in utilizing the internet?
2. Which Gerung's four model of PR, does the organization's presence on social Media resemble?
3. What is the extent of the promotional communication of the Public relations practitioners of the organization?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General Objective

- Analysis of the digital public relations of the Ethiopian tourism organization.

1.2.1 Specific Objectives

- Find out the accessibility of the organization in e-PR.
- Learn which Gerung's four model of PR the organization highly uses over the internet.
- To assess how the PR practitioners of ETO are promoting the organization.

1.5 Scope of the study

Myriads of governmental and none governmental organizations work on different purposes and objectives. This study though will focus on Ethiopian Tourism Organization (ETO). This study specifically will focus on analysing the digital public relations of ETO. Moreover, the study only analysed two social media sites and their website. The sample taken for the content analysis is only for a period of four months.

1.6 Significance of the study

In the speedy change we are experiencing, it would be pivotal to be alerted of the technological advancement. Public relations being one of infant yet growing professions in Ethiopia, it is essential to study the field. Studying the discipline and professional status of the field in relation

with the change we are experiencing could give an insight and waking alert for ETO organization and other professionals to contemplate on the progress of the profession.

Since tourism sector studies are not efficiently found, this study could also function as a reference for other researchers and for stakeholders as an idea and motivation builder.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the newly coming digital public relations of ETO. This will limit the study in to only focusing in only one major development of public relations. Besides this the study will only be limited to one governmental organization.

The study will also be limited to only one governmental organization which may make it unrepresentative to the other governmental or none governmental organizations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Analysing the digital public relations of Ethiopian Tourism Organization is the major focus of the study and so this chapter explores the literature that bares direct significance to the objectives and research questions outlined in Chapter One. Given that the wealth of research and information on public relations and studies, the objective here is just to make a brief review of key aspects. Constructing a conceptual framework, the research chapter will be able to define public relations; identify and understand the difference between digital and traditional PR; present the impact or importance of PR to tourism; describe the concept of digital public relations and media and tools which are integrated with; present ETO's mission, vision and goals.

2.2 Brief History of Public Relations

What now is known as public relations has been with us for thousands of years. People with a message to communicate have long recognized the power of public opinion to move others to action. The Greeks had a word for Public relations: Semantikos: to signify, to mean. Semantikos means semantics, which can be defined as how to get people to believe things and do things.

The sign to modern-day public relations practice can be found in the work of rhetoricians, press agents and other promoters. Since early times speechmakers, called rhetoricians, provided such communication services as speech-writing, speaking on behalf of a client, training for difficult questions, and persuasion skills.

For example, in 50 B.C. Julius Caesar wrote the first campaign biography, *Caesar's Gallic Wars*. He publicized his military exploits to convince the Roman people that he would make the best head of state. Candidates for political office continue to publicize themselves with campaign biographies and accounts of military exploits to this day. Between 427 to 347 BC, Rhetoric as a distinct discipline was well established in Greece. In this age the rhetoricians' job was to foster persuasive skills more than it was to determine if arguments and claims were true or false according to (Garcia, 1998).

The term propaganda is derived after the creation of the Congregatio de Propaganda (The congregation for propagating the faith) by the Roman Catholic Church is often pointed to as a key stone in the development of public relations.

Numerous examples of public relations–like activities were identifiable in the early days of American settlement as each of the colonies used publicity techniques to attract settlers. In 1641, Harvard College initiated the first systematic U.S. fund-raising campaign, which was supported by the first fund-raising brochure, *New England's First Fruits*. In 1758, King's College (now Columbia University) issued the first press release to announce graduation exercise.

Publicity techniques were even more prevalent at the time of the American Revolution and all subsequent conflicts or situations when power has been threatened or when public support is needed. In the middle of 19th century appeared a man who was to become one of the leading publicists of all time, Phineas. T. Barnum. He has always been considered the master of press agency, a promoter with endless imagination. His accomplishments include the founding of the American Museum and the establishment of the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Barnum was a master of promotion who could fill his enterprises with customers by using publicity methods. When P. T. Barnum died, the *London Times* fondly called him a “harmless deceiver.” (www.wikipedia.com).

Publicity techniques were even more prevalent at the time of the American Revolution and all subsequent conflicts or situations when power has been threatened or when public support is needed. Indeed, public relations have prospered most in times of extreme pressure or crisis. Such were the circumstances preceding the American Revolutionary War, when Samuel Adams initiated what can be called a public relations campaign.

Public relations became a profession in 1903 as Ivy Lee undertook to advise John D. Rockefeller on how to conduct his public relations. Rockefeller owned coal mines and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Miners were on strike and the railroad hushed up the facts when its trains were involved with accidents. Lee advised Rockefeller to visit the coal mines and talk to the miners. Rockefeller spent time listening to the complaints of the miners, improved their conditions, danced with their wives, and became a hero to the miners.

After a railroad accident, Lee invited reporters to inspect the wreck and get the facts. The Pennsylvania Railroad then obtained its first favorable press coverage. Lee professionalized public relations by following these principles: tell the truth, provide accurate facts and the public relations director must have access to top management and must be able to influence decisions.

Lee defined public relations, saying: public relations means the actual relationship of the company to the people and that relationship involve more than talk. The company must act by performing good deeds.

Public relations took the next step toward professionalism in 1918 as Edward Bernays advised the president of the new country of Czechoslovakia to announce independence on a Monday, rather than on a Sunday to get maximum press coverage.

In 1923, Bernays published “Crystallizing Public Opinion,” in which he established several public relations principles. He said that public relations had these functions: to interpret the client to the public, this means promoting the client and to interpret the public to the client; which means operating the company in such a way as to gain the approval of the public.

Bernays and Lee were stressing the idea that the corporation should accept social responsibility. Bernays’ ideas about social responsibility led to his refusal to accept unethical clients. He created the concept that there are many publics and each public needs to be appealed to. He advised public relations professionals to seek out group leaders and other key communicators (opinion leaders), who would be able to pass along ideas to other members of the public. Besides this, Bernays has also included concepts: that state public relations is a means of public service and it should promote new ideas and progress. In addition to this public relation should build a public conscience.

Bernays put his ideas into practice when he took on as clients’ proctor and Gamble and Colombian Rope Company. Proctor and Gamble had produced a radio commercial, which was offensive to African-Americans. Bernays worked and changed the commercial in addition to convincing the company to offer African-Americans significant jobs and inviting them to tour the plant. Furthermore, Bernays featured African-Americans in the company newsletter.

While the Columbian Rope Company has an anti-union image, Bernays took some steps to fix the situation. He produced a radio program featuring union and management panellists, while

introducing the company to bargain with the union. He also convinced the company to sponsor a vocational program and offered tours of the plant.

Edward Bernays may truly be called the father of public relations and Ivy Lee the first Public relations counsellor.

2.3 Definition of Public Relations (Harlow, 1976):

Many scholars state there is no one agreed definition on PR. This is due to the profession is used in huge range of industries and in each industry exists and develops slightly different skills and competencies between practitioners (Grunig 1992; L'Etang 1996; White and Mazur 1996; Moloney 2000 as cited in Ralph Tench & Liz Yeomans, 2009).

Definitions are mostly categorized from two perspectives: from the academicians and practitioners. Let us first see how academicians think of PR.

Harlow (1976) found 472 different definitions of PR coined between 1900 and 1976. He built his own definition from these findings, offering:

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

This definition assumes PR as a profession plays management roles besides mentioning the goals, manner and tasks of PR. This lengthy definition has been improved and shortened by other researchers.

Taking a rather short and different path from Harlow (Hunt & Grunig, 1984) defined public relation as “The management of communication between an organization and its publics.” This definition is later refined by Grunig as cited in (Ralph & Liz , 2009) as “an organization’s managed communications behavior.” Another briefer definition is given by (Kitchen, 1984 as cited in Ralph & Liz , 2009): suggesting that PR can be defined as “communication with various publics.” This

definition is rather general and doesn't exactly show where PR professional stand in an organization.

Other definitions focus on two-way communications practices and building positive relationships between organizations and their publics. Cutlip et al. (2006) as cited in (Ralph & Liz , 2009) combined different aspects and suggested "Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and publics on whom success and failure depends."

Based on the goal of PR (White and Mazur 1996) defined PR as: " to influence the behaviour of groups of people in relation to each other. Influence should be exerted through dialogue not monologue with all the different corporate audiences, with public relations becoming a respected functions in its own right, acting as a strategic resource and helping to implement corporate strategy"

All the above definitions reflect that PR is about managing communication so as to create a mutual benefit between the organization and its publics. This however is not accepted by some scholars as it undelies the fact that PR practitioners are there to promote an organizations interest. This brings the assumption that PR is a way of deceiving target audiences for a particular organization.

However the exchange and arguments of ideas the word "Persuasion" has been left out from academic definition. Some academic point out and argue we should explicitly recognize the fact that PR is based in favour of commercial interests. Moloney (2000 as cited in Ralph & Liz , 2009) explains PR is too multifaceted to be incorporated in to a single definition. He suggests that PR can be defined differently as a 'concept' "Communication management by an organization with its publics", as a 'practice', "Mostly dealing with the media" and in terms of its effects on society " A category of persuasive communication done through the mass media or through private lobbying by groups to advance their material or ideological interests.

Practitioners on the other side define public relations based on the reality and day-to-day job. Public relations is often used and assumed to be meant organizational communication or corporate communication (Grunign, 1992; Hutton, 1999 as cited in Ralph & Liz , 2009). The profession is often considered as a means or a way of persuasion and influence. These kinds of thoughts simply imply that there is vague concept on what their job exactly entails.

The UK Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) defined public relations as: “About reputation-the result of what you do, what you say and what other say about your public relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influence opinion and behaviour. PR is also defined by the Institute of Public Relations (2004): It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain good will and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.

Despite some practitioners disagree with this definition, the public relations consultants Association (PRCA) in the UK accepted and put to use the definition of CIPR. It is still hard to find one clear definition for the profession. This could be because both the profession and the world are changing rapidly. Though there is no clear cut definition for the field, it is common to find some words repeated in various definitions (i.e, reputation, communication, promotion, management, crisis management,).

2.4 Models of Public Relations (Grunig And Hunt, 1984)

In 1984, two of the earliest systems theorists, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt, published *Managing Public Relations*, in which they presented a typology of PR, based on observations of practice in the United States: Press agency/publicist; public information; two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric communications (Grunig and Hunt 1984).

Press agency/publicity: under this model of PR, practitioners attempt to gain publicity and/or media attention for their organization through an asymmetrical approach (Grunig, 1990). Press agency/publicity is simply a one-way effort for an organization to get information to the media (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). This model does not require dialogue with the intended audience but rather puts a objective of putting forward one specific view of the world through the media and other channels. Under this public relations model, practitioners utilize propaganda strategies. It is most often practiced in sports and product promotion (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

Public information: is different from press agency in a way that it does not use manipulative tactics. It is used for presentation of accurate information. However, the communication pattern is one-way. As (Grunig, 1990), explains this public relations model is implemented by practitioners who are familiar with the ideas and practices of journalism. This type of public relations is

asymmetrical in nature and often involves the positive spreading of information about the organization. The main aim is to inform rather than persuade and the information has to be accurate, true and specific.

Two-way asymmetrical: Grunig (1990) described the two-way asymmetrical model of public relations as one that utilizes means of determining the messages that could again the support of key publics without having to change the organization's behaviour. Under this method, practitioners use tactics such as interviews, surveys, and focus groups in order to determine the nature of the relationship between their organization and key publics. This is important because once the practitioners can measure the relationships that can initiate public relations efforts more effectively. Two-way asymmetrical model of public relations is often practiced by public relations and marketing firms (Grunig & Grunig, 1992).

Two-way symmetrical: this model of public relations is based on practitioners relying on bargaining and negotiations in hopes of changing the relationships between their organizations and its publics (Grunig, 1990). Grunig (2001) explains using two-way symmetrical or a combination of two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical could increase the overall effectiveness of public relations. This model of communication aims to generate mutual understanding- the two-way communication should lead to changes in both the public's and the organization's position on an issue.

Concerning two-way symmetrical model of public relations, scholars like L'Etang (1995) and Dover (1995) stated this model of communication as a utopian ideal and a concept that could work for academic concept. Specially in a case where there exists inequality of resources, attempting to practice symmetrical public relations might constitute a self-destructive disclosure strategy for the least powerful participant. However, (Grunig, 2016) argues it is not possible to control the public especially in the age of new media. Although the digital media would seem to force communicators towards the two-way symmetrical model, digital tools exist for each of the models: blogs with comment enabled the one-way asymmetrical model; and open corporate social media sites, Twitter, and interactive online community contribution the two-way symmetrical model. He explains the problem with the new digital or web 2.0 and public relations practitioners is the

stubbornness of them to develop strategies to guide them and carry on with the new highly interactive media.

2.5 Public Relations Roles and Tasks

In 2.1. and 2.2. is discussed the evolution and definition of PR. It is implied in the context that there is no one common definition of the profession. This lack of an agreed definition is, however, still a problem for the practice. Deciding what it is and what people do has evidently caused much distraction and expenditure of individuals and collective energies. Some of the long-winded definitions still do not easily convey what the discipline stands for and what people do. Fawks (2008) as cited in (Ralph & Liz, 2009) argues that the synthesised UK CIPR definition of PR below is one that at least simplifies the discussion and helps practitioners understand what it is they do or should be doing: 'Public relations is about reputation- the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you'(CIPR 2005). A rather prominent research undertaken by US researchers Broom and Smith (1979) and Dozier and Broom (1995) as cited in (Ralph & Liz, 2009) identified two dominant PR roles. The first one is *the communication manager*, who plans and manages PR programmes, advises management, makes communication policy decision and oversees their implementation. The second is *the communication technician*, who is not involved in organisational decision making but who implements PR programmes, such as writing press release, organising events and producing web content. Technicians usually do not get too involved in research or evaluation: they are the 'doers'.

The communication manager role itself is divided into three identifiable types: *the expert prescriber*, who researches and defines PR problems, develops programmes to tackle these problems and then implements them, sometimes with the assistance of others, the *communication facilitator*, who acts as communication broker, maintaining two-way communication between an organisation and its publics, liaising, interpreting and mediating and the *problem-solving process facilitator*, who helps others solve their communication problems, acts as a counsellor/adviser on the planning and implementation of programmes. This role can be fulfilled by specialist consultancies as well as the in-house person.

Two other roles, sitting between the manager and technician are also noted. The first one being *Media relations role*, a highly skilled job requiring profound knowledge and understanding of the media. This is not just about the dissemination of messages, but a crucial function where the needs

of the media are met in a sophisticated way. This is a role often fulfilled by a senior journalist who has made the crossover to public relations. The second one is *Communication and liaison role*, meaning the individual who represents the organization at events and meetings and creates opportunities for management to communicate with internal and external publics.

The classification into manager and technician roles does not mean that lines are fixed. Most PR professionals perform mix manager and technician work, but the point is that one role will tend to predominate. Experience builds the role: more experienced practitioners play part in the managerial function as less and fresh practitioners tend to play role as technicians (Ralph & Liz , 2009).

Fomburn and Van Riel (2006) as cited in Ralph & Liz (2009) divide corporate communication into three areas. The first one is *Management communication*. it is communication by management aimed at developing a shared vision, establishing and maintaining trust in the leadership, managing change, and empowering and motivating employees. The second one is *Marketing communication*. It is aimed at supporting the sale of goods and/or services. This will include advertising , sales promotion, direct mail, personal selling, online and mobile marketing as well as market-orientated public relations-or publicity, as they call it. The third one is *Organisational communication*. It is a host of communication activities usually at a corporate level, not all of which will be necessarily located in the PR departments, which include public affairs, environmental communication investor relations, labour market communication, corporate advertising, internal communication and PR.

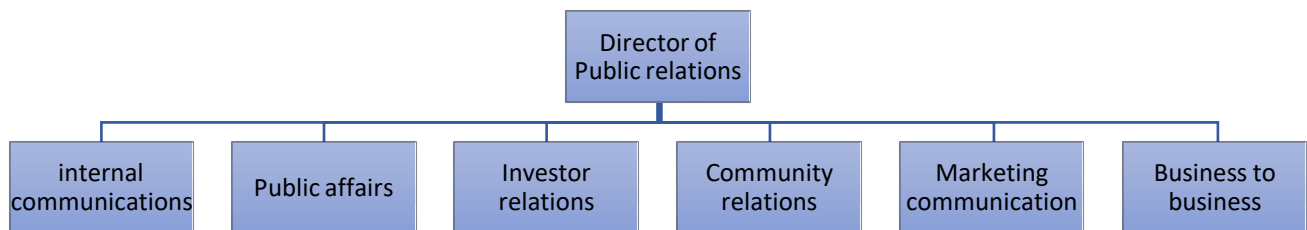


Figure 1: PR department Structured in Functions (Ralph & Liz , 2009)

This structure is a typical example of PR department organized enclosed with functional role. In such a structure an individual or group will look after all the activities falling within the area, whether these are media relations, sponsorship, events or individual relationships.

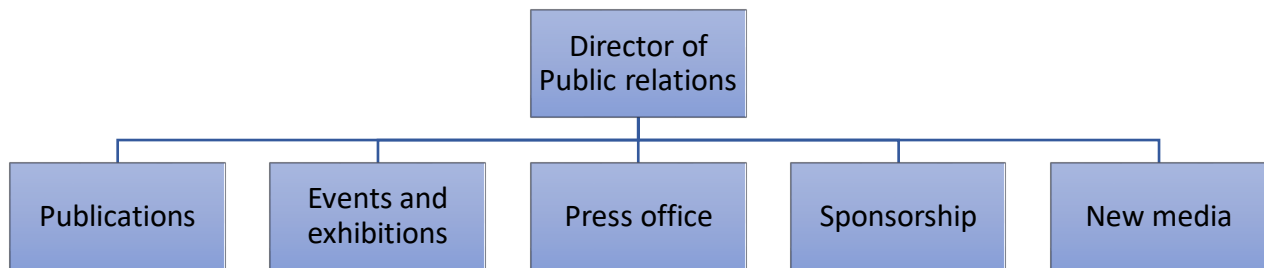


Figure 2: PR department structured by tasks (Ralph & Liz , 2009)

This PR department structure shows how a PR department can be organized based on tasks in an organization. An obvious danger of both these approaches is that the specialist individuals or teams become function or task orientated and lose the overall picture of organizational priorities. The job of the manager is to ensure this does not happen. One way in which this is approached in consultancies is to put together project teams for accounts as they are won. These comprise functional and task experts drawn from across the consultancy who work on other cross-functional/task accounts concurrently. Many literatures support a mixture of both task and functional roles being played by organizations so as to maintain a smooth organizational PR department.

The other dimension of pertaining PR with the role it process is putting it in systems theory. Systems theory works on the basis that everything in the social world is part of a system that interacts with other systems in that the whole equals more than the sum of its parts (von Bertalanffy 1969).

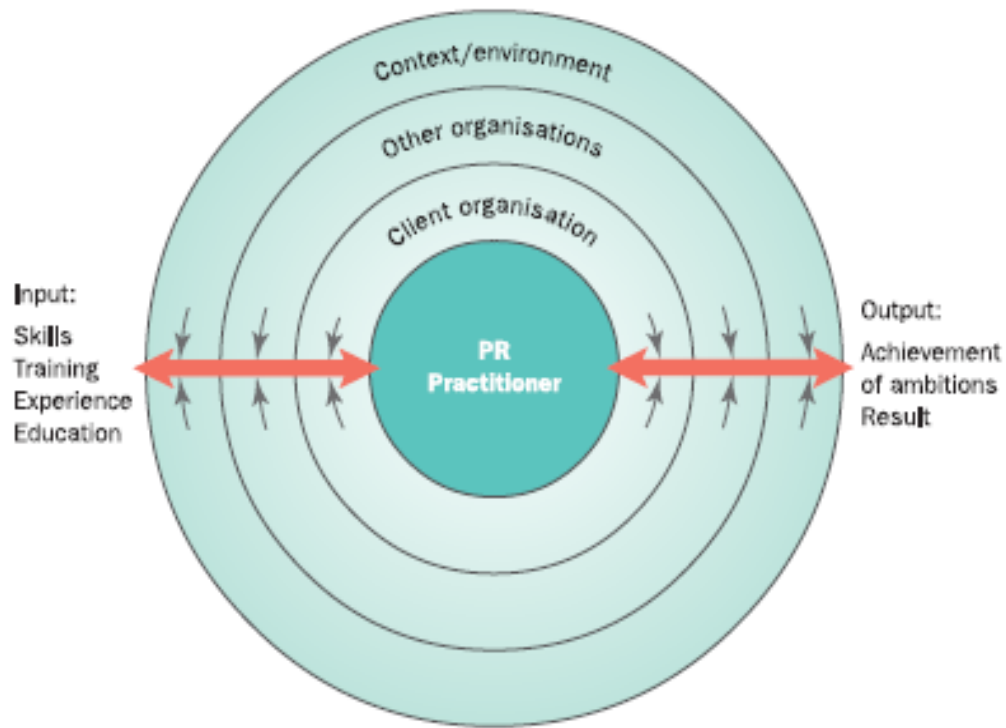


Figure 3:PR practitioner role within systems theory (Ralph & Liz , 2009)

This model assumes that the PR practitioner is part of an open system interacting with other systems, and therefore the nature of the role will not be fixed but depend on the influences both in and out of the system.

Overall, organizational PR roles and tasks are not fixed hard as it varies according to the organizational structure and level of trust and interaction with the internal and external environment. What can be understood here is the inability of scholars and practitioners to agree and put together a one definition has also influenced upon the roles and positions of PR practitioners in an organization.

2.6 Public Relations in Tourism

The literature defines public relations like a strategic form of communication, which focuses on obtaining the public’s understanding and acceptance regarding the process of establishing a good relation between an organization and the public, especially in terms of shaping reputation and communicating information (C and Gaither, 2008, p.19). Through the communication and

promotion strategies which they develop, public relations facilitate the building of confidence-based connections between the various organizations and the many categories of public, creating interactive relationships between the various levels of society.

The British Institute of Public Relations qualifies public relations like a “management reputation”, given that public relations are focused on reputation – the result of what you do, what you say and what other say about. Therefore, the practice of public relations is the discipline which centres on reputation, with the purpose of gaining understanding, the support and influence of public opinion and behaviour (Petrovici, 2011, p.18).

Public relations represent a unique way of promoting the organization, its products or services, by building a higher visibility in the public space. The public relations activities imply conscious, planned and long-term efforts in building and maintaining relations of mutual trust and understating both with the public opinion as a whole and the different target groups (Kunczik, 2002, p.11). In this the literature defines public relations like a strategic form of communication, which focuses on obtaining the public’s understanding and acceptance regarding the process of establishing a good relation between an organization and the public, especially in terms of shaping reputation and communicating information (C and Gaither, 2008, p.19). Through the communication and promotion strategies which they develop, public relations facilitate the building of confidence-based connections between the various organizations and the many categories of public, creating interactive relationships between the various levels of society.

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relations between an organization and its public, an organization and the environment, by means of a two-way communication (DiMeo, 2002, p.151).

In the tourism sector, public relations is more than a necessity. To meet the constant challenges, the public relations in the tourism sector should evolve towards turning into a management function, which should lead to responsible approach. The literature argues that the public relations represent the fifth “P” of a marketing strategy: product, price, position and promotion (Wilcox et al., 2009, p.16). According to specialists, cultivating public relations takes longer, but when they are actuated, they can contribute to promoting the company on the market (Kotler, Rackham, 2006, pp.68-78). The major challenge consists in identifying the most efficient ways of promoting tourist products, building a positive image, increasing the visibility of tourist destinations, in order to attract a significant number of tourists. According to specialists, a tourist product may be approached from a global perspective, regarded like a unitary whole, respectively from an individual perspective, due to its intrinsic features, namely: unique elements, which individualize the product even more; location at the “source”, which means that tourism planning should occur only in areas with tourism potential (beach, mountains, mineral springs, thermal waters, historical monuments etc.); developed tourism infrastructure, respectively transportation, accommodation, food and entertainment units with specific equipment; a varied segmentation of consumers, with needs, tastes and different motivations (Gherasim, Gherasim, 1999, p.33).

Public relations may support the tourism public sector, building a positive image and a favourable attitude towards the tourism product, respectively the tourism destination envisaged (Stăncioiu, 2000, p.50). The explanation lies in the fact that in the tourism sector, a favourable image creates motivation in making the decision to buy the tourism product. In this case, the final image appears like the result of a bidirectional process: from the offeror, who projects and transfers an official image, respectively from the potential tourist, who perceives that reality in a certain way, from the perspective of preferences, experiences or the information obtained from other reference sources, other than the official ones (Baud-Bovy, Lawson, 1977, p.43). Public relations in tourism are a key element of the marketing mix, which resorts to “general influence tools” such as the relations with the media materialized in press tours, conferences on tourism, fairs and expositions, promotional activities, special events (Kotler, Rein, Haider, 2001, p.177). Creating a positive

image which may mean respect and professionalism should constitute a reference point throughout this entire process, because public relations aim at “building” a favourable climate not only at the level of the tourism market, but also at the level of the entire ensemble, with all its internal and external components (Bucur-Sabo, 2006, p.229). The ongoing transmission of messages meant to inform consumers about tourism products, with the intention of developing a positive attitude towards the product and company, respectively to generate favorable changes in their consumption mentality and habits represent an instantiation of tourism promotion (Bucur-Sabo, 2006, p.222). From the perspective of public relations, this implies the management of the communication between the company and the target public, by means of constant and proper informing of the various categories of audiences (Grunig, Hunt, 1984, p.6). Materials for promoting tourism destinations include: magazines, brochures and tourist guides, which may contain information about certain events, characteristic of a certain area or scheduled activities (audio-visual presentations, expositions), rules of conduct for tourist safety; maps and information on tourist attractions; information centres in public spaces, parks, shops, stations and restaurants; graphic boards placed on tourist tracks and in belvedere points (Hanche, 2004, p. 194). In their turn, interpreter guides also play an essential part by the accuracy and coherence of the information provided during tourist circuits. The promotion actions performed by public relations cannot be efficient without properly specialized and trained staff, which may provide quality services and meet the clients’ expectations. In this case, public relations play a strategic part not only in attracting tourists to the various destinations, but also in maintaining their satisfaction after they arrive at the respective destinations. In coordinating these efforts, there may be engaged all the responsible factors, from local or regional tourism agencies to counselling authorities, organizations, local collectives, public authorities etc.

2.7 PR through Media Ages

Poster (1995) introduced the notion of the Second Media Age to identify what he and other scholars see as a major change taking place in media due to exploding use of the internet. While he proposed this shift in media and public communication well before emergence of what is termed Web 2.0, the characteristics and potentialities he identified and contrasted with the First Media Age are silent in understanding the changing media and public communication environment. Poster noted that the First Media Age was characterized by five points. The first point is the characterization of

centralized content production. The second characterization is the media is state controlled. The third is way of communication is one-way distribution of information. The fourth is audiences are conceived as a mass, and the fifth is media is designed to influence social consciousness and reproduce exiting social structures (Holmes, 2005; Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). Poster saw this regime of mass media influencing mass audiences as a key structuralism feature of modernity and modernism.

In contrast, Poster (1995) saw the Second Media Age as postmodern “Characterized by a decentralized network of communications that makes senders-receivers, producers-consumers, rulers-ruled, upsetting the logic of understanding the first media age. Poster (2001) proposed that media in the Second Media Age were beyond state control and democratizing through their two-way decentralized communication and interactivity which he argued were essential elements for individuals to construct themselves as subjects and for effective functioning of society.

While caution needs to be sounded in relation to some highly optimistic and transformant views of the web, a number of scholars have identified the effects of Web 2.0 in the early 21st Century as far-reaching, impacting media institutions, journalism, politics, advertising, public relations, communities, and individual social and cultural capital. Jenkins (2006) noted that media industries are undergoing another paradigm shift. We are currently living through a revolutionary change in technologies of communication. The current ICT developments are considered as a renaissance and we are witnessing a major shift in human perspective and understanding. Pavlik (2008) sees the media change as “the rise of citizen journalism”. The freedom to publish in social media such as blogs constituted a “sea change” with “far reaching implications for the nature and function of journalism in modern society. The development of interactive Web 2.0 media has increased civic engagement and public participation. Advertising meanwhile is increasingly going online in interactive Web 2.0 formats (Burnett, 2008) and Web 2.0 –enabled social media and networks are increasingly being deployed by business for communication and marketing.

From definitions offered by founders and architects of Web 2.0 as well as from scholarly literature, the defining characteristics of this emergent communication environment can be summarized as openness for interactive two-way interaction at human-to-human as well as human-to-content levels expressed through conversation, collaboration, and co-creativity harnessing collective intelligence. Explicit in definitions and descriptions of this environment is relinquishing *control*

that characterizes one-way top-down information distribution models, and a requirement for *authenticity* instead of heavily ‘produced’ and pre-packaged content (Macnamara, 2010a).

Much of the public relations literature shares this enthusiasm in relation to this evolving environment for interactive two-way communication. For instance, Breakenridge (2008) proposes that, in the era of Web 2.0, public relations have evolved into ‘PR 2.0’ and, writing with Solis, says that Web 2.0 is “putting the public back in public relations” (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009). In the foreword to Breakenridge’s 2008 book also published online, Solis (2008) stated: “Welcome to what just may be the greatest evolution in the history of PR”. He claimed that with the shift from PR to PR 2.0 “monologue has given way to dialogue” (para. 1). In another contemporary text, *New Media and Public Relations*, Hazelton, Harrison-Rexrode and Kennan (2008) go further and claim that public relations is “undergoing a revolution” (p. 91).

Such statements suggest that public relations practitioners are engaging in the use of social media and that these interactive applications are helping realize the two-way symmetrical model of communication recommended in *Excellence Theory* (Grunig, & Grunig, 1992; Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) but which, previous, critics have suggested is an unrealized normative theory (L’Etang, 2008, Murphy, 1991). Similarly, claims such as those of Solis, suggest that interactive social media are enabling a *dialogic model* of public relations as proposed by Kent and Taylor (2002).

2.8 Digital public relations/ e-pr

The criticism of the PR industry has often been that it is slow to adapt to changing technological developments. (Whatmough, 2019). Perhaps this criticism works if organizations are not concerned about the change that we are experiencing which in a glipse of eye. It is now easy to pay your bills using your smart phone, what once was imaginary to have food delivered to your door steps is now a simple reality that could only be done from your samrt watch. We may not have considered a taxi app that can work from our smart devices to make our life easier. Therefore, it is not possible to take away digitalization from our life and not be able to be affected or envolved with the progress.

Today the internet has changed the world and especially the practices of communication. The internet is of prime importance as a tool for communication and this research provides that the

internet is very important to majority of people. A report published by (Dutton, diGennaro and Hargrave, 2005 as cited in Petrovici M. A., 2014) provides that the internet is very important to majority of people; more than seven in 10 people believe the internet is making life better.

One of the reasons that public relations practitioners may be involved in their use of internet communication is that it is very competitive. A PR that doesn't effectively communicate with the online community can no longer effectively shape and maintain the desired public image. While PR specialists virtually had no competition in the era of the traditional media, the democracy of the internet force them to compete with the entire world. "As public relations is largely dependent on communication it has to follow the public appetite for media, and this is fast becoming internet based. What practitioners can take from this figure is that it is important to monitor such trends" (Petrovici M. A., 2014).

The role of PR is changed or rather evolved. A report by Institute of Public Relations (2003) noted that, "... previously PR has been perceived as a tactical tool for influencing media coverage, the proliferation of communications, the need to engage with multiple stakeholders, and demands for greater corporate transparency, have placed PR at the heart of strategic management". For unlocking the potential of public relations and developing good practice the industry has to be part of the internet revolution. Nowadays, e-PR has become more than a necessity, representing a communication opportunity. In the internet age, stakeholders can now communicate with each other about an organization in a very public way. The PR function will in most cases be the department dealing with this unplanned messages. As stakeholder strength increases, PR practitioners will have to develop strategies that deal with the rising power of different stakeholders on the web.

In their book: Putting the public back in public relations: How social media is reinventing the aging business of PR, Brian Solis and Deirdre Breakey observe that "Public relations has evolved to its second generation. This version of PR takes into concern the new media of today, and the roles these play in the communication towards stakeholders and publics. PR 2.0 differs from traditional PR as it does not ignore the power people have on the internet, and if Web 2.0 brings out changes where people have the power, the PR 2.0 is the change to appreciate this and join in." These times Web 2.0 has enabled even just a high school student to be one of the world's influential

figures: Greta Thunberg to the world's powerful president: Donald J Trump to share her stands to millions.

Matt Haig explains the essence of online PR. In his opinion, “e-PR refers to public relations on the internet. The “e” in e-PR is the same “e” that comes before mail and commerce to refer to the electronic medium of the internet. P is for public. It is more useful to think in terms of different publics or audiences. R is for relations; building relations between your business and its audiences is the key to success on internet” (2000).

2.9 Traditional vs digital/e-PR:

The last two decades have been swift of change. Email, social media, instant messaging- there are now more ways to communicate with each other than ever before, and unsurprisingly, this evolution is changing the way that people consume information and media. PR practitioners on the other hand have to find working and coping mechanisms to the evolution of technological communication tools.

In the current world where information is available to anyone, at any time revolutionized the PR industry from the traditional form to the new PR or what has now is being referred as digital/ e-PR. According to (Salaizadeh, 2018), in the year 2018, digital ad spending is projected to reach an all-time high \$ 232.48 billion in North America. In the world where a tweet has the potential to reach more people than a million-dollar ad campaign, does traditional public relations run the risk of becoming obsolete?

Simply defining, traditional PR is a form of communication that do not require the internet. Traditional PR require things like press releases, reputation management and attending trade shows. Basically, it usually falls under the realm of traditional PR (Salaizadeh, 2018). Traditional PR would typically focus on print -based publications, radio, television and newswire services.

On the other side, digital public relations or e-PR or rather dot.com public relations is the latest concept. It is the practice of public relations through the new information communication technologies (ICTs). It is an innovative concept that is computer mediated. It is public relations practice in the cyber space. It is highly creative, strategic, fast, result oriented and yet cheap. (Ezeah, 2005)

Sinha (2019) put seven differences between digital and traditional PR as follows. Of the seven differences, the first is *channel*. In traditional communication, mass media outlets such as press, radio and television were the main channels. Now, the supports are completely different in digital PR with blogs, social media and websites being the main source to distribute information to connected audiences. Fortunately these new online channels are within everybody's reach and make it possible for all parties to participate in the conversation-and that's what communication is all about.

The second difference is in the *message*. Before, brands communicated by talking about themselves. It was all about being introspective and showing what they were doing all the time-obnoxiously telling their stories to uninterested audiences. But in today's digital PR, this type of approach is no longer valid. It's not enough to talk about your brand. You have to create content and find people who will help get your content out there.

Digital PR seeks to generate quality content that influencers want to share. It's content that talks subtly about your brand, but does not overwhelm the senses with blatant promotion. Influencers have an audience and they don't want to lose followers by promoting content that their audience will not find valuable.

The third difference is on the *formats of communication*. Attracting attention from journalists and influencers is one of the means of pertaining a relationship with the public. In traditional PR it was all about press releases and articles which now in this age of communication doesn't make it. Now (digital PR), communication has to be more engaging and interactive. Otherwise, all the effort paid could mean nothing. Brands must understand the external communication relies on different platforms and resources such as company blogs, social media and even multimedia content for content distribution. Adapting a traditional press release to a much more visually attractive format may make the difference between success and failure.

The fourth difference focuses on *the digital tools*. Following and maintaining organization's customers and communication activities was a hard work as it had to be done manually. Whereas now there are digital tools that enable the PR practitioners manage all their communication in an integrated way.

The fifth distinction is based on the *tone of communication*. Traditional PR practices the brand of an organization was always referenced in the header of any communication, making it impossible to distinguish between “promotional” material and real quality content. The new PR rather addresses audiences with a less formal and integrated a more personal tone within their public relations campaigns. And this more “relaxed” communication is not just with clients or the general public, but also being used in the content they create with influencers through storytelling to show a more “human” side of the brand.

Sixth point of distinction is *profile*. Traditionally PR managers-working their entire lives in a press department- hardly have any experience operating digital environments. These people would be surprised to be aquatinted with a digital PR practitioner whenever they are talked through about involving a blogger or an influencer in a communication campaign. Traditional PR professionals don’t understand the importance of communicating on social networks and word or mouth or someone who is more in tune with Digital PR.

The last point of difference is *audience*. Traditional PR focuses on journalists and people that are on their contact databases while the digital form of PR assumes bloggers, online experts, influencers and focused audiences that are needed for the organizational achievement of goal.

The following table summarizes the above concept in a nutshell.

7 differences between traditional and digital PR		
	Traditional PR	Digital PR
Profile	Has only worked in press departments and has little or no digital experience. Believes bloggers aren’t important in the slightest and continues to call press conferences for appointments or agreements of lesser important.	Digital savvy journalist. Has worked in online businesses and understands online influencers’ needs perfectly. Also, a blogger and social media “geek”.
Audience	Journalists from a 500-contact database.	Bloggers, specialist journalists, twitter users, online experts... influencers with a very segmented audience who

		match their brand's target audience
Message	Corporate communications talking directly about their brand or spokespersons.	Wants to generate valuable quality content for their influencers, not necessarily talking about their brand.
Tools	Uses massive Excel spreadsheets and copies and pastes messages from word to Gmail, Outlook or Yahoo.	Manages all of their activity from CRM that integrates email and social media, managers influencer databases and features automatic reporting.
Channels	Their targets are traditional media: press, radio, TV	Tries to get the most out of digital media: blogs, social media, and websites.
Tone	Uses set phrases such as "we are market leaders", "our revolutionary new system", etc. Puts the onus always on their brand and uses overly corporate language at all times.	Speaks to influencers on their own level, shares experiences, content, and engage with them at events... Uses friendly tone and never boasts about their brand, but talks about the experience gained from it.
Formats	Press releases and articles are their preferred formats	Puts everything in play, from the company blog to social media and multimedia content to distribute their message.

Table 1: seven differences between traditional and digital PR (source: Sinha, (2019))

So, which is better: traditional or digital PR? The answer for this is not straightforward. There is in fact a reason why traditional PR is a tradition. The world might be becoming more digital, but there is still something to be said about good old-fashioned networking and relationship building. Furthermore, the public at large still depends on traditional media sources like radio, television

and print. Even those in the digital space often still get their news and entertainment from what we consider “traditional” media sources. So, it would be foolish to go for an entirely digital strategy and ignore what’s worked for so long (Salaizadeh, 2018).

Likewise, there is a reason why digital PR is building up so much momentum. Digital PR enables business and entrepreneurs to cost-effectively reach millions of potential customers. Why waste time and money reaching out to newspapers or going to trade shows when you can instantly reach millions of people with the click of a button?

Several reasons make digital PR significant in these times. One situation is as customers are spread across the country and around the globe, customer service also needs to be global. Considering 89% (Forbes.com, 2016) of companies believe customer service is the primary point of competition, this means digital is a must. The other point is the fact that digital age has levelled the playing field, allowing businesses of all sizes equal access to the consumer and consumer data. Even individuals running business from their homes can compete. Marketing is now easy and inexpensive, particularly with the availability of social media and blogs. Traditional advertising can no longer come in the form of traditional ads.

Thus, high quality content has become essential to online marketing efforts. Since so many consumers turn to search engine to launch their brand and product journey, it is important to realize that SEO plays a huge role in today’s digital PR.

In the end, neither digital or traditional PR is superior to the other. Businesses should execute a combination of both traditional and digital PR for maximum exposure. Like so many things in life, one must balance the old with the new, and it is the challenge to find where the balance lies.

2.10 Digital PR and search engine optimization (SEO)

Public relations have always been at the centre of a brand’s communication strategy. A good PR campaign helps a brand form a mutually beneficial relationship with the public by increasing the public’s awareness about that brand and the products or services it offers. However, traditional PR forms just part of traditional media, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio. Instead they have turned to online media (Lebedeva, 2018).

With this shift to online media, consumers are more connected to each other and to information they are looking for. They have become impatient with traditional forms of advertising, which are blatant, annoying, and offer little value to them. According to a recent research conducted by McCarthy Group 84% of millennials stated that they did not like traditional marketing and what's more they didn't trust it. In addition, they really are not viewing or listening to it either. They don't watch traditional TV, preferring instead live streaming, video up-on-on different platforms. Another study at Forbes.com states 85% of millennial respondents regularly watches You Tube. Furthermore, 58% of millennials don't mind ads when they support their favourite digital personalities. Lebedeva (2018) explains today customers want a conversation with brands. Brands are turning to collaborative marketing, where they market with the cusdtomer instead of marketing at the customer. The key in today's PR environement is to go where the consumers spend their time and to engage with them in a way they will appreciate.

2.10.1 Where to Find Today's Consumers

Today's consumers are largely online, and they spend an incredible 30% of online time in social media (globalwebindex.com, 2017). In addition, digital use is growing around the world with over 4.13 billion internet users in 2019 (Statistica.com). 72% of customers now turn to Google to research products or services (Paradot.com). This means customers arm themselves with an arsenal of information before even making contact with a brand. It also means that the search engine optimization (SEO) plays huge role in a brand's online presence and visibility. With the in mind, brands need to rethink their PR approach.

Since consumer presence is primarily online these days, brands have to turn to these digital channels for their PR occurs when a brand brings their marketing efforts to channels such as: content, SEO, Social media, Email marketing etc. when a brand conducts a PR campaign across these channels they can rely on: improved search engine presence, more backlinks to their website, more positive mentions, likes and shares in social media, more reviews and commentaries on the brand and their products and more five-star ratings on Amazon and Google (Lebedeva, 2018)

These all help build trust and a relationship with the consumer in ways that were difficult to obtain with traditional PR. A significant portion of digital PR happens through the publication of online

content. This content can be published in many forms -from press releases and news articles to infographics to social media posts.

When content is targeted at providing the utmost in value to the consumer, digital PR and SEO can come together in a significant way. This pairing has been made possible in part by Google's revamped policies on SEO and their increasing focus on the content quality. That means the content has to provide value be distributed via multi-channel means, be relevant, and provide backlinks to websites. Thus, anyone who wants to rank high in Google's search engine has to produce content that is valuable and relevant to the masses and include links to prominent sites.

2.10.2 Aligning Digital PR and SEO

There are four primary channels on which to focus when it comes to digital PR. These are: content marketing, SEO, social media marketing and online media relations (Lebedeva, 2018).

a. Content marketing

Content is and always has been the foundation of PR. The key is to start delivering content online. This means digital PR experts must collaborate with content specialists to create and distribute their content specialists to create and distribute their content in various formats and via various channels to ensure it reaches a properly targeted audience.

b. SEO

Search visibility is important to the success of any digital PR campaign. For this reason, digital PR and SEO experts need to work together closely. This is to ensure that all content that is created and promoted is fully optimized for relevant keywords and contains high-quality links that will help increase the brand's authority and visibility.

c. Social media marketing

Since so many people use social media to such a great extent, it is important to reach the consumer through various social media channels. This means social media is an ideal channel over which to distribute content. It also provides means of connecting the consumer directly with the brand in a sort of one-on-one way. Companies can offer live coverage of an event, engage in a conversation with a customer support and respond to customer feedback through social media channels.

d. Online media relations

Even digital PR relies on the media. In this case, however, it is online media that is the focus. When connecting with online media, digital PR enjoys the advantage of increased mentions, comments, and even reviews and increased backlinks that again helps improve a brand's SEO.

2.11 Global relationship management in the digital world

The relationship between an organization and its public represents a central concern of public relations. Definitions from different scholars pin point the fact that organizations maintain relationships with the public through their activity of public relations. Ledingham and Bruning describe relationship between a company and its publics as “state that exists between an organization and its target publics, where the actions of each part produce an impact on the other parties' economic, social, political and cultural state,” (1998).

Public relations are taken as one of the most important ingredients for an effective organization. Relationships influence the success or failure of an organization (Harrison, 2003). Why have the relationships become so important for organizations and for PR? Several points could be raised for these questions as: to reach organization's goal; to reach their goals, organizations need the support of people or groups of people (publics). Through PR a company tries to convince and motivate their publics to support their goals with their own specific contribution. The other reason is to position in market and society. More and more organizations recognize the potential relationship management offers for differentiation from competitors in the market place but also in society. Besides this, maintaining relationships within and outside of the organization are essential.

2.11.1. How Digital Media and Technologies Can Contribute to Relationship Building

Marie-Ryan stresses that every medium possesses a unique combination of features (2015). Digital technologies provide story telling with a combination of four peculiarities: integration, accessibility, connectivity and interactivity (Herbst, 2004). It is pointed out the two most important for global relationship management are connectivity and interactivity.

a. Connectivity

Connectivity means that the building blocks of devices, technologies, applications, media assets, etc. are connected with one another and communicate (Herbst, 2014). Connectivity with and without the digital realm has increased dramatically in recent years. For example: digital convergence is the consolidation of traditionally distinct disciplines like print, TV, radio, digital (Jenkins, 2006). Devices and technologies: people mail with their phones, go online with their television and listen to radio online. Mobile end devices like smartphones and tablets open up new user scenarios and multi-screen experiences via apps and digital utilities like location-based services. Another example is social networks and sharing platforms. These enable new forms of communication where every individual can access, forward, rate, comment and themselves create content.

Users in the digital realm have three possible modes of navigation: first, the haphazard pursuit of links through which the user drifts; secondly, goal-oriented travel along a certain path and thirdly, a concrete search for a particular piece of content.

b. Interactivity

Interactivity is closely tied to integration and connectivity. Many authors see interactivity as the essential difference to traditional storytelling: “interactivity is repeatedly cited as the feature of digital media that most clearly distinguishes it from older, non-digital genres” (Ryan, 2004). Interactivity can either be described as selective, from clicking on a link, or productive, from participation in a story plot with dialogue or gesture (Ryan, 2004).

Accordingly, PR in digital media entails a very active user in contrast to classical PR, which consists of an active narrator and a passive audience. Users in digital media aren't required to wait until something happens, rather they can make something happen. The digital PR user can influence the relationship directly: users can reach into the communication and help shape it. The question is as follows: does the user select a story (human interacts with machine) or tell a story as user generated content (human interacts with content)? Organized and collective consumer movements against a company are a part of the risk on interactivity.

2.11.2 Relationship Management and Social Media

Social media have radically changed communication behaviour and created new means to manage relationships. “Social media present new opportunities but also risks for political actors. The moment they start using social media they enter an implicit communicative agreement with the public; they are expected to seek reciprocity and interaction and not, as they traditionally have done, prioritize the internal party organization, members, supporters, and the media, instead of the public” [Karlsson, Clerwall & Buskqvist, 2013).

In particular, social media platforms grant companies’ opportunities to contact and engage with existing and potential customers. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn have radically altered the possibilities for engagement of publics and relationship management. Social media enable users to participate, both passively and actively, in communication, such that they can integrate and co-create brand messages.

Digital professionals Boyd & Ellison summarize the three primary functions of social networks. According to which, social networks are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social networking sites provide constant connectivity among consumers (Jansen, Zhang, & Sobel, 2009) and PR managers are focusing on leveraging these social interactions among customers to achieve benefits for their customer relationships. In today’s connected world, online content is an integral part of a customer, and sharing online content can have a big impact on sales and the development of customer relationships (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009). CRM is as “a philosophy and a business strategy, supported by a technology platform, business rules, processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment. It’s the company’s response to the customer’s ownership of the conversation” (Greenberg, 2010).

Generally, social media seems to be the perfect channels for organization’s relationship management. The company can put to use an already existing channels, an organization can also sustain enormous reach and it could also have many active users searching for corporate and brand information. The challenge in social media is that human behavior has changed dramatically and

users have evolved from passive receptors into active participants. Social networks are places where relationships arise, but also where they may end as quickly as they began (Stegbauer 2011).

Although there seem to be many opportunities for relationship management with target audiences there are some important problems in regard to Global Relationship Management. Those are: social media channels vary widely worldwide, enormous cultural differences worldwide, regulatory differences, language differences, differences in design: pages are too colourful and loud, channels could be restricted and popular could be arrested.

2.11.3 The Power of Online Influencers

According to David (2009), public relations professionals need to understand how to influence the pure, unfiltered opinions that are shared over the Internet to reach their own goals, as well as the goals of their clients. To accomplish this, public relations professionals need to first identify the influential people who shape public opinion online and offline and who share the uncanny ability to seamlessly spread information by word of-mouth. The challenge today, and in the future, will be for companies to understand influential and harness their potential impact to achieve measurable business results.

In this complex world, one must understand not only the direction of the traditional media, but also the shaping of public opinion. This must be done within the framework of knowing that information travels at the speed of light. Therefore, a global corporation looking to help shape the opinion of a company or to deal with a crisis has to understand that things happen instantaneously. Every piece of information has global consequences within seconds. Not only, then, does a public relations company have to deal with the traditional media, newspapers, television, radio, but also with the Internet and its implications. That help define where and how the Big Idea has to work. In other words, he or she has to know what the limits or boundaries are.

Use free tools such as Twitter Search, for individuals on Twitter who are potentially relevant to you. You can also utilize directories which have been created for easy access to the right individuals. Some of these directories are paid-for services. The simplest solution to this issue is to make sure you follow all the influencers you have identified on Twitter, and this is clearly an appropriate action anyway in order to allow you to engage with them. However, there are still two challenges to overcome to achieve a curated listening solution. Having a core understanding of how the media works, audiences 'network and influencers behave is central to online media relations (Stephen, 2012).

2.12 Social media and PR

According to Brian Solis Deirdre (2009), social Media is the democratization of content and the shift in the role people play in the process of reading and disseminating information and thus creating and sharing content. Social Media represents a shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a conversational format between authors and peers within their social channels. Social Media is, quite simply, anything that uses the Internet to facilitate conversations. People now have the opportunity to broadcast their thoughts, opinions, and expertise on a global scale. In many cases, these voices are as influential as many of the most widely renowned journalists and industry experts. Social Media is empowering people to become the new influencers, and it is forcing PR and marketing professionals to recognize and include these powerful tools in their advertising and marketing communications strategies.

However, marketers are still unsure exactly how to adapt to the new world of Social Media. Relatively few experts exist, even though there are many actively trying to play the role. Social Media is powerful. It is not only changing —the game, it is also inspiring everyone across every marketing discipline to evolve or quickly become victims of media —survival of the fittest. Some professionals will make it. some won't. Others will waste time questioning the viability of Social Media and the need to reform, while simultaneously the world advances around them.

Unfortunately, the outcome will be the gradual obsolescence of many marketing departments and advertising and PR teams (Brian Solis Deirdre, 2009).

Social Media and web are altering the entire media landscape, placing the power of influence in the hands of regular people with expertise, opinions, and the drive and passion to share those opinions. This people-powered content evolution augments instead of replaces traditional media and expert influence. And in the process, entirely new layers of top-down and bottom-up influence have been created. Blogs, social networks, online forums, and other forms of Social Media have changed the dynamics of influence. New

information is now readily shared among peers. Monologue has changed to dialogue, bringing a new era of Public Relations. It's no longer about traditional media and analysts. PR must now also focus on the very people it wants to reach.

As Stephen W (2012.), for today's PR practitioner, adapting public relations to this changing environment can seem daunting. Social networks present a complex, but rich, landscape of opportunities and risks. The focus must always be on the communities, whether they are connected through interest groups, trusted friendships or driven by passions. Tapping into the conversations that are relevant to your stakeholders allows businesses to build relationships, influence communications and ultimately inspire advocacy and trust.

2.12.1 Social Media strategy

According to Stephen W (2012), the first thing to do is selecting the social media squad. To this date it has tended to be the PR, marketing and customer services functions that have been at the forefront of using social media. there are plenty of commonplace situations which show how different areas of a business might well have to be involved where Customers complaining, Negative/slandorous contents get published, Constructive suggestions forwarded and so on. Then we need to set a goal. before we rush to establish a social media presence without a clear purpose, we must first consider what the point of your social media activity is. align our social media goals with the core drivers of your organization's success. In this way, our social media achievements are most likely to be judged and hopefully as successful at the most senior levels.

Once the goal is set, we need to Start listening. A social media listening exercise will focus on our entire online environment. not just what is being said about us, but our wider product or service keywords, our senior people, colleagues or employees, your competitors, your industry sector and your wider stakeholder environment. It should or at least could uncover all sorts of interesting results, allowing us to discover what others are talking about before we join the conversation. Becoming more human might be about reducing the distance between us and your audience. perhaps showing ourselves to be open, reliable, responsive, friendly or engaging.

While playing active role in the social media platforms, we need to Integrate our out posts. To integrate social media with other channel activity, such as email, and even offline events where we can still capture new fans and followers. Further technical integration should also be sought, in particular with our Web Analytics. Finally, whatever your strategy, we need to measure our activities to know if we are getting results.

2.12.2 Social Media guidelines

Social media guidelines can generally be described as a set of principles created by an organization to help employees understand the boundaries and desired dos and don'ts when engaging with social media. The guidelines typically cover how to engage with social media on behalf of an organization. They may also provide guidance on the appropriate amount of time to spend on social media sites during work hours, and finally, why it is essential to differentiate a personal social media account from a professional one. (Stephen, 2012.)

Why do we need social media guidelines?

Despite an increase in the use and understanding of social media, many employees are still in need of guidance when it comes to social media engagement. Creating guidelines can help organizations to protect their brand online as well as empowering employees to hold conversations and spread the word about an organization. Having clear guidelines can also help employees understand ways they can use social media to help achieve business goals.

Avoid automated response tools. Find new friends and followers by content follow topics you are interested in. Don't ask for re-Tweets or follows, it looks desperate. Have a strategy for handling mistakes. Correct mistakes quickly and openly. Risk analyse campaigns before they go live. Don't delete content; Respond to critics accordingly! (Stephen, 2012.)

2.12.3 Facebook

The Facebook platform is designed to enable brands to build communities. Brands normally use the various Facebook features - Like 'adverts to acquire fans based on their interests and demographics. It also helps us engage with fans. By using a brand page or profile, brands can publish interesting and relevant content to their community and engage them in two-way dialogue. Brands can amplify the social engagement of the community members, i.e. conversations with their fans, to friends of those fans. The logic here is that sharing how a person has interacted with a brand with that person's friends is much more powerful than standard advertising. (Stephen W, 2012.)

Facebook Socially enable your business. Using Facebook Connect, organizations can enable to share actions they take on the organization's website directly with their Facebook news feed. You can easily Sell your products and services. Brands are monetizing their communities by turning their Facebook Pages into shops. (Stephen, 2012.)

Like all social media, the evaluation of Facebook campaigns is a heavily discussed topic. At the time of going to press, there was no dominant industry standard for Facebook evaluation. the lead from traditional PR evaluation methods, Facebook campaigns can be evaluated by looking at Conversation triggers: the number of status updates, comments, photos and so on, that the organization will post to the Page to generate conversations. The number of Fans of the Page and the number of Likes, comments and posts by those Fans can also be measured. Conversation outcome is tied back to a business objective or marketing objective and could be anything from increased sales to reduced customer complaints, depending on the aims of the Page and how it fits into the overall marketing strategy. In general, the goals of the Facebook Page should support the goals of the organization and, ultimately, be evaluated against those goals.

2.12.4 Twitter

It is a way to get closer to our favourite celebrities, or get better access to relevant and up to- date news, or even just a new alternative messaging service to chat with a group of friends. Indeed, the majority of Twitter members are pure consumers of information, not participants. As an engagement tool, Twitter is largely self-referential and conversational. It will either aim to help a brand serve its public better, or it will try to engender greater

loyalty by creating a closer tie between the brand and the consumer of that brand. the other natural area for Twitter to become integral to modern communications is that of brand protection, or more specifically crisis management. As with anything in crisis management, it's not without its risks, but bad news spreads rapidly these days, and people demand information faster than ever before. Twitter's real-time nature has only increased this pressure. This can be an excellent way of protecting our brand.

2.12.5 How Often Should an Organization Post over Social Media?

If you don't maintain an active presence on your social media profiles, customers are likely to choose another business when searching for local products and services. But, posting too often will leave your followers feeling overwhelmed and give you a negative reputation. Do this for too long and they'll unfollow you. Neither scenario is good for your business. So, how often should you post? Plenty of companies have conducted studies to figure out what works best on various social platforms. For the purpose of this study, two of them shall be discussed.

Cox (2020) studied their 13,500+ customers to see if posting on Facebook more frequently would help businesses reach more people. They found that businesses with more than 10,000 followers were the only ones that saw an increased number of clicks when posting more than once per day. Businesses with less than 10,000 followers received 50 percent fewer clicks per post when they published twice per day. Brands that posted just 1-5 times per week, though, saw their engagement *nearly double!*

Therefore, posting more than 2 posts a day wouldn't be an advantage but rather annoys followers and they might as well block the page.

An organization can post as often as it wants on Twitter. Here's why. The average lifetime of a tweet is between 15-20 minutes (Wilson, 2019). After this time span, your followers' feeds have received enough new posts that yours gets pushed to the bottom. So, how do you fight the high turnover rate and get your name out there? Tweet periodically throughout the day, but don't overload your followers with tweets. Most retweets happen within an hour after they publish, so a higher daily frequency like this can pay off. Still, not everyone has the time to churn out 10 or more tweets every day. That's why your Twitter posting strategy should depend on your goals.

If you want to see higher engagement on each individual tweet, research says to send between 1 and 5 tweets per day. A study by (Socialbaker, 2013) found that engagement starts to drop off after the third tweet, and has also been determined that response per tweet peaks at around five tweets per day before taking a dive.

Therefore, tweeting 3 to 5 tweets each day is advantageous according to the studies.

2.12.6 Web sites

The World Wide Web is probably the most important Internet technology for PR practitioners, permitting organizations to display text, visual, and sound files using computer servers and browser software on personal computers. The Web provides the decentralized delivery of information using human-computer graphical interfaces to facilitate access.

Organizations use Websites for a variety of marketing, human resource, and other management functions besides public relations. Among the most common applications for public relations are the following (Doug, 2007).

2.12.7 Engaging with Bloggers

Here is the challenge for PR practitioners in working with bloggers. Stephen (2012) explains there is no standard approach. Standard pitches must be avoided at all costs. Blog by-blog research is critical to understanding the motivations of a blogger. Some bloggers do accept content on the same basis as journalists, but more often bloggers refuse PR pitches of any kind, preferring to discover their own sources of content. Others are happy to blog about an organization if it is willing to sponsor a post.

2.12.8 Discussion Groups, Online Chats and Meetings

Organization representatives can sign on to a wide range of discussion groups or chats online, where they can collect valuable insights about participants opinions on key issues and can use both to articulate organizational viewpoints. An important ethical issue involves whether the organizational representative is clearly identified and all users understand his or her special interest.

2.12.9 Social Impact on Strategy

David (2006) states, public relations, at its most senior level, has to establish board commitment to online strategy. Its significance is greater than executive board roles such as human resources, marketing, product development and supply chain, because each of these is deeply dependent on an effective internet strategy. Part of strategic planning for corporate public relations requires a significant element to plan for change. For the practitioner this means that communication and

relationships internally and externally will consider how the internet will affect five elements of corporate strategy development. The social media stuff is probably the most important thing we do today, from a marketing standpoint. The other elements of marketing mix have sort of become more and more transactional and more and more tactical in nature. “Social media stuff is much more strategic. Use social media to power the fundamental of the business. That is what we’re focused on” (David, 2006).

2.14.10. Developing Online PR Strategies

Objectives for online activity have to be part of a strategic, multi-participant, multi-media approach, and if the aims are short term, one needs to be very explicit about duration. An organization may want to sell more products yet it may also seek the collaboration of the online community to develop ideas, products or markets. The means may be a contribution to the ends. Seeing online objectives is not as simple as it may be in many other areas of PR. Online objectives have to coincide with organizational objectives and values, and to do so in ways that will make both transparent to the world. In addition, these ambitions need to chime with an online community that has plenty of other places to go. Seeing online PR objectives requires risk and opportunity analysis and a view of how to manage the unknown. What, in other areas, can be a stand-alone campaign will soon reach further both inside an organization and beyond it. Employees, customers, vendors and other partners must assume they will have complete visibility.

2.14.10 Social Media Monitoring

Among the few social media monitoring techniques Sentiment analysis is mostly used. The benefits of this kind of approach are that automated sentiment analysis tools can be created at low cost for the end user. Indeed, some tools such as Social Mention 148 are free to use. The downside is clearly accuracy. Social Mention allow any organization to at least test the concept of sentiment analysis in the context of social media for no monetary outlay, and can give them some idea as to what level of investment may be appropriate for them in the future. In addition to this organizations could also monitor their online presence and social media activities using different online tools like: Google Analytics, Analytics for Facebook, Analytics for Twitter and etc.

2.14.11 Contemporary Public Relations

Contemporary public relations theories strongly support and call for an interactive, dialogic, collaborative approach. According to Broom (2009), it would be a gross over-simplification the modern practice of public relations can be defined in terms of Grunig and Hunts 1984 models of public relations.

Some have criticized the two-way symmetric model of public relations which denotes 50/50 co-orientation between organizations and their publics, seeing it as normative and idealized. Murphy (1991) argues that most of those who advocate two-way symmetric approaches admit that it is extremely rare in practice and Murphy proposes a middle ground involving a sliding scale of co-operation and competition in which organizational needs must of necessary be balanced against constituents' needs, but never lose their primacy. This thinking has led to a mixed model approach to public relations which involve a combination of information dissemination and persuasion matched by listening and responding to public opinion. As debate continues what is persistent in the discussion (debate) is the importance of two-way interaction at some level.

Kent and Taylor (2002) propose a dialogic model of public relations, arguing that dialogue is central to building relationships which prominent scholars including Jim Grunig cite as the key outcome of effective public relations (Grunig and Hon, 1999). Dialogic theory draws on Martin Buber's (2002) "I/Thou" concept of dialogue which considers the other and orientates towards the other and not only the self, in contrast with what he calls the "I/it" approach which sees others as a thing to be influenced, manipulated or exploited. Buber contrasts dialogue with monologue and 'monologue disguised as dialogue' and argues for the importance of the former.

An interactive dialogue and co-orientation approach to public relations is dynamic and uncontrolled, unlike one-way information dissemination which seeks to control messages and meaning making. Within the specific practice of media relations and publicity this has been long identified, with practitioners negotiating with journalists but unable to control what editors and journalists publish and broadcast. In this regard, public relations has been a distinctly different practice to advertising which in most repetitions employs a one-way transmissional model involving controlled content and controlled placement.

The importance of two-way uncontrolled interactive concept of public relations was highlighted by the technological change and growth of Web 2.0. Contemporary public relations is based on this technological advancement which is now commonly known as public relations 2.0. Public relations 2.0 is a term being used to denote use of Web 2.0 media and communication in public relations. For instance, in PR 2.0: New Media, New Tools, New Audiences. This would mean the use of PR in different social media platforms, blogs and web sites.

2.15 Systems theories

One of the predominant theoretical lines of thinking underpinning much of public relations practice is systems theory (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Cutlip et al, 1994). The theory states that mechanical, organic and social systems (including organizations) can be defined by their interactions with their environment. There are three main systems perspectives: mechanic (closed system), organismic and adaptive (open system). All these provide public relations with valuable insights.

2.15.11 Mechanic or Closed Systems

Morgan (1986) states early in the development of management theory mechanic or closed systems concept were used to understand effective management. These theories focused on how to manage a unit in an organization or an organization itself without considering relationships with other units or with the organization itself without considering relationships with other units or with the organization's environment. These systems were concerned more with the internal working of the organization and paid little attention to the external environmental matters. These theories originated in the applied sciences and viewed the universe as essentially a clockwork mechanism with humans being subject to the same universal principles as everything else. The essence of closed or mechanic systems is equilibrium; any disturbances are countered so that the balance of the original state is restored.

Closed systems are designed to meet pre-determined goals and are unadoptable to change. Thus, the highly mechanical, prescribed approach on car production lines is a contemporary example of a closed system. More recent management theorists assume an open system approach.

2.15.12 Open Systems: The Organismic Model

In open systems, units within an organization which affect and are affected by other units and the organization as a whole are responsive to environmental change. According to Katz and Khan

(1978), organizations are open social systems within emphasis on two aspects, (a) system character where movement in one-part leads to movement in other parts in predicable fashion, and (b) openness to environmental inputs, so they are constantly in a state of flux. The key elements of open system according to Katz and Khan are: *Input*: without which a system runs down (entropy). These inputs can be the system's own output (for example money) or from the wider environment outside they system. *Throughput* (or transformation): the processing input into outputs (for example, making a product). *Output*: whatever the system eventually produces (for example, end product). *Interrelationship or interdependence*: the interlocking relationship between the parts of a system and the whole system. The output of open systems affects the environment and feedback will confirm whether or not that output is appropriate. That is then used by the system to make adjustments. The process is cyclical and continuous. *Transactional relationship with the environment*: the environment is not constant and must be under continual investigation. *Boundaries*: both connect and separate the organization from its environment.

An open system receives input from the environment which impacts on its ideal or desired goal states (or objectives). In response, feedback from within the system causes adjustments in the system structure (what it does). To preserve the system this may lead internally to alternations in goal states (or not). Externally, outputs may maintain or change the environment. In open systems the objective is survival, but to achieve this they have to adjust to maintain balance within themselves and with their environments. Organismic systems exert some impact on their environment by monitoring it to predict and influence change.

These theories have been applied to public relations as proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). They proposed four models of communication based on the theory: press agentry/publicity, public information, two way asymmetrical and two way symmetrical. The press agentry/ publicity model describes public relations as an activity to obtain favourable publicity, often employing less than truthful means. Its primary purpose is propaganda. The public information model focuses on the dissemination of information in order to persuade the target. While truth is important in this model, it does not necessarily include the whole truth; damaging information could be withheld.

Both these models are one-way and are asymmetrical because they attempt to change the target publics, not the originating organization. Grunig and Hunt say that public relations practitioners

who use the press agency or publicity models of communication effectively operate as if they are in a closed system because, 'they have typically concentrated on efficiently producing publicity or information regardless of whether those public relations products help either the organization or its environmental systems'. Furthermore, Cutlip et al. (1994) assert that reactive public relations programs are based on closed systems approach since the program is only activated is the system is disturbed. These programs are primarily designed to affect the environment rather than allowing the environment to change the organization.

The closed system forces practitioners to maintain an act of being functionary or technician role. This requires practitioners to produce materials rather than participating in design making or taking part in decision making.

The two ways asymmetric model uses research to plan messages that are likely to persuade the target publics to act in a way that is desired by the organization. The aim is not to change the organization, but to change public attitudes and behaviour. Feedback is used to an extent to moderate messages to make them more effective, but not to initiate change.

2.15.13 Open Systems: The Adaptive Model

Buckley was the first to propose adaptive systems model which he saw as a progression from a critique of both closed and open systems. Buckley's focus was on how the system itself changes. An adaptive organization is not static but emerges from a network of interactions among individuals in which information is selectively perceived and interpreted in accordance with the meaning it holds for the actors involved. Furthermore, interaction between the organization and the environment is not mechanical (a seeking of feedback to make adjustments to a self-perpetuating system), but an ongoing act where the development of shared meaning and mutual understanding is essential.

While two-way asymmetric public relations has leaning towards the adaptive systems approach, it is the two way symmetric model which fits best, looking again at Grunig and Hunt's four models of communication, the two way symmetrical model embraces some of the concepts of adaptive model in that it proposes that organizations should be willing to change as their publics as a result of communication dialogue.

The open systems approach provides a framework for considering an organization in context and makes organizations examine external forces as well as internal process and structures. Most organizations devote considerable resources to understanding and interacting with the immediate task or business environment defined by key publics such as customers, suppliers, competitors etc and the wider contextual or general environment.

There are however some weaknesses of open systems as described in public relations. First, it can encourage the organization to believe that it is in control to an extent since it can be suggested that the cycle of communication starts and finishes with it. This is suggested in statements like that made by (Kornegay and Grunig, 1998) who describe the dialogue as being dominated by the organization in two-way symmetrical public relations. Secondly, the communication planner can become over-focused on the effects of communication. While undoubtedly vitally important since it provides evidence of the effectiveness of any particular public relations campaign, it sometimes becomes the only end, especially if senior managers or clients are pressing for early results. Almost as important is the process. The very act of engaging in dialogue builds understanding and takes time, considerable effort and research and can be damaged in an attempt to gain swift impact.

As we change in various aspects in life, so does the way organization function. In recent views of contemporary public relations, they take the technological change in to account so as to discuss better ways organizations could function.

2.16 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Public Relations 2.0 or electronic-Public relations as currently recognized is the evolving form of the new PR. It basically relates with how PR professionals are making use of Web 2.0. The defining characteristics of this emergent communication environment can be identified as openness for interactivity at human-to-human as well as human-to-documents level, shared creativity, collective intelligence, conversation and authenticity.

Understanding the characteristics and principles of practice in this emergent mediascape are significant and worthy of close analysis because of the rapid growth and approaching ubiquity of Web 2.0 media such as blogs, social networks, photo and video sharing sites, virtual worlds and another emergent forms such as microblogging.

It is understandable that publics would interest one another whether organizations like it or hate it. In the case of new PR it is essential to know the public is as powerful and volatile. Therefore this study considers open system theory developed by Cutlip (2000). Open systems are systems that take their environment into account and change their business accordingly. Cutlip and his colleagues suggest that PR should view itself as part of an open system. It should help the organization to monitor relevant environmental influences and adopt its activities accordingly as well as encouraging changes that in the external environment that will help the organization.

Contemporary public relations theorists strongly support and call for an interactive, dialogue, collaborative approach. Grunign's and Hunt's (1984) four models place emphasis on interactive approaches that involve two way asymmetric and two way symmetric communication. Both critical theorists and post modernists criticized two-way symmetric communication which denotes equal share 50/50 co-orientation between organizations and its publics seeing it as idealised and a myth. Members of the dominant coalition (business and government in particular) will enjoy a more profitable negotiation.

This thinking has led to a mixed model approach to public relations which involves a combination of information dissemination and persuasion matched by listening and reporting to public opinion. This study is also aimed at analysing the practice of this model in relation with ETO.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

3.1 Research design

As Kothari (2004, p. 31) specifies, “Research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. It is pivotal to develop a research design beforehand in the first place other than continuing ahead. The design of this study is case study. It is a structure of research character which mainly focuses on investigating single institution. Case study focuses on a situation or event and aims to pinpoint the unique feature in a single case.

The research puts to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative techniques can increase a researcher’s depth of understanding of the observable fact in here is used interview. The methods allow a researcher to view performance in a practical setting without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental or survey research Wimmer et al (2011). On the other hand, this research is also going to analyse the digital PR of ETO integrating online statistical analysis tools. These tools analyse the digital presence of the organization in different platforms quantitatively. Therefore, this study implements both qualitative and qualitative methods.

3.2 Data collecting instruments

With relation to data, both primary and secondary data sources are considered. The primary data sources being the praticioners and stakeholders while the secondary data sources are the online activites of the organization. The main instruments that will be used in this qualitative are interview and content analysis.

3.2.1 Interview

The study has implemented a semi-structured indepth interview. Semi-structured interview has enabled the researcher to make continuum questions related to the orginal questions to find more clarification and investigation. The interview questions were developed prior to the interview and are all open ended questions which so motivated the interviewees to open up and discuss their answers througly. The aim for the intewrview was to gather the true emotions, experiences and practices of PR praticioners and marketing department official at first hand.. The interview was

conducted in a period where the interviewees had enough time and were comfortable. The questions were prepared and delivered in English language.

3.2.2 Content Analysis

Due to the fact that content analysis is applied to examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication, it is used in large number of fields, ranging from marketing and media studies, to literature, rhetoric, information studies, sociology and political science, psychology science, as well as other fields of inquiry. Therefore, this study has applied content analysis to examine the content of different web contents of ETO.

As the new or digital PR deals with web 2.0 contents posted in platforms like, social media pages, blogs, websites and etc., it focuses on analysing the online contents of ETO. Therefore, content analysis based on a well organized codebook to analyze web contents was organized and implemented. The content analysis was time lined over what is considered as peak season for tourist arrivals, which is from mid of August to the beginning of March. Thus this study analysed the digital activities of ETO from August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am; on Facebook and Twitter. Regardless of the time frame the web site was analysed before hand working with the social media pages of the organization. Analysing digital appearance is a bulky activity as organisations could make changes as quick and frequent as everyday briefings. Thus, I also used the advantage of online analysis tools.

3.2.2.1 Facebook and Twitter

The coding scheme was created from a combination of three sources. Hallahan (2008), Park and Reber (2008), and Edman (2010) each measured online organization-public relationships. The researcher adapted their variables and coding methods to suit the organization's public context of this study (See Appendices B-C for codebook). Coders recorded the name of the organization, the organization's number of "likes," "shares", "Comments" the time and date of each post, a screen shot of each post, and the post's intended message.

Coders took a screen shot of each post (n=43) and record if the post includes a picture/video and the language in which the post is written. The coders also categorized the post as "nature", "people in meeting, seminar, training...", "Infographic", "Promotion", "Informative", "Tourists on the go"

or “other”. Top ten posts were also selected from the total posts based on the number of like, share and comments they have gotten.

Four categories examined the presence or absence of the four models of public relations. Coders did not choose the model that best suited the post. In other words, a post could be deemed as representing more than one model. The press gentry/publicity model was designated when posts tried to persuade others to buy or use a product or service of the organization or persuade customers/audiences to apply to a certain program. It could also demonstrate obvious publicity of the organization using biased language such as “the best in Africa.” Posts were designated as public information posts when they used one-way communication with direct, objective language (i.e. just the facts). A public information post extended information without using biased language.

3.2.2.2. Website

Prior to collecting data, the researcher had to clarify what the term “Web Site” meant, and define the unit of analysis. For the purposes of this study, the term web site was applied on the general level, defined as “a collection of pages or files linked together and available on the World Wide Web. Any hyperlinks that took the researcher outside of the original web site were not included in the study.

The web site was accessed and coded during a period of three days- March1, - March 3, 2020. Due to the ever-changing nature of the Web’s content it was important to limit the time that the web site was accessed. However there were not foreseen changes.

The unit of analysis was the homepage plus two drill downs. To drill down through content means to move from summary information (e.g. content of the homepage) to detailed data by focusing in on information. The content of the web sites was divided into four categories: purpose, audience, models of public relations and accessibility. Prior to collecting the data a coding template was developed that would include possible content found on tourism information web sites. The coding categories contain sub-categories, as defined in the coding guidelines (please see Appendix A for the coding guidelines).

The code book for the organization’s website looks to examine the following variables: purpose of the website (i.e, tourism promotion, service delivery, news, social support, promotion, evaluate

tourism information, consumer participation) audience, models of public relation, and accesibility of the website.

3.2.3 Online Analatical Tools

Google besides being a great tool to browse the internate it also provides an excellent way of analysing a website or online presence. It is pivotal for an organization these days to run these and more other online analatical tools so as to assess and improve working online. Google gives a free means of figuring out the trending word or search phrase and the statistics that run with it. The researcher used “Google Trending” to see the online existance of searching words and interest of it in different countries with a period of 12 months (August 18, 2019-August 18, 2020). The tool was used on August 18, 2020 and the stastics was screen shot saved for analysis. The other tool the researcher was meaning to use was Google Analytics which is a free online tool that displays the activity of a web site based on different variables. However, the web site of the organization was down by the time of the analysis.

Thus the content analysis chatagorizes each code/variable include: social media platforms, website and online analitical tool.

3.2.4 Sampling Methdology

Sampling is a procedure that uses a small number of units of a given population as a basic for drawing conclusions about the whole populations, Albaum (1997).

3.2.5 Sampling Method

This study implimented purposive sampling. The social media content is purposefully sampled between from August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019 as this is the period where it is peak season for tourism. The samples for the interview are also sampled purposefully as it known which person is needed for the interview. The researcher purposefully selected the senior public relations, digital public relations officers, and Senior marketing manager of the organization. To select torism offices, the researcher took the requirement of being top performers, those which possess a web site or social media and officed in Addis Ababa. Irrata

3.3 Sample size

There were three officials interviewed from ETO (senior public relation, digital public relations officer and senior marketing official). As to the digital content, a census of all activities between August 2019, 8:00Am and December 2019 are taken in to account.

3.4 Methods of data analysis

All the data that has been collected through a codesheet (see apendix A, B, C) is carfully recorded in a Microsoft Excel (2019) spreadsheet and analysed using tools from the platform to produce different statistics. The data that is collected from google trending is taken as it is and discussed in words. The interview is discussed qualitatively. After conducting the interview, the researcher analyzed the notes and prepared the full report. The responces from the interview were analysed using themes that emerged from the research objectives. Thematic nalysis refers to category segment/strata of qualitative data into meaningful (significant) themes. It aims to understand and know the data. When data is analyzed by theme or strata, it is called thematic analysis (Braun, V. and Clarke, V.,2006).

Thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. It helps in identifying, analyzing and reporting pattern (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun, V. and Clarke, V.,2006).

Finally , the data was analyzed by grouping similar responces together. The data has been presented in a narrative form.

3.4.Research reliability

One of the negative impacts of content analysis is the effects of researchers biases (Kolbe, & Burnett, 1999). Therefore, objectivity, systematization, and quantification were the most significant and distinguishing attributes of content analysis. Definite rules and procedures should be provided as directions throughout the research process. Whether one study is replicable is the criterion of its reliability (Kassarjian, 1977). Reliability is one of the distinctive attributes of content analysis methodology comparing to other techniques in communication.

This research has incorporated three coders including the researcher. The researcher has given instruction and trainings on how the coding should be filled. The coders were taken from two different organizations. One of them being a digital communicator for a tourism organization and the other a PR practitioner in a different organization.

The researcher first conducted three informal coder training sessions with peers in order to fine-tune the study's coding system. The codebook was revised for a better use on the initial training sessions. Thereafter, the researcher conducted multiple training sessions with the coders. Inter-coder reliability was then calculated based on Scott's pi values. The table below explains the reliability of different variables.

Name of the website	1
Address of web site	1
Sector	1
Purpose	.90
Audience	.90
Models of Public relation	.88
Accessibility	.99

Table 2: Website inter-coder reliability

Like	.1
Follow	.1
Date and Time of the post	.1
Post Kind	.78
Share	.1
Models of PR	.86

Table 3: Inter-coder reliability of Facebook???

Like	.1
Follow	.1
Retweets	.1
Date and Time	.1
Post Kind	.88
Models of PR	.77

Table 4: Inter-coder reliability of Twitter???

Based on the above reliability it is possible to say that the research is reliable.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

This section of the research demonstrates the data collected through web surfing and interview. The collected data is presented both qualitatively and quantitatively which is then discussed.

4.2 Social media

4.2.1 Facebook

The research had considered posts made by the organization between August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am. The reason behind the selection of this specific months is because this period is known to be peak season for tourist flow. Which is therefore is expected many hospitality industries to be active in their overall activities.

ETO as an organization working in the hospitality industry uses Facebook as one of its strategy to **reach out wide audience and make its best effort to serve its audience and stakeholders at this period.** The organization had 27, 920 followers of the page by June 10, 2020. During the time of analysis, the organization had made 43 posts in total. The table below shows the average numbers of like, share and comments. It is a picture which shows the general concept of activity of the page with relation to the followers on average.

Like	Share	Comment
24.4%	71.6%	3.5%

Table 5: Average number of like, share and comments

The calculation is made total number of like, share or comments divided by the total number of posts made. Following is the top number of like, share or comment for a single post from the 42 posts.

On average, the organization's post is probably going to get 24.4 likes that is almost each post is liked by at least 25 people. The average amount of share of the posts is 71.6. This tells us almost 72 followers of the page share a content posted by the organization to others. Number of comments on average is 3.5 followers. This means almost 4 followers of the page write comments on each post.

Following is the top number of like, share or comment for a single post from the 42 posts.

Like	Share	Comment
308	181	48

Table 6: Top number of like, share and comments

This single post is the most liked, shared and commented post of all the 42 posts of the organization. the post had maintained 308 liked, 181 shares and 48 comments from the followers of the page.

These two tables are vivid enough to show the activity made in these periods was not satisfying as the numbers are very low considering the advantage social media could provide. These day’s a person’s single account could achieve a better recognition than the number seen in the tables. The post from table 7 has a **concept of asking a question where tourists would like to travel in the season**. Which invites people to participate and share their destination for the season and share their idea with their friends.

The posts made were again recorded considering different pictures that accompany the written words. All posts were accompanied by pictures except for one which was a video. The table below shows what content was posted.

<i>Content</i>	<i>Number of posts</i>
<i>Nature</i>	9
<i>People in meeting, seminar, training</i>	27
<i>Infographics</i>	1
<i>Promotion</i>	8
<i>Information</i>	17
<i>Tourists on the go</i>	0

Table 7: Content kinds posted

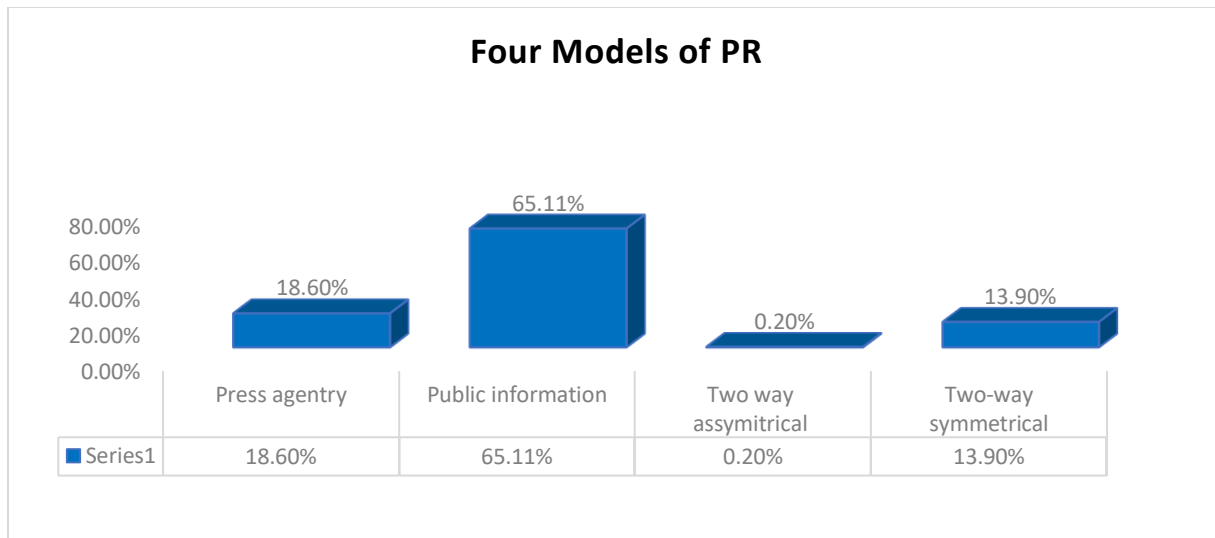
The table above shows what contents the organization has posted. All the posts were accompanied with pictures except for one which was a promotional video. Most pictures posted as can be inferred from the above table focus on people taking trainings or participating in meetings (27 posts). This

may not be a point of interest for tourists as it is not enticing. It is said a picture is worth thousands of words, how about a video? According to Facebook's recent algorithm update, videos are more favourable than pictures by page visitors. Facebooks which is visited by 1.47 billion (globalwebindex, 2020) each day can be a magnificent tool to take advantage of so as to promote one's organization.

The table above shows only one infographic is posted. This is a big negative since infographics these times are very useful as big and complex information can be sum up on one infographic to make audience glance and grasp a huge data or information. Another fact is 17 posts convey information. Submitting information is naturally important as people visit a site one for information. But information can be shown through different infographics because infographics are colourful and can easily catch once attention. (Vallauri, 2020). On the other hand of the posts eight of them are basically promotions. One of the weaknesses of Ethiopian tourism as mentioned in different studies is the lack of promotion (Altes, 2018; Ethiopia & World Bank Group, 2012; Robinson D. B., 2016). Only very few of the posts are promotional.

Moreovder there are no pictures of tourists visiting a place. Onc of the majour mission of the organization is promoting the tourism and hospitality industry so that more tourists could visite the country. One of the weays to do this is by showing what people are experinceing in certain places. It is easier to attract tourists by showing what other interested groups like them were up to. This gives them comfort and could dragg their attention towards that certain destination (Vallauri, 2020).

Based on the Grunign's and Hunt's four models of PR, the posts were analised. Here is graph that shows this.



Graph 1: Posts based on Grunig's and Hunt's four models of PR

The graph above is collected from the total 43 posts between the pic periods of tourist arrival (i.e. August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am). It is put based on the four models of PR. It can be inferred from the graph that most of the posts are based on public information (65.11% posts), followed by press agency (18.6% posts). These two are one way communication models. Social media on the other hand is a comforting path for two way communication. As to Deidre (2009), social media represents a shift from broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a converational format.

Weather liked or not people can influence an organization in one way or another in the digital world. The new media, web 2.0 has given equal opportunity to every user. It is a matter of being strategic and putting the platform in to good use or not. Based on the graph above it is easy to see the focus and time paid by ETO to reach out their audience is based on one way communication model rather than focusing on two way models. The other two way models are two way symmitric which takes s share of 13.9% is ranked the third of the posts. The least used communication model is two way assymitrical model which is only 0.2%.

The next table is a selection of ten top posts based on their like, share and comment totals. In Facebook, when a post gets many lilkes it menas many people are interested on the content posted. When the post gets a number of shares, it means people not only are interested on the post but they wanted to discuss and interest their friends with the post. And when a post gets many comments it

resembles people are so interested to reflect their idea over the post and maybe get some feed back for their questions or break a discussion with the organization and or other users.

LIKE	SHARE	COMMENT	COMMUNICATION MODEL
308	127	48	two-way symmetrical
193	70	10	Press agency
193	181	24	two-way symmetrical
160	56	18	Press agency
131	25	27	two-way symmetrical
130	28	15	two-way symmetrical
113	64	4	public information
99	6	8	public information
87	33	1	public information
82	38	4	public information

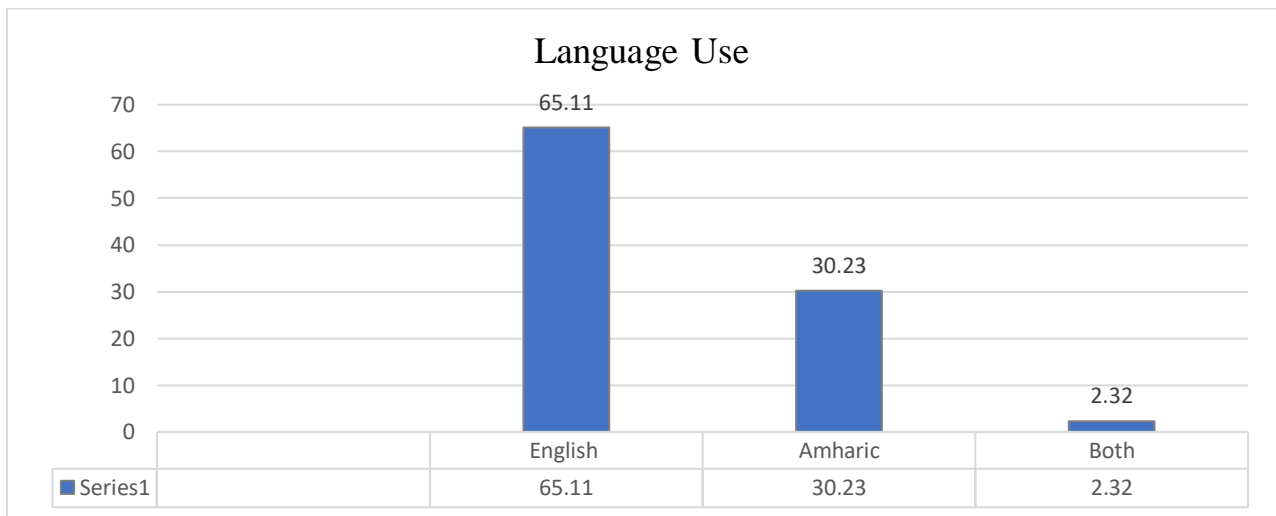
Table 8: Top ten posts on Facebook

Table 9 reveals interesting figure compared to graph 1. It can be seen above top ten posts are from both two way communication models and one way communication model. But what is interesting here is the fact that we see 13.9% posts were two way symmetrical. We can further see almost half of the posts are two-way symmetrical. The table further shows interesting numbers. It is true except for the two-way asymmetrical model the rest four models are amongst the top ten posts. What is enticing in the table is the number of shares and comments. Eventhough the number of likes show interest in audience, the real communication is on the share and comment section of the post. If the content gets many shares it means it had spread over different range of people like a virus. Therefore, many people could see and participate on the post even on other page other than the organizations page. Comments on the other hand are a means of dialogue with customers or audiences, which is very beneficial to organizations to grasp the attitude and questions of their audiences so as to make changes to their strategy or work on helping their customers/audience with something they are troubled with. The table here shows more share and comments were observed in the two-way symmetrical model than the other two (i.e. public information and press agency).

The posts in two-way asymmetrical are like “ where are you planning to go this summer?” which made numbers of shares and comments mentioning their destination. Then as comments flow in PR officials of the organization converse with the users. While in public information many posts

were about the trainings being given or held somewhere. Which receives likes but low number of comments and shares compared to two-way symmetrical. “The best destination this season..” such post resembles press agency and as a result may get likes but not as many shares and comments as is seen in the two-way symmetrical post.

Another point analyzed is language use of the contents. The language use determines which audience the content of the post intends to address. For example, if a post is written only in Amharic then its intention is only addressing Ethiopians which then is intended for internal audiences. But if the language is written with English, French or Arabic for instance, then the post is meant to be for international audiences mainly. And if the post is written in both an international language and local language then the intended audiences are both internal and external. The table below shows the total number of posts and language used.



Graph 2: Language use of posts

The graph above shows high majority of the posts were written in English (65.11%) while half below English posts ranges Amharic (30.23%) and finally a post that encompassed both English and Amharic (2.32%). It is here obvious to say many of the posts are meant for international audiences and those who can read and understand English which is then intended for external audiences.

Another relationship is with the top posts at table 6 and languages used. The top posts were all written in English language. This could signify who their audiences are.

4.2.2 Twitter

Twitter is a ‘microblogging’ system that allows you to send and receive short posts called tweets. Tweets can be up to 140 characters long and can include links to relevant websites and resources. Twitter even though not as popular as Facebook compared by the number of users, it contains its own quality. The platform isn’t just popular with the average consumer, Journalists, politicians and celebrities all frequently use it. Twitter is also a place to easily find trending news.

As Facebook, Twitter also has a comment section, like button and retweet button. What we write and post over Twitter are known as tweets and the ‘share’ feature of Facebook is similar with retweet in Twitter. Based on the same code used for analysing Facebook, the official Twitter page of ETO has been analysed.

ETO has 11,800 followers (Accessed on June 10, 2020). During the time of analysis that is tweets from August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am, the organization had tweeted 18 tweets in total. These tweets are barely enough considering the time and what it is required to be recognized in the platform. To be one of the top tweets on twitter. The organization has to tweet as many tweets as possible so that the algorithm of twitter would consider the page as essential and top. But what can be seen from ETO’s twitter experience is rather unattractive. The table below shows average numbers of like, retweets and comments.

Like	Retweet	Comment
55	14.05	2

Table 9: Average number of retweets, like and comment

The calculation is made total number of like, retweets or comments divided by the total number of posts made. It is not hard to figure out the numbers above are insufficient. The more likes, retweets and comments one page has, the better it could be recognized over large number of audiences. Each tweet on average is liked by 55 followers and on average 14 people would share/retweet the tweet to others while 2 comments on average are written on each post.

Following is a table that shows the most popular tweet of the 18 posts analyzed. Compared to the rest of tweets made, this one tweet had received a good number of interests from followers.

Like	Retweets	Comments
276	144	28

Table 10: Most popular Tweet

The tweet on table 11 contains a video accompanied with words written. “*What have you seen in the Bale Mountains? Perhaps the rare Black-Maned Ethiopian Lion?*” *Tell us your experience and share pictures.*” The tweet is tempting and many have seen the video and also got many people’s participation comparing to the other tweets. The tweet is liked by 274 followers and it has been retweeted by 144 followers. The post had also made people write/comment on it; 28 followers had written comments to share and discuss their experiences.

The two tables above show what the general figure of Twitter activity looks like. It is clear the organization isn’t doing its best to be active and involve at least people who are following the organization’s page.

The tweets were categorized in to different contents based on the pictures or videos they coordinate with their word. Of the total 18 tweets one didn’t contain a picture or video whereas three of the total tweets were incorporated with video and the rest of the tweets were words plus picture.

<i>Content</i>	<i>Number of posts</i>
<i>Nature</i>	4 (2 videos)
<i>Wild life</i>	1
<i>Areas</i>	0
<i>People in meeting, seminar, training</i>	7
<i>Info graphic</i>	0
<i>Promotion</i>	3 (1 video)
<i>Informative</i>	2
<i>Tourists on the go</i>	0

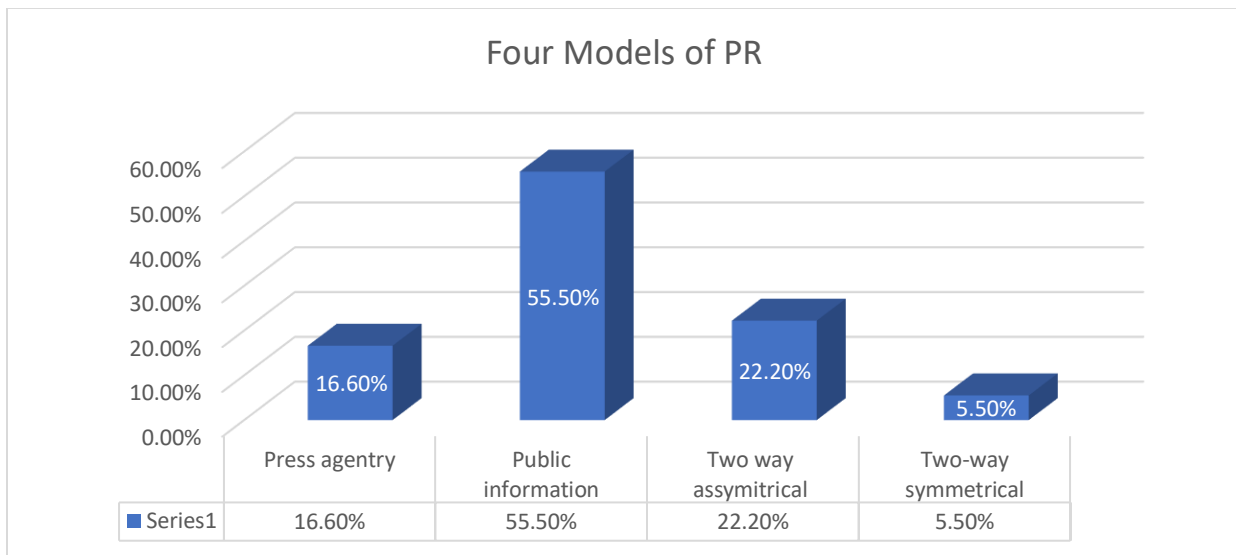
Table 11:Content kinds posted

The above table is a reflection to what kind of picture/videos the tweets incorporate with them. It is naturally tempting to have a picture or video tagged with words instead of reading only written words. It is nice to see almost all the tweets containing graphics with them except for one tweet. The table manifests many of the pictures were showing people in meetings, seminars or trainings. This is rather interesting for the internal audience rather than outside. Table 12 shows ETO hasn’t

been active on the promotional activity as it is supposed to be. Again, what studies mentioned in the literature mention ETO has a big down of promotional and marketing movements as it is expected from them. The table shows how much attention is given for the promotional activity which is very low. Another interesting number is none of the pictures show actual tourists experiencing their visit. People intend to be involved in to something whenever they see others who share quality as them in what they wanted to try. The tweets are not inclusive of visitors.

Information dissemination is important for any visitor of the page so that the audience or customer could be equipped with the right and useful information as possible. As this century is all about information, it is pivotal to consider how to give away the information in more attractive and efficient manner. These days, infomercials and infographics are essential as they can give away bulk of information at once with a smart graphics. Though this, ETO’s twitter page doesn’t seem to be paying any attention to infographics at all. There were no infographics used in their tweets.

Analysis is also made based on the four models of communication of Grunig and Hunt.



Graph 3: Tweets by Four Models of PR

The graph above is a reflection of what ETO’s tweets are manly look like based on the four models of PR. The tweets are mostly focused on public information (55.5%). The tweets mostly give a certain factual information like, location and what sort of things could be found. “*The Dorze people in Southern Ethiopia are renowned for their traditional weaving mastery...*” is an example of one

of the tweets in public information model. Less than public information is two-way asymmetrical model (22.2%) these posts are different in a way that they encourage visitors of the page to leave their comments and go further to retweet and like the post. “*How is this for a heavenly sunset? (picture attached)*”. People would leave comments and retweet but they get no reply to their comments. Press agency is less favourably used (16.6%) than public information and two-way asymmetrical models. The tweets in press agency are more likely exaggerated than the others. For instance, “*You would be thrilled to be atop this mountain in a totally new experience ...*”. This and other like these posts were not as popular as the others. They don’t get attention like the others. The least used post is made in two-way symmetrical model. The post may not be liked as the other posts but what makes it different from the others is there appears to be seen a question and answer between the organization and a visitor about a certain point based on the post. For example, the post is written as “*The Danakil in a mobile filmed video by Jason have you been there?*” with attached video. Then in a comment section someone asked “*How far is it from Addis?*” in replying the tweet “*It is 720.3km*” and following the thread people talk about the Danakil including the organization.

Top five posts were analysed to further see what kind of posts were most popular. To selected this, I considered the number of likes, retweets and comments. The following table presents the top five tweets selected from the total 18 tweets.

LIKE	RETWEETS	COMMENT	COMMUNICATION MODEL
276	144	28	Two-way asymmetrical
114	38	2	Public information
92	55	10	Two-way asymmetrical
79	20	10	Two-way asymmetrical
72	31	2	Press agency

Table 12: Top five tweets

The table above is dominated by two-way asymmetrical model (3 out of the five). The rest two are one-way communication models. For a tweet to have likes means people are interested or agree on what is posted out. Tweets get interesting when they receive as many comments and retweets. The reasons behind this are: first of all when a tweet is retweeted then the discoverability of the tweet

increases as not only the followers of the organization’s page but others who doesn’t follow the page but follow the person who retweeted it could get the chance to see it and it spreads like that. The other reason is when a tweet is flooded by many comments then it gives the organization a chance to see what people has to say and even assess their strength and weaknesses.

The two-way asymmetrical possess better numbers of retweets and comments compared to the other two. This could signify the two-way model initiates people to take parts in what is tweeted while the other models written above contain less numbers of participation compared with the two-way asymmetrical model. The other two models in the table contain only two comments, this implies the amount of dialogue is very rare which in this case doesn’t resemble what social media are for.

Language used in the tweets determines the audience which an organization aims to reach. If the organization is aiming at reaching external tourists and different continents, the organization needs to make the tweets in English or other international languages. Language also can be purposefully used for a certain kind of audience or customer. For instance, if the target audiences are from middle east then Arabic would be the best choice. In the analysis of all the tweets, English language has been used 100%. Therefore, the tweets are mainly intended to reach out for international audiences.

4.3 Web site

ETO has been running a web site since 2015. The web site <http://www.ethiopia.travel/about-eto> possesses different information that are coded and presented as follows.

A. Purpose

Tourism Promotion	Yes	No	Comments
a. Life style	x		
b. Social Determinants		X	
c. Strategies		X	

Service Delivery	yes	No	Comments
		X	

News	Yes	No	Comment
a. Government		X	
b. Hot topics		X	
c. Conference and events		X	

Social Support	yes	No	Comment
a. Support group information		X	
b. Virtual support with the organization		X	
c. Virtual support with professionals		X	
d. Virtual support with other visitors		X	

Promotion	yes	No	Comments
a. Selling a product or service direct		X	
b. Advertising a product or service	X		Not directly

Evaluate Tourism Information	yes	No	Comments
		x	

Consumer Participation	Yes	No	Comments
		X	

B. Audience

Group	yes	No	Audience	Subject	N/A
Children		X			
Youth		X			
Men		X			
Woman		X			
Seniors/Aging		X			
People with disabilities		X			
Ethnic Sub population		X			
Immigrants		X			
Tourism professionals		X			
Educators		X			
Parents		X			
Groups		X			
General	X		X		

C. Model of Public Relations

	yes	No	Comments
a. Press agency	x		
b. Public information	x		
c. Two way asymmetrical		X	
d. Two way symmetrical		X	

D. Accessibility

Reading level	Grade	Comments
	7	

Accessibility Characteristics	yes	No	Comments
Easy to Navigate			
a. Toolbar		X	
b. Link to sites homepage	X		

c. Link to useful sites		X	
d. Title on each page		X	

Accessibility Characteristics	yes	No	Comments
<i>On-line-glossary</i>		X	

Accessibility Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
Languages			English
a. All information	X		
b. Some information		X	

Accessibility Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
tool-free number offered so people without internet connection or software can get the information they need in another format free of charge		X	

Accessibility Characteristics	Yes	No	Comments
Font size (at least 10-point font)	x		

Accessibility Characteristics	yes	No	Comments
Address		X	
a. map/direction/Google map link for the location of the organization		X	
b. phone number		X	
c. link for the organization's social media pages		X	

Accessibility Characteristics	yes	No	Comments
Chatrooms		X	

Table 13: Web Site analysis

The table above is shocking to see as many of the attributes expected from the web site are not fulfilled. The web site shows that it is not as interactive as it should have been like many websites these days. Moreover, it doesn't give sufficient and Up-to-date information on different occasions as the news displayed is far out-dated and the promotion is not tempting. The website basically displays more of a factual information and what is available but no other means for interaction. It is possible to say it is closed and doesn't offer much of needed information for the visitor of the page; the most basic thing (Address) is not available in addition to the fact that there is no room for people to interact.

Generally, the website is weak, not tempting, and inaccessible as it is supposed to. It is easy to see much of a work has not been implemented on the website so as to grasp once attention.

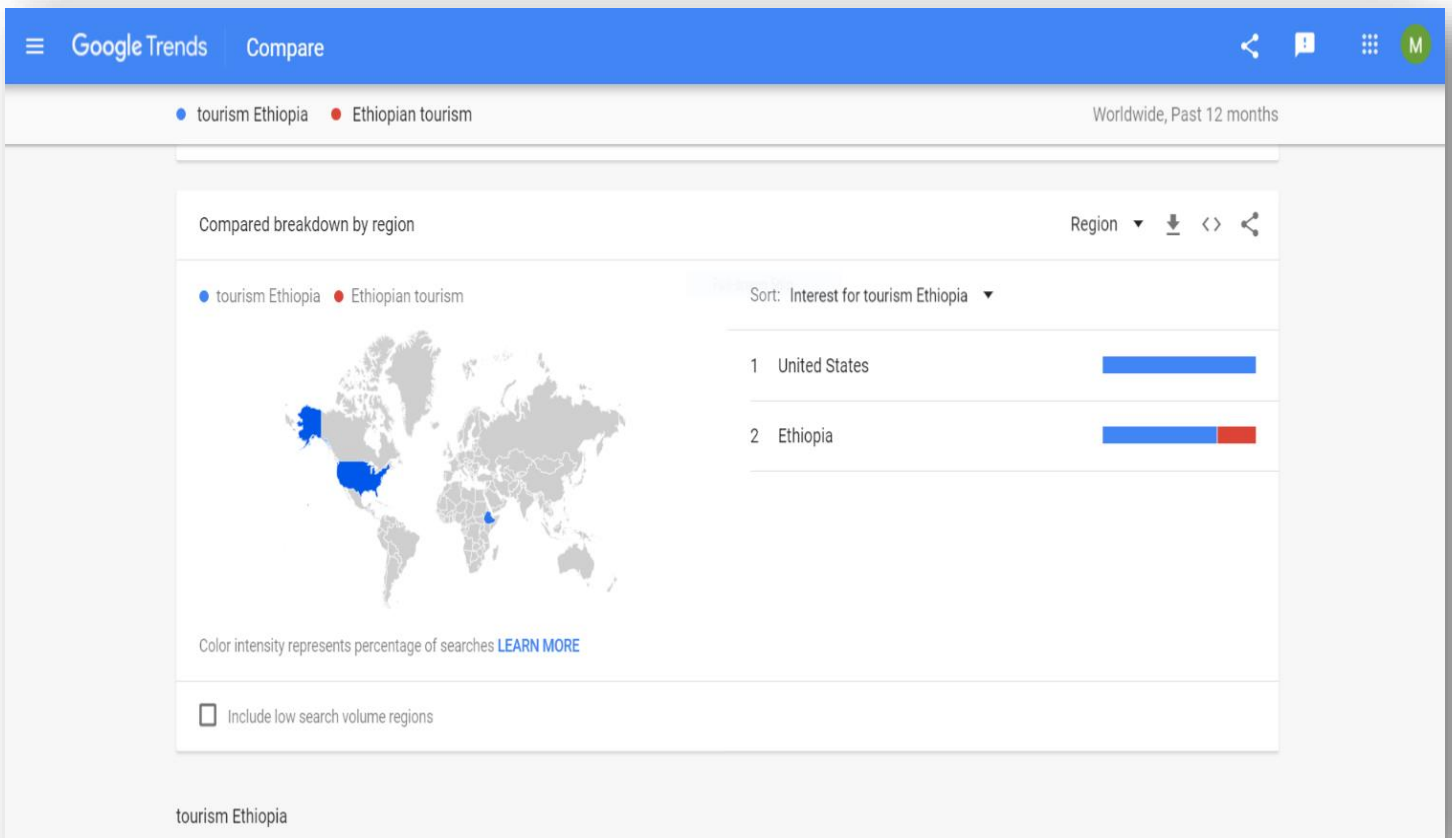
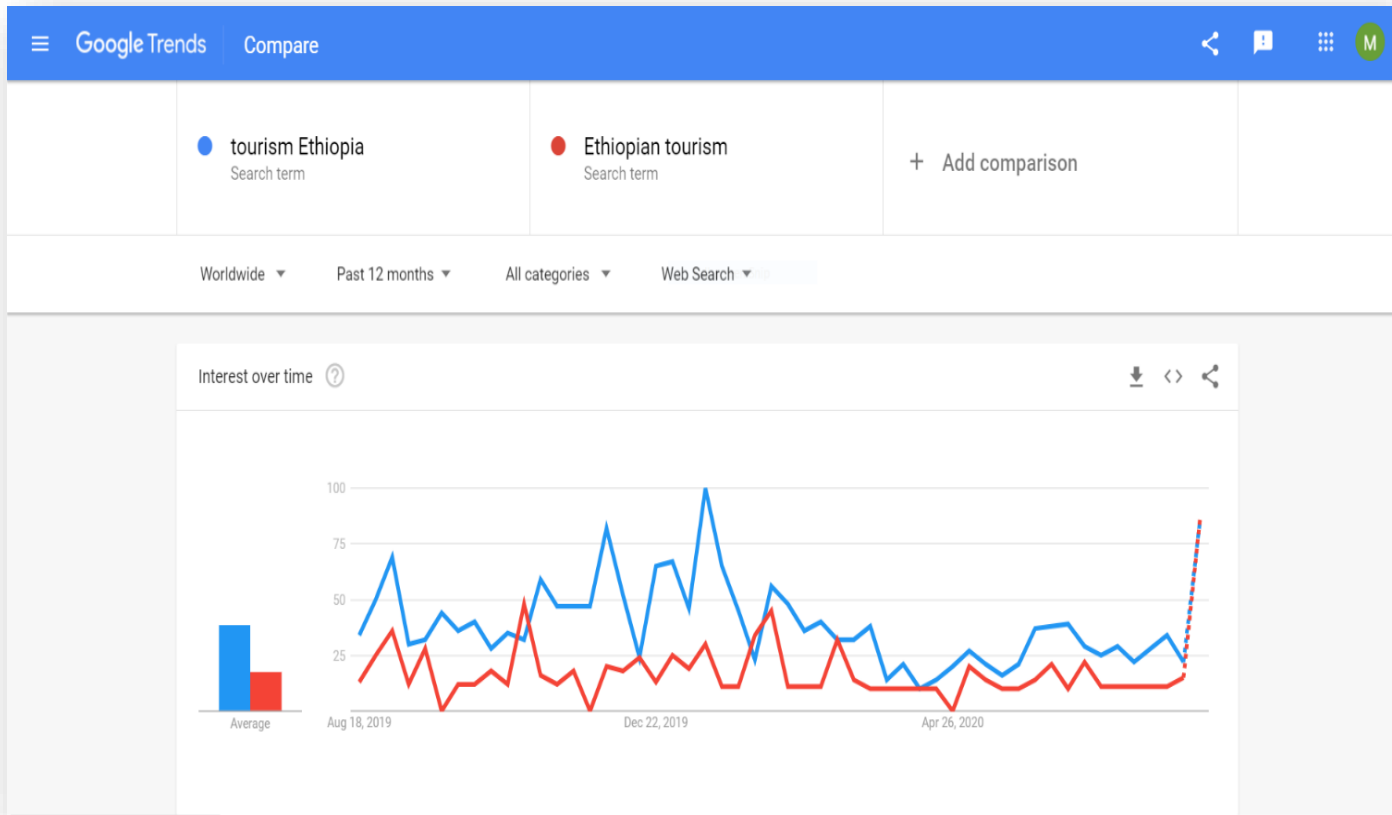
4.4. Online analysis

To analyse the online presence of the organization I have used two tools. One is Google Trending while the other is Google Analytics. These both are online tools which assess different qualities. The first one shows how much a word is searched over the internet. Therefore, shows the trend of a certain phrase/ word.

4.4.1 Google Trending

I used the search word “*Tourism Ethiopia and Ethiopian Tourism*” To assess where in the world and how frequent the word has been searched within 12 months period. Here is a screen shoot of the results.

Figure 4: Google Trending analytics



The result shows the phrase “Tourism Ethiopia” has a better statistic for being searched than “Ethiopian Tourism”. Other than this, December has the highest rate of interest than any other month in a year. Another interesting result is how in the world wide search interest the search term falls in two countries only. The highest rate of search is found in America followed by Ethiopia. This signifies the search term which is directly linked to the organization doesn’t possess interest all around the world but two countries. This could also mean the organization is not being discovered worldwide.

4.5 Interview

The interview has been done with three employees working in ETO. I have asked the senior PR official, the digital section of the PR and marketing manager of the organization. The interview questions were semi structured which enabled me to ask follow up questions so that I could find out more on a vague response.

The interview question is intended to get more information for the first and third research questions. The research seeks to find answers to how effective the presence of the organization over the internet and to discover the extent of promotional communications of the public relations practitioners of the organization.

The organization’s PR office strives to create a conducive environment both in and out of the organization so as to meet the goals of the organization. To create a relationship the department follows a strategy which is highly dependent on print (newspapers, magazine, brochures ...) and broadcast media basically Tv. I have been informed that they are not as active with the digital system of communication as print or broadcast (Tv).

To meet the evolution of communication system the PR department has a sub section that only deals with the digital communication of the organization. They promote the organization using different platforms. The digital director has told me: “We currently focus more on *Facebook* and *Telegram* for the popularity they have in our country but we also use others like Instagram and twitter when its needed” this point of interest contradicts with the vision the organization has which is to make Ethiopia popular worldwide.

I asked whether the online existence of the organization is effective and how they measure their online activities. In response I got a response that their digital activity is not as strong as a result is not bringing much of the needed results. For the question which weather they assess or analyse their digital activities, I got the following response “We analyse our social media posts by the number of likes, comments, and shares we got per post” but this action is not effective because for the follow up question I asked: “What tools do you use to analyse?” I was informed they do it manually which is really intimidating for the posts and online activities are hectic and far too many which implies this action has not been done effectively.

Concerning the website, I was informed it is intended to display basic information for any visitor of the page. But it is not active as it is not refreshed frequently with fresh news or information. The digital section of the PR department is overall trying to cope up with the fast-changing digital communication although it is in its infancy level is how they describe their activity over the internet.

Marketing and PR department though different in office arrangements they work together as any other portion of the organization so that they succeed over what their responsibilities. The relationship between the two departments basically falls in the advertisement and promotional actions of the organization. My interview questions have revealed the marketing department has got noting to do with the organization’s outside relationship unless it is on the purpose of purchasing a product. I was told the marketing department doesn’t promote and sell a product rather get in touch with the PR department for the purpose of advertisement so as to deal with the financial bureaucracies of the organization.

The PR department basically works on social media specially Facebook to promote Ethiopian tourism but they have been working exhaustively on print media to promote the organization.

4.6. Findings of the study

Studies show with over 4.13 billion internet users in 2019 (statistica.com) and 72% of customers turning to google to search products or services (Paradot.com) not only this but also 30% of today’s customers are largely online spending time on social media according to globalwebindex.com. This means it is wise to develop and use website and social media actively so as to create and maintain communication with wide public. ETO has made a wise move in to developing a website

and also creating social media pages to join and be visible worldwide. However, the question was whether they were efficient or not.

The analysis of the social networking sites of ETO show a number of information as to how active the organization is over the internet and what communication model it is using. Over a period of four months of analysis the organization made 43 posts over the Facebook and 18 posts over Twitter. This is a hardly enough frequency to the social medias. According to a study conducted by (Cox, 2020), it is not wise to post many posts as it is annoying to users of the platform and may cause the page even to be blocked. Therefore, he suggested organizations should post not more than two posts per day to be effectively available to followers of their page. However, ETO has made 0.3 posts on average within a range of four months. This is barely enough to get in touch with their followers. On the other hand, they made 18 tweets on twitter on the period of four months. A study by (Socialbaker, 2013) mentions tweets get attention when done frequently. It is mentioned on average 3 to 5 tweets should be made to be recognized as a tweet's life time is between 15-20 minutes. Contrary to this, ETO had made 0.15 tweets on average. This signifies the tweeter page of the organization is not discoverable at all. Hence how the organization runs its communication through two of the most popular social media platforms is not effective.

Frequency being one factor, the other constraint of the social media activity of the organization is displayed on table 6 and 10. The organization possessed an average of 24.4 likes, 71.6share and 3.5 comments over Facebook. The numbers signify there aren't efficient dialogues as almost only 4 followers would comment on a post. In addition, a post doesn't get applauded for only 24 or so fans would react to it. Much better than the two is the share action. Over all the posts made by ETO are not enticing enough to achieve sufficient attention from their followers. Even worse than Facebook is their performance on twitter. The average number of likes is 55, 14.5 retweets and an average of 2 comments. This is vivid enough to show the tweets of the organization are not effective since they couldn't capture many followers' attention. This possibly could be the inability of the organization tweeting not as frequently as it is supposed to.

Another analysis shows what the posts show classified in different contents (table 8 and 12). The contents posted as discussed are not sufficiently equipped with the best mechanisms. The posts were mainly focused on the activity of the organization and portraying them over their posts (i.e.

meetings, seminars, trainings...). The content analysis portrays the posts both in Facebook and Twitter were not equipped with promotional activities which should have been one of the major focus of the organization as suggested by studies. Concerning this Sinha (2019) explains in today's digital PR, talking about own organization, showing what is being done all the time obnoxiously telling stories to an interested audiences is no longer valid. You will need to create quality content that influencers want to share.

Based on Grunign's and Hunt's four models of public relations, the content analysis displayed in Graph 1 and 3 show one-way communication model is the most used. And specifically, public information model is the most used model. In this model the organization have posted factual information about different locations and events letting followers be informed of a certain issue or destination. From the two-way models better used is two-way symmetrical. In the new era of communication and the development of e-PR or PR 2.0, communication has to be more engaging and interactive (Sinha, 2019). Hence, the intensity of interactivity in ETO's situation is very low and needs to be moulded to be more interactive.

Another interest taken is most popular tweets from both Facebook and Twitter. This category is dominated by two models: public information and two-way asymmetrical models (tables 9 and 13). Other than being top of the posts the real difference relies on comments given in each post. The two-way asymmetrical posts are rich in comments compared to the public information model. This is normal as two-way PR models invite followers to have their say. But then again considering the platform used it is not this common to have the public information model used as often since social media are many-to-many communication tools that initiate people to take part as actively as possible.

In the interview held, the interviewee from the digital section of the organization had mentioned that they want larger and international followers to be in our zone and participate as much as possible so that they could improve themselves. This is seen partially as almost all of the posts are written in English language which indicates their intended audiences are foreigners. However, the communication model which they are implementing doesn't invite foreigners to be their fans as it is not participatory as it is supposed to be. Concerning on maintaining an engaging interaction between an organization and its public, Sinha (2019) explained brands must understand the

external communication relies on different platforms and resources such as company blogs, social media and even multimedia content for distribution. Therefore, developing quality, interactive content is pivotal to entice audience's attention.

One basic way of addressing large number of audiences legitimately is through the website an organization owns. ETO as many organizations possesses a web site. The website is not sophisticated but rather is shallow. Table 14 put the analysis of the website in black and white. The website is not fit to the current technological advancement. When I asked the digital section about this situation, I was informed that it is being developed again to a better performance. It is absurd to see that the website has not been updated since 2015. The information given there is not current and UpToDate. These days, backlinks to the web or social media pages are common to drag the visitor from the web to social media s or vice versa but they feature is not available on neither the social media or the web. These imply the organization is far behind the pace of the digital world in this case.

In the world of Web 2.0 it is crucial to be discoverable over the internet. An analysis in Google Trends shows the existence of the organization is very poor and is only active in two countries from the whole world. The search terms "*Tourism Ethiopia*" and "*Ethiopian Tourism*" were used to see how often the search term is used worldwide. The graph shows there is not much interest in the search terms and it is dropping in current time. But it is easy to see interest of visitors was high during December. Furthermore, tourism Ethiopia has better search preference than Ethiopian tourism. High quality content has become essential to online marketing efforts. Since so many consumers turn to search engine to launch their brand and product journey, it is important to realize that SEO plays a huge role in today's digital PR.

The interview has revealed different crucial points. First of all, it is easy to notice the PR department is trying to catchup with the digitalization of communication and marketing. However, they are far behind in many cases as can be seen from the content analysis. The department is still tightly engaged in print promotion. Sinha (2019), explained adapting a traditional press release to much more visually attractive format may make the difference between success and failure. Traditional PR in fact not being bad, has a disadvantage of being discoverable worldwide as print media is limited to places and numbers. Second point is regarding target audiences, talking about

target audiences the interviewee stated, “our public and private partners and stakeholders are our main focus, even more than the general service.” This idea contradicts with the one reply to a question how often they interact with stake holders which has been answered as “we meet annually” and doesn’t seem to understand whether liked or not people will talk about an organization and in e-PR is different in a case that it doesn’t ignore the power people have on the internet. Another point of interest was how the digital section of the organization interacts with influential figure on the internet. Concerning this, I was informed that they don’t have any connection with bloggers and online influencers over social media. Supporting this point study at Forbes.com states 85% of millennial respondents regularly watches You Tube. Furthermore, 58% of millennials don’t mind ads when they support their favourite digital personalities. In a world where a teenage travel writer is offered thousands of dollars to mention a destination to his/her followers it is not wise to neglect bloggers or influential people over the internet. One strategy in marketing is advertising, to a question asked about online advertisement, the interviewee has not started advertising online. Advertising meanwhile is increasingly going online in interactive Web 2.0 formats (Burnett, 2008) and Web 2.0 – enabled social media and networks are being deployed by business for communication and marketing. Another crucial point over digital monitoring is developing guidelines for social medias, they haven’t yet developed media guidelines or strategies (i.e. the dos and don’ts of employees while they engage themselves in social medias.). Moreover, I was also addressed that they haven’t yet developed social media strategy other than the annual general plan and strategy.

Another awkward finding is the marketing department and the PR department are not working together to bring up a successful result.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The study has been conducted on what is now a multimillion-dollar business for countries and way of foreign currency for a country like Ethiopia (i.e. tourism). Ethiopian tourism organization was a focal point of this study which is responsible for promoting Ethiopia worldwide. This study has been conducted in consideration of the opportunity the country has regarding tourism and the new way of promoting and communicating that is digital PR. The study has analysed ETO's digital; PR trend.

Social media being one means of digital communication, ETO has created and used them in addition to the website it runs. The study had revealed that the digital communication tools although being used by the organization, they were not used efficiently and effectively. The PR of the organization has not yet used the platform exhaustively to benefit from the colossal advantages the platform offers. The website being the most legitimate means of finding organizations, ETO has not even refreshed the content on the website since 2015.

New media or web 2.0 is a digital system that initiates a communication where mass could communicate with mass. It is known as a "many to many" communication. ETO though has not focused on that aspect but rather use one-way communication specifically public information to address the followers of their page. Furthermore, in ocean of information, it is crucial to be discoverable for interested browsers. It is not easy to access ETO as they were not active and wise in their online existence and activity.

One huge way of being discoverable is through promotion or advertisement. ETO's marketing department and PR hasn't created the bond needed to promote the organization using digital means of advertising. Their advertisement and promotional activities are rather old fashioned and doesn't aim to reach the world. Most of the contents posted over their social media pages focus on the internal activities of the organization like meetings, seminars and trainings. This couldn't be a point of interest for many tourists as to the objectives they have.

5.2 Recommendations

The content analysis has shown the digital communicative model of the organization is highly dependent on one-way public information model and the posts of the organization over social media doesn't get sufficient attention.

Therefore, the organization:

- Should first develop social media strategy and increase the frequency of posts they share on Facebook by at least 2 posts a day at maximum amount and 3 to 5 tweets a day on twitter.
- They need to focus on quality content posted over their social media instead of the organization's routine work activity.
- They shall work more on two way asymmetric or dialogic model of PR rather than public information, so as to communicate and increase the number of followers they have. Because, this will make the organization discoverable and the organization on the other hand can address the emotions and feelings of interested audiences.
- The web site needs to be re-designed as it is old. It needs to include basic features such as address, backlinks, news feed, chatrooms.
- They shall work with bloggers and internet celebrities so as to be discovered and increase their followers.
- They need to advance on SEO (search engine optimization) by analysing their progress frequently so the organization can be found easily on Google and other search engines.

Policy makers on the other hand:

- Should revise the tourism development policy and design a policy where organizations should include a digital section of their public relations department.

And researchers:

- Can make a comparative study between two organizations to study the digital public relations practice and traditional public relations practices.

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APPENDIX - A

CODING GUIDELINES AND SCHEME

CODING GUIDELINES FOR THE WEB SITE

Units of analysis: the content of the web site that is located on the homepage plus two drills downs. To drill down through content means to move from summary information (e.g. content of the home page) to detailed data by focusing in on information. In addition, any web pages in the form of legal disclaimers or choice of language are not to be included in unit of analysis. Therefore, such pages do not represent a drill down and should be ignored.

Name of Web site: State the name of the web site as it appears on the homepage.

Address of web site: State the URL address of the web site.

Sector: state wheatear the web site is sponsored by a government or a commercial/private actor.

A. Purpose

Indicate what the purpose(s) of the web site is.

1. *Tourism promotion:* in order for a web site to be “tourism promoting” it should reflect broad view tourism, recognizing both life style and social determinants of tourism and support a variety of strategies to initiate, or entice once destination interest. Report on whether the web site offers information regarding all or any of the three features of tourism promotion (Yes/No).
 - a. Life style: Adventures/ harmonious relationships between and nature, food and drinks.
 - b. Social determinants: Accommodation, income, social status.
 - c. Strategies: working in partnership with other tourism organizations.
2. *Service Delivery:* Report on whether the web site offers information regarding service delivery provided by the organization’s sponsoring the selected web site or by others. Information could be presented regarding what services are offered, when they are offered and who is eligible to receive the service (Yes/No).
3. *News:* Report on whether there is a selection on the web site that is devoted to news (new information regarding how tourism destinations, recreational activities, new roots, service/offerings, payments etc.). Indicate which type of topic or news, if any offered.

- a. Government: Policy information, reports on the tourism system, change in government personnel (i.e. change in ministers), news from the ministry, government (Yes/No)
 - b. Hot topics: News events that change daily or weekly regarding a specific destination or condition, a social determinant of tourism or strategy or a story that is relevant to a time of year. For example, the blockage of road (Yes/No).
 - c. Conference and Tourism events: For example, conference regarding research, tourism topics, hotel managements or a tour association new project (Yes/No).
4. *Social Support*: Report on whether the web site offers information regarding social support services, such as information about support groups or virtual offers groups or chat groups. Virtual support groups provide an opportunity for the visitor of the web site to interact with the provider of the site, with professionals, or with other visitors.
- a. Support group information: Information about local or national support groups (Contact information). (Yes/No).
 - b. Virtual support with organization: an opportunity to interact with the provider of the site (Yes/No).
 - c. Virtual support with professionals: an opportunity to interact with a professional who can offer medical and emotional support to the visitor of the site (Yes/No).
 - d. Virtual support with other visitors: an opportunity to interact with other visitors to the site (Yes/No).
5. *Promotion*: Report on whether the web site contains material designed to encourage visitors to purchase products or services, or participate in research programs.
- a. Selling a product or service direct (Yes/No).
 - b. Advertising a product or service (Yes/No).
6. *Evaluate tourism information*: Report on whether the web site contains information (i.e., a checklist) explaining to internet users how to critique (assess) web-based health information (yes/No).
7. *Consumer participation*: report on whether the web site contains material related to consumer participation in the tourism sector, this may involve being a part of a government committee specifically set up with the intention of soliciting consumer participation, or involve participating on an advisory committee for a non-profit or for-profit organization that is lobbying the government for tourism and image change (Yes/No).

B. Audience

Indicate if there is a hyperlink to a specific target group of people (e.g. children, youth, seniors etc.), and if so, whether the group is the intended audience for the information, or just the subject of the information. In other words, is the information provided geared for a select group or is it about a select group or is it about a select group? For example, if there is a link for children then you check 'Yes' there is a link for this group. You would click on the link and assess whether the information is designed for children, this should be clear based on how the information is presented (Yes, they are the audience). Is it possible that adults are intended audience, for example a site offering children a special holiday as family vacation to parents; therefore, making the children the subject not the audience. It is also possible that the sub-category (e.g. children, youth, men etc.) may be both the audience and the subject. For example, information about birding contests would likely be geared towards tourists of birding are both the audience and the subject. Therefore, the coder would check both audience and subject on the coding sheet, indicating that the sub-category was both the subject and audience of the web site's contest. In addition, it is possible that a sub category could not have a link for tour companies it is quite possible that tour guides are the audience of the information. Therefore, you would note that tour guides are intended audience, despite the fact there is not direct link (hyperlink) for tour guides. If the coder is not able to assess whether the information is for, or about, a particular group within the unit of analysis (home page plus one click) the coder would check N/A (not available, or not able to discuss) on the coding sheet.

1. *Family*: Report whether the web site offers information regarding family.
 - a. Is there a link for families? If yes, please complete point 'b' of the question. If no, please select no and move to next question. (Yes/No)
 - b. Are families the audience or the subject of the content, or are they both? (Yes/NO)
 - c. Yes/No-Not able to discern if the information is for or about a particular group.

C. Model of Public Relations

Identify whether the web site fits in one of the four models (press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical). Since the models can overlap, it is okay if more than one model fits the web site. Drill through the homepage plus two drills down.

Answer Yes if the post corresponds to the model and No if it does not. The press agency/publicity and public information model use one-way communication. One-way communication refers to communication moving directly from the organization to the public without evidence that the organization wants or uses feedback from the public. The two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models use two-way communication. Two-way communications refer to communication moving back and forth from an organization to its publics. Two-way communication shows that the organization solicits and uses feedback from its publics.

1. *Press Agency/Publicity*- type Yes or No.

a. One-way communication using persuasive language: A press agency/ publicity display will usually try to persuade others to buy or use a product or service of the university or persuade audience to apply or be convinced to a certain package or program. It can also demonstrate obvious publicity of the organization using biased language such as “your best experience/choice” this type of page in the web does not try to communicate with others. While tourists or other users may comment/reply to the organizations will not reply to the comments.

i. Example: “Our service is the best!”

ii. Example: We are now offering an interesting tour package. Apply now!”

iii. Example: “Join our one of a kind hiking programs this summer!”

2. *Public information*: Type Yes or No

a. One-way communication, using direct, objective language; just the facts: A public information post will extend information without using biased language. This can include scores from a game, directions to the airport, delayed flights, current events etc. even if the post is about the organization posting the information, it can still fit under this model if it lacks biased language. While interested groups may comment/reply to the organization’s post, the organization will not reply to the comments.

i. Example: “check out these pictures from the wonders of Ethiopia”

ii. Example: “Did you know...? (or any interesting, “fact of the day content)

iii. Example: “Tour operators held a meeting last night!”

3. *Two-way Asymmetrical*-Type Yes or No.

a. Two-way communication that advocates feedback or poses questions to tourists and stake holders. Two –way asymmetrical posts communicate with publics to focus on overall

organization's goals, ignoring the needs of the public in general. The organization uses language that encourages a response from tourists, tour organizations, tour operators and other concerned bodies, but the organization does not respond.

- i. Example: "What did you think of last night's training?"
- ii. Example: "Send us your pictures."
- iii. Example: "Who has headed to the Semien mountains today?"

4. *Two-way symmetrical-Type* Yes or NO

- a. Two-way communication that manages conflicts and promotes better understanding between the organization and stake holders will nearly always include a response to post or email from an interested person). A dialogue between the organization and stake holders and interested groups exist. Unlike the other models (where people post comments, and the organization does not respond). In this model, the organization responds with help, assistance, empathy, etc. two-way symmetrical posts will demonstrate a desire to build long –term mutually beneficial relationships with audiences. These posts can include the organization's desire to fix a problem a tourist may have, give advice on how to do something direct tourists and interested groups with information and having casual conversation.
 - i. Example: Post from a tourist: "How do I get a tour guide if I want to travel to Bale Mountains?" ... Post from the organization "Please visit these sites or call these numbers for more information."
 - ii. Example: Post from tour organization: "Are there any peace threat around ... please?" ... Post from the organization: "There isn't any serious threat but use this phone number to contact the local police in case of emergencies."

D. Accessibility:

Assess the accessibility of the content of the web site.

1. *Reading level*: Apply the readability tool to a random article on the web site (within the unit of analysis) to assess what level of reading a person must have to understand the text.
2. *Easy to navigate*: Report whether the selected web site is easy to navigate.
 - a. Toolbar- is there a tool bar offered on every page with navigational links and consistent icons? (Yes/No)

- b. Link to site's home page on every page?
- c. Link to useful web sites: is there a link to webs that are useful for the browsers to find additional useful information (Yes/No).
- d. Title on each page-Is there a title on each page identifying the focus on subject of the page (Yes/No).
- 3. *On-line-glossary*: Is there an on-line glossary? (Yes/No).
- 4. *Language*- Report whether the information on the web site is offered in another language. If yes, please record which language(S) (Yes/No).
 - a. Is all of the information offered in another language?
 - b. Is part of the information offered in another language?
- 5. *Other means to access information*- is there a tool-free number offered so people without internet connection or software can get the information they need in another format free of charge (Yes/No).
- 6. *Font size*: Is the font size of the information at least 10 points font size follow the steps: 1) choose a word(s) that appear to be written in the smallest font; 2) highlight and copy the word(s) and past them into a word document; 3) put the cursor on the word(s) and see what the font size is by looking at the top of the screen, in the toolbar (Yes/No).
- 7. *Address*: location and contact information of the organization.
 - a. Is there a map/direction/Google map link for the location of the organization (Yes/No)?
 - b. Is there a phone number (Yes/No)?
 - c. Is there a link for the organization's social media pages on the homepage of the web site? (Yes/No).
- 8. *Chatrooms*: Is there a platform on the web site where audiences could interact one another and with the organization? (Yes/No).

APPENDIX - B

CODE BOOK (FACEBOOK)

Use this code book as a guide to code each individual post made by the organization between August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am

- 1. Name of The Organization
 - a. Write the name of the organization being coded.

2. Number of Likes and Follows.
 - a. Write the number of likes and follows of the page
3. Time and Date of The Post
 - a. Write in the time (followed by a.m. or p.m.) and date (MM/DD/YY) of each post.
4. Post Kind
 - a. Only written post (Yes/No). Describe if the post is written in any other language other than Amharic.
 - b. Picture (Yes/No). Decide if the picture is
 - i. Nature
 - ii. People in meeting, seminar, training.
 - iii. Infographic
 - iv. Promotion
 - v. informative
 - vi. Tourists on the go
 - c. Both picture and written words (Yes/No).
5. Shares. Write the average of the overall posts between August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am.
 - a. Write which the top ten posts that got most shares and likes (Decide which models of PR they are grouped in to).

FOUR MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Identify whether the post fits in one of the four models (press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical). Since the models can overlap, it is okay if more than one model fits each post. Try to narrow it down to one model, if possible. Answer yes if the post corresponds to the model and 'No' if it does not. The press agency/publicity and public information models use one-way communication. One-way communication refers to communication moving directly from the organization to the public without evidence that the organization wants or uses feedback from the public. The two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models use the two-way communication. Two-way communication refers to communication moving back and forth from an organization to its publics. Two-way communication shows that the organization solicits and uses feedback from its publics.

1. Press Agency/Publicity – Type Yes or No
 - a. One-way communication, using persuasive language: A press agency/publicity post will usually try to persuade others to buy or use a product or service of the university or persuade students to apply to the university or a certain program. It can also demonstrate obvious publicity of the organization using biased language such as “the best in Africa.” This type of post does not try to communicate with others. While users may comment/reply to the organization’s post the organization will not reply to the comments.
 - i. Example. “We’re now reorganizing the hosteling industry in Addis Ababa.”
 - ii. Example. “Our service is the best!”
 - iii. Example: “Join in for our hiking program this January.”

2. Public Information- Type Yes or NO
 - a. One –way communication, using direct, objective language; just the facts; A public information post will extend information without using biased language. This can include scores from a game, directions to the airport, delayed flights, current events, etc. even if the post is about the organization posting the information. It can still fit under the model if it lacks biased language. While users may comment/reply to the organization’s post, the organization will not reply to the comments.
 - i. Example. “Check out these pictures from last week’s hiking program.”
 - ii. Example. “Did you know the Gelada Baboon is found only in Ethiopia?”
 - iii. Example. “Tourism Ethiopia gave training for fresh tour guide graduates.”
3. Two-Way Asymmetrical-Type Yes or No
 - a. Two-way communication that advocates feedback or poses questions to users. Two-way asymmetrical posts communicate with publics to focus on overall organization goals, ignoring the needs of the public in general. The organization uses language that encourages a response from audiences, but the organization does not respond themselves.
 - i. Example. “What did you think of last week’s training?”
 - ii. Example. “Send us your pictures; let’s know what you were doing?”
 - iii. Example. “Who likes the Semen Mountains?”
4. Two-Way Symmetrical- Type Yes or No
 - a. Two-way communication that manages conflicts and promotes better understanding between the organization and users (Will nearly always include a response to post or comment from a user). A dialogue between the organization and users exists. Unlike the other models (Where users post comments, and the organization does not respond), in this model, the organization responds with help, assistance, empathy, etc. Two-way symmetrical posts will demonstrate a desire to fix a problem a user may have, give advice on how to do something, direct user information, and having casual conversations.
 - i. Example: Post from a tourist: “How do I get a tour guide if I want to travel to Bale Mountains?” ... Post from the organization “Please visit these sites or call these numbers for more information.”
 - ii. Example: Post from tour organization: “Are there any peace threat around ... please?” ... Post from the organization: “There isn’t any serious threat but use this phone number to contact the local police in case of emergencies.”

APPENDIX - C

Code book (Twitter)

User this codebook as a guide to code each individual post made by the organization between August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am.

1. Name of the organization
 - a. Write the name of the organization being coded.
2. Time and date of the post.
 - a. Write in the time (followed by a.m. or p.m.) and date (MM/DD/YY) of each post.
3. Number of followers.
 - a. Write the number of followers of the page.
4. Post kind
 - a. Only written post (Yes/No). Describe if the post is written in any other language other than Amharic.
 - b. Picture (Yes/No). Decide if the picture is
 - i. Nature
 - ii. People in meeting, seminar, training.
 - iii. Infographic
 - iv. Promotion
 - v. Informative
 - vi. Tourists on the go
 - c. Both picture and written words (Yes/No).
5. Retweets
 - a. Write the average of the overall posts between August 2019, 8:00Am to December 2019, 8:00 Am
 - b. Write which top ten posts that got most retweets and likes (Decide which models of PR they are grouped in to)

Four models of Public relations:

Identify whether the post fits in one of the four models (press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical). Since the models can overlap, it is okay if more than one model fits each post. Try to narrow it down to one model, if possible. Answer yes if the post corresponds to the model and 'No' if it does not. The press agency/publicity and public information models use one-way communication. One-way communication refers to communication moving directly from the organization to the public without evidence that the organization wants or uses feedback from the public. The two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models use the two-way communication. Two-way communication refers to communication moving back and forth from an organization to its publics. Two-way communication shows that the organization solicits and uses feedback from its publics.

1. Press Agency/Publicity: Type Yes or No
 - a. One-way communication, using persuasive language: A press agency/publicity post will usually try to persuade others to buy or use a product or service of the university or persuade students to apply to the university or a certain program. It can also demonstrate obvious publicity of the organization using biased language such as "the best in Africa." This type of post does not try to communicate with others. While users may comment/reply to the organization's post the organization will not reply to the comments.
 - i. Example. "We're now reorganizing the hosteling industry in Addis Ababa."

- ii. Example. “Our service is the best!”
 - iii. Example: “Join in for our hiking program this January.”
2. Public information: Type Yes or No
- a. One –way communication, using direct, objective language; just the facts; A public information post will extend information without using biased language. This can include scores from a game, directions to the airport, delayed flights, current events, etc. even if the post is about the organization posting the information. It can still fit under the model if it lacks biased language. While users may comment/reply to the organization’s post, the organization will not reply to the comments.
 - i. Example. “Check out these pictures from last week’s hiking program.”
 - ii. Example. “Did you know the Gelada Baboon is found only in Ethiopia?”
 - iii. Example. “Tourism Ethiopia gave training for fresh tour guide graduates.”
3. Two-way asymmetrical: Type Yes or NO
- a. Two-way communication that advocates feedback or poses questions to users. Two-way asymmetrical posts communicate with publics to focus on overall organization goals, ignoring the needs of the public in general. The organization uses language that encourages a response from students, but the organization does not respond themselves.
 - i. Example. “What did you think of last week’s training?”
 - ii. Example. “Send us your pictures; let’s know what you were doing?”
 - iii. Example. “Who likes the Semen Mountains?”
4. Two-way symmetrical: Type Yes or No
- a. Two-way communication that manages conflicts and promotes better understanding between the organization and users (Will nearly always include a response to post or comment from a user). A dialogue between the organization and users exists. Unlike the other models (Where users post comments, and the organization does not respond), in this model, the organization responds with help, assistance, empathy, etc. Two-way symmetrical posts will demonstrate a desire to fix a problem a user may have, give advice on how to do something, direct user information, and having casual conversations.
 - i. Example: Post from a tourist: “How do I get a tour guide if I want to travel to Bale Mountains?” ... Post from the organization “Please visit these sites or call these numbers for more information.”
 - ii. Example: Post from tour organization: “Are there any peace threat around ... please?” ... Post from the organization: “There isn’t any serious threat but use this phone number to contact the local police in case of emergencies.”

Appendix D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PR Officer In ETO

These interview questions are prepared for the PR official active at ETO.

1. What's your role in this organization?
2. How do you intend to create relations both in and out of this organization?
3. What's your major tool to promote the vision and mission of the organization?
4. How do you interact with stakeholders?
5. What's your way of treating comments, complaints or questions from tourists or other concerned bodies?
6. Which public relation tool do you use the most to promote the organization?
7. How is the PR department coping with the new medias?
8. How do you treat comments that you receive in your social media pages'?
9. How do you expect a concerned body to reach you?
10. What is your purpose over social media specifically Facebook and Twitter?
11. What do you want to display over the organization's website?
12. Which social media site do you participate the most why?
13. What kind of contents do you share over the internet?
14. How do you analyze your activity over the internet?
15. Who do you consider as your audience?
16. What platform have you created for your interest group to communicate with you?
17. What do you say is your status in the evolving nature of PR? Are you coping up?
18. What reaction do you have to the new PR?
19. What is your basic mechanism to be discovered worldwide?
20. Where would you place the digital PR existence of the organization?

Interview questions (2)

Interview for officials from selected tourism offices.

1. What communication channel do you have with ETO?
2. What is your source or tool of discovering tourists?
3. What help do you require from ETO?
4. Is there any means for tourism organizations like you to reach and communicate with ETO?
5. Do you think online marketing and public relations are crucial?
6. According to your view is ETO discoverable worldwide?
7. What is your view to the new form of PR?
8. Do you administer any website or social media page? If so, what do you benefit from that? If not why?
9. Do you believe ETO runs an open organization for the stakeholders.
10. What is your suggestion to improve Ethiopian tourism concerning the system we are running?
11. Is ETO playing its role accordingly?