



**College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and
Communications**

School of Journalism & Communications

The Practice of Marketing Public Relations in Ethiopian Airlines Group

**A Thesis Submitted to School of Journalism and Communications in partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement of Degree of Masters of Art in Public Relations and Strategic
Communications**

By

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September, 2021

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University

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DECLARATION

I, Ayele Legesse, hereby declare that the work in this research study entitled “The Practice of Marketing Public Relations in Ethiopian Airlines Group” is my own original work and all the sources of materials used for this study have been identified and duly acknowledged. This research study has not been previously submitted in full or partial fulfillment for any degree in this university or any other recognized education institution. This research study is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communications.

Abstract

The notion of Marketing Public Relations began to emerge in marketing communications arena since 1993, when Harris defined it as “it is the process of planning, executing and evaluating programs that encourage purchase and consumer satisfaction through credible communication of information and impressions that identify companies and their products with the needs, wants, concerns, and interests of consumers” (Harris, 1993:13-14). Marketing Public relation, in simple description, is the marketing oriented public relations. The current business firms on the world utilizes the PR in various forms, some in the form of marketing dominated PR, other as a separate entities, still others as entities equally important for a company (Grunig& Grunig , 1998 cited in Geremew, 2017). The current study aimed at investigating the practices of Marketing Public Relations (MPR) in Ethiopian Airlines Group. Guided by interpretivist research paradigm, the researcher deployed qualitative approach to answer two basic research questions, “what is the belief of PR managers and practitioners about MPR?” and “What is the actual practice MPR in Ethiopian Airline Group?” Document Analysis, key Informant Interview and Focus Group Discussion were used to collect data for the qualitative study. Simple random sampling was used to select 7 participants of FGD and Purposive sampling technique to involve 3 managers for key informant interview; and relevant PR documents were randomly used to investigate the practices of MPR in the company. The finding from all tools revealed that marketing public relation is practiced in Ethiopian Airlines under the umbrella of Integrated marketing communications. The participants were found to believe the indispensable role of PR in marketing activities of the company. They believe that the changes occurred since IMC was introduced to the company and since they started working with all marketing communication actors, and they also mentioned that their reach of customers were very less when they were working in silo before IMC. There were also gaps revealed by the study like the place of PR in the organizational structure which affects the practices and absence of Public relation research in the department. Lack of periodical training to maximize the capacity of the practitioners in line with the rapid technological advancement and bitter competition in aviation business, lack of human power in PR&CC department, are some challenges mentioned. Therefore, continuous evaluation by IMC constituents, facilitating experience sharing, providing training to the practitioners and solving the shortage of man power were some of the recommendations made.

Key words, Integrated Marketing Communications, Marketing Public Relations, Marketing Communications, Public Relations

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Acronyms

EAL- Ethiopian Airlines

ETG- Ethiopian Group

IMC- Integrated Marketing Communications

MPR- Marketing Public Relations

PR- Public Relations

PRCC- Public Relations and Corporate Communications

MRO- Maintenance Repair Overhaul

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

Marketing public relation(MPR) is first defined by Harris as “Marketing Public Relations is the process of planning, executing and evaluating programs that encourage purchase and consumer satisfaction through credible communication of information and impressions that identify companies and their products with the needs, wants, concerns, and interests of consumers” (Harris, 1993). Kitchen also considers MPR as a vital element of the marketing communication mix in that it adds value to an organization’s marketing efforts (Kitchen, 1999).

Marketing public relation is understood as marketing oriented public relations. It is the narrow aspect of public relation. It is different from general public relations (PR) in that it focuses on the interactions with consumers or with other publics about the product of an organization regarding market matters. On the other hand, public relation is seen as an organizational activity concerned with developing good will between a company and its publics; its efforts are aimed at various corporate constituencies, including employees, suppliers, stakeholders, governments, the public, labor groups, citizen action groups, and consumers. In this sense, most PR activities do not encompass marketing but deal with general management issues (Shimp, 2007).

Now a day, MPR is being seen as the PR roles in integrated marketing communications strategies of an organization. As it can be understood from the previous definitions, the concept marketing public relations leans up on the activities public relation plays in marketing. As to Maloney (2000), in the contemporary marketplace, MPR is a prominent component of marketing communication; goods and services producers since the 1960s have been inclined to favor it more than advertising. Maloney again added that there is a growing use of PR by marketers when they understand that advertising only is not enough persuading tools especially when the customers or public are educated. They believe that public relation information is ethical, more informative and increase awareness.

Moreover, current literatures assert that relevance of MPR is unquestionable with all its advantages and disadvantages. In line with this, Percy (2008), and Pickton and Broderick (2005) assert that its advantages include such things as: low cost; reach specific target groups; avoid confusion about product (service); avoid message credibility. PR, as a communication tool, can reach specific target

audiences effectively; it also avoids message ambiguity which is common in advertising. However, MPR has disadvantages in that it lacks control over message once sent, which can be altered by other editors.

The prominent author in marketing communications field, Philip Kotler, witnessed that many companies are turning to MPR to support corporate or product promotion and image making. He also adds “MPR goes beyond simple publicity and plays an important role in launching new products, repositioning the matured products, building interest in the product category, influencing specific target group, defending products that have faced public problems and building the corporate image in a way that reflects favorably on its products (Kotler & Keller, 2011).

In current study, the researcher intends to describe to what extent marketing public relation is practiced in an airline company. The airline companies are a business oriented firms that run abundant aviation services and operate in a very diversified, competitive, and complex market environment. The competition requires an airline company to exercise effective and efficient marketing communication strategies to position oneself in the market. One of the communication strategies is practicing integrated marketing communication mixes. Public relation is one of the tools of integrated marketing communications and as discussed earlier, the marketing public relation plays indispensable role in marketing communications of such business companies.

Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) now called Ethiopian Group (ETG), the current study site, is a huge public business company which operates in air transportation, hospitality and other services in the country and in the world at large. The company with the name Ethiopian Group comprises different business constituents. These are Ethiopian International Passenger Service; Ethiopian Regional Service; Ethiopian Cargo; Ethiopian MRO; Ethiopian Aviation Academy; Ethiopian In-flight Catering Service and Ethiopian Ground Services (Ethiopian Airlines, 2021).

EAL, established in December 21, 1945 EC, started operation on April 08, 1946 EC by the full ownership of Ethiopian government. Ethiopian Airlines, the fastest growing African airlines, is the flag carrier of Ethiopia during the past seventy-five years and this year it is celebrating its 75th year anniversary. Holding the motto “The new Sprit of Africa”, Ethiopian has become one of the continent’s leading carriers, turning profits for almost all the years of its existence (Ethiopian Airlines2021).

Communication is one of the major activities of Ethiopian Airlines Group to introduce itself and its new service products to the aviation market and to maintain its prominent brand in the industry. As a result of these communication purposes, the company runs huge communication activities through various organizational structures, the advertising and sales promotion department, employee engagements, public relations and corporate communication are some of the responsible departments for communication activities. Employee engagement is, of course, responsible for internal communication.

The new approach or the organizational structure which pursues the method of integrating all marketing communication tools was introduced since 2019. Under the Integrated Marketing Communications, the Group public relation& corporate communication, the Group Digital Marketing, Group Advertising and Sales Promotion departments were structured and operating the Group's whole marketing communication and general public relations activities. Each department has its own sub departments accordingly. For instance, Group Public Relations and corporate communication comprises sub divisions of Media Relations and Event management, Content Development and Social Media Team. Therefore, this study was intended to know the practices of public relation activities in marketing communications which is termed as Marketing Public Relations (MPL) in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of marketing public relation is less articulated in marketing communications researches. Most of the time, the emphasis is given to integrated marketing communication tools such as advertising, promotion, public relation, direct marketing and personal sale. Of course, public relation is seen as the corporate level marketing tool that helps maintain good relationship between companies and the customers or consumers. In this sense, the role of public relation in marketing activities is overlooked and in some instances the delineation between public relation and marketing is the issue of debate among the scholars of the field (Geremew, 2017).

In fact, the objective of the current study was not dealing with the debate, but it is to describe the role that public relations play in marketing activities. Nevertheless, the vitality of MPR is getting attention and became the area of various researches. Professionals in marketing communications field of researches like Philip Kotler (2003), Gianini(2010), Kitchen and Pappasolomou (1997) , emphasized the role of public relation in marketing by looking from the view point of marketing public relations. To state some, Gianini (2010) depicts MPR as the tool which has “the potential to

enhance the visibility of products and organizations, inform stakeholders in relation to issues that are critical to the organization, influence public opinion favorably towards the organization, as well as encourage the trial of products and increased usage”. Kitchen and Papasolomou (1997) cited in Vrontis (2014) again highlights the value of MPR in winning consumers’ reliance, celebrating special occasions and sponsoring special events and programs.

In locally published researches, there are very few issues addressed in relation to MPR. Most of the locally published papers focused on the general public relation activities of public and private organizations. Furthermore, the research works in Ethiopia focus on separate marketing tools independently. The emphasis is given to advertising, personal sales, promotions direct marketing digital marketing etc. However, to mention one, Lissan (2019) conducted study on the practices of MPR in DH- GADA Business Group and in his conclusion he claims that there were no marketing public relations practices in the company. Another research work related to IMC is the one which was conducted by Befekadu (2018). He conducted study on the effect of integrated marketing communication on brand awareness focusing on Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

When EAL communications practice related researches is considered, as far the experience of the researcher is concerned, mostly addressed areas were ticketing (traditional and the modern online one), public relations issues like crisis management, media relations, employee relations, etc.), relationship marketing and other corporate communication issues. To mention few, Isayas (2010) investigated the practices of E-marketing with special focus to E- ticketing practice of Ethiopian Airlines, Rahel (2013) conducted her study on the practices of Public Relations of Ethiopian Airlines ;she didn’t focus on marketing public relations, and Henok (2018) studied the Effect of Personal Selling on customer loyalty, the case of Ethiopian Airlines.

Thus, it is vital to investigate the current practices of marketing public relations of Ethiopian Airlines group which runs very huge marketing and communication activity in the country and in the world of aviation at large. The following objectives would be met by answering the basic research questions enlisted here under.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to know the status of the practice of marketing public relation in Ethiopian Airlines Group.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To describe the current practice of marketing public relations in ETG.
- To identify the perception of the managers and practitioners of communication activities of the company towards the role of public relations in marketing communications
- To describe the challenges in applying marketing public relation.

1.4 Research Questions

- To what extent Marketing public relations is practiced in Ethiopian Airlines group?
- What perception do practitioners of marketing and public relation have towards MPR?
- What are challenges that PR department encounters while attempting to apply MPR?

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This study will have contribution in revitalizing the role of public relations in marketing communications by business owners operating in the country. It also paves the way for student researchers to make the MPR field the potential area of further study in marketing communications field. Moreover, the researcher believes that the study can help the Public relation department of the study site to review their role in marketing activities of this huge company. It increases the awareness of the role of PR not only in the department but also in other departments which have direct or indirect interface in marketing communication activities.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

This study was limited to EAL Group, Public Relations and Corporate Communications department. It involved other departments of the company which are working on marketing communications activities to gather data which helped the researcher to understand the practices of MPR. The time scope of this study will only be limited to the year 2020/21 (2013 E.C) to make the study manageable.

1.7 Operational Definitions

Public Relations: Public Relations is a management activity that serves link an organization with its publics to maintain mutual understanding, up to date information exchange about an organizations product or services and also about the customers' needs, wants and opinion.

Marketing Public Relations: is the process of planning, executing and evaluating programs that encourage purchase and consumer satisfaction through credible communications of information and impressions that identify companies and their products with the needs, wants, concerns and interests of consumers

Integrated Marketing Communications: is a planned approach, audience targeted, utilizes range of promotional tools, various messages, different media with clearly identified objectives and concerns about management of all forms and integration of all promotional activities.

Marketing Communications: Marketing communication (MarCom) is a fundamental and complex part of a company's marketing efforts. MarCom can also be described as all the messages and media deployed to communicate with the market. Marketing communication includes advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, your online presence, printed materials, PR activities, sales presentations, sponsorships, trade show appearances and more.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this part, the definitions given to public relations by various scholars theories of public relation which will be used as a framework for this study, , different models of public relations, the issues of integrated marketing communications will be discussed. The marketing public relations concept, as it is the main focus of this study, will get special attention in review of literature. At last, various studies related to marketing public relations will be reviewed to get some insight for the current study.

2.2 What is Public Relations (PR)?

Though it is difficult to find definition of public relations in one and similar statement across scholars' work, it is possible to state in more comprehensive definition which can describe the discipline. Before coming to the comprehensive definition, it is better to look in to definitions given by some scholars.

Cutlip (2000) defined public relations as the management function which assesses public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest and plans and implements a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

Public relation is abroad set of communication efforts used create and preserve favorable bond between an organization and its stakeholders. An organization communicates with various stakeholders, both internal and external, and public relations efforts can be directed toward any and all of these firm stakeholders can include customers, suppliers, employees, stockholders, the media, educators, potential investors, government officials, and society in general (Pride, 2005)

Wilcox et al (2000) also states “Public relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends ,predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders ,and implementing planned programs which will serve both the organization and the public interest” (p.6). L’Etang,1996 also

stated that public relation contains many key concepts and saves us ploughing through hundreds of or it should be. Besides,

he described the attempts to define public relations as largely ‘constructed in an attempt to be all things to all people simultaneously.

From the above definitions we can understand that people describe the public relation based on their understanding about its functions and its purposes, because of this L’Etang claims that the attempts to define PR as largely ‘constructed in an attempt to be all things to all people simultaneously’.

The definition given by Harlow sounds more comprehensive in that he collected more than four hundred definitions given by various scholars. He came up with the following summarized and inclusive definition of PR.

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 opinion; 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 (Kayode, 2014).

In short, Public Relations is a management activity that serves as a link with an organization with its publics to maintain mutual understanding, up to date information exchange about an organizations product or services and also about the customers’ needs, wants and opinion.

The focus of this study is investigating the practices of marketing public relations (MPR) in marketing communication activities of an organization. So it is vital to give emphasis to PR from the view point of marketing.

2.3 Theoretical Background

Public Relations (PR) is a rapidly developing field as an academic discipline and also as a practice. But there is no one theory that may explain all public relations practices. There is a complex perspective which comprises inconsistent concepts, terms, structure, process and findings in the field (Dubin,1969). According to Broom (2006:142) “we are in the early stages of building theory that may someday provide a foundation for the emerging profession

and its practice in PR". Theories of PR emerges from multiple disciplines like mass communication, Psychology, and Sociology (Lattimore et al. 2004)

For this particular study entitled "The Practices of Marketing Public Relation, the researcher intends to utilize some existing theories that best guide this research. The theories are social theories, the system Theory and the role theory in Public relations. These theories are helpful in understanding public relations in a given social sphere, Public relations in organizational systems and the role it plays in this social system.

2.3.1 Social Theory in PR

Social theory perspective to PR defines its role according to the activities in the social system. However organizational perspective to PR defines its role according to the contribution to achieving organizational objectives. The best known approach in the second group is James Grunig and Todd Hunt's four public relations model (Sesen, 2015). There is another perspective which accepts that PR is equal to communication. But it is not an efficient point of view because this approach does not provide solutions to problems of PR in practise. PR is a field that practitioners have been faced role multiplicity and role conflict at the same time.

The researcher's attention is driven to the work of Habermas (German prominent social scientist), in which he named Social Sphere to understand about social theory in PR. Social Sphere is first conceptualized as a social space that mediates between the political sphere and the private sphere by providing space for discussion and negotiation (Heilen and Ruler , 2009).

Habermas claims that the social sphere is the environment in which people entertain various ideas freely, debate and argue rationally as it is open ended and free to express feelings. In relation to PR scholars like Jensen , reviewed the Public Sphere ,, as an analytical concept referring to the discursive processes in complex network of persons, institutionalized associations and organizations (Jensen, 2001). He argues for the relationship between an organization, associations and individuals referring to Public Sphere as a multisided analytical concept. This view indicates that from the view point of Social theory, public relation practice is phenomenon which takes place between organizations, individuals and their environment which facilitate common understanding among each other. It is important, as a Public relation practitioner, to have the grasp of such networks to maintain the balance to be considered.

In line with this, Heilen and Ruer quotes Habermas's statement as "Habermas denounced public relations for undermining the critical public sphere by cultivating a consensus that is not based on rationality or good arguments, but rather on the ability to portray oneself as having the public interest in mind while hiding one's real business intentions" (Heilen& Ruler , 2009:7).

Habermas, in his claim, warns that the PR practitioners should not only worry for their message to be imposed up on the society, but they should be open enough to entertain ideas from the community. Contrary to this, Maloney (2006) argues the view of Habermas in that he claims society should be persuaded; persuasion being the main role of PR. So, Maloney considers Habermas's view of public sphere as utopian ideal which does not exist. He rather favors for "persuasive sphere".

Burkart (2007), as a reconciler of Habermas's and Maloney's claims, focuses on the Habermas's Notion of understanding as the main objective of communication and proposes a model of consensus oriented Public Relations (COPR) for planning and evaluating PR. This model promotes PR practitioners to anticipate criticisms of their own practice and modify that practice in order to eliminate doubts about their message among the publics.

PR is a dynamic and rapidly growing field. Whether you're developing the public image of an organization, dealing with the society, media or managing issues for a large company, you need strong communication skills and a sound understanding of public relations processes as well as social and organizational systems (Johnston, 2009 cited in Sesen, 2015).

Social theory view of Public Relation enables the practitioners to perform their roles by endorsing social contexts in which they operate.

2.3.2 System Theory and Public Relations

The basic foundation of System theory in line with Public Relation is "organizations are systems of subsystems" (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The systems theory views things as a unit. Actually, it looks at a set of objects or entities that are interrelated with one another in order to form a whole.

These "systems" are open to different environments and create synergy. This theory was developed by a group of biologist in order to explain how the different systems within the human body work. Their theory was later used to explain organizational and cultural behavior in both society and nature. An easy way to explain this is by looking at a company's

organizational structure. Organizations are made of various sub- units which come together to form the whole structure which are interdependent.

“For systems theorists, “research begins with the practitioner working for the organization, the organization carrying out PR or the situation in which the activity takes place. The main objective of PR is to develop and execute strategies and tactics that will benefit an organization in a given context” (Tench, 2006).

According to Tench, organizations are open social system that must interact with their environment in order to survive. The environment, according to system theory is not only the social sphere but also its internal environment with its sub structures. When it comes to Public Relations effectiveness, Grunig (1992)cited in Tench (2006) asserts that PR contributes to organizational effectiveness when it helps brings together the organization’s goals with the anticipations of its strategic publics.

Systems theory looks at organizations as made up of interconnected parts, familiarizing and adjusting to changes in the political, economic, and social environments in which they operate (Lattimore et al., 2004). Role of PR is affected by the perception of an organization related to its role in the society and social perspective defines PR according to its activities in the social system (Miles,1978).

In general, system theory indicates that PR is an entity in a given organizational system which plays its role within the particular social context.

2.3.3 Role Theory and Public Relations

Role theory has existed in European languages as concept for centuries but became popular since 1920s and 1930s. It became more prominent in sociological discourse through the theoretical works of George Herbert Mead, Jacob L. Moreno, Talcott Parsons, and Linton. It began in a sociological discourse through the works of George Herbert Mead, Jacob L. Moreno, Talcott Parsons, and Linton (Hindin,2007 cited in Sesen , 2015) .

Role theory Role theory is a perspective in sociology and in social psychology that considers most of everyday activity to be the acting out of socially defined categories. Is a

view in sociology and social Psychology which considers everyday activity to socially defined categories, for example being supervisor, auditor, writer, mother, etc... So A role can be defined as a social position, behavior associated with a social position, or a typical behavior. Some theorists claim that role is a belief or expectation how individual ought to act in a given social system and others believe how individuals already behave in a given social position (Coser,1975).

Role Theory focuses on roles of all actors including organizations in social system and according to the approach organizations are actors who behave according to different rules and patterns as well as individuals (Allen & Caillouet,1994)

According to Role theory organizations are expected to behave in line with set rules and with same manner individuals also act based on different rules and patterns.

The theory is useful in that it points out PR has identified roles in an organization the set rules and patterns in organizational systems (Allen& Caillouet, 1994 in Sesen, 2015).

For the current study, these three theories help as a framework from the beginning to the end. However the theory of public relations is not limited to this. The objective of the study is describing the current practices of marketing public relations in EAL, therefore based on the theories mention the research will conduct a search to answer the research questions. Next, the meaning of public relation as given by various scholars is discussed.

2.4. Models of Public Relations

Public relations roles in an organization are reflected through different models. The models of public relations were first proposed by Grunig and Hunt. They proposed four models of public relations that describe the ways public relations practitioners apply their PR programs (Grunig& Hunt,1984. The four models will help us understand the model that MPR applies to achieve marketing communication objectives. The models are:

a. The Press Agency (Publicity) model

In this model public relation serves as an instrument of propaganda in which its aim is to persuade and influence people. Practitioners spread the message or an ideology of the organization involved, often through incomplete, distorted or half-truth information (Tench &

Yeomans, 2006:269). Wilcox and Cameron (2006:63) also support that this is essentially one-way communication that transmits messages from a source to a receiver with the intention of persuading the recipient into action. In this model of PR, practitioners' main objective is to get media coverage in order to promote a person, an organization, a product or a given program.

b. The Public Information Model

In this model of PR, the sole purpose of practitioners is to inform the public. It is not to persuade or convince but simply to aware the public about a given phenomenon about the organization, or its product and any new updates. It focuses on technician roles of public relation (Seitel, 2004).

c. The Two Way Asymmetric Model

Tench and Yeomans (2006) describe this as a two-way communication planned to persuade through the classic public relations' functions of research, objective setting, communicating and then evaluating to see if the communication changed attitudes and opinions as desired. In this model the communication is two way but the objective is to understand the attitude of the public about the organization and to design another way of making them accept the message. This is mostly done through research in which the opinion of the public is sought and the framework of PR communication is shaped.

d. The Two way Symmetric Model

Lattimore et al. (2004:58), describes this model as "the two-way symmetrical model sees public relations efforts in terms of its research based description as the use of communication in improving understanding with strategic publics". From this we can understand that the model is the same with the two way asymmetric model but different in that it entertains the public's opinion to facilitate for mutual understanding between an organization and the public. In this the practitioners of PR serves as mediator between an organization and the public by maintain the balance (Seitel, 2004:56).

In modern public relations, we often see a mixing of the public relations models among multiple tactics or communication tools within one public relations campaign. It is best to think of the models as theoretical constructs that, in implementation, become combined through the mixed

motives of public relations. In most cases, public relations professionals not only want to aid their employer or client but also to assist the public outside the organization to access and understand the inner workings of the firm. This mixed-motive approach is based on the real-world contingencies that impact public relations decisions, and the desire to facilitate communication on both sides of an issue, both for organizations and for publics.

In modern public relations, all models are used selectively based on the objectives of our PR campaign. This approach is called Mixed-motive approach in which the PR facilitates communication on both sides of an issue; from the organization side and from the client side (Schmitz, 2012).

The knowledge of the models are essential for marketing public relation activities that the PR practitioners promote the product of a company, gather opinion about a product or services to facilitate for long lasting mutual benefit of the organization and the customers.

2.5 The Roles of Public Relations in an Organization

Roles are the collection of daily activities that people perform. Public Relations play significant roles in achieving ones organizational communication goals. Their roles vary from communication manager to communication technicians. Regarding this, Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006) identified four major roles of PR practitioners which are communication technicians, expert prescriber,

Most practitioners of PR begin their jobs as communication technicians. The role includes applying strategies with the communication tactics of new releases , newsletters, media relations(placements), website contents, speeches, blogs, and social media interactive messages. Practitioners at this stage are involved in identifying problems and seeking solutions they rather spend their time on applying tactical activities like technical writing skills.

The expert prescribers are the role of investigating some specific problems of a given industry>its primary responsibility is to handle this function as a consultant with little input or participation by other senior management.

The communication facilitator is a person who makes bridges between an organization and its publics. This role realizes the mutual understanding between the organization and the key publics to make decisions which benefits both sides (Cutlip, Centre, &Broom, 2006).

The problem solving facilitator works with other managers to identify and solve organizational problems. In this case, the person is the member of dominant coalition and has access to senior managers. The problem solving facilitator helps the managers to solve the problems through public relation perspectives. Dozier and Broom (1995) re categorized the roles in to two as communication technician and communication managers. The technician role is distinct from other three roles and the three are highly correlated. Therefore, based on the research, they are considered as communication manger roles.

The objective of this study to know the practices of marketing public relations in an organization, therefore a clear understanding of the general roles of public relation practitioners will lead us to know what activities are expected from PR particularly regarding marketing.

It is again important to know the functions of PR practitioners based on the roles identified earlier. There are various functions of PR, the following are among many Lubbe and Puth, (2002) state some major functions of public relations.

One of the major functions of public relation practitioner is conducting research. Public relations researches are the foundation for planning PR activities, understanding the public, gathering opinions, forecasting the problems and understanding the environment. According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000: 36), “research also includes monitoring programme implementation and assessing programme impact to evaluate programme effectiveness”. Concerning the research role of PR, Samson(2018) asserted that a research by PR is vital in evaluating program of action and communications to achieve informed public understanding.

Strategic planning is another function of PR in an organization. In consultation with the senior managers PR practitioners are expected to formulate their strategic communication plan of an organization. The third function can be educating internal public in order they know the plan activities and the final goal of the organization. This is the part of internal communication activities.

Another important function of PR is counseling the managers in order they understand the plan and contribute to its implementation and aware their staffs. Communicating (acting) the planned activities is the core function and evaluating the implementation is another essential duty.

Media relations and placement is one of the key tasks in which practitioners may be involved. Johnston and Zawawi (2004) preserve that it involves getting in touch the news media, magazines, freelance writers and business publications with the purpose of getting them to publish or broadcast news and features about the organization. It also encompasses responding to media's request about the organization.

According to Cutlip (2006), organizing is another functions of PR in which they handle a variety of functions ranging from media conferences, conventions and exhibitions, to open-house days, anniversary celebrations, fund-raising events, contests, awards programmes and sponsorships.

2.6 Public Relations places in Marketing Communications

Philip Kotler precisely defines marketing as "Marketing is about identifying and meeting human needs profitably" (Kotler 2014 :p5). Marketing communication can be defined as a set of devices and processes for exchanging information about the company and its offer, which should contribute to achievement of the basic goals of the organization. It is one of the dimensions of holistic marketing in which relationship marketing is given emphasis. Holistic marketing, as defined by the same author (2014), is "the development, design and implementation of marketing programmes, processes, and activities that recognize the breadth and interdependences of today's market environment". In this environment marketing communication plays a pivotal role to make an organization survive. The relationship marketing is about having rich, multifaceted relationships with customers, channel members and other marketing partners. Communication encompasses sharing perspectives, and it is the hearts of forming relationships (Hollensen 2010,

490). All businesses do have relationships, and their efficiency in business is partly due to how well they manage these relationships. A company cannot survive without relationships. Relationships are both an asset and a burden for any business (Gadde et al 2011)

Today's companies are facing a severe competition to meet the needs of their customer, to maintain their reputation, and to conserve their brand. This is resulted from the ever increasing

technological advancement, the sophistication of information flow and its speed and the increase in knowledge of the public. The expansion of various media (electronic and print), especially the increase of the number of television channels, radios of different waves (local & international), Yeshin called this an explosion, brought a radical change in business environment. Most specifically, now days, the expansion of internet which boosts up the speed and the amount of interaction between people affects the companies' marketing communication strategies (Yeshin, 1998)).

Advertising was used to be and is being used as the dominant tool of marketing communications. However, because of the increase in one to one interactivity of communication these days advertising is losing its position in marketing as customers are over advertised and getting resistant to traditional advertisement stimuli. Because of this fact, the need for other communications tools is emerging. One of the tools that can fill the gap is applying public relations. In line with this, Naumovska & Blazeska, claim:

“... the necessity for altering the structure of the traditional marketing communication mix elements, emphasizing the role of other elements but advertising, with more personalized and Interactive functions. One method for improvement of marketing communication's mix efficiency is by reallocation the leading role of advertising with public relations.”(2017: 175)

Before going to emphasizing on the public relations roles in marketing, it is important to look in to different marketing communication tools. As mentioned earlier one of the marketing tools is advertising, and others are sales promotion, public relation, personal selling and direct marketing (Belch & Belch, 2004). Others add elements like sponsorship and exhibitions, e-communications, packaging and words of mouth as marketing communications tools (Gumuski, 2016). Let us have a look at the description of each tool.

A. Advertising

Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2012) cited in Todorova G. (2015) defined it as “any paid

form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services from the sponsor evident by the print media (newspapers and magazines), telecommunications (radio and television), network communications (telephone, cable, satellite, wireless), electronic

media (audiotape, videotape, videodisk, CD-ROM, web page), and display media (billboards, signs, posters)” .

Advertising is a major constituent of the marketing communications mix and exists for one century. The evolution of advertising has engaged a variety of advertising approaches. According (Clow and Donald 2010) there are seven major types of advertising applications: Fear, Humor, Sex, Music, Rationality, Emotions and Scarcity. The same authors also state the goals of advertising as: building a brand image, providing information, persuasion and supporting marketing efforts. The main functions of advertising are informing, persuading and reminding. In order to perform these function advertising employs media like TV, Internet, Radio, Print, Out of home media, directing the message from the sender to the receiver (Descotes and Delassus 2015). It involves three elements of communications, the sender, the message and the receiver. The sender is the sponsor of the marketing communication and the receiver is the mass target. Pozzi , 2012 contends the shortcoming of advertising in that it is only one way and the opportunity of getting feedback is less and therefore interactivity between the sender and the receiver is limited. This leads to the gradual arousal of doubt about its worthiness and efficiency.

B. Sales Promotions

It is sales technique to influence the buyer through personal communication and a system of market tools to induce or accelerate the purchase of short-term effect. Sales, price reductions, products free of charge, gifts etc. are among the promotion facilities, and Promotion warranties customer satisfaction and raises the rate of total selling. However, the boundary it puts to price is mentioned as a limitation to business’s financial revenue (Duncan, 2002).

Sales promotions are categorized as the “consumer promotions” which It consists of premiums, gifts, prize and incentives and as the “trade promotions” which includes free merchandise, discount and bonus (De Pelsmacker, et al., 2010, p. 412- 422cited in Gümüscü, & Nordval, 2016). Sales promotions provide increasing of business’ sales for a short period of time. The results of sales promotions are seen immediately rather than advertising. Promotional tools are wide area and it contains everything such as, calendars, pens, scrap-pads, key chains, T-shirts, toys for kids etc. can be used as sales promotions (Patten, 2001).

C. Personal Selling

Personal selling is defined by Weitz and Castleberry (2004) cited in Henok(2018) as an “interpersonal process whereby a seller tries to uncover and satisfy buyer’s needs in a mutually

long term beneficial manner suitable for both parties”. It is the communication between person that represents the company and the customer through face to face modality, or using various technologies like telephone, virtual video conference, etc. Kotler affirms that personal selling is useful chain for communicating with present and potential buyers. But its effectiveness depends up on how well both parties attain a common understanding that leads to mutual goal fulfillment through social interaction (Kotler, 2013).

Personal selling has been highly effective communication tool because it is adaptive to personal requirements of customers. It has been different from other communication tools because it has been a dyadic communication tool which means that business and consumers on both side are involved in the communications (Duncan, 2002).

D. Public Relations

The definitions, roles and functions of public relations in an organization had exhaustively been defined in the previous parts. In this part Public relation is seen from the perspective of marketing communication as one of its element. Public relations is connective activities with sales promotion and advertising. It aims to increase awareness of a product or service (Harrison 1995). There are some advantages of public relations in marketing practices such as increasing brand awareness, provides acceptance and credibility for brand, cost effectiveness, clutter busting and reaching the hard to reach (Duncan, 2005). Public relations are one of the marketing communication mixes which help companies and customers to exchange their ideas through various means like telephone, e- mail, conferences which are face to face or virtual (L’Etang 2008).

Some of the strengths of public relations are its ability to reach the difficult- to- reach audiences, cost effectiveness, message flexibility and its objectivity. PR also provides companies on trends create corporate image and reputations and manage crises without much damage to the company. PR messages are more flexible than advertising and sales promotion (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010).

The disadvantages of public relations have been defined as its effectiveness are hard to measure, lack of control, and journalists sees PR as gatekeepers. The lack of control over the content of the news is vital disadvantage of PR because, the media have some priorities and they can publish the news differently from PR department (De Pelsmacker et al., 2010, p. 340).

E. Direct Marketing

One of the fastest growing segments in the global economy is direct marketing, by which organizations communicate directly with their target customers to generate reaction and/or transaction (Todorova,2015) . Direct marketing is the one of the fastest developing marketing industry. Through direct marketing, many businesses connect directly with targeted consumers to obtain response and to cultivate customer loyalty. Today, e-mail and text messages, direct mail, telemarketing, catalogue marketing and Internet tools are used in order to launch the relationship with the customers directly (Keller & Kotler, 2009 p. 572). Companies reach their consumers with personalizing their message and getting some feedback from receivers through tools like direct marketing activities and digital communication in which public relations contribute to the communications(Todorova, 2015).

The development of technology and the use of the Internet make possible to apply new and attractive forms of direct marketing that contain the potential for branding and generating sales. Such forms are web marketing, email marketing; direct mail, web seminars, telemarketing promotions, sales channels, direct sales, advertising flyers, catalogs and more. The communication in direct marketing is personal and mostly the outcome is measurable (Todorova, 2015).

Other like sponsorship and exhibitions, e- communications, and packaging are mentioned by scholars as other forms of marketing communications tools (Amoako et al, 2012). Another aspect of marketing communications is the issue of integrating the tools for the effective and efficient achievement of the organizations' marketing goals. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is currently dominating concept in the field which many authors of marketing communications address in their works. In the following sub part the concept of IMC is defined and other important issues related are also addressed. This again will help to understand the place of public relations in the integration.

2.6.1 Public Relations in Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

The concept of integrating marketing communications is not new but it is something with which the marketing communications industry at large is increasingly concerned and which they are actively trying to achieve. According to Picton & Borderick (2005), it is practically very difficult to make sure that marketing communications are integrated but such difficulty should not

prevent people from trying, as the rewards of synergy and coherence are significant. Duncan, one of the early proponents, wrote a note about IMC in the book of previous authors and mentions the current communication platform, the rise of electronic commerce and communication, i.e. the Internet and World Wide Web revolution, has provided an even more irresistible need for integration. The technology not only made IMC to be possible but created the demand for integration in all areas of businesses (Duncan, 2002).

There are various definitions given to IMC by various scholars. Bmnett and Moriarty (1998) define IMC as "the practice of unifying all marketing communication tools - from advertising to packaging - to send target audiences a consistent, persuasive message that promotes organizational goals". Shimp (2005) precisely defines IMC as "the management process of integrating all marketing communications activities across relevant audience points to achieve greater brand coherence. However the same author. The more comprehensive definition which consists of various features of IMC is :

IMC is a process which involves the management and organization of all 'agents' in the analysis, planning, implementation and control of all marketing communications contacts, media, messages and promotional tools focused at selected target audiences in such a way as to derive the greatest enhancement and coherence of marketing communications effort in achieving predetermined product and corporate marketing communications objectives (Shimp, 2005: 26).

These features comprises , as depicted in the definition, that IMC is a planned approach, audience targeted, utilizes range of promotional tools, various messages, different media with clearly identified objectives and concerns about management of all forms and integration of all promotional activities. It also considers people involved, incorporates all products or brands and all marketing communication efforts. According to Schultz, IMC is a process through which companies accelerate returns by aligning communication objectives with corporate goals

Organizations, when employing IMC, benefited in different ways. The principal benefit of integration, according to Pickton and Berderick (2005:27), is the synergy. For these authors, the concept of synergy is "bringing together the various facets of marketing communications in a mutually supportive and enhancing way then the resulting 'whole' is more than the simple sum of

its parts” Shmp (2005) also state the same benefit of integrating the marketing communication mixes by mentioning the synergy that is deploying multiple methods in combination with one another produce more positive communication effects than do the tools used separately.

Linton and Morley’s (1995) cited in Pickton & Borderick (2005) listed some ten benefits of IMC to the organizations’ marketing communications. They underscore that a company cannot achieve all ten benefits at once because of difficulties of implication, quality of person involved, and etc. These benefits are:

- Creative integrity
- Operational efficiency
- Easier working relations
- Cost savings
- Unbiased marketing recommendations
- Greater agency accountability
- High-caliber consistent service
- Better use of media
- Consistent messages
- Greater marketing precision

Beside the benefits of IMC, there are various barriers of implanting this marketing communication approach. Alam (2013) mentioned some obstacles like functional silos, limited creativity, time scale conflicts and a lack of management know-how.

Functional silos are to mean the rigidity of organizational structures that they protect their budget and their power base. Some departments isolate communications, data, resources, their managers, etc. instead of cooperating. For example PR does not exchange information with marketing and the sales people do not or rarely meet with advertising or sales promotion team. IMC may also limit creativity of each department and the time allotted for each tool may vary, for instance the long time given for branding may affect the short time given for sales promotion if not accommodated in an integrated plan. Lack of knowledge of managing the tools is also another barrier.

2.6.2 The Place of Public Relations in Integrated Marketing Communications

As the objective of this study is to describe the practices of marketing oriented public relations in a service organization, it is important to pinpoint the places of PR in IMC. Public Relations is

20th century phenomenon lifted up mainly due to the growth of the big institutions, media sophistication, increased incidence and conflicts, growing power of media, public opinion, democracy and internet(Pozzi, 2012 cited in Naumovska& Blazeska, 2016). PR is unique from other IMC tools in that it has the ability of creating perceptions and accepted image of an organization.

On top of this, they mention its function of construction of social reality because it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world. PR has also the ability of establishing credibility and trust which is the most desiring concept in marketing communications. Ries and Ries (2004), add that Public Relations can be practiced in many corporate activities, from initiating a product or a brand, guarding company's reputation, all away to fostering corporate social responsibility.

Other authors contend that PR is different from other marketing communication tools in that PR focuses on a well planned activities oriented on a long term return while others are

focused on performing short-term campaigns for getting the maximum benefit (Dimitrijevs& Dolbnev, 2013). In this thought we understand that PR has the role of establishing long lasting relationship between the company and the customers.

Ukaj(2106) conducted a research on the place of PR in IMC in some enterprises in Kosovo and concluded that PR has an identity and a specific way of communicating with the public focusing on loyal customers of the enterprise. In line with this, he adds Public relations can be a valued tool for businesses and experts to establish credibility, enhance their profiles, build awareness, and in finding new customers. We can find the role of Public relation in marketing communications from the definition of PR which was given by Gianini as "any program or effort designed to improve, maintain, or protect the sales or image of a product by encouraging intermediaries, such as traditional mass media, the electronic media, or individuals, to voluntarily

From the ideas discussed above, it is clear that PR has visible places in IMC in which it plays very valuable roles for a company. This role of public relation in marketing has been getting attention by the scholars of the field and began to be coined as marketing public relation. Marketing public relation practices is the focus of this research.

2.7 Marketing Public Relations (MPR)

From the term it is clear that this type of PR is a one which is market oriented and focuses on the relation between producers or service providers and customers. It also serves as the marketing tool which boosts the brand and image of an organization, credibility and acceptability of the product or services.

Shimp (2007) describes MPR as” the marketing-oriented aspect of public relations, the narrow aspect of public relations involving an organization’s interactions with consumers and other publics concerning marketing issues. Harris argues that the definition given by Shimp is very narrow and gives detailed meanings of MPR as “the process of planning, executing and evaluating programs that encourage purchase and consumer satisfaction through credible communications of information and impressions that identify companies and their products with the needs, wants, concerns and interests of consumers. Of course, Thomas

Harris is the person who first introduced the term MPR to describe PR activities that's support marketing objectives and since 1990's 70% of PR activity is related to marketing (Percy, 2008).

The definitions given by Harris makes possible to identify marketing public relation from the general public relations. MPR focuses on producers and customers relation, customer satisfactions, product acceptance, addressing the need and wants of customers and so on. Concerning this definition, Pickton & Borderic contend though MPR is customer and product focused, indirectly concerns about the purchase by increasing acceptability of the product through planned communications which influences the attitude and opinion of publics. The action stimulated by MPR does not have to lead directly to a purchase. It might endeavor to affect attitudes and opinions which, ultimately, have a bearing on consumer satisfaction or in limiting unfavorable outcomes in the event of negative or crisis situations (Pickton & Borderic , 2005)

According to the prominent scholar of marketing , Philip Kotler, many companies are turning to marketing public relations (MPR) to directly support corporate or product promotion and image making(Kotler, 2001)

Based on these background information, the details about the role of MPR, its advantages and disadvantages, the tools used by MPR and other important issues are presented here.

2.7.1 The Roles of Marketing Public Relations and the Tools

Marketing Public Relations plays significant roles like other general PR in raising awareness, informing, raising interest, exciting, educating, generating understanding, building trust, encouraging loyalty and even in helping generate sales – the roles not often associated with PR activities (Pickton& Borderic, 2005). In sum, the following are some activities undertaken by MPR in a company. Kotler (2001) lists some roles of MPR as:

- Assisting in the launch of new products,
- Assisting in repositioning a mature product,
- Building interest in a product category,

- Influencing specific target groups,
- Defending products that have encountered public problems, and
- Building the corporate image in a way that reflects favorably on its products.

Pickton and Borderic (2005) list some the activities of MPR and described them in detail. The first one is *planning and managing the MPR activities*. This involves the overall planning, and controlling of MPR activities. It includes identifying tasks, setting objectives, identifying publics, integrating with other marketing communication mix, scheduling, implementing and evaluating of effectiveness.

The second task of MPR is *media relations* which is an important aspect of MPR and is linked to gaining publicity or editorial coverage. Media relations help ensure good media coverage; encourage favorable and positive publicity; and discourage negative coverage. Another activity is *Producing publicity*. Creating publicity is a backbone of MPR. It is related with press and media releases and it comprises publicizing positive information about the organization and its products to achieve editorial coverage. It also helps limit the negative effect of bad publicity (Satawedini, 2005).

Producing publications is one of the MPR activities which is an important PR support function. Different publicity information can be disseminated through a variety of publications like employee newsletters, financial reports, general performance reports, consumer magazines and media packages in the form of text, audio or video. Corporate communications is another task of MPR though not all corporate communications activities fall under the remit of MPR. Concerning this, the roles of MPR include corporate identity programmers, corporate image management, corporate advertising, some internal communications and some communications with other stakeholder groups (Pickton and Borderic, 2005).

Other tasks of MPR include public affairs and community relations, lobbying which is concerned with building positive relations with media, community leaders, legislators, policy makers, public figures and officials, sponsorship and donations, event management, crises management and research and analysis. In line with this Percy (2008: 141) restates some of the ways in which MPR can contribute to achieving a brand's overall communication objectives

through such activities as media relations, corporate communication, sponsorships, events, and perhaps its most important activity, publicity.

To implement these activities, MPR deploys various tools. Pickton and Borderik(2005) mention the following important MPR tools. These are media releases, media conferences, media contact and entertainment, PR and publicity events, lobbying, promotional materials, MPR advertising, sponsor and donations, product placement, advertorials, corporate identity materials, company websites, in-house magazines, organizational events and etc.

Todd Hunt and James Grunig, Harcourt Brace (1994) cited in Yeshin (1998: 265) again list similar tools and describing them as the PR techniques.

While utilizing these tools to practice its role in marketing communications, MPR can be categorized as reactive MPR and proactive MPR while playing its role in integrated marketing communication activities through various tools mentioned earlier.

2.7.2 Proactive Marketing Public Relations and Reactive Marketing Public Relations

Proactive MPR is a tool for communicating a brand's quality evidences and is used typically in conjunction with other marketing communications tools such as advertising and promotions. Based on a company's marketing objectives, proactive MPR is offensive in that it seeks new opportunities of market rather than solving market related problems (Shimp, 2007).

It serves increasing credibility, giving a product additional exposure, newsworthiness. Regarding this PMR is different from advertising in that it gets attention from the audiences because people trust motivational information from endorsed editorial than product announcements from advertisement because audiences know that advertisements have personal stake in influencing customers. MPR implements product releases, executive statement releases and future articles to play its proactive roles (Percy, 2008)

Reactive MPR , in comparison, acts on addressing un expected vulnerability happened to the organization due to external factors like bad image created by media or competitors, human made or natural disasters, changes of customer attitudes towards the company's

product, change in policies and other unexpected situations that influence credibility of the company(Percy 2008).

For instance, in aviation business there are tremendous possibilities of facing unexpected crises due to accidents and incidents happen to aircraft, instabilities at the destinations, bad image that can happen due to less quality services, economic instability, global pandemic like COVID- 19 which currently affecting the air transport. In general, the most dramatic factors underlying the need for reactive MPR are product or service defects and failures (Kotler et al, 2005).

2.7.3 Merits and Demerits of Marketing Public Relations

Marketing public relations activities are, without a doubt, essential and valued assets to the marketing communications mix. They serve complementing the roles that other marketing communication tools are unable to fulfill (kitchen, 1995).

MPR has both merits and demerits in organizations' marketing communication activities. In terms of merits, first of all, MPR can effectively and efficiently create credibility by supporting other marketing communication tools, because information released by PR is based on facts. MPR adds credibility to the message because consumers perceive MPR as news or opinions which are more trustworthy (Giannini, 2010 cited in Verontis, 2014), thus strengthening IMC through trust-based relationships. Unlike only a power of advertising, for instance, some advertisers use different techniques such as half-truth telling and exaggeration only for the purpose of selling goods. Another benefits are MPR messages reach large audiences (customers and prospective customers) by extending advertising scope; it is cost effective than advertising, and the message can be modified before release if PR department has good relationship with media. It helps build brand awareness, knowledge about the product and commitment to consume it.

The demerits of MPR are low control over editorial coverage and editorial content, which can be changed into unintended information. Sometimes media tend to undermine the positive messages and even emphasize negative aspects of the message. The way the MPR message presented in third party media cannot be controlled and the time of release also depend on the need of media, not the organization who send the MPR messages (Pickton& Borderik, 2005).

2.8 Review of Some Empirical studies on Marketing Public Relations

There various international studies had been conducted on the issues of the practices of MPR in some organizations and the role that it plays in marketing communications; and some studies focus on the place of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and others focus on the benefits of MPR over advertising. There are few, as to the researcher's reading, unpublished local studies conducted for fulfillment

of degrees. Next to this some international studies will be reviewed.

2.8.1 Review of International studies

A. Marketing public relations: A consumer-focused strategic perspective

The research was conducted by Pappasolomou (2012) and others, at University of Nicosia, Cyprus to investigate practices and perceptions of some public relations and advertising agencies in Cyprus by employing multiple case study method through in-depth interview and secondary data analysis.

In this context, this research finds that Marketing Public Relations (MPR) offers organizations an effective means to the same end that is both economically and practically viable in the majority of cases. The result of this study further indicate that advertising and print media are losing their places in marketing communication and the customers are turning to marketing public relations though the practitioners in the field were hesitating to apply MPR due to conservatism (in favor of traditional advertising), lack of knowledge and experiences.

B. Public Relations as Part of Integrated Communication of an Enterprise- Consumer Oriented

This study was conducted in Kosovo by Ukaj (2010) to conceptually study and evaluate the public relation and their functions in communication activities of enterprise or institution. A research has been done through collection of data using interview questionnaire. Also, a second data analyses were carried out.

The finding of the study shows that PR has an unique and a specific way of communicating with the public particularly with royal customers of the enterprise. This study, mentioning that the new methods of attaining places in marketing communication is taking place and to address this the new tools have been introduced in order to increase the awareness of the consumer and gain their loyalty. According to this study one of the tools to be used is integrated marketing communications (IMC) with special attention to public relations,

C. Public Relation based model of Integrated Marketing Communications

Naumovska and Blazeska (2016) conducted a theoretical research supported by qualitative research of business segment by conducting a detailed interview for the marketing communication practice. They claim that due to global business and society fluctuations, marketing communication industries and theories are facing rapid changes. Global and local markets are continuously varying and getting unpredictable.

The most implemented marketing communication tool, advertising is losing its acceptance since consumers are over advertised and becoming resistant to stimuli from traditional marcom tool specially advertising. Advertising is a one way communication marketing tool which can no longer hold the leading role in the industry. Therefore altering its place to other interactive tools is unquestionably essential. The researchers concluded that reallocating public relations one method for improving marketing communications efficiency.

2.8.2 Review Local Empirical Researches in Related to MPR

Regarding to local empirical research on MPR, the current research was unable to find any published article. However, two unpublished MA thesis conducted at AAU were reviewed.

A. The Practices and Challenges of Public Relations on Marketing and Promoting Tourist Destination Sites in the case of ANRS Cultural and Tourism Bureau

The study was conducted by Befekadu Gedif for his partial fulfillment of MA degree in Public Relations and Strategic communications. The objective of the study was to examine the practices and challenges of public relations on marketing and promoting tourist destination sites in the region in the case of ANRS Cultural and Tourism Bureau. He employed both qualitative and quantitative data collected tools.

Finally he concluded that in the study area, specifically, in Tourism and Culture Bureau of Amhara National regional State, there was practice of public relation in tourism bureau

especially on marketing and promoting tourist destination sites in Amhara region. However there found challenges like lack of understanding among the staff, lack of equipment and resources.

B. Marketing Public Relations: In the Dh- Geda Business Group

Lissan Demeke, MA student at AAU, conducted research on practices of MPR in a business firm called DH- Geda business group for the fulfillment of his MA degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communications. He conducted descriptive study employing mixed method approach and the result of the study showed that in the company was not implementing marketing public relations. They do not utilize any social media and other online communication methods. They rather focus on other marketing communication tools like advertising on broadcast media, sales promotion, and personal sales. He claims that the smooth relationship of a company with its customers is under question. Finally, he recommends trainings and awareness creation mechanisms to all employees and management teams regarding marketing communication strategies.

2.9 Conclusion

In this review, it was attempted to address all issues to be considered in this study. It starts with the theoretical background of the public relation, and it continues with defining PR, its models, its places in Integrated Marketing Communications. The researcher broadly discussed about marketing public relation, its foundation, its importance, etc. At the end, marketing public relations related empirical researches were reviewed. In the next section, the methodology of the study will be dealt

Chapter Three: Design of the Study

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to know the current practices of marketing public relations in Ethiopian Airlines Group. This research pursued a descriptive study approach which focused on describing of the current practices of MPR in the EAL communication activities.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Before indulging in to such design of study, researchers ground their study to at least one of the existing world views. The world view here is „the basic set of beliefs that guide action” as defined by Guba (1990) while others called it “paradigms” (Lincoln &Guba, 1985 cited in Donough, 2007). In this study, the philosophical assumption or the paradigm to be discussed indicates the current researcher’s philosophical orientation towards the study.

The most influential theoretical perspective in social science researches in general and education researches in particular are the positivists, various strands of interpretivism, critical enquiry, pragmatism and post modernism (Walcot 1992 cited in Dounghue 2007:5).

Positivists view the world objectively. They believe that research is neutral to what is researched and the data can be quantified using different statistical measurements. The role of the researcher in this perspective is to be detached from the subject of the study and reporting what is experimented objectively (Creswell 2009).

The second social science research paradigm is interpretivism. According to this perspective, the reality in the world is relative and subjective. It is rooted in the fact that methods used to understand the reality in social science is different from understanding knowledge in physical sciences. For interpretivists, single phenomena may have multiple interpretations rather than one absolute meaning. The interpretivist researchers try to gain deeper knowledge of a given phenomenon and its complexity in its unique context rather than generalizing it to other contexts. The researchers guided by this paradigm do not separate themselves from the subject of the research. The researcher uses his or her skills as a social being to try to understand how others understand their world. This approach recognizes social interaction as a source of knowledge and knowledge, in this view, is constructed through mutual negotiation of the participants (Donoghue 2007: 9-10).

As the current study is focused on describing the phenomena from the participants' and researcher's point of view, the interpretivist paradigm best guide the study.

3.3 Research Design

The objective of the study is to describe the practices of marketing public relations in Ethiopian Airlines group and hence the study pursued the descriptive case study design. In line with this, Kothari (2004) defines descriptive research as the fact finding enquiries. The purpose of this type of research design is describing the state of issues as it currently exists and it is characterized by limited role of researcher which has no control over the variables and only reporting what was and currently going on.

The design of the study was the case study in which the researcher focuses on the given group and specific context, not to generalize to other similar groups or contexts. In line with this, Hays (2004: 218) states that "Case study seek to answer focused questions by producing in-depth description and interpretations over a relatively short period of time". She added that the generalization is not the goal in the case study.

This study also applied qualitative approach in which the behavior and perceptions of practitioners of communications were gathered and analyzed by the researcher.

3.4 The Study Site

The study was conducted at Ethiopian Airlines Group, Public Relations & Corporate Communication department. Of course, because of integrations of marketing communications activities, other departments like Sales & Promotion were included as the source of information.

3.5 Population of the study

The study involved the managers and practitioners of Integrated Marketing Communication, the Public Relations and Corporate Communications, and Sales Promotion. The number of practitioners was about 28 , and the number of director and manager was 3. In total the population of the study was 31 people.

3.5.1 The Samples of the Study and sampling techniques

The researcher applied the purposive sampling method to include the three managers and simple random sampling to include 3 practitioners from PR and CC department and 4 practitioners from sales and Promotion department. It was intended to randomly select 5 practitioners from each department but because of the difficulty of getting employees together at fixed time the researcher decided to select only three employees from both departments. The office uses flexible work schedule to minimize the COVI 19 pandemic effect.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

3.6.1 Document Analysis

This tool was considered as primary data collection tool by the researcher. The objective of the document analysis was to know the real practices going on by referring to various documents. For the current study PR documents (tools) like Press Release, Social media, company website and Media out lets summary documents considered. To minimize the size of documents to manageable size, the researcher randomly selected 4 press releases in 2020/21, 4 mainstream media coverage in 20/21. The social media used by the company are Facebook, twitter, you tube, Instagram, Google⁺, Wikipedia and etc. They make use of these outlets 24/7 approach. Therefore, the researcher used only Facebook and Twitter as a source of information. This was done only to limit the data size as the first reason and the similarity of most of the information disseminated through the channels as the second reason. However, the researcher observed that the information disseminated through all media platforms are similar in that they release one message through all social media platforms at one shot. As a result of this, only messages gathered from Facebook and twitter were analyzed.

The purpose of searching in to these social media channels was to consult whether the PR and CC department of ETG applied the marketing public relations via the mentioned tools. Of course, the marketing communications tools used by the company are not limited to these but the researcher used the listed tools based on the convenience and ease of access.

3.6.2 Key Informant Interview

The key informant interview was conducted with the Integrated Marketing Communications director and the two managers of Public Relations and Corporate Communications, Group

Advertising and Sales Promotions .The specific objective of the interview is to investigate the practices of current MPR and challenges they face while applying marketing communications.

3.6.3 Focused Group Discussion

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest (Mishra, 2016). A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The number of participants was 7.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

The data from document analysis was analyzed qualitatively by describing those marketing activities done by corporate communications and public relation department. To delimit the scope, the researcher used only 2020/21 PR documents. Because PR releases materials which are daily based, weekly and semi- annually that makes the data very huge to manage. Therefore, the researcher used selective approach. The data gathered from key informant interview and focused group discussion were also analyzed qualitatively based on thematic issues which were drawn from basic research questions.

The Research Ethics and Limitations

The research followed ethical procedures. First, after the proposal was approved by the advisor, the letter of cooperation was written to the Ethiopian Airlines Group. After that the concerned department in ETG wrote official letter to Group Integrated Marketing Communications and to others accordingly. Another important procedure followed here in the company is the HR department was responsible to check the data collection tools whether it is in line with the policy of ETG or not. SO, the researcher submitted the data collection tools and discussed on some issues for amendment and continued the study based on the consent of the company

The research gathered all information based on the consent of all departments included in this study and individual informants maintaining all the confidentiality of the information given as per the consent of the participants.

The researcher, before submitting this thesis, gave to some participants of the research to add over jumped or correct wrongly stated thoughts in the text which is common for this kind of qualitative study.

The limitations, as far as the researcher's understanding is concerned, were the less number of participants in FGD as a result of COVID 19 protocol which hinders the researcher to get more employees at the same time and to gather people more than five in one place. The second limitation of this research was the exclusion of questionnaire from data collection tool list. It was planned to conduct mixed type of approach as the research was descriptive case study and which might have enriched the information further. In addition to this all of the participants were not willing to be recorded during discussion. But the researcher attempted was moderating the FGD and took the field not by assigning a colleague to critically record the note while discussion was on progress.

Chapter 4 Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this study was to know the practices of marketing public relations in Ethiopian Airlines. To meet this objective, the researcher formulated the research questions. The first questions were “what is the belief of practitioners of marketing and public relation towards the marketing public relations and the second major question was what is the current practices of this marketing communications concept in the company.

To seek answers for these questions, the researcher designed descriptive case study and the qualitative research approach to gather information from the actual context by employing different data collection tools. The tools planned by the researcher were questionnaire, key informant interview and document analysis. However, while getting in to gathering the data, the instrument like questionnaire failed to be utilized as a result of very few number of respondents accessed. Therefore, focus group discussion replaced the questionnaire instead. Another thing found by the researcher during the study was the document Analysis happened to be the dominant data collection tools since most of the research questions could be answered by the information from the document.

Based on this background information the results and findings of the study will be presented.

4.2 Data gathered via Document Analysis and the Findings

4.2.1 The Place of PR in ETG Organizational Structure and the Expertise of the PR Practitioners

Through the document analysis, the researcher made an effort to gather information about the place of PR in the organization’s structure and some relevant information about the practitioners and managers of PR. According to Excellence theory of PR which was claimed by Grunig (2003), the place of public relations department in an organization affects the effectiveness of the roles of PR. The theory claims, in order PR plays its role for the given organizations, it is expected to be the member of dominant coalitions or the top decision makers team.

In line with this, according to Tench (2006), organizations are open social system which must interact with their environment in order to survive. The environment, according to system theory

is not only the social sphere but also its internal environment with its sub structures. This implies that the place of PR in an organization has contribution to play its expected roles.

Based on information gathered, the PR activity is done under the department named “Group Public Relation and Corporate Communication” which reports to Group Integrated Marketing Communications led by a director. The IMC director reports to Chief Commercial Officer and again Chief Commercial Officer reports to Group Chief Executive Officer.

Under IMC, the PR and CC, Advertising and Sales Promotion, Digital Marketing (Customer Relation management are structured (See Appendix I). From the illustration, it can be seen PR is far apart from the upper management units or CEO which indicates the department is not the member of Dominant Coalition.

The expertise of practitioners and managers of PR and corporate communication also has direct impact on the achievement of communication goals for a given organization. Most of the practitioners of PR studied English language and Literature, Journalism and communications, PR and Strategic Communications and marketing management. Most of them hold second degree and few of them hold first degree.

4.2.2 The Marketing Activities done by PR&CC

As the objective of this study was to describe the practices of marketing public relation, the researcher attempted to search some tools of public relations which were utilized by the department to play the marketing public relation roles.

According to the document analysis carried on, the researcher intended to look in to some PR tools like press releases, CEO’s speech, information released on mainstream media, company’s periodical reports, and information disseminated via social media platforms.

The online marketing communication platforms of the company is too much starting from the company’s website to various social media like you tube, Instagram, Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, etc. To manage the span of this study, the researcher randomly selected Press releases, Facebook, Twitter, Print media and television from mainstream media. As the company has abundant access to local mainstream media, the researcher confined the study to some well-known international television channels like CNN and CGTN as a sample.

The method of analysis is looking critically in to messages conveyed through written texts and messages conveyed audio visually on televisions. The purpose was to critically analyze whether the marketing contents were included in the messages as the messages were developed by PR& CC department of the company.

A. Messages through Press Releases

Four Press releases were selected; two from 2020 and two from 2021 randomly since the number of presses released in these years were too much. The first one is (Appindix II) the Press release disseminated containing the message of the leading position of ETG in in Africa in Freight traffic during COVID -19 pandemic (ICAO, 2021).

The title is read as” **Ethiopian Continues to Lead Africa in Passenger and Freight Traffic during the COVID Crisis**” and under this title, the news of ETG’s leading place in Africa in Cargo transportation was well dictated by supporting the issue by the quotes taken from CEO’s speech. This researcher believes this message was serving at least two objectives at once. The first one is, it helps build the image of the company in the global aviation industry and helps promote the freight traffic service which was being offered by the company during critical time of COVID 19.

During this period, as mentioned in the message, ETG was the only African airliner to operate the cargo transport. Therefore, this message, as a second objective, attempted to attract the customers or the potential customers to buy the freight service in that the CEO speech was quoted concerning the current service “*We are excited about the role we played in the fight against the pandemic by continuing our much-needed air connectivity within Africa and with the rest of the world without any flight suspension.*” *We are saving lives through air transport of medical supplies and vaccines.*” The transportation of medical supply to save life was promoted here by PR as this kind of speech is crafted by this department.

In addition to this, in editor’s note the same objectives mentioned above were tried to meet in that it introduces the background of the company and the whole services given by the company. In all notes to editors, up on the historical background of the company the services given by different business units of ETG, like Ethiopian International Services; Ethiopian Cargo & Logistics Services; Ethiopian MRO Services; Ethiopian Aviation Academy; Ethiopian Addis

Ababa(ADD) Hub Ground Services, Ethiopian Airports Services and Ethiopian Express Services (Domestic), and Ethiopian Skylight Hotel are consistently, promoted throughout all press releases.

The second press release (Appendix III) taken as a sample was the press released with the news of vaccination of ETG flight crew which promotes the safety concern of ETG to its passengers. The press emphasized the sensitivity of the company about safety of its passengers during COVID- 19. In this press also, the CEO speech was quoted as evidence and for more emphasis; it is read as *“We are pleased to operate flights with fully vaccinated crew – a significant step in protecting our employees’ and customers’ health safety.”*

More over the writer also included all safety measures taken by the company to prevent the pandemic by applying various protocols including preflight COVID 19 test and digitized booking system which is free from physical contact. In this corporate communication message, it can be understood that the team is promoting the service of ETG which guaranteed safety.

The third press release was about “chat bot” (Appendix IV). This is a new digital product promoted through this message. It eases passenger’s booking effort by helping them do all booking on their mobile phone. It is a mobile application as described by the writer of the press:

“Passengers can simply use their mobile to book, pay, check-in, check flight status, and get information on free and excess baggage and Live Chat through the chat-bot. The chat-bot is available in both Amharic and English languages with Ethiopian calendar installed for Amharic language users.”

In this text, the product was well described and promoted to be used by the customer passengers which again makes passengers attracted more by the ETG service than other airlines. It is viable that the message from corporate communication is playing the marketing role here.

The fourth and the last press release (Appendix V) taken as a sample was the information delivered about flight with special permit to Cameroon entitled **“Ethiopian to Resume Flights to Cameroon on Special Permit”**. It was issued on 10 July, 2020 during COVID pandemic first

wave expansion to Africa and Ethiopia as well. During this time most airlines were closed and there was no flight across the world.

In this message, the corporate communication of ETG intended to inform passengers that they can fly by Ethiopian to Yaoundé with special permit from the government or concerned bodies of the destination country. In this message PR is serving as agent to inform the company's service and attract those passengers who wanted to fly to Cameroon.

B. Message Released through Print Media

Due to COVID 19 pandemic the company limited its in-house prepared print materials. The renowned company magazine "SELAMTA" changed in to online publication only. Selamta magazine is fully dedicated to promote the company's product, its destinations, and different facilities, historical tourist attraction areas on the world and in Ethiopia to maximize the flow of tourists who again contribute to maximization of ET passengers and in turn maximizes revenue. The researcher learned from PR department that 'SELAMTA' is published by hired international PR agency. So, the researcher did not go in to analysis of this magazine.

Nonetheless, the researcher was able to find one information released on local print business newspaper called "CAPITAL" in 2020 before the pandemic.

The message was intended to promote the expansion of flight destinations of the airline. The title was read as "Ethiopian Airlines links Nigeria to its global network". (See Appendix VI)

The message dictates that, even during dangerous COVID time Ethiopian was serving the passengers by linking Nigeria to its global network of over 70 destinations. It was historical time that the flight was named "Evacuation Flight"; escaping from the pandemic. The reporter narrates "*the airline said that that it is providing world class flight services to passengers while respecting the rules and protocols imposed by the countries*" (Capital, 2021).

From the report, the researcher believed that PR, by providing the information to the reporter, attempted to build the image of the airline and also promoted the safest service being delivered at that critical time of the pandemic.

C. Message released through Mainstream Media

There were different issues covered by various mainstream local media and international media. As mentioned earlier, ETG has huge access to local media and the researcher focuses only on the international coverage.

The first media coverage taken was the one on which the CEO was appeared on CNN, “Quest Business” program in which the issue of the modification of passenger aircraft in to to Cargo Aircraft due to the pandemic was broadcasted (Appendix VII).

In this program the company has got the opportunity of image building and the opportunity of attracting global customers who were in need of CARGO transportation at a time. Through this release, corporate communication plays a huge global promotion role for free which indicates the pervasiveness of marketing public relations (CNN, 2020).

The second one is a live TV news report done on CGTN (Appendix VIII). It was done during the inauguration of the new passenger terminal at Bole International Airport. The reporter of the television directly transmitted the interview he had conducted with the director of Ethiopian Airports. In the news report, the new improved product, which is highly advanced, suitable, secured and passenger friendly terminal was promoted without any cost.

In this event, the media relation activity of PR is clearly observed playing the big marketing role. Due to this news it is believed that passengers from the world who were watching CGTN TV channel would use Bole Airport as a destination and a layover. As these customers pay for the airport service, it is believed that the revenue of ETG would increase as a result of the media coverage in which PR and CC played significant marketing roles (CGTN, 2020).

D. Messages Released through Facebook

The marketing activities on Facebook and other social media are on 24/7 basis, so the researcher only selected few samples randomly.

The first promotion selected was one which was released on Facebook concerning the introduction of new product or which is Cargo Conversion at Ethiopian MRO (See Appendix IX). The news narrated that Ethiopian got in to partnership agreement with Israel Aerospace

Industry to enables EAL to expand Ethiopian cargo and logistics services which was already the largest and leading cargo network in Africa as said by the Ethiopian Group CEO. In this message, PR is promoting or introducing that ETG MRO was able to convert passenger aircraft in to cargo aircraft and new customers are expected to buy this service. This again increases the acceptance of ETG in aviation market.

The second message selected was the one which advertises the Ethiopian Aviation Academy but using a very short but powerful PR expression supporting by picture (Appendix X). It is read as

“Join the largest Aviation Academy in Africa & be empowered to live your dreams! #Ethiopian Aviation Academy #Pioneer of aviation excellence” (EAL, 2021).

The third message selected was the information delivered on line via Facebook containing the news about the organic meal being served on EAL during flight which is the product of Ethiopian Inflight Catering. The PR disseminated the promotion by utilizing vary short attractive and powerful expression supported by illustration as follows (See picture in Appendix XI). It is expressed as follows:

“Our catering team at Addis Ababa always ensures fresh and top ingredients used while preparing your on-board meal. Travel with us to find out more” (EAL, 2021).

In general, the researcher learned from the documents referred that all messages crafted by PR and disseminated through different channels implied that the PR and CC of ETG practices the marketing public relations (MPR).

4.3 Data gathered through Key Informant Interview

The semi structured key Informant interview was prepared and two managers and one director were participated. These informants were labeled as ‘key’ since the researcher believed that they know very well about the issue under study as they are leading the marketing communication of ETG. Their name is kept anonymous. Before getting in to the analysis of the key informant interview, their personal background is presented here under.

Key KI: key informant

No	Respondent's Code	Sex	Qualification	Field of Study	Work Experience in ETG	Current Position in ETG	Remark
1	KI ₁	M	MA	Marketing Management	10	A/ Director IMC	
2	KI ₂	M	MBA	Business MGT, Marketing focused	7	Manager Academic Sales	
3	KI ₃	M	MA	Marketing MGT	7	Manager, PR&CC	

Table 1. Information about the Respondents of Key Informant Interview

4.3.1 Data gathered from Key Informant Interview 1

As presented in the table, the key informant interview one is one who holds the position of the director of IMC. There, it was believed that this respondent is an ideal person to be interviewed to get information that could answer the research questions. The current research question were, “what is the belief of managers and practitioners of IMC towards marketing public relation?”; and “what is the actual practice of MPR in ETG , challenges and solutions?”.

So answer these questions, the responses of the respondents were analyzed under themes drawn from the research questions.

Belief of the respondent about MPR

KI 1 believes that the importance of IMC is paramount in which resources are organized together to accomplish a give task effectively. He mentioned that IMC introduced to the company before two years and the reason for being in need of this IMC approach were, first, the competitive aviation market environment, various dimensions of transformation of the industry in a very speedy manner which needs agility in terms of approaching the market. When it comes to ETG and the second reason is the digital era which requires changes in commercial transactions.

To address these reasons, the respondent added, ETG embarked in to restructuring of marketing activities in integrated way. Before introduction of IMC, departments were operating in silo which was not effective and could not be effective in this digital era.

The respondent also mentioned some challenges in IMC, like of skilled heads, technological capabilities of employees to implement this new approach of marketing which were currently solved.

When it comes to PR, the KI₁ believed that the importance of PR department in marketing communications of ETG is crucial. They serve IMC in promoting new products, in preparing press releases, reaching out various media, like mainstream media and various forms of social media. He added that their role is not limited to promoting commercial product, but they are responsible for all corporate issues like brand awareness of the airline, monitoring negative mentions about ETG and so on.

The researcher believes that the information revealed the respondent has positive attitude and awareness about the role of PR in marketing communication which is manifested in Marketing Public Relations.

The Practices of MPR as Perceived by the Respondent

The key informant confirmed that The PR plays indispensable role in marketing communications being integrated with other marketing departments. It receives marketing information about the new product or the existing product from different units of ETG like MRO, Cargo, Ground services, Aviation Academy, etc. to facilitate the promotion of new products.

He mentioned, the newly established Ethiopian Aviation University (ETAU) which is now on promotion. To do this promotion, first the issue of the campaign is crafted by Advertising department and then PR produces content and Customer Relation management unit being with Digital marketing department releases the news of the new product to the public. This is how integration is practiced in ETG, he claimed. In this campaign PR plays irreplaceable roles of writing the content, synchronizing with graphics representations and selecting media for news release. He added, “all these combined efforts run fully in one go and the reach is impactful.”

Therefore, from the explanations of the respondent MPR is fully practiced in ETG. Concerning the challenges, he mentioned less capability of different ET agents at different stations to apply this IMC as expected and the complex nature of the company itself. He evidenced the change came to the company after the introduction of IMC in figure. He mentioned that before IMC, the

e-commerce outlet was the only company's website and its penetration on line sales was limited to 10-12%, but now this has been grown to 36% due to utilization of diversified electronic media in which PR plays significant role.

4.3.2 Data gathered from Key Informant Interview 2

Key Informant2, as displayed in the table above is holding the position of Manager of Academic Sales, the department structured under Group Advertising & Sales Promotions and who has a frequent interface with PR and CC department. In the manner, the response of the KI2 will be analyzed under two themes driven from research questions.

Belief of the respondent about MPR

The first question was prompted to know his opinion about IMC as a spring board towards the issues of MPR which is the focus of this study.

He said he believes that IMC is the very useful marketing approach which helps to organize financial, human and time resources together to achieve one goal. It also creates opportunities for practitioners to learn from each other as he mentioned. On the other hand, he pin pointed that the approach has a disadvantage in that it involves multiple human power, if one deviate from the set objectives because multiple channels, the intended result cannot be achieved.

The second issue raised was the importance of PR in marketing communication. The respondent explained that PR is very important for their marketing activities in that they help in introducing new products of the company to the customer or entire public, and they have vital role in creating awareness, maximizing acceptances of a product, building the image of ETG in competitive market and in influencing the perceptions of ETG's customers. On top of this, he added, the message from PR is highly influential in that they utilize various social media outlets and they apply best practices possible on the world. Finally, he claimed, | working with PR is not optional.”

The Practices of MPR as Perceived by the Respondent

As is mentioned in above, the respondent verified that PR department works with them in looking for media coverage, plan together particularly while they have marketing campaigns. He mentions, they apply the tool called SLA (Service Level Agreement) with department of PR to

cooperatively accomplish promotion tasks. SLA is the kind of contact agreement or commitment takes place between departments directly have activity interfaces for effective accomplishment. In the document, the guiding principles and responsibilities and accountability of the actors are orchestrated clearly. He further explained that they plan, monitor and evaluate the marketing communication activities for a given campaign.

Another point stated by the respondent was the challenges they have during working with PR. He said, sometimes need for PR roles of marketing communication arise from different units of the company because of the large size of the company. At this time, as a result of man power PR department encounter challenges in addressing the needs. He said that unexpected request from other departments interfere in to their planned action and they get challenged to prioritize. In between this we, as Academic sales, may not get the service we need from PR department. Another challenge is lack of capacity building trainings for actors of marketing communication in general and PR practitioners in particular.

Data gathered from Key Informant Interview 3

Key Informant 3 is the manager of Group Public Relations and Corporate Communications. The researcher first asked his opinion about IMC in the company. He explained that IMC was introduced to ETG before two years as a new approach of marketing communications. It helped them in in pooling all marketing communication activities in to one to attain the intended goals. He stated, “the actors are different units, but the objective is the same and we all work together for that objective”

The merits of IMC, as mentioned by the respondent, is its coast effectiveness, synchronizations of human power, similar voice through different channels at once, wise use of resources and time, etc. On the other hand, he added, the challenges they encountered at the beginning time. The challenges were, employees were resistant to the transition tending to maintain the status que, confusion among employees since it was new concept. Lack of understanding happened since there was no any IMC training in our country’s college or universities.

The researcher asked whether he thinks PR is essential in marketing activities of ETG or not. He confirmed by saying “No question!” He substantiated his response by mentioning some PR roles in Marketing like writing contents and disseminating to public through various media. He

asserted that they work in collaboration with Advertising & Sales Promotion, Digital Marketing and other concerned units to get in to the public through electronic media.

He believes that IMC and working with other marketing department helped them to learn from each other, working together for the same goal, minimizing or avoiding wastages of resources and so on.

The Practices of PMR as Perceived by the Respondent

The respondent said they plan together, monitor and evaluate the achievement of their goals regularly. He added that their achievement is measured by the revenue generated for the company as a result of marketing communication campaign they under take.

He stressed that they critically measure the extent to which the campaign was effective in meeting its goal, generated revenue, and the extent to which their marketing communication reach the people and measure their response through social media as an example. In general, there is the pre, the while and the post campaign evaluation trend.

About the challenges they faced during applying marketing public relations, he revealed delay of some message due to multiple tasks, lack of man power which they were working on to attract interested and trained employees to join their department.

Therefore, from discussion held with key informant³, it was concluded that belief the respondent about MPR is positive in that he stated its merits and demerits. he has the awareness in that he broadly dictated about the activities take place during applying MPR and the challenges they faced. From points he listed as practice, the research understood that MPR is practiced in the company.

4.4 Data collected via Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion was a data collection tool to gather information from the participants concerning the belief they have about marketing public relations and the actual practice they have been experiencing.

The FGD was conducted in to groups, one FGD1 participants are from Sales and Promotion department; participants of FGD2 were from Department of Public Relations and Corporate Communications. The participants' number was limited due to the strict COVID 19 prevention

protocol being applied by the company. In addition to this, the researcher believed to separate participants from both departments to cross check their thought about marketing PR.

Before going in to the detail analysis of the discussion, it is vital to present participants' background information. Therefore, the following table illustrates the participants of FGD1 demographic information; education background and work experience they have in ETG.

N o	Participant 's Code	Sex	Qualificatio n	Field of Study	Work Experienc e in ETG	Current Position in ETG	Rema rk
1	P1	M	BA	Development Management	6 years	Senior Marketing Officer II	
2	P2	M	BA	Industrial Designing	2 years	Senior Graphic Designer	
3	P3	F	BA	Marketing Management	5 years	Senior Marketing Officer II	
4	P4	F	MA	Marketing Management	>15 years	Sales and Service officer	

Table 1. Information about the participants of FGD 1

From the table1, we can understand that the participants were the right personnel to discuss on issues of marketing public relations. Their experience and their education back ground would help the researcher to obtain insightful ideas from the FGD.

The discussion was conducted to investigate the belief they have concerning the roles of public relation in marketing communications and the actual practices in the company. The participants were randomly selected from practitioners of Advertising & Sales Promotions, as this department is one of the marketing communications actors structured under Integrated Marketing Communications. The department was also purposively chosen from other departments based on the frequency of job interface they have with Public Relations and Corporate communications.

Analysis of Data gathered from FGD1

Information gathered from this FGD1 was analyzed based on themes driven from the research questions.

The belief of Participants towards the roles of PR in Marketing Communications

The researcher or the moderator of the FGD provided points of discussion to guide the discussion. Accordingly, the first point of the discussion was about their belief towards the role of PR in marketing activities.

Most of the participants mentioned that the roles of PR in their activity is indispensable in that the messages they disseminate has high impact in marketing activities of ETG as stated by P3. P1 added that since they have global media coverage they served the company too much in making the marketing outlet. P3 again confirmed that the importance of PR by saying "PR is the face of our company". P2 added, "even though my knowledge about their roles is limited, I know that they are very important for sales promotion and advertising. They integrate the contents with the video and graphics we produce. P4 mentioned that her department strongly operates with PR concerning sales and promotion. She explained that they sell trainings, so PR serves them as a bridge for them by linking them with customers through their well-developed messages. She added "they are very important in introducing new product". P4 believes that sometimes because attractive contents created by PR many potential customers come to their academy for visiting and after that they join the academy or they recommend other to join based information they had got from messages from PR. The important point P4 added was "These days advertising is getting costly but the PR department promotes our product with less or no cost."

From the exchange of their idea we can conclude that they have the belief that PR is very important in marketing communication activities of ETG.

Another point of discussion was how they see integrated marketing communication in which they are expected to operate with other IMC department including PR&CC. All of them mentioned that integration of their activity is helpful and they witnessed that sometimes integration could be difficult when multiple activities come from different parties. This problem,

particularly affects the PR department. Since they receive marketing issues from different departments, integration can be affected. They may face problems in setting priority. But still they confirmed that integration is helpful for marketing communications. Concerning IMC, P4 confirmed it helped them in planning marketing campaigns in a very organized way.

Based on these, it is possible to mention they have positive attitude towards IMC, but they confessed that there was some limitation during applications. So, it is possible to come to the idea that they believe the advantage of IMC by mentioning some of its challenges.

The Actual Practices of MPR in ETG as Perceived by the Participants

The participants of the FG1 also discussed about practical experiences on the ground which is about the practices of involvement of PR in marketing communications.

They mentioned the PR department practically operates in marketing activities. P3, for example, mentioned that they have the trend of planning specific campaign together, monitoring, and evaluating the result collectively which is very common among PR and Advertising and Sales promotions. P1 also said they have the trend of planning media coverage together. P3 extended the idea by witnessing that they provide them with some inputs like videos, photographs and other visual graphics and hence they synchronize it with messages that promote the ETG's products. P4 strongly explained that the PR team is well aware of marketing activities especially since last five years, before five years they used to focus on other corporate PR activities.

The other point related to MPR practice was the challenges they have encountered while working with PR. The first challenge is the complexity of the company which makes the PR department very busy to priorities the marketing messages. Even though the IMC is practiced, they mentioned that PR sometimes receives multiple messages from various departments which create high burden to the team. To support this with evidence, P4 mentioned that sometimes they face unplanned visits from external customers who wants to visit EAA facilities and when they inform PR team for briefing and guiding the visits, they get very busy since the event is unplanned. They mentioned one of the problems of PR&CC department is lack of man power. Lack of training for practitioners was also mentioned as a drawback for their effective MPR operations.

One of the practical activities as prescribed by some PR professionals like Cutlip et al (2006) is the PR research trends of PR. PR team is expected to conduct research to gather opinions from customers and other competitors' activities. In line with this all participants confirmed that there are formal research practices by PR&CC communication department.

At the last, the participants pin pointed some opportunities or advantages they got from working with PR. They mentioned (P3) that they got opportunities of learning from each other as all of them are operating under IMC. P1 added they out[put of woki8ng together is exiting when accomplished. P2 added they learned from challenges when they work with PR. P4 again mentioned that they (PR) are cost effective than advertising. They also added there

In general, the researcher believed that MPR is understood positively by these participants and practiced well with some challenges like lack of prioritizations, lack of training for practitioners and culture of conducting MPR research.

Analysis of Data gathered from FGD 2

As mentioned earlier, the FGD participants were practitioners from Public relations& Corporate Communications department of ETG. The data is analyzed based on the themes driven from research questions. The following table illustrates some important information about the participants of FGD2.

No	Participant's Code	Sex	Qualification	Field of Study	Work Experience in ETG	Current Position in ETG	Remark
1	P1	M	MA	PR & Strategic Communications	3 years	Communication Officer	
2	P2	F	BA	English Language & Literature	4 years	Senior communication Officer	
3	P3	F	BA	English Language & Literature	5 years	Communication Expert	

Table 2 Information about Participants' of FGD2

The belief of Participants towards the roles of PR in Marketing Communications

The participants of FGD were invited to discuss on the belief they have towards their role in marketing communications. Regarding this, P1 asserted that PR is very essential in brand building, boosting acceptance of the products of ETG and attracting customers. P2 again mentioned that their formation affects customer attitude by producing PR messages which is their key role. P3 also confirmed that they are very important in crafting marketing messages and in making publicities.

P1 added they use interactive social media platform to attract customers, to increase their awareness by making them play some online games which have awards for the winners.

Concerning operating under IMC, they witnessed that it is an opportunity that they plan together, act together and develop their capacity through experience sharing with various segments of IMC division.

Therefore, the researcher understood that the participants believe that they have roles in marketing communications of ETG and they consider IMC as an opportunity to cooperate and to learn from each other.

The Actual Practices of MPR in ETG as Perceived by Participants

The second point of discussion was the extent to which MPR is practiced in ETG. The participants witnessed that most of their activity is marketing communications. They mentioned that they craft marketing messages and disseminate through various media platforms like face book, Twitter, Instagram, you tube, telegram and etc.

P3, especially, mentioned that they usually use press releases to promote new product to the market and different updates related to ETG services, but they use press conference very rarely. P1 added they organize events, apply social media outlets and make international and local media relations to maximize the opportunity of promoting ETG's service products in addition to other corporate communication activities.

Concerning PR research, other than interaction they have with customer on some specific issues, they do not have the trend of periodical opinion gathering through formal PR research. The

interactions mentioned is a kind of routine question and answer via social media on the points which were not clear for passengers.

Another point raised was the opportunities they have gained from applying MPR. They mentioned that have got some advantages in taking part in marketing communication activities of the company. For instance, P2 said that she changed her attitude about differences between PR and marketing, and she developed “sales personality”. P3 claimed that the MPR under IMC platform helped them synchronize dispersed similar tasks in to one, and increases the knowledge of marketing communication tools.

The challenges they experienced while practicing MPR was , lack of the knowledge the nature huge company like ETG, sensitivity of some issues in relation to addressing deadline, company business security.

To summarize, the researcher learned that the practitioners in PR&CC had awareness about MPR and they also believe that their role is important in marketing communications of ETG. From their discussion, again, the researcher can conclude they practice MPR in the company from points they raised as an opportunities and challenges they encountered while applying MPR.

4. 5 Discussion

So far the results obtained from different data gathering tools were analyzed under two main themes which were driven from basic research questions. The researcher tried to focus on the data that answer the questions to for effective management of the information gathered. In document analysis, the practical practices of MPR of PR was emphasized and some PR tools were taken as a sample to check whether they focused on the marketing communication activities of the company.

The researcher, as the departure point, first analyzed two main phenomena through document analysis. The first issue was the place of PR and CC of ETG in organization’s structure. This is done because of some theories that dictate the role of PR is affected by the positions it has in an organization. The Excellence Theory of PR recommends, the manager of PR should be the member of dominant coalition which helps him/ her and practitioners participate in decision making, communicating decisions made, communicate up to date information of the corporate

levels, the corporate level achievements, and future directions to the public (Grunig & Hunt, 1992)

In line with this the study revealed that PR and CC is not placed at the top level of the management and is not the member of dominant coalition in ETG. As observed from organizational chart and ideas from respondents, PR and CC is structured under IMC.

However, the participants of this study did not mention the drawbacks observed in the public relations activities. In some instances, the CEO by passes and consult the PR team, and the PR team do the vice versa without any problem. Concerning IMC, the position of PR&CC communications helped them to plan, monitor, and evaluate marketing communication activities.

The second concern of the document analysis was enquiring whether the managers and practitioners in PR&CC do fulfill the required expertise to exercise marketing public relations. Cognizant of this Olisegun (2006) stated the skills required from PR practitioners which are research skills, writing skill, speaking skills and event managing skills. Through document observed and interview conducted, it was revealed that most of the practitioners have the educational preparation to practice the mentioned skills. Most of them studied English Language and Literature for their first degree and Public relations and strategic communications for their second degree. Some of them studied Journalism and Communications and few of them studied marketing communication. From this the researcher can claim they have the capacity to run the marketing public relations activities in the company, but this requires more investigation on the effectiveness of their writing, researching, speaking other IMC units witnessed that the messages of PR is impactful in influencing the perceptions of the customers.

The PR tools utilized were analyzed to investigate whether PR and CC department is exercising the MPR in ETG. According to Harison (1995), PR is connected to advertising and promotion to increase the awareness of the product or services. Some advantages of public relations in marketing practices are increasing brand awareness, provides acceptance and credibility for brand, cost effectiveness, clutter busting and reaching the hard to reach (Duncan, 2005).

In line with this, the researcher investigated same sample PR tools which were being used by the department to run marketing communications. From the investigation it was found that PR

abundantly practices marketing communication through different outlets like press releases, mainstream media, and various social media platforms.

Another important research question attempted to answer through this research was identifying the beliefs of PR practitioners and other IMC units' actors of marketing communication about marketing public relation. Most of the respondents claimed that the importance MPR to their activities. They witnessed that without PR roles they cannot achieve successful marketing communications. They claim PR serves as bridge between the ETG and the entire customers. They believe that PR plays significant role in increasing brand awareness, product acceptance, promoting new service products, reacting to negative mentions about ET's product, and so on through their influencing PR messages.

The second basic research question was to know whether PR practices MPR in ETG or not. From the discussions held in FGD and interview conducted with key informants, it was averred that PR plays various roles in marketing communications which indicates the prevalence of MPR. Participants from all departments substantiated the idea by raising marketing activities of PR, opportunities they gained from working with PR, challenges and areas improvements for future success. The researcher, by applying the cross-check of all data, confirmed that the MPR is fully implemented in ETG.

The study also revealed some gaps observed with reference to PR theories. These are the place of PR and CC in the company's organizational ladder which may affect the decision making roles of PR, the potential of experiencing lack of access to new updates at corporate level. This again may affect the influencing power of their messages and affects the company.

Another very essential task expected from PR is conducting research. Most importantly, to practice marketing public relations conducting marketing research is paramount essential. Regarding this, Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006), for example, suggest that without research practitioners are limited to making mere assertions that they know the situation. Again Lindenmann (2003) cited in Kwanshi- Aido(2015) , argues that research is the key to any successful public relations, communication and/or marketing effort.

However, the current study revealed that there were no trends of conducting marketing research at the level of IMC in general and PR and CC in particular.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The current research aimed at conducting descriptive case study to know the beliefs of IMC PR actioners of Ethiopian Airlines group had towards applying marketing public relations and the actual practices of marketing public relations in the company.

The current researcher deployed qualitative approach in which three data collection tools were used to answer the basic research questions.

Accordingly, based on the analysis and result found the researcher has made following conclusions in respective of the research questions

1. The belief of PR practitioners and managers about MPR

The belief of practitioners of IMC towards MPR was positive and constructive in that they explained the benefits of MPR, the advantages they got in working with PR during marketing campaigns, the changes occurred in marketing communication since the introduction of IMC to the company under which PR is structured as one of the constituents. In addition, they emphasized MPR plays indispensable roles in marketing communications.

2. The actual practices of MPR in ETG?

The documents analyzed indicated that MPR is exhibited in all PR tools of communications. The researcher understood that most of the information conveyed at different times through various media dominantly comprises marketing communication messages which justify the practices of MPR in the company.

It was confirmed that MPR is being practiced in ETG. These was shown in FGD in that participants deeply expressed the practically experiences of marketing oriented public relations which is MPR. They explained the marketing detail activities they do with PR department to achieve the marketing communications goals.

Key informants also asserted that the MPR is fully practiced especially after introduction of IMC. They explained how they practice MPR in detail, how they plan, monitor and evaluate collectively focusing on campaign activities.

3. Some challenges encountered while applying MPR

On another side, during practicing MPR, the research revealed some challenges of man power, multiplicities of marketing communication tasks at once which may make PR group over loaded and negatively affect their performance.

As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, the place of PR and CC in the organizational structure seems far apart from the dominant coalition which may affect PR activities of the company. However, participants of this study did not mention the structure as a challenge.

The bona fide of the practitioners and manager of PR&CC can be considered perfect combination in which they all have management, journalism, marketing, public relations and communication trainings which indicates the better application of the MPR in the ETG as dictated in Excellence Theory of PR.

5.2 Recommendations

From the findings, the researcher came up with the following recommendations:

- Integrated Marketing Communications approach is highly accepted by the participants, therefore it is vital to further strength it through experience sharing and periodical collective evaluation of the units' marketing communication activities under IMC.
- Trained man power is unquestionably important for the success of employees. Since the practice of MPR and IMC is recent concept, periodical trainings that can raise awareness of the practitioner should be provided by ETG.
- Group HR should solve the shortage of man power in PR&CC department since they are operating in a very huge company, it could be challenging for them to address the needs come from various units of the organization.
- Research is the backbone for PR, so PR&CC and IMC directorate should think about supporting their interventions of market by researches. If there is the lack of research skill, trainings on research skill development should be facilitated. A PR without research

cannot know the opinion of his customers, the status of the competitors, and the general environment in which it acts. Of course, the researcher learned that there is the department named “Group Development Research” responsible for entire activities of the company. However, research focused on marketing communication activities will also help the IMC to run evidence based decisions and activities.

5.3 Future Research Directions

As frequently mentioned, the concept of MPR in IMC is very new to the company. So, it will be helpful if the effect and challenges of IMC to ETG is well investigated to learn from practice and to plan for further improvements.

Another potential area of research is, investigations of the drawbacks or the advantages of the current structure of PR&CC is conducted, lesson can be obtained and improvement could be sought. The gap concerning research skill of practitioners can also be investigated to know the root cause of the problem.

At last, the current study itself could be enriched by applying survey kind of study to gather information about MPR from large number of employees in IMC and managers concerned about MPR.

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Appendices

1. Appendix I –Partial Organizational chart illustrating the place of PR and CC in ET
2. Appendix II – Prease Release on Cargo Transport news

Ethiopian Continues to Lead Africa in Passenger and Freight Traffic during the COVID Crisis

Addis Ababa, 05 July 2021

Ethiopian Airlines Group, the largest Pan-African airline, has become Africa’s top airline in passenger and freight traffic retaining its leadership position in the continent.

According to the African Airlines Association’s (AFRAA) report, Ethiopian has been ranked first by passenger and cargo traffic in 2020. Ethiopian carried 500 thousand tons of freight and 5.5 million passengers through its main hub, Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Tewelde GebreMariam said, *“We are honoured to continue our leadership even during the Global Pandemic Crisis which has devastated the aviation industry. This is a manifestation of our resilience and agility. We are excited about the role we played in the fight against the pandemic by continuing our much-needed air connectivity within Africa and with the rest of the world without any flight suspension. We are saving lives through air transport of medical supplies and vaccines.”*

Ethiopian Airlines topped the list with the highest passenger traffic transported through Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. A total of 5.5 million passengers have been transported through the airport. Of this traffic, Ethiopian transported 5.2 million passengers and the remaining passengers were transported by other airlines. The cargo terminal has handled more than 500 thousand tons of freight during the year 2020.

Ethiopia also topped the list in the most connected countries in Africa due to Ethiopian Airlines’ large number of direct flights within the continent.

AFRAA Air Transport Report 2020 is available in the below link:

<https://afraa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/AFRAA-Air-Transport-Report-Q1-2021-Updated.pdf>

Note to Editors:

About Ethiopian

Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) is the fastest growing Airline in Africa. In its seventy-five years of operation, Ethiopian has become one of the continent's leading carriers, unrivalled in efficiency and operational success. Ethiopian commands the lion's share of the Pan-African passenger and cargo network operating the youngest and most modern fleet to 127 international passenger and cargo destinations across five continents. Ethiopian fleet includes ultra-modern and environmentally friendly aircraft such as Airbus A350, Boeing 787-8, Boeing 787-9, Boeing 777-300ER, Boeing 777-200LR, Boeing 777-200 Freighter, Bombardier Q-400 double cabin with an average fleet age of five years. In fact, Ethiopian is the first airline in Africa to own and operate these aircraft. Ethiopian is currently implementing a 15-year strategic plan called Vision 2025 that will see it become the leading aviation group in Africa with Seven business units: Ethiopian International Services; Ethiopian Cargo & Logistics Services; Ethiopian MRO Services; Ethiopian Aviation Academy; Ethiopian ADD Hub Ground Services, Ethiopian Airports Services and Ethiopian Express Services (Domestic). Ethiopian is a multi-award-winning airline registering an average growth of 25% in the past seven years.

Email: CorporateCommunication@ethiopianairlines.com
8913/165/529/ **Web:** <https://www.ethiopianairlines.com/et>

Tel: (251-11)517-

3. Appendix III. Press Release on COVID 19 Vaccination

Ethiopian Starts Operating Flights with Fully Vaccinated Crew

Ethiopian Airlines Group, Africa's largest carrier, has started operating flights with fully vaccinated crew against COVID-19 to keep travelers safe in light of the pandemic.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam said *"We are pleased to operate flights with fully vaccinated crew – a significant step in protecting our employees' and customers' health safety. We are encouraged by the increasing number of passengers travelling for business, VFR and tourism supported by the confidence of vaccination across the world. We have been squarely focused on working very hard to ensure the safety of our staff and passengers*

since the pandemic broke out and this is another testament to our continued commitment. We have bought and imported more than 37,000 vaccine shots for our employees and stakeholders.”

Ethiopian has been rigorously implementing COVID-19 precautionary measures including the launch of its own testing and isolation center and digitization of its operation among others. It has been at the forefront in the fight against the pandemic carrying essential medical supplies and vaccines across the globe as well as repatriating stranded people back to their home.

4. Appendix IV Chat Bot Press release on the new product Chat Bot

Ethiopian Enhances its Chat-bot for Domestic and International Services

Addis Ababa, 22 July 2021

Ethiopian Airlines Group, the Largest Aviation Group in Africa, is pleased to introduce an upgraded chat-bot for domestic and international flight uses. The Ethiopian chat-bot, dubbed “Lucy” is equipped with various self-service features that will enable passengers to easily process their travel needs.

Passengers can simply use their mobile to book, pay, check-in, check flight status, get information on free and excess baggage and Live Chat through the chat-bot. The chat-bot is available in both Amharic and English languages with Ethiopian calendar installed for Amharic language users.

Beyond the previous features that were limited only for domestic flight services, the new enhanced Ethiopian chat-bot is expanded with more features to provide services to both domestic and international flight users with multiple payment options. Among the new features included in the chat-bot is an option where passengers can send their feedback.

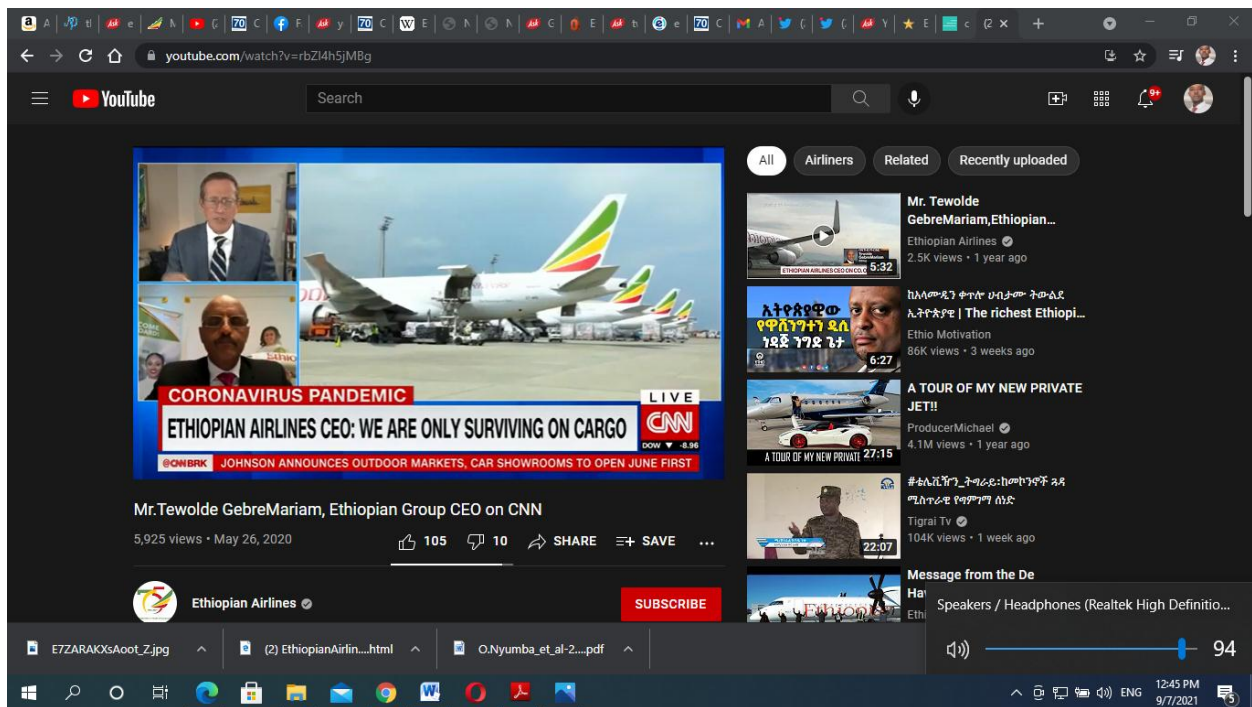
Regarding the upgraded chat bot, Ethiopian Director Integrated Marketing Communications, Mr. Mesfin Biru said, *“We are constantly working on ways to improve our accessibility to our customers. Our main goal is to secure simplicity and convenience in the services we provide.*

With the upgraded chat-bot, passengers will have additional option to process their travel globally at their convenience.”

Easily accessible on telegram and messenger, the chat-bot is expected to have a vital role in simplifying travelers’ experience. “Lucy”, the Ethiopian chat bot is an additional online platform of the airline along with Ethiopian website and mobile app.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbZl4h5iMBg>

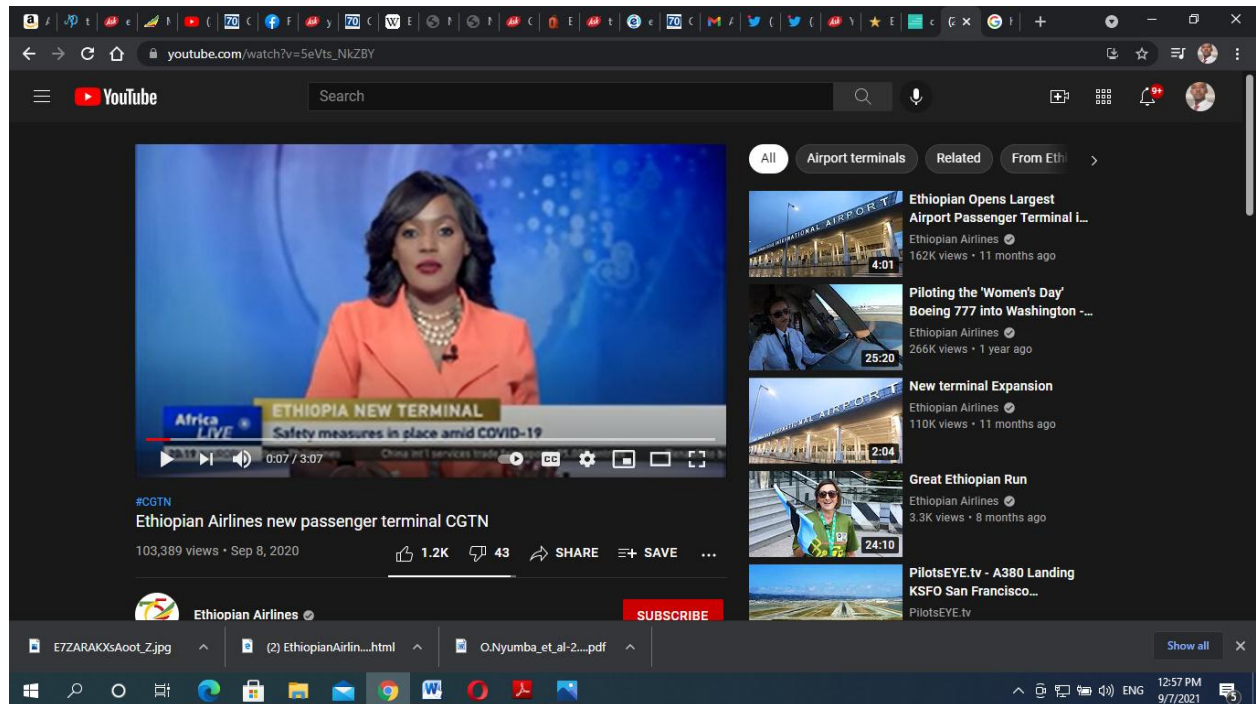
5. Appendix V The airline is converting passenger aircraft to cargo aircraft to combat COVID 19 effect



The image is a screenshot of a YouTube video player. The main video is a live broadcast from CNN, titled "CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES CEO: WE ARE ONLY SURVIVING ON CARGO". The video shows Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam, CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, speaking on a video call. In the background, several Ethiopian Airlines aircraft are parked on a tarmac. The video has 5,925 views and was posted on May 26, 2020. The channel is Ethiopian Airlines, which has a red "SUBSCRIBE" button. To the right of the video, there is a list of related videos, including "Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam, Ethiopian Airlines CEO on CNN" (2.5K views), "The richest Ethiopian" (86K views), and "A TOUR OF MY NEW PRIVATE JET!!" (4.1M views). The bottom of the screenshot shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system tray displaying the time as 12:45 PM on 9/7/2021.

6. Appendix VI : CGTN reports on the newly inaugurated terminal

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eVts_NkZBY



7. Appendix 7VII: News from Print Media

Ethiopian Airlines links Nigeria to its global network

By

Staff Reporter (Capital News Paper) <https://www.capitalethiopia.com/tag/ethiopian-airlines/>

September 14, 2020

Ethiopian airlines has linked Nigeria to its global network of over 70 destinations from September 7, 2020.

Cities that are open for flights of the Ethiopian Airlines include Toronto, Washington DC, Chicago, Newark, London, Paris, and Manchester.

Flights will commence from Abuja on the 7th and Lagos on the 8th.

Abuja will be served with the Airbus A350 every day while Lagos will be served with B777 Aircraft four times weekly.

During the Lockdown Ethiopian Airlines handled evacuation flights from America on behalf the Nigerian government and also to America for the American government.

The Airline said it will be providing world class services to passengers while respecting the rules and protocols imposed by the countries.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EthiopianAirlinesVision2025/posts/4390169561003813>

Ethiopian Establishes B767 Passenger to Freighter Conversion Site in Its Addis Ababa HUB MRO Center

8. Appedix VIII; news about Cargo Converion from Facebook

Ethiopian Airlines Group, the leading aviation group in Africa, establishes a global standard cargo Conversion program to convert the B-767-300 ER to dedicated freighter services in partnership agreement with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

Ethiopian Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam, said, “In line with our Diversified Aviation Business Model of Vision 2025, we have been increasing our cargo capacity in fleet, ground service infrastructure and cargo connectivity network. Accordingly, we are partnering with IAI, one of the global technology leaders in the Aerospace industry, in building a cargo conversion center in our MRO facilities in Addis Ababa Airport. The Cargo conversion center will commence its first business with three Ethiopian Airlines owned B-767-300 aircraft. The Cargo Conversion Center in Addis Ababa airport will expand its services to all airlines in Africa and the wider region.

We are very happy that we are able to collaborate with IAI to enable us to expand our cargo and logistics services which is already the largest and leading cargo network in Africa. The capacity building will also help us expand our MRO services with cutting edge technology and knowledge transfer.”

Yossi Melamed, IAI's Executive VP and General Manager of Aviation Group on his part said: “We are witnessing a sharp rise in the demand for cargo aircraft as a result of the rise in e-commerce, which has peaked to record levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. IAI has an excellent reputation as a conversion center of passenger-to-freighters aircraft, and we are constantly receiving requests to open such conversion centers in more and more locations around the world. I am excited by the opening of the current center in Ethiopia and thank my colleagues in Ethiopian Airlines for the trust they have put in IAI's Aviation Group, as the world's leader in conversions.”

The new passenger-to-freighter conversion centre, which will operate from the Ethiopian MRO centre in Addis Ababa, will provide solutions for the rising demand for cargo aircraft of B767 models. The conversion line in Ethiopia will join existing conversion sites IAI operates at its campus in Ben Gurion International Airport and in Mexico.

It is to be recalled that Ethiopian MRO, with its internal capacity, temporarily converted 25 of its passenger aircraft to freighter to boost its cargo capacity as demand to transport emergency medical supplies soared

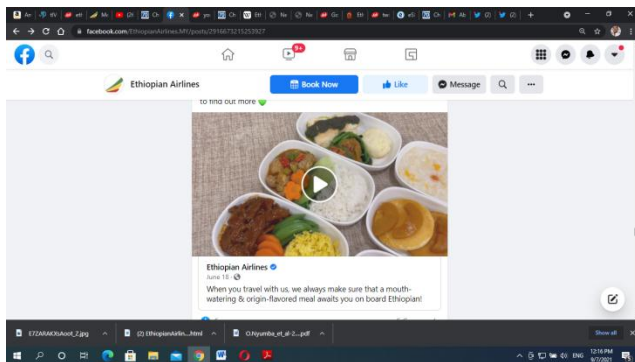
9. Appendix IX: News about Ethiopian Aviation Academy promotion on face book by PR

Join the largest Aviation Academy in Africa & be empowered to live your dreams!
#EthiopianAviationAcademy #Pioneerofaviationexcellence
www.ethiopianairlines.com/EAA



10. Appendix X: News on Green on flight Meals from Ethiopian Catering

Our catering team at Addis Ababa always ensures fresh and top ingredients used while preparing your on-board meal. Travel with us to find out more 🍀



<https://www.facebook.com/EthiopianAirlines/videos/258796309375489>

When you travel with us, we always make sure that a mouth-watering & origin-flavored meal awaits you on board Ethiopian (Very attractive video of vegetables is included).

11. Appendix XI: Promotion on Ethiopian Airport Services on face book

Enjoy enhanced travel experience through combined comfort and safety at Addis Ababa's Bole International new passenger terminal.

#FlyEthiopian



<https://www.facebook.com/EthiopianAirlines.MY/photos/a.1603006656620596/2863896010531648/>