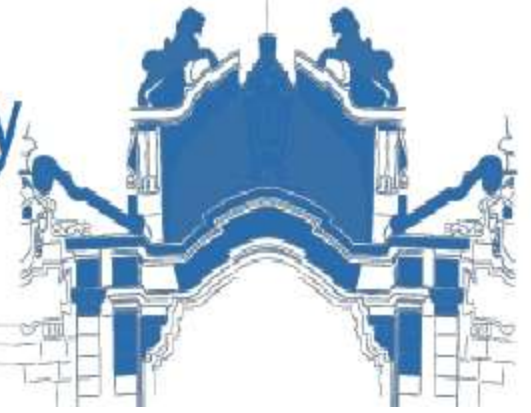




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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication

School of Journalism and Communications

**The Role of Public Relations Department on Effective Tourism Marketing:
the case of Ministry of Tourism**

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Extension Program: Public Relation and Strategic Communication

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May, 2023, Addis Ababa

The Role of Public Relations Department on Effective Tourism Marketing: The case of Ministry of Tourism, Addis Ababa

By: Addisu Dagneu

A Research Project Submitted To College Of Humanities, Language Studies, Journalism and Communication

School Of Journalism and Communication Public Relations and Strategic Communications Extension Graduate Program

May, 2023, Addis Ababa

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this project work entitled ‘The Role of the Public Relations Department on Effective Tourism Marketing: The Case of the Ministry of Tourism’ is my own work. With the help and direction of my research advisor, Gashaye Belew(PhD), I conducted the research on my own. In neither this university nor any other university has this study been presented for a degree. It offered partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

Signature-----

Name: Addisu Dagneu

Date: May, 2023

CERTIFICATION

As research project advisors, we here certify that we have read and evaluated this project work prepared, under our guidance, by Addisu Dagneu, entitled ‘The Role of Public Relations Department on Effective Tourism Marketing: The Case of the Ministry of Tourism’. We recommend that it be submitted as fulfilling the project work requirement.

Gashaye Belew(PhD)

Name

Signature

Date

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to examine the role of public relations department on effective tourism marketing in the case of Ministry of Tourism. Most importantly, it examines the major public relations roles played in the ministry on tourism promotion and the activities that the department does. To investigate the results of the study, a qualitative methodology was used. Data was gathered through interviewing staff at the Ministry of Tourism, observing various kinds of activities, conducting focus group discussions, and analyzing documents/ through content analysis/ and data is analyzed through word description. Finally, the study found out that public relations and communications department has great role in tourism promoting. It does supportive tasks and contributes a lot to the marketing and promotion of tourism. However, more needs to be done to make the promotional function of the public relations office visible. There are communication channels, tools, and social media like Tv, radio, prints, You Tube, facebook, telegram, websites and others to promote Ethiopian tourism. The department has also technical roles of writing, editing, making publications, and creating image; and managerial roles of managing social media, making decisions, etc. The study recommends that the public relations and communication department be busy since the manpower of the department is small and more budget is necessary for this department to perform its tasks better.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

No formal organisation is an island; claim Lamb and McKee (2005:1). Each one has its own internal social network and operates inside a framework of interlinked systems for connections with important stakeholders, including rival businesses, customers, sponsors, authorities, and the media. Therefore, Lamb and McKee (2005:1) contend that public relations is a crucial component of an organisation and that its successful application is inextricably linked to the tourism and travel industry of the organisation. In turn, it provides the business with a mechanism to efficiently observe, interact with, and react to other important groups functioning inside the organisational environment. Public relations is the term used to describe the communication and actions used by an organisation to help forge and maintain relationships that are beneficial to both the organisation and the organisations it depends on. Public relations, as a subsystem inside an organisation, considerably contributes to the accomplishment of a company's overall aims and objectives.

The government of Ethiopia, with the Ministry of Tourism, is in charge of studying, maintaining, advancing, and publicising Ethiopian culture and its people's tourism destinations both domestically and abroad. According to the annual plan of the Ministry, one of the Ministry's goal is to build up positive perceptions of Ethiopia in order to add sustainable socio economic and political values with the help of the general public and stakeholder participation. Its mission is to research, preserve, develop, and promote the cultural wealth and national tourism attractions of Ethiopia's nations, nationalities, and peoples. It is in charge of fostering sustainable socioeconomic and political principles with the help of the general public and other stakeholders, as well as developing and marketing Ethiopian tourism. To hasten the development of the tourism industry, it also creates and implements sector specific policies, strategies, and regulatory frameworks. In order to create destinations and diversify attractions, it also engages in resource identification and mapping for the tourism industry. This is done with the ultimate goal of ensuring competitiveness.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is divided into two ministries. These are the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Culture and Sports. The main role of the organisation was to promote culture, values, and assets, as well as tourism in general. There were departments for

public relations (publication team, audiovisual team, and communication team), marketing, cultural values, and assets. Each department works cooperatively with the others.

When the Ministry of Tourism was in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Public Relations Department used to do promotional activities for cultures, values, and assets and tourism in general with other departments. This interchangeable and overlapping function between public relations', marketing's, and communications' departments has led to the collaboration and incorporation of public relations into these departments. But now, the Public Relations and Communication Department in the Ministry of Tourism does not do promotional tasks directly; which means, the task of promotional activity is being done by department of Promotion. It does supportive tasks for the marketing and promoting department. The reason for this is that it is the marketing department that performs promotional activities.

1.2 Definition of Tourism

Even though tourism is not the central idea of this study, having some definitions of it is good. In addition, to understand in detail the activities of public relations in the tourism sector, it is better to define what tourism is. According to the World Tourism Organisation (2014), tourism refers to the actions of people who travel to and stay in locations outside of their normal surroundings for up to one year in a row for pleasure, business, or other reasons. In a different perspective, Mathieson and Wall (1982) define tourism as the transient travel to locations other than one's usual residence and place of employment, as well as the activities carried out while there and the establishment of infrastructure to meet the demands of visitors. Jafari (1991) held the opinion that tourism is a study of a man away from his or her usual habitat, of the industry that responds to his or her needs, and of the impacts that both he or she and the industry have. According to Malntosh et al. (1995), tourism is the sum of all the phenomena and relationships that result from visitors interacting with host governments, host communities, business suppliers, and host tourists.

In order to be able to talk about the role and importance of applying public relations in the marketing of a tourist destination, the concept should first be defined.

Marketing for a traditional product is different from marketing for tourism. Mill and Morrison state: "What is sold is a non-material experience, not material goods that may be tested before use." These non-material assets and tourist destination sites should be highly promoted, preserved, and introduced both domestically and internationally. Ethiopia is rich in various kinds of tourist destinations, culture, intangible assets, and values. All these destinations and assets need high promotion to attract tourists.

This research is going to investigate the roles of public relations departments and whether they are playing their roles or not by promoting or doing supportive tasks.

The Ministry of Tourism in Ethiopia has significant value in advertising, promoting, and introducing each tourist destination and cultural asset of Ethiopia. To do this, the sector needs to assess how to promote, where to promote, and to whom to promote in order to understand their role further.

1.3 Promotion of tourism

Promotion is used to communicate with clients about product options, according to Rowley (1998). It is a way of communication between service seekers and service providers in tourism to increase service awareness and sales. Companies communicate with clients about their product offerings through promotion. Kotler and Armstrong (2004) define promotional techniques as any methods used by a business to explain the advantages and merits of its goods and influence potential customers to make purchases.

According to Lazer (1971), who emphasises the traditional marketing point of view, the company's strategy to address the marketing communication process which necessitates interaction between two or more individuals or groups and includes senders, messages, mediums, and receivers is promotion. In agreement with Lazer, Dibb et al. (1994) assert that the goal of promotion is to make sure that clients are aware of the products that the company makes available to them. Similar to this development, promotion has been described as the art of piquing consumers' interest in what a company has to offer in the marketplace (Hingston, 2001).

In general, 'tourism promotion' refers to activities and investments intended to boost domestic and international travel and convention business, including, but not limited to, 'promotion,' 'branding,' 'advertising,' 'publicising,' and 'marketing,' as well as the creation and dissemination of information with the aim of enticing and welcoming visitors, tourists, and travellers to the nation.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Tourism in Ethiopia is one of the five development goals, but it is not being done as it is one of the development goals or a foreign currency source. Ethiopia has abundant natural tourist attractions, including nine World Heritage Sites, and good cultural values and assets, but the Ministry of Tourism is still not promoting them worldwide. According to Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2009), the Ministry of Tourism is still struggling to attract tourists, but there are not many tourists to

visit and the majority of visitors fly across Ethiopia to destinations like Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa, just to mention a few. Accordingly, not much attention has been given to tourism promotion in Ethiopia in terms of the role of Public Relations. There are lots of destinations and tourist attraction sites in Ethiopia but most tourists lack sufficient information about tourist attractions. Tourism sector of Ethiopia needs high promotion strategy in order to attract tourists. Promoting destinations and tourism, public relations and communications department plays its role by releasing various kinds of messages through printed and social media.

Countries that have fewer tourist destinations than Ethiopia are more beneficial due to their high investment in promotion. For instance, Rwanda does not have as many travel destinations as Ethiopia, but they just advertise their tourism in the English Premier League and paid \$40 million on the North London team Arsenal ("visit Rwanda"). However, following the advertising, Rwanda's tourism sector grew right away and the country made a sizable profit. Because there aren't any of these kinds of worldwide tourism advertising, Ethiopian tourism is not as advanced as it may be. Public relations is essential to an organization's and a tourism institution's communications and marketing efforts. The primary strategy for marketing and communication in the travel and tourism sector is public relations.

Even though public relations professionals in the Ministry of Tourism are recruited to promote and create a good image of Ethiopian tourism, the sector is not being developed or more tourists are not coming to Ethiopia. This is the reason this research is going to be conducted. The main objective of this study is to know the main roles of the Public Relations Department and check whether they are clearly playing their role to promote Ethiopian tourism or not. In addition, the study also assessed what communication tools public relations professionals are using to promote Ethiopian tourism. After the assessment, the reason why Ethiopian tourism is not developed is elaborated clearly. The findings that are elaborated on in Chapter 4 are significant for employees of the tourism sector, researchers, and even domestic and international tourists.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1.5.1 General objective of the study

The general objective of this study is to examine the role of the public relations department in effective tourism marketing: the case of the Ministry of Tourism (Ethiopia).

1.5.2 The specific objectives of the study are:

□□To examine the major public relations activities in the Ministry of Tourism on marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism.

1. □□To assess the roles of public relations practitioners in the Ministry of Tourism in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism.

□□To assess whether public relations practitioners are playing their role properly or not in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism.

□□To identify the actual performance of public relations and communications department and the concept of theoretical part.

1.6 Basic Research Questions

The following basic research questions are answered based on public relations practitioners' roles in the promotion of Ethiopian tourism. The study is expected to answer the following research questions:

- □What are the major public relations' activities practised in the Ministry of Tourism for marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism?
- □What are the roles of public relations practitioners in the Ministry of Tourism in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism?
- □Do public relations practitioners play their role effectively in promoting and marketing Ethiopian tourism?
- □The researcher would also like to investigate the actual performance of the public relations and communications department on promotion of Ethiopian tourism.

1.7 Significance of the study

The outcome of the study might be helpful in the following ways.

- It would help to identify the Ministry of Tourism's public relations' activities for marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism. In doing so, the top management, public relations officers, and other stakeholders work together in order to fill the limitations accordingly and improve their practises on marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism.
- It provides information about the role of public relations in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism. As a result, the sector can sort out the gaps that are observed in public

relations, have a discussion about them, and make improvements to the role of public

relations in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism.

- It also would help to know the communication tools of public relations practitioners to promote Ethiopian tourism. Here, they can assess whether they are using the proper communication tool or not and improve if they are not using the right communication tool.
- It might also be helpful to other researchers, public relations officers, journalism, and communication students who are studying in this area as reference material.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

It would have been better to collect data from a number of organisations for the sake of ensuring the validity and reliability of the research results. But the research is confined to the Ministry of Tourism in Ethiopia. The first reason for the confinement of the place is that the Ministry of Tourism can be a representative of well-organised public relations offices and officers in government organisations in Ethiopia. The other reason is time and resource constraints.

1.9 Limitation of the study

Time and financial constraints may be some of the limitations of this study, which might impact the validity and reliability of the research findings. The other limitation of the study is the minimal experience of the researcher in conducting full-fledged research. A shortage of resources is also another limitation of the research.

1.10 Organization of the study

This study is made up of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction. It deals with the introduction, the background of the study, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the research questions, and the organisation of the study. The second chapter deals with the review of the relevant literature as well as the theoretical review and framework. Chapter three discusses the methodology. It begins with an introduction, research methods, sampling approach, target sample method, and data collection method.

To establish the role of communication in the promotion of paragliding data analysis, ethical considerations encountered, and an outcome, these will be reached through conducting investigations using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, and observation. The fourth chapter looks at conversations, data interpretation, and analysis. The debates and, if necessary, the formulation of recommendations are covered in the last chapter. The areas for more investigation are also covered in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

The ideas of public relations and tourism are presented in the literature review in an effort to set the scene for the investigation. The definition of tourism and problems with public relations' marketing of tourism are highlighted in this section. Due to the small body of knowledge that public relations has regarding tourism in Ethiopia, the dissertation looked at the construct from a variety of disciplinary angles.

Since there is a correlation between theory and practise of public relations in Ethiopia's tourism sector, the study has made an effort to include theoretical reviews. On the one hand, marketing continues to have conceptual sway over this industry, and all the theories, models, and concepts of public relations have been established and used.

Public relations, on the other hand, are a common practise in the sector. In the tourism sector, public relations is the main form of promotion and communication. The reason for this association is that the public relations function is appropriated by and subordinated to marketing in the tourism marketing model, which pioneered the industry's promotional activities and is still used today. Even though the departments of public relations and communication and marketing and promotion are highly related, specialists in the field are still struggling to draw a definite boundary between the many communicative disciplines (Huertas, 2018).

2.1 Definitions of Public Relations

Although many academics have defined public relations, they have not all come to the same conclusion. It is true that there are literally hundreds of different ways to define public relations. Therefore, organisations should carefully consider these definitions in order to choose one that best captures their organisation's vision, mission, objectives, and core values. According to Wilcox and Cameron (2009:5), individuals frequently associate public relations with some of its more obvious methods and strategies, such as newspaper advertisements, television appearances by celebrities, or spokesperson interviews for organisations. What many don't realise is that

public relations is a process with numerous nuanced and extensive facets.

Public relations professionals, according to Wilcox and Cameron (2009:5), work as a bridge between an organisation and all of its constituents. Theaker (2004:6) goes on to say that the discipline of public relations is concerned with the reputation of businesses (or other goods, services, or people) in order to foster understanding and support.

Foreigners believed that there was fighting in all regions and locations of Ethiopia during the federal state of Ethiopia and TPLF conflict; however, the Ministry of Tourism's public relations department did not provide its reputation for such incorrect perceptions. As a result, Wilcox and Cameron (2009:6) emphasise that there are important terms to remember in the definitions given above, including deliberate, planned, publics and stakeholders, and management. Deliberate suggests that public relations efforts are deliberate. They are made with the intention of persuading, comprehending, educating, and getting feedback from individuals who will be impacted by the activities. Plans suggest that public relations efforts are coordinated. As a result, operations are spread out over time, and problems are solved while also considering logistics. It requires inquiry and analysis because it is methodical. All those impacted by the operations are referred to as the public or stakeholders. Activities involving public relations should benefit both publics.

According to management, public relations is most successful when it is a key component of senior management's decision-making. Public relations is not simply about disseminating information after a decision has been made; it also involves high-level problem-solving and counselling. Depending on the scholars' viewpoints on the role of public relations in various paradigms, the definitions may change. Some academics attribute the increased focus on public accountability and social responsibility among government officials and company executives to public relations.

Others stress the relevance of the function in increasing an organisation's receptivity to public concerns and acceptance of its corporate social responsibility. Every organisation aspires to build and maintain connections with those deemed crucial to their existence and development. Despite being taken for granted, it is important to take some definitions into account.

According to Cultip, Centre, and Broom (2000), the management role of public relations is to create and preserve relationships between a company and the general public that are mutually beneficial. In addition, according to Wilcox et al. (2000), 'public relations is the art and social

science of assessing trends, foreseeing their effects, counselling organisational leaders, and implementing planned programmes that will serve both the organisation and the public interest' (p. 6). Public relations, in the opinion of Van Heerden (2004), is also viewed as a way of assisting organisations in anticipating and responding to public perceptions and opinions, new values and lifestyles, power shifts among the electorate and within the legislative bodies, as well as other changes in the social and political environment. Wamsler (2006) emphasises that public relations has an impact on society in this regard.

Public relations, according to L'Etang (1996), contains a number of essential concepts and saves us from having to read hundreds of definitions by describing what PR actually accomplishes rather than what it is or ought to be. Along with that, he added that definitions of public relations were frequently 'made in an attempt to be all things to all people at the same time.' Public relations, according to Wilcox et al. (2003), is the art and social science of determining trends, anticipating Research, analysis, programming, communication, and responses from various audiences are all part of public relations. Its practitioners work at two different levels: as both technicians who create and distribute messages across many media channels and as advisors to their clients or the senior management of an organisation. Therefore, public relations is a special management function that helps to establish and maintain channels of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organisation and its publics; it involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to remain informed about and responsive to public opinion; emphasizes management's duty to serve the public interest; and helps management to stay current with and utilize social media effectively.

We could describe some fundamental roles of public relations in the definitions above. In order to achieve this, Harlow defined public relations as a separate management function that assists in establishing and maintaining mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organisation and its publics; manages problems or issues; helps management stay informed about and responsive to public opinions; emphasizes management's duty to serve the interests of the public. Furthermore, 'public relations is the management function that creates and maintains relationships between a business and the public on which its success or failure rests' (Broom, 2009, p. 7).

According to this concept, managing public relations is a management responsibility that must be taken care of in every organisation. The establishment and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their audiences is identified as the moral and ethical

foundation of the field. Finally, it offers standards for defining what constitutes public relations and what does not. Public relations is a particular kind of communication that has particular uses in the tourism industry. Creating a recognisable public image is one of the key goals of this communication technique. Since everyone must work together to promote tourism, this goal is crucial for the industry, especially when it comes to promoting Ethiopian cultural values, assets, and tourism in general.

Although public relations as an element of tourism marketing management plays a significant role on both the international and national levels, there is still a lack of study on this crucial aspect of promotional marketing. Only a very tiny number of manuals and articles on public relations in tourism are discovered in the extremely thorough and voluminous literature on the subject, and there are no scholarly publications or textbooks on the topic. Public relations is discussed as a component of marketing and promotion in magazines that specialise in tourism marketing.

2.2. A relational perspective on public relations

Public relations professionals, according to Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (2000: 51), should concentrate on researching and comprehending organisational linkages. According to Grunig (2006: 158), the majority of recent research in public relations has been centred on organisational public relations, and he thinks that this is an obvious sign of the field's future growth. According to Ledingham (2003: 183), it would be difficult to overestimate the significance of the relational idea of public relations organisational linkages. According to Grunig (2006: 158), the majority of recent research in public relations has been centred on organisational public relations, and he thinks that this is an obvious sign of the field's future growth. According to Ledingham (2003: 183), it would be difficult to overestimate the significance of the relational idea of public relations. The many connections an organisation has with important players in its surroundings have an impact on its goals and direction. Because of this, Dozier (1995), cited in Ledingham (2003: 83), suggests that the relational perspective of public relations proposes that the primary goal of public relations professionals in the organisation is to develop enduring relationships with significant stakeholders in the organization's environment. In order to balance the interests of the organisation and the general public and achieve mutual benefit, these interactions should be handled.

Public relations serves the objective of balancing the interests of organisations and their publics through the management of relationships, according to Rensburg and Cant (2009: 52). Public affairs, community relations, problem management, crisis management, and media relations are

just a few of the contexts and roles in which this relational perspective of public relations has been examined.

According to Heath (2006:99), in the current tumultuous climate, where successful organisational partnerships depend on strong public relations, quality relationships are also essential for successful organisations. The public relations function contributes to organisational performance, according to Thomlison (2000: 178), when it successfully handles long-term, strategic linkages that foster organisation success by: fostering innovation, promoting mutual benefit for the firm and its stakeholders, promoting informed decision-making, and giving the organisation a competitive advantage as an intangible asset.

According to Vervic, who is cited by Heath (2006: 101), what sets apart communication and public relations managers from other managers is that they bring a unique focus on larger societal concerns and solutions to boardroom difficulties. In a relational view of public relations, where important relationships with stakeholders in the organisation's surroundings are managed, this point of view serves as the cornerstone. In order to identify strategic publics as part of the strategic management process and develop strong, long-lasting connections with them through symmetrical communication, public relations must be organised in this way. Because of this, public relations must have a strategic mission with the main objective of creating long-lasting, win-win relationships with important stakeholders.

Additionally, according to Grunig (2006: 160), it is essential that communication managers represent public relations in the organisation's dominant coalition, where they can provide a special concern for broader social concerns or challenges. According to Rensburg and Cant (2009: 53), the candidate responsible for organisational connections must speak for members of the coalition that is in power and must continually evaluate how organisational actions will affect important interpersonal relationships. These links with corporate strategy could be made by this organisational communication role, incorporating it into the "larger picture." Given this, good public relations must be earned rather than purchased. Instead of being a one-time event, public relations is a continuous process that may take years to produce results.

After World War II, public relations was acknowledged in South Africa as a serious profession. It's a significant factor in corporate life today. Centre et al.'s assertion that historically the function has changed from one-way information transfer to a two-way concept of sending

messages and receiving feedback to the current idea of an organisation adjusting in harmony with the public on whom it depends serves to support this. According to Seitel (2004: 32), the combination of four significant socioeconomic factors has led to the development of public relations.

- The expansion of global democracy;
- The rise of powerful institutions and their awareness of their duty to the public;
- The rise in social change, conflict, and confrontation among interest groups; and
- The increased awareness of people brought on by more advanced communication technology.

This means that everyone involved in public relations has a duty to lead all initiatives inside an organisation.

According to Wilcox and Cameron (2006:63), the theoretical model of public relations communication developed by professors James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt is "possibly the most frequently discussed theoretical model of public relations communication." Four approaches for defining public relations communication were put forth by Grunig and Hunt. These four models, according to L'etang and Pieczka (2006:13), describe how public relations practitioners carry out their programmes. These models include the public information model, the two-way asymmetric model, the press agency model, and the two-way symmetric model.

2.2.1 The press agency/ publicity

In the press/publicity agency model, Tench and Yeomans (2006:269) emphasise that public relations acts as a propaganda function. Practitioners frequently use inaccurate, skewed, or partial information to propagate the faith of the collaborating group. According to Wilcox and Cameron (2006:63), this is essentially one-way communication in which signals are conveyed from a source to a receiver with the specific goal of moving the recipient to take a particular course of action. Such a strategy is most often related to "propaganda," the unquestioning distribution of ideas intended to win the public over to a particular point of view or course of action. Additionally, Lubbe and Puth (2002:8) contend that this paradigm characterises public relations as being a little more than a publicity function that aims to gain media attention. This paradigm promotes a one-way flow of information to the public because it exists only to support a person, a business, or a product.

2.2.2 The public information model

Another one-way communication approach, this one intended to enlighten rather than necessarily

persuade. In this paradigm, the public relations professional conveys factual information meant to inform the general audience. This approach, according to Seitel (2004:56), concentrates on the technical function of public relations. Here, the public relations professional's job is to report information about the company in an unbiased manner.

2.2.3 The two-way asymmetric model

According to Wilcox and Cameron (2006:63), the goal of communication is scientific persuasion, and it is two-way with unbalanced effects. Although the model features a feedback loop, its main objective is to aid communicators in understanding their audiences and how to influence them. According to Tench and Yeomans (2006: 147), this is a two-way communication with the goal of persuasion. It entails the traditional public relations functions of research, objective setting, communicating, and evaluation to determine whether the communication successfully changed attitudes and opinions. Asymmetric two-way communicators use what they have learned to persuade audiences to agree with their organisation's stance.

2.2.4 The two-way symmetric model

According to Lattimore et al. (2004:58), the two-way symmetrical model characterises public relations activities as the use of communication to enhance understanding with strategic publics. According to Seitel (2004:56), the two-way symmetric model is different from the two-way asymmetric model in that the goal is mutual understanding rather than persuasion. This makes the strategy more symmetrical and "balanced," with the public relations communicator acting as a liaison between the organisation and the public. All four models are employed in public relations work, although Wilcox and Cameron (2006: 63) note that it is always preferable to pursue two-way communication when trying to convince or inform. In other words, feedback is essential for genuine comprehension. According to Rensburg and Cant (2009: 28), a public relations department's primary responsibility in an organisation is to communicate with stakeholders. Public relations now plays a bigger role in society. The goal of public relations is to create and maintain a favourable perception of an organisation among its target audiences.

2.3 The roles and functions of public relations

Public relations now plays a crucial role both in private and governmental organisations. Even though public relations was not born yesterday, it is now more digitalized and more important.

Seitel (2001: 25) contends that although modern public relations was initially used as a weapon in American power struggles, its function in contemporary society is now very different because we live in a complex society and are dealing with an explosion of knowledge that is fueled by cutting-edge technology, which alters the function of public relations. In other words, as institutions have gotten bigger, they have had to get better at connecting with their audiences. Therefore, today's public relations professionals have the responsibility of interpreting institutions for the audiences they serve and enhancing their reputation and image.

According to Rensburg and Cant (2009: 49), public relations is not a standalone role. It is an essential component of an organisation's communication function. Almost everyone is impacted by public relations, and we all engage in it in some capacity. Public relations has grown in size and importance over the last few decades. While the primary goal of marketing and sales is to sell an organisation's products, the goal of public relations is to sell the organisation as a whole. A number of fundamental and inherent actions from the public relations perspective serve as the foundation for this perspective.

Further asserting that public relations professionals engage in a variety of tasks or responsibilities that may include:

- **Research:** Any endeavour must start with intelligence gathering in order to comprehend the case's aspects. What are the main publics' beliefs and behaviours? Who are the influential opinion leaders? Which organisations or individuals are motivated to take action? In order to create programmes that are sensitive to audiences and problem situations, this requires obtaining information on public opinion, trends, emerging issues, the political climate, media coverage, the concerns of consumer and environmental special-interest groups, etc. Research "also entails monitoring programme implementation and measuring programme impact to evaluate programme effectiveness," claim Cutlip, Centre, and Broom (2000: 36).

- **Strategic planning:** A strategy must be developed based on the facts and the situation. You need to question, "Where are we now?" to do this. What is our origin? Where are we trying to get to? How will we get there? According to Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, and Agee (2004:7), planning and advising generally include collaborating with management or clients to find solutions to issues.

- **Counseling:** The plan must be clear to other management, who must also agree that it should be carried out. They might participate in implementation and, at the very least, will have to inform their staff of it.

- **Internal education:** Internal education: Employees must be made aware of the plan and their roles within it.
- **Communication and Action:** The strategy must be implemented. The many publics involved are issued messages or appeals, activities or actions are staged, comments must be analysed, and everyone must be kept updated as the project progresses.
 - **Evaluation:** Another type of research is evaluation, which charts effectiveness, or lack of it, and very likely will result in a new plan.
- **Media relations and placement:** One of the main duties that practitioners might perform is this. It comprises contacting the news media, magazines, independent authors, and trade journals to urge them to publish or broadcast news and features about the organisation, according to Johnston and Zawawi (2004:259). Additionally, it might entail serving as the organisation's spokeswoman and responding to information requests from the media. Last but not least, it can entail making arrangements for the creation, scheduling, placement, or broadcast of corporate commercials used as part of a PR effort. Because the results of media relations can be seen in the media every day, it is one of the most well-known aspects of public relations.
- **Organising:** According to Cutlip et al. (2000: 36), public relations professionals are capable of managing a wide range of events, including media conferences, conventions, and exhibitions, as well as open houses, anniversary celebrations, fund-raising activities, competitions, awards ceremonies, and sponsorships.
- **Writing:** Practitioners of public relations should be proficient in writing corporate advertisements, product information, technical documents, correspondence, reports, booklets, radio and television copy, film scripts, trade papers, and magazine articles. Seitel (2004:10) notes that this is a crucial aspect of public relations that aims to reach target audiences through textual communication.
- **Editing:** Practitioners are involved in editing shareholder reports, employee newsletters, special publications, and other communications aimed at internal and external audiences, in addition to conducting research and authoring special features.
- **Production:** The production process is complex and difficult. It entails developing communication using multimedia knowledge and skills, including art, photography, and design for brochures, booklets, reports, corporate advertisements, and sporadic publications. It also involves recording and editing audio and video tapes, as well as creating audiovisual presentations.
- **Speaking:** The public relations professional either addresses gatherings themselves or makes arrangements for others to do so. The process of obtaining information, according to Skinner et al. (2004:12), enables organisations to create programmes in response to the public and problem situations, to monitor their effectiveness during execution, and to assess their overall impact.

- **Training:** This includes assisting executives and other organisational representatives in getting ready for media interactions, speeches, and other public appearances. Additionally, practitioners might help with in-service staff development.
- **Management:** Another very important duty is the management of the public relations function with regard to personnel, budget, and action programmes.

According to Davis (2004:21), public relations in organisations refers to the routine daily information interchange that is used to manage all corporate communication, including marketing efforts. The field of public relations is quite complex and has many different tasks. The tasks and responsibilities of public relations are significant because they outline the duties of a public relations practitioner. Public relations, according to Ravindran (2000:2), play a significant role in raising awareness and backing for a certain cause or event. In essence, public relations aids in defining and explaining mutually beneficial connections between organisations and their major stakeholders, including both their staff and their clients or customers. This suggests that public relations may manage connections between an organisation and its stakeholders and ensure open communication among the various stakeholders within the organisation.

According to Ströh (2007:1), public relations should serve as the overarching function that coordinates communication between an organisation and its audiences in order to foster and strengthen positive connections that are advantageous to all parties. As a result, since relationships are important to the role of public relations, they can be considered one of the most crucial components of a successful organisation.

By focusing on building relationships with the public in order to promote social and economic development, public relations also plays a role in society by assisting organisations in surviving in their social surroundings. According to Wilcox et al. (2009:7), public relations also serves operational, reflective, and educational functions inside an organisation in addition to its administrative responsibilities. The operational position is in charge of creating communication channels for the organisation to use in developing its communication plans. This position focuses solely on the execution and assessment of the communication process, and it is also concerned with communication plans created by others.

By focusing on building relationships with the public in order to promote social and economic development, public relations also plays a role in society by assisting organisations in surviving in their social surroundings. Integral elements of public relations include communication,

relationship-building, participation in strategic management, and the understanding that communication is a crucial management function that supports all other management activities.

Together, public relations and marketing create relationships with consumers, clients, distributors, and other marketing parties through initiatives including sponsorships, brand development, image management, and media relations. It is critical to emphasise that public relations plays a considerably more significant role than simply serving as a support system for these activities. In order to ensure that communication prevails throughout all organisational subsystems, this position entails developing and maintaining relationships. A successful connection is comprised of "knowledge, influence, benefit, and behaviour," according to Thomlison (2000: 178). Relationship management is defined as "the formation, maintenance, expansion, and fostering of mutually beneficial connections between organisations and their relevant publics" in the context of public relations.

A transactional approach is also offered by public relations, which creates a "dynamic, process-oriented, meaning-creating interaction between the two participating parties. So, "establishing dialogic communication" is its main goal. According to Wilcox and Cameron (2006:26), it is useless to try to categorise public relations professionals into a single personality type because the industry is so diverse and requires individuals with a range of personalities. Numerous practitioners interact directly with clients and members of the public on a regular basis. Others spend most of their time at desks, planning, writing, and conducting research. No matter what line of work they are in, Wilcox and Cameron further advise public relations practitioners to gain knowledge and skills in the following five fundamental areas: Skills in writing, research, planning, problem-solving, and business/economics are also required.

According to Centre et al. (2008: 51), basic public relations work is involved in many aspects of an organisation's community relationships; as a result, with the dynamics of change, public relations work is becoming less concerned with the "routine" and more concerned with the unusual: dealing with calamities, crises, and governmental regulations as they affect the local community or as they become applicable nationwide. According to Tench and Yeomans (2006:29), there are two key functions in public relations: The communication manager advises management, determines communication policies, and manages their execution, in addition to planning and managing public relations programmes. The communication technician implements public relations programmes, such as preparing press releases, planning events, or creating site material, but is not involved in

organisational decision-making. Since they are the "doers," technicians typically do not engage in extensive research or evaluation.

There are two more jobs that lie between the manager and technician, according to Tench and Yeomans (2006:29). The first position is in media relations, a highly trained position that requires in-depth media knowledge and comprehension. This important role involves sophisticated media demands in addition to the simple broadcast of messages. The second function is that of communication and liaison, which designates the person who represents the company at gatherings and meetings and finds ways for management to interact with both internal and external audiences. The lines between manager and technician responsibilities are classified, although they are not rigidly drawn. The argument is that one position will tend to predominate, despite the fact that the majority of public relations professionals combine manager and technician tasks. There is a tone of variability within these professions, as Steyn and Puth (2000:20–21) confirm. A technician hired for their writing abilities may work on a variety of projects, such as writing press releases, speeches, or content for the web, or they may focus on one task, like publishing internal journals.

If the communication manager works for a major corporate organisation, they might just be in charge of one specialised area, like investor or government relations, rather than the entire public relations programme. There is a lot of misconception about who performs what in public relations, according to Tench and Yeomans (2006:38). However, the absence of a consensus definition continues to be a challenge for the profession. Some of the wordy definitions still make it difficult to understand what the field stands for and what experts do. These responsibilities outline the routine tasks that practitioners carry out.

Organisations define expectations for the people who make up the organisation through these roles. It is clear from the information above that public relations is essential to an organisation's operation. According to Grunig (2006:151), public relations increases an organisation's effectiveness when it recognises key stakeholders in the environment and then creates communication plans to establish enduring, reliable connections with them. Public relations' roles and responsibilities have been well defined, but some organisations are still having trouble positioning the discipline since there is still a disconnect between its duties and those of marketing. To represent the different perspectives on the two disciplines' functions and positions within an organisation, it is crucial to draw a separation between them.

2.4 Locating public relations within organizations

Apart from external and internal factors, according to Tench and Yeomans (2006: 27–28), the placement of public relations within an organisation also depends on a number of other variables, including the position of the discipline's most senior practitioner, the tasks assigned to it, and its placement in relation to other disciplines. A fair measure of how the function is considered within organisations is the position of the senior public relations practitioner.

According to Seitel (2004:88), decentralisation and downsizing have a negative impact on public relations in many corporate organisations. Due to this, departments that were formerly quite huge have shrunk and been replaced with smaller ones. This has also raised the issue of how best to set up an organisation's public relations department. According to Skinner et al. (2004:6), public relations is understood to be and must be a management role. This clearly refers to advanced public relations conducted by seasoned professionals. The environment, strategy, organisation, and people are the four perspectives used to describe the role of public relations in strategic management within organisations.

- **The environment:** The traditional understanding of public relations is that it entails a more or less one-way flow of information from the organisation to the outside world and is largely focused on connecting with the organisation's external publics. According to Lubbe and Puth (2004:20), public relations plays a significant role in gathering pertinent information from the outside and analysing and interpreting it as a management function.
- **Strategy:** No useful tactics can be developed without the public relations department's knowledge of environmental trends and developments. According to Grunig (2006: 151), public relations must assist in defining the target audiences that the organisation wants to reach as well as creating and implementing communication strategies to do so.
- **Organisation:** Environmental information is interpreted and distributed within the organisation through public relations. It focuses on delivering corporate messages to its target audiences outside the company. Theaker (2004:48) asserts that "management must acknowledge the importance of public relations in environmental analysis and strategy planning in order for public relations' external communication functions to be relevant." A key instrument for strategic management in establishing and preserving an organisation's reputation is public relations.

- **People:** One of the key success factors that may be used to gauge management effectiveness is the workforce. Communication with employees is one of the target groups that an organisation tries to engage as part of its overall public relations strategy, according to Lubbe and Puth (2004:20). According to Seitel (2004:74), as a management function, public relations is able to: continuously assess internal and external opinions, attitudes, and needs; provide management with advice regarding their potential effects; and serve as a tool for enacting policy changes and guiding new courses of action.

According to Wilcox and Cameron (2006:98), executives are beginning to view public relations as a process of negotiation and compromise with a number of important publics rather than as publicity and one-way communication in a changing environment and in the face of a range of challenges. Top-level management in many organisations views public relations as largely a journalistic and technical responsibility (media relations and publicity). Public relations are frequently viewed as only a marketing department support function in large, mechanical organisations with low levels of complexity. The responsibility of the public relations departments and their ability to influence management decisions are both significantly constrained by such perceptions held by senior management. Instead, public relations is relegated to a tactical function, simply preparing messages without input on what should be communicated.

According to Skinner et al. (2004:7), public relations managers must be positioned at management level in order to be responsible to top management and service all organisational departments if they are to be effective. Public relations benefits organisations by supporting them in making decisions, carrying out tasks more successfully, and fostering a mutual understanding between the organisation and its surroundings. Public relations, according to Seitel (2004:75), ought to be the company's conscience.

Public relations specialists should have adequate freedom within an organisation to communicate openly and honestly with management. Organisations employ a broad range of names for the function of public relations, including the department where it is headquartered. Ironically, corporate communication appears to be the preferred term today as opposed to the traditional term "public relations."

According to Cutlip et al. (2000:36–37), many internal departments mix functional and task teams. Public relations professionals and departments work with all other departments in an organisation because they are a support function, providing assistance and counsel as needed.

According to Wilcox and Cameron (2006:99), the function of public relations in an organisation frequently depends on the nature of the organisation, the attitudes of senior management, and even the skills of the public relations executives.

Public relations and marketing are two different but related roles that some organisations may regard as separate from one another. Therefore, it is clear that the distinction between public relations and marketing is highly hazy. As a result, some organisations have a communications department that handles both marketing and public relations tasks rather than a separate public relations or marketing department. But organisations frequently run into issues when they don't distinguish between public relations as a discipline and public relations as a marketing tool.

Public relations is the function that controls the communication between an organisation and its public in order to create and enhance healthy relationships to the benefit of all parties concerned. Organisations must realise this fact in order to address these issues. Public relations is a significant, if not essential, component of any organisation, according to the literature.

Public relations strategic planning is a crucial component of management. Planning is important to earn the support of senior management as well as to understand where a particular campaign is headed. According to Seitel (2004:95), public relations is firmly regarded as a component of the management process of any well-run organisation in the twenty-first century. The organisation's overarching goals must be the direct source of public relations' objectives, aims, strategies, and techniques. Public relations techniques must be created to achieve the organisation's business goals, while public relations strategies must match the organization's strategy. In other words, public relations programmes are useless if they don't help management and the organisation achieve their objectives.

2.5 How public relations differs from marketing

Public relations and marketing are different from one another in a number of ways, according to Wilcox and Cameron (2009:17–18), even if their limits frequently overlap. They both deal with relationships within an organisation and use comparable public relations strategies; therefore, their roles often overlap. The ultimate goal of both is to ensure the success and financial survival of an organisation. However, the two professions take on this issue from a few slightly different angles or worldviews. The descriptions of each field demonstrate this variation: In order for an organisation to fulfil its objectives, public relations is a management strategy whose aim is to build and maintain consensus and constructive social behaviour. Its primary duty is to create and

maintain a welcoming environment for an organisation. Marketing is a management strategy whose objective is to draw in and keep consumers (or clients) over the long term in order to meet an organisation's financial targets. Building and maintaining markets for an organisation's goods and services is its primary duty. In other words, marketing is concerned with clients and the sale of goods and services, whereas public relations focuses on fostering relationships and developing goodwill for the organisation.

Additionally, according to Grunig et al. (2002: 280), marketing and public relations work together to establish relationships with consumers, clients, distributors, and other marketing parties through initiatives like sponsorships, corporate branding, image-building, and media relations. It is critical to emphasise that public relations plays a considerably more significant role than simply serving as a support system for these activities. In order to ensure that communication prevails throughout all organisational subsystems, this position entails developing and maintaining relationships. Public relations and marketing can have a tense connection, according to Tench and Yeomans (2006: 30). Public relations, in the eyes of many marketing professionals, is all about obtaining unpaid "publicity" in the media to help the sale of goods and services to consumers. Public relations, however, entails much more than that; it involves fostering connections with a wide range of stakeholders while utilising a variety of tools and tactics.

Public relations, with its specialties in connection development, is increasingly recognised as having a role that goes well beyond marketing communication. Seitel (2004:465) notes that marketing is, in its most basic sense, the act of promoting and selling a good or service. However, by a broad definition, public relations is the organisation's marketing. Most businesses now understand that public relations can contribute more to marketing than previously thought. In some businesses, selling specific products and the business as a whole are intimately linked. According to Belch & Belch (2007: 23), public relations is a management function that assesses public perceptions, determines which organisational policies and practises are in the public interest, and implements a plan of action to win over the public.

Marketing has been described as an organisational function and a collection of procedures for producing, disseminating, and providing value to consumers, as well as for managing customer relationships in a way that benefits the firm and its stakeholders, according to Kotler and Keller (2009:45). Choosing target markets and acquiring, retaining, and developing a client base through the creation, provision, and communication of greater customer value are considered the

art and science of marketing in this context.

According to Seitel (2004:465), the practise of public relations establishes and maintains a welcoming atmosphere in which the organisation may operate, while the practise of marketing creates and maintains a market for goods and services. Marketing presupposes that there is a "profit" in every exchange transaction and that the organisation emerges as the net winner, according to Tench and Yeomans (2006: 31). One of the fundamental principles of public relations is that relationships have value in and of themselves. This is a significant area where the two fields diverge. Grunig, Grunig, and Toth (2007: 357) contend that the marketing function should interact with the markets for an organisation's products and services, drawing a clear distinction between public relations and marketing.

All of the organisation's stakeholders should be considered in public relations. The main goal of marketing is to increase the slope of the demand curve and generate revenue for the company. By developing relationships with the public that limit or improve the organisation's ability to fulfil its objectives, public relations mostly serves to save money for the organisation. Public relations theorists, according to Wilcox and Cameron (2009: 18), highlight another crucial distinction between public relations and marketing. According to them, "good" public relations does not include persuasion; rather, it promotes cooperation and understanding between parties by engaging in a two-way conversation. By definition, marketing aims to persuade customers to buy its products and services.

According to Stroh (2007: 1–15), marketing is one of the cross-disciplines in the field of public relations; as a result, there are many theoretical and actual locations where the two fields converge. As communicators, marketers and public relations professionals share many skills, as stated by Skinner et al. (2004:43). Both work with organisational relationships and make use of related procedures, methods, and tactics. The two roles must be divided by mission and goal, though. Marketing, according to Kotler and Keller (2009: 45), is about determining and addressing societal and human needs. Marketing is a social process that allows people to create, offer, and freely exchange valuable goods and services with one another in order to fulfil their needs and wants.

According to Belch & Belch (2007: 23), it's critical to understand the differences between marketing and public relations. A company is actually doing a task known as public relations when it develops and disseminates information in a methodical manner in an effort to manage

and control its reputation and the type of press coverage it receives. The connection between the marketing and public relations departments has always been murky and unclear. Thus, it is crucial to distinguish between the two disciplines. It is important to remember once more that marketing and public relations both transmit the fundamentals of communication. The maintenance and development of harmonious connections with organisations and their audiences is the primary goal of both functions (internal and external).

2.6 Public relations in the marketing mix

Public relations and marketing are two of a company's main external duties, according to Skinner et al. (2004). Both functions begin their analysis and planning with the goal of satisfying one or more already-recognised members of the public. According to Skinner, some organisations view their exchange ties with customers as just one type of interaction among many within the organisation. Marketing is listed as a subset of the wider public relations function on their organisational charts. Other organisations prioritise "non-customer relationships" that are deemed crucial to the marketing effort while disregarding marketing as a core function. In these organisations, marketing has priority over public relations. Other businesses include "customer relations" under "public relations," making them accountable for consumer concerns that are not related to marketing, such as complaints, usage instructions, safety information, and repair services.

According to Koekemoer (2004:399), public relations and marketing are the two roles that are most frequently mixed together, with marketing typically being given greater weight than public relations. Skinner and others (2004: 46) Public relations and marketing are seen as independent entities with distinct but complementary duties in many other organisations. It follows that different organisations will engage in different public relations activities. Depending on the nature of the organisation, public relations may either support or contradict marketing efforts. According to Hutton (2001:205), the failure of public relations to "identify itself and to build sophisticated and progressive theory" or to establish its "primary tenet or core notion" has caused it to lose the competition with marketing and puts it in mortal danger.

Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier's (2002: 262) argue that a new paradigm must be created in order for marketing and public relations to operate successfully for the benefit of the organisation and the people it serves. It is clear that diverse opinions about the boundary between marketing and public relations, as well as different perceptions about the crucial responsibilities of marketing and public relations practitioners, exist across organisations.

According to Cornelissen and Lock (2000:231), some organisations promote the unification of the two disciplines, while others insist that they should continue to be distinct organisational activities. This leads to the conclusion that without a clear explanation of the function and position of these two roles within the organisation, their contribution to the overall operation and performance of the organisation would be substantially muddled and diffused. According to Heath (2006: 93), systems theory and social change theory's rhetorical roots and tenets, which inform how we interpret connections, can all be useful foundations for public relations. Systems theory provides a fantastic perspective on the function and impact that public relations has within a company. Strategically, public relations is placed at the centre of all business activities within an organisation.

2.7 Theories of Public Relations

Public relations theory examines the fundamental ideas and elements of the field, as well as how they might be used in real-world contexts.

2.7.1 The Systems Theory

According to Tench and Yeomans (2006:27), it is obvious that organisations are not free-floating entities that are unaffected by their surroundings. The environment in which they work both influences and is influenced by them. Organizations are viewed by systems theory as a collection of interconnected subsystems that interact with one another and the outside world. A system is described as "a set of things or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole" by Lubbe and Puth (2002:41). Organisations must modify and adapt as their internal environments change and as their external environments change. They are an element of a social system that interacts with people or organisations, including suppliers, local communities, workers, customers, and the government. In order to help the organisation achieve its goals, public relations exists to create and maintain positive relationships with the public. Organisations, according to Tench and Yeomans (2006:27), typically have five subsystems. These include the management subsystem, the adaptive subsystem, the disposal subsystem, and the production subsystem.

According to Tench and Yeomans (2006: 27), production subsystems create an organisation's goods or services. Workforce collaboration is encouraged throughout the organisation through maintenance subsystems. Marketing and distribution of goods and services are included in disposal subsystems. Strategic planning is one adaptive subsystem that helps the organisation adapt to its changing environment. All other subsystems are directed and controlled by management subsystems, which

also handle any competing requests that may arise. Additionally, they negotiate between the needs of the organisation's survival and the demands of the environment, such as the demand for a certain product (supply of that product). Usually, the organisation's board and senior management are in charge of this task. The systems approach is one of the most successful techniques for public relations management, claim Lubbe & Puth (2002:41). This method clarifies the role that public relations plays in the efficient running of the company. An organisation must function as an open system in order to be effective. It has been observed that an organisation that actively engages with its environment has the best chance of long-term success. According to Tench and Yeomans (2006: 27), using a systems approach reveals that public relations specialists play a function that crosses boundaries. They operate at the edges of organisations, collaborating with all internal subsystems and assisting them with external communication by offering professional guidance on what and how to communicate as well as assistance with execution. For instance, when it comes to investor relations, senior management and marketing (the disposal subsystem) may collaborate closely with public relations.

According to Seitel (2006:87), public relations professionals serve as intermediaries between an organisation's internal and external publics at the periphery of the organisation. Public relations professionals, in other words, have both inside and outside feet. Public relations professionals serve as "boundary managers" for their coworkers by facilitating cross-organisational communication both inside and outside the company. By acquiring this knowledge and developing the skills necessary to manage the complex relationships that are a part of any organisation, public relations specialists also develop into systems managers.

Systems theory serves as the foundation for Broom, Casey, and Ritchey's theoretical framework (2000: 218). They contend that all interactions and relationships are based on the interdependence of system components. In addition, because they all contribute to the comprehension of relationships, the factors of "mutuality of understanding, trust, credibility, emotion, closeness and resemblance, immediacy, and dominance-submission" should be taken into consideration. In light of this, public relations is a practise where the environment is influenced as part of the process. In addition to performing surveillance and information-distribution tasks, public relations plays a crucial role in governing and maintaining an organisation as an open system, making sure that it is always stable and able to respond to environmental changes. Organisations can sustain this contact with the help of public relations.

According to Lubbe and Puth (2002:41), the systems approach provides a framework that logically integrates the public relations process into the organisation's overall operations. An abstract

conceptual framework called the Systems Approach is a very useful tool for comprehending and using public relations. Applying the open systems approach to public relations, according to Cutlip et al. (2000:190), necessitates deliberate environmental sensing to foresee and identify changes that have an impact on organisational connections with the public. Selective sensitivity to the public that is mutually impacted or influenced by organisational policies, processes, and activities is required in public relations. Initiating corrective measures within organisations and directing programmes to influence the knowledge, predilection, and behaviour of both internal and external audiences are both possible using an open systems approach to public relations. The desired results include the upkeep or accomplishment of objectives that take into account the shared interests of organisations and their audiences. As a result, organisations using open systems of public relations preserve their relationships with their audiences by responding to rapidly shifting social, political, and economic situations. Therefore, it's crucial to develop insight and knowledge of how both environments contribute to the significance of connections. In order for organisations to develop a comprehensive strategy for communication and relationship management, emphasis should also be placed on the strategic role of public relations in organisations.

The open systems concept gives public relations the responsibility to notice changes in the organization's social contexts and advise clients or employees on how the organization should adapt itself and respond to create a "shared meeting ground," as emphasized by Lubbe and Puth (2002:41). Professionals in public relations are change managers and agents both inside and outside of their organisations.

2.7.2 The Dependency Theory

Due to their enormous financial resources and industrial leverage, tour operators are one of the most important tourism suppliers. In receiving countries, many of which resemble peripheral areas, their activities for instance, can significantly affect the occupancy rate of hotels and the spatial distribution of visitor flow (Shaw and Williams, 1994). Additionally, a large number of hotels, especially those of a high international standard, are owned or operated by multinational corporations.

Din (1990) argues, however, that not all international standard hotel chains in underdeveloped nations are owned by industrialized nations and are therefore not subject to outside control. He uses the fact that many of the upscale hotels in Penang, a popular tourist destination in Malaysia, are owned by locals as an example of this idea. These connections suggest that developing countries are

underdeveloped as a result of being exploited by industrialized countries on a different level (Britton and Harrison, 1995).

According to the dependency hypothesis, tourism is a sector of the economy that is used by industrialized nations to keep developing nations dependent on them. Through the design of its enclaves and its emphasis on traditional structures, tourism exacerbates the socioeconomic regional differences already present within developing nations (Oppermann, 1993: 411). When the theory is applied to the research, it becomes clear that the dependency theory aids in the preservation of several popular tourist destinations in Ethiopia without enhancing them. Since the tourist spots are geared towards foreign visitors, it has also made travel expensive for the nation's citizens. They therefore impose levies that the locals are unable to afford. As a result, participation declines, and more people lose interest in Ethiopia's tourism.

2.7.3 The Role Theory

According to Biddle (1986, p. 70), a role is defined as "the collection of expected behaviours engaged in while performing the job responsibilities" or as "shared, normative expectations that prescribe and explain behaviours." Academics claim that job expectations can include "preferences they may deal with what the individual should do, what sort of person he should be, what he should think or believe, and how he should relate to others with regard to certain deeds and personal qualities or styles. Job descriptions are not the only source of expectations for roles.

According to Kahn et al. (1964), a person's role set or the people who transmit role expectations include their direct superiors, subordinates, clients, vendors, intimate friends, and family members. A role set in public relations may comprise managers, employees, peers, and trade organisations. In an experiment engaging graduate and undergraduate students to investigate the client relationship experience based on diverse role enactments, Broom and Smith (1979) laid the foundation for role theory in public relations. Their study led to the development of a typology with four key roles. The positions of expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem-solving process facilitator were at a higher level (Broom & Smith, 1979). "Preparing and manufacturing communication materials" are the duties of the communication technician at the entry level, according to Broom(1982,p.18). Public relations professionals today have a dual responsibility: building relationships with internal and external target audiences as well as developing new methods in response to changes in an unstable social, cultural, environmental, and organisational framework.

According to Neil and Lee (2016), it is crucial that the roles of public relations in an organisation and an organisation in society are correctly defined in order to carry out these activities. In addition, roles are viewed in various contexts. Roles can be viewed as a collection of people's daily tasks. Because of this, Dozier and Broom (1995) classified the role of Roles can be viewed as a collection of people's daily tasks. Dozier and Broom (1995) defined the roles of public relations activities as technical and managerial in their study in light of this. Technical jobs are based on the artistic side of public relations and involve things like writing, editing, creating communication materials, preparing for media appearances, etc. In contrast, management positions concentrate on identifying issues and proposing solutions.

In conclusion, practitioners of public relations require new approaches to address organisational, social, and environmental demands simultaneously. To do this, they draw on theoretical and practical models and methodologies from a variety of disciplines, including communication, sociology, organisational behaviour, and others. Role theory can help us comprehend the many different roles that public relations professionals play. In conclusion, practitioners of public relations require new approaches to address organisational, social, and environmental demands simultaneously. To do this, they draw on theoretical and practical models and methodologies from a variety of disciplines, including communication, sociology, organisational behaviour, and others. Role theory can help us comprehend the many different roles that public relations practitioners play.

2.7.4 The Rhetoric Theory

Public relations can use rhetorical theory to understand the symbolic elements of communication. This might be said to be the core of public relations work. Despite a few brief mentions It's common knowledge that the term "rhetorical approach" first appeared in the early public relations literature in the 1980s, when Robert L. Heath suggested that rhetoric was the essence of The interaction between a company and its surroundings (Heath, 1980). Since then, Heath has maintained his position that rhetoric allows public relations to engage in an ethical and practical practise: "the good organisation communicating well" (Heath 2001, 39). Organisations can achieve legitimacy and specific objectives with the help of rhetoric. Focusing on the various interpretations, meaning zones, and stakeholders ideally, co-defining and co-creating these helps. The goal is agreement, and conflicting opinions help to make the public opinion process stronger.

2.8 Public Relations and Tourism Demand

Governments have exerted significant effort through national tourism organisations to sell their nation in the global travel industry, in addition to the expanding economic relevance of international tourism (Webster & Ivanov, 2007). Through a variety of strategies, including advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations (Dore & Crouch, 2003), national tourism organisations seek to generate demand for their destinations. These techniques enlighten travellers about a specific location and have a big impact on where they decide to go, especially when they don't know enough about that location (Kulendran & Dwyer, 2009; Lourens, 2007). Among the tactics, "public relations" is described as a strategic communication process that creates connections between corporations and their audiences that are mutually beneficial (Public Relations Society of America, 2015). Press relations, publications, corporate communications, events, reputations, and community relations are all part of public relations (Kotler et al., 2014; Presenza, Sheehan, & Ritchie, 2005). The framing theory asserts that public relations uses attribute framing by highlighting features of goods or services in communication (Hallahan, 1999). Because this attribute framing draws consumers' attention to or refocuses attention on the specific qualities of the items being advertised, public relations can affect consumer decisions (Kim, 2015). Public relations has been a crucial tool for destination promotion in the tourist industry (Hanusch, 2012), since it spreads destination knowledge and encourages consumer preference (Dore & Crouch, 2003).

The creation of press releases and press kits, as well as offering locations and financial incentives to movie and television producers, are all examples of public relations efforts. However, how promoted locations are portrayed in the media and when the general public can access these media products are hardly ever affected by these public relations initiatives. These qualities lead visitors to believe that public relations is a route of communication that is uncontrollable by tourism stakeholders and that it generates information about the industry that is comparatively objective (Lahav & Avraham, 2008). For instance, destination information from the media, which is regularly utilised in public relations campaigns, is regarded as more credible and, thus, more convincing than information that has been advertised (Loda & Coleman, 2005). Public relations efforts are transformed into useful results as a result of these impressions. Using public relations contracts that foreign governments negotiated with public relations agencies in the US and the dollar amount of the contracts, Lee and Yoon (2010) explored the relationship between country-level public relations and economic performances,

including tourist arrivals. The findings revealed a strong correlation between the number of public relations contracts and US travellers to the promoted nation.

2.9 Public Relations and Publicity

The task of getting editorial and news space in print and broadcast media to promote a good or a service is referred to as publicity (Kotler et al., 2014, p. 406). Press relations, events, and other public relations activities have all made extensive use of publicity (Kotler et al., 2014). In accordance with the agenda-building hypothesis, public relations efforts play a crucial role in setting the media's agenda by generating material for news stories (Kioussis, Laskin, & Kim, 2011). For example, organisations issue press releases, have press conferences, or perform special ceremonies for new products to provide the media with information about promoted products so that the products gain publicity.

Public relations' contribution to publicity is increasing as their importance to the agenda-setting process increases (Lahav, Mansfeld, & Avraham, 2013). According to Zawawi (2001), 37% of news pieces in three Australian newspapers were the outcome of public relations efforts, and 31% of news stories included data from press releases in their creation. Sallot and Johnson (2006) estimate that 44% of news articles in the US were created using PR materials. The media's coverage of stories and the affective tone of the stories have both enhanced the influence of PR on travel journalism (Lahav & Avraham, 2008). For instance, national tourism organisations may provide travel information and marketing guides for locations as well as public relations initiatives for journalists, such as complimentary visits to target places, to entice journalists to depict destinations favourably (Dore & Crouch, 2003; Hanusch, 2012). As a result, the connection between public relations and publicity may be crucial in describing how public relations affects demand for travel.

2.10 Publicity and Tourism Demand

It has frequently been noted in the literature on tourism that travellers typically create their mental image of a location first through the media, including news reports, movies, and books, all of which are sources that are not associated with travel promotion (Hanusch, 2010). As one of these sources, news articles play a significant role in influencing how tourists view and learn about foreign countries (Fürsich & Kavoori, 2001; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). This is because the news media are a major source of information about other countries. Additionally, information about destinations that comes from the media is regarded as being more genuine and acceptable than information that comes from advertising (Loda, Norman, & Backman, 2007).

According to Morgan and Pritchard (2005), the promotion of destination images becomes more important as perceived credibility and acceptability rise, which in turn affects consumer visit intention and recommendation intent (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008). National tourism organisations have consequently created and implemented PR campaigns to spread news articles showcasing their destination, increasing consumers' exposure to the destination's favourable information (Dore & Crouch, 2003). Destination decisions may be impacted in one of two ways by the visibility of destination information through publicity. First, more tourists may visit a destination if they are familiar with it. Through both direct and indirect experiences with the product, one might become familiar with it, which is described as the degree to which one has knowledge about a product (Seo, Kim, Oh, & Yun, 2013). Baloglu (2001) defined indirect product experiences in the context of tourism as the gathering of destination knowledge that results in informational familiarity. Particularly, as visitors learn more about popular tourist spots, they get to know the places (Baloglu, 2001; Lepp & Gibson, 2003). The likelihood that a tourist will visit a place increases when they develop a positive perception of the place and feel less risk there (Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Molina, Gómez, & Martn-Consuegra, 2010). As a result, the quantity of knowledge visitors gather about a destination tends to influence their choice of travel destination.

The association between tourism demand and media attention, a gauge of the volume of destination information, is supported by this familiarity effect. Second, the relationship between travel demand and media prominence can be examined from an attention-grabbing perspective. A tourist makes use of the attention that is available at any particular time (Hsieh & Chen, 2011). Customers are more inclined to choose things that catch their attention than those that don't, and vice versa (Barber & Odean, 2008). What is Ethiopia offering travellers? What are the queries that come to mind? What facts about Ethiopia are required in order to employ public relations to attract tourists? When will travellers have access to enough information regarding Ethiopia's hotels, security, and tourism sites?

It is simpler to promote Ethiopia's tourism through PR. In this regard, news articles about a location that are well-placed in the media may boost the possibility that the articles will grab tourists' attention and further influence their destination decisions. It is simple to see how media valence affects travel demand. More tourists visit a marketed place as a result of the positive publicity generated by PR campaigns because it reinforces positive perceptions of the destination already held by the public and/or counteracts unfavorable perceptions (Day et al., 2012). Jain and Winner (2013) looked into the connection between news stories (and their tone) about foreign nations in the US news media and US travellers' desire to visit those nations. The results demonstrated a relationship between US travel

demand for the nations and the media's focus on a positive tone. To the authors' knowledge, no study has examined the connections between the three facets of publicity and demand for travel at the same time.

2.11 Using Social Media for Public Relations in Tourism

Hotels use social media to advertise their goods and services, for public relations, to stay in touch with guests, to hear from them about their complaints or satisfaction, and to provide information about exclusive events, promotions, and special deals. Hotels that participate in social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube can connect with their customers without the use of any additional hardware or software. The virtual communities that are organised by users of social networking websites can be a target market that is easy for tourism businesses to access (Kasavana et al., 2010). Social media is being used more and more for public relations by hotels, airlines, and other businesses in the billion-dollar tourism sector. On social networking platforms like Loopt and YouTube, airlines show introductory videos and provide affordable flight costs. In any organization, using social media while travelling is possible at every level of. A traveller can do everything online, including booking accommodations and selecting dining establishments (<http://www.turizmanaliz.com>). Marriott chain hotels are among the best illustrations of this. In order to stay in touch with its consumers, Marriott Chain Hotels created a page on Facebook called Marriott Courtyard.

Five-star hotels like Hyatt and Hilton are gaining more Twitter followers. Using Twitter, a chef at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Washington communicates with his patrons to learn what they would like to see on the menu this season and what special dishes they would like to eat on particular days. Even he runs competitions, rewarding the winners with complimentary dinners (<http://www.turizmanaliz.com/>). Experts stress that using social media can help tourism businesses achieve some of their goals. In terms of public relations, according to Laboy and Torchio (2007), tourism companies will benefit significantly if they are successful in achieving these goals. These goals are:

Prestige follow-up and management: Through blogs, forums, comment websites, and other social media platforms, tourists can express their opinions about particular brands, destinations, businesses, products, and services. Tourism businesses can find out about these remarks and control their reputation (Laboy & Torchio, 2007). For instance, the Trip Advisor consumer review website was created with the belief that users could rely on it while making travel arrangements (Miguens et al.,

2008). More than 45 million travellers from around the world have left comments on Trip Advisor about their travel experiences (Trip Advisor, 2011).

Brand Reinforcement, Brand Awareness, and Customer Acquisition: Tourism users create blogs, give recommendations, make lists of destinations they want to visit, and download photos to share with other travellers on social media networks. For instance, on the Yahoo Travel website (www.travel.yahoo.com), tourists can plan their trips by choosing the places they want to visit, the hotels they want to stay in, the car they want to rent, and other goods and services. Through hyperlinks on Yahoo Travel, tourists can connect with the official websites of travel agencies, bringing in more business for agencies. Travellers who follow businesses on social media and learn more about them enhance brand recognition and reinforcement (Laboy and Torchio, 2007).

Customer Engagement, Customer Services, and Customer Profiling: Customer services made possible by Web 2.0 technologies are used on social media platforms. These consist of regularly updated local activity schedules for destinations, lodging pricing comparisons, 360-degree visual tours of locations, and similar services. Companies that offer tourism develop profiles of their clients (Laboy and Torchio, 2007). To get a greater competitive edge in the travel and tourism sectors, businesses must present their ethical applications in addition to their quality standards (Beeton, 2006). Disobeying ethical guidelines is one of the biggest issues to deal with when planning public relations activities in the tourism business. The downsides of information published on social media websites show that opinions are very subjective and that how people view the quality of a service might vary from person to person. For tourism businesses, customer pleasure is essential, and any unethical behaviour could result in permanent harm. It is crucial that tourist businesses and their partners internalise these ethical principles and apply them to their management practices.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This part of the study presents the research methodology employed in it. Its major goal is to describe the data collection methods and research techniques. It describes the stages involved in conducting the essential research, the tools used to collect the data, and the administration and coordination procedures employed with the research instrument. Every empirical study has a certain approach to gathering data (Babbie, 2009). Research methodology, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001), includes the research procedure as well as the types of tools and methods to be used. As a result, the chapter's opening section explains the study's aim and links it to the relevant research methodologies. The research design, demographics, sample, and data collection tools are then discussed.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A community of social groups, religious organisations, individuals, and the social environment all share a common set of values, beliefs, ethics, laws, assumptions, and philosophies known as a paradigm. Thomas Kuhn defined "paradigm" as the shared commitments, beliefs, values, methodologies, and perspectives that exist across a discipline (Schwandt, 2001, p. 183–4).

The general paradigms of interpretivism and constructivism are used to guide this investigation. According to constructivists, there are many realities rather than just one truth or reality. They dedicate their time to deciphering and analysing the significance of an action. Constructivism and interpretivism focus on comprehending the world through others' perspectives. The interpretativists contend that there are as many fictitious realities as there are individuals who create them, and that reality is socially constructed (Creswell, 2003; Mertens, 2009). So, reality is a mental construct that may be created by an individual or a society. Reality cannot be generalised into a single, shared reality; it is specific to the environment, space, time, and people or groups in a given circumstance. Because it is a product of social construction and is mind-dependent, constructivists hold that knowledge is a personal experience. The human experience is the source of truth. Because of this,

cultural, historical, and contextual factors influence whether a statement is true or incorrect; however, some statements may be universal. Stories, belief systems, and assertions of spiritual and earthly links made by communities find a place as valid knowledge in this setting.

For the reasons outlined above, constructivists frequently employ qualitative research techniques that emphasise offering other viewpoints, such as interviews or case studies. The goal of constructivism is to explain "why." Interpretivism contends that human behaviour is complex and defies prediction by established probability models. Other than genes, environmental factors also have an impact on it, and it can fluctuate depending on the situation. Human behaviour differs greatly from a straightforward scientific variable. The subjective nature of human behaviour is influenced by a variety of elements. Hence, interpretivism favours investigating human behaviour in the real world as opposed to a laboratory context. Each researcher has a unique understanding of what constitutes knowledge and truth. These perspectives, which social scientists refer to as paradigms, shape how we perceive the world around us and direct our thinking, beliefs, and assumptions about society and ourselves (Schwandt, 2001).

3.3 Research Approach

According to Creswell (2007: 249), the word "research strategy" refers to the complete research process, from envisioning an issue through writing the narrative, and not only the methods like data collection, analysis, and report writing. According to Yin (2003:20), a study's research approach is the logical path that connects empirical data to its initial research questions and, eventually, to its findings. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 134), qualitative research projects frequently accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- **Interpretation:** They allow a researcher to gain fresh perspectives on a particular phenomenon, develop new theories or conceptual frameworks about the phenomenon, and/or identify the issues that are present within the phenomenon.
- **Description:** They can reveal the nature of particular situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems, or people.
- **Verification:** They enable a researcher to examine the truthfulness of specific hypotheses, assertions, theories, or generalisations in the context of actual situations; and

- **Evaluation:** They give a researcher a way to assess the efficacy of distinct policies, methods, or innovations.

According to Bergman (2008:11), qualitative researchers emphasise the social construction of reality, the close bond between the researcher and the subject under study, and the limits imposed by the environment on the research. Such research highlights how value-laden inquiry is. They look for responses to queries that emphasise how social experience is produced and given meaning. In general, qualitative research explores people's environments and behaviours in narrative or descriptive ways that more accurately reflect the circumstances as they were for the participants.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), who were cited by Welman et al. (2005:8), qualitative research deals with subjective data generated by respondents' or interviewees' brains. The researcher is attempting to comprehend the importance that respondents give to their environment in this instance. Creswell (2007: 249) goes on to state that qualitative research is an understanding-seeking process built on a unique methodological tradition of inquiry that looks at a social or human problem. The study is carried out in a natural setting while the researcher constructs a sophisticated, comprehensive image and analyses words, reports, and in-depth views of information. This study is mostly empirical in that it aims to make judgements using the information gathered from the interview data. This study has, therefore, used one methodological approach, namely, the qualitative research approach. The reason for this is that qualitative approach enables the researcher to ask why and how questions and helps to gather detail information with these questions. It allows the researcher to gradually adjust the type of data being collected to acquire a greater understanding of what is being researched. Qualitative research is based on flexible and explorative approaches. Based on this understanding, the research instrument took the form of interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and document analysis schedules.

3.4 Target population

A population is a collection of possible subjects for a study in which a researcher hopes to generalise the findings. The target population is the group of people to which the researcher would most like to generalise his or her results. The population is the study object, according to Welman (2005: 52), and it is made up of people, groups, organisations, human products, events, or the circumstances to which

they are subjected. So, a study problem has to do with a particular demographic. Every unit of analysis that the researcher wants to draw specific conclusions about is collectively referred to as a population. Thus, the Ministry of Tourism Bureau's Public Relations and Communications Department employees are chosen as the study's target group. Since the title of this study focuses on the effective role of the public relations' and communications department in the chosen organization, its target population is the public relations and communications practitioners of the Ministry of Tourism.

3.5 Sample Technique and Sample Size

The list of every item in the researcher's population serves as the sampling frame. It is tiresome to examine a whole population, especially if that community is highly numerous and diverse. So, it is crucial to decide which aspect of the population to research. The population serves as the source of a sample. In other words, the sample includes all of the study participants, or respondents, and is a subset of the population.

More frequently than not, qualitative researchers choose a non-random data source on purpose. Instead, their sampling is deliberate; they choose the people or things that will provide the most details regarding the subject of the enquiry. In this study, the purposive sampling method is selected as the best approach. Based on this approach, the researcher has chosen interviewees purposefully. For the purpose of interview, respondents are chosen using the purposive sampling technique. They are chosen based on their positions, experiences, and status /purposefully/. A purposeful sample was utilised since the study used a qualitative way to gather data, and the researcher asked the positions of all public relations and communications practitioners within the Ministry of Tourism. In qualitative research, deliberate sampling is frequently employed to find and choose cases with plenty of relevant information on the topic under study.

The public relations and communications department of Ministry of Tourism has only four employees. Since the number of employees is small, the researcher has taken all of them and interviewed, and make them to participate on the focuss group discussion.

3.6 Data Gathering Instruments

When a researcher or investigator studies a new field of study or seeks to identify and theorise significant concerns, qualitative research methodology is seen as appropriate. The most popular sorts of qualitative methods are interviewing and observation, which are developed to have an in-

depth and extensive grasp of the issues through their textual interpretation.

The analysis of the study's data came from primary and secondary sources. In-depth interviews, observations, document analysis, and focus group discussion are instruments with which data is gathered. The data was gathered from managers and higher experts of of the ministry of tourism and the ministry of Culture and Sport through in-depth interviews, document analysis, focus group discussion, and observations. This is how they are presented:

3.6.1. In-depth Interview

When more one-on-one interaction is necessary and in-depth information is needed from the participant, a qualitative interview is the research method used. Follow-up questions are typically included in qualitative interviews, which are conducted in a conversational or discussion format. Comparing qualitative interviews to generic questionnaires, the latter is a more impersonal form of study. Such formats frequently incorporate follow-up and open-ended questions.

In-depth interviews were used as the main source of data for the study, with detailed discussions of questions. The department has four employees and the researcher has interviewed all of them. This tool's objectives are to examine the main public relations initiatives within the Ministry of Tourism for marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism, to evaluate the roles of public relations professionals within the Ministry of Tourism for marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism, to determine whether public relations professionals are fulfilling their roles in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism effectively or not, and to determine the appropriateness of the public relations initiatives. Hence, the researcher held an interview with all employees of the department one by one and took notes and recorded them.

3.6.2 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions are widely employed as a qualitative strategy to comprehend social topics in depth. Instead of drawing data from a statistically representative sample of a larger population, the technique aims to get information from a specific set of individuals.

The researcher has used this data gathering instrument to get the shared data which is discussed together. In addition, the result of the focus group discussion helps to broaden the collected data.

In this study, three employees with comparable backgrounds or experiences came together for a focus group conversation to discuss a particular topic of interest. They are questioned about their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or ideas about a topic of interest. Participants are permitted to converse with other participants of the discussion during focus group discussions. A moderator (interviewer) guides the discussion, which is loosely structured and covers a range of interesting subjects.

Since participants are actively encouraged to not only express their own opinions but also respond to other members and questions posed by the researcher, focus groups offer a depth, nuance, and variety to the discussion that would not be available through surveys. Additionally, as the focus group discussions are structured and directed but also expressive, they yield a lot of information in a relatively short time. With this focus group discussion, the researcher has learned more in-depth information about a participant's viewpoints on a subject. The discussion's course was typically preplanned, and the researcher used an outline or guide to make sure all pertinent subjects are covered.

3.6.3 Observation

An example of a qualitative research method that includes participant observation as well as ethnography and fieldwork is observation. Observation in qualitative research is a method in which the researcher collects data using the senses of sight and hearing. As it is dependent on the researcher's sensory organs, it is a subjective way of information gathering. The researcher can collect subjective data about an object, phenomenon, or process without the participants knowing they are under investigation. The observational research design involves several study sites. Observational data might be included in research that is auxiliary or confirmatory. It also enables the researcher to observe, interact, and gain a rich picture of the public relations department in their organisation. Furthermore, this data collection method allows researchers to better understand the process, culture, and attitude of public relations practitioners in the ministry of tourism. Through this method, the researcher made observations to cross-check whether the data given by the interviewee was real or not.

3.6.4 Document analysis

The systematic assessment and evaluation of printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) documents is known as document analysis. In the Ministry of Tourism, to check the practical activities of the public relations and communications department, different kinds of documents are analysed. For example, the department's websites, reports, plan, published materials, and transferred messages are some of the documents analysed.

3.7 Data Collection Methods and Procedure

Data are the bits of knowledge that a specific scenario provides to the observer. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 143), qualitative researchers frequently combine different types of data in a single study. Students may use anything that can assist them in addressing their research questions, including observations, interviews, objects, written materials, electronic data (email messages, websites), and written or printed materials.

Additionally, a developing design is a common feature of many qualitative investigations. Regardless of the types of data involved, data gathering in a qualitative study requires a significant amount of time, according to Polit (2006:246). Using field notes, audiotapes, or any other appropriate method, the researcher should thoroughly, accurately, and methodically document any potentially helpful data. Many qualitative researchers start making notes (also known as memos) regarding their initial interpretations of what they are seeing and hearing as they gather data. The gathering of data is a crucial step in the research process. Whatever a researcher believes is required to answer a study question might be considered data. The semi-structured interview schedule used in this study served as the means of gathering data. For this study, a semi-structured interview schedule was appropriate because the researcher understood exactly what needed to be learned beforehand and could then craft pertinent questions to gather the information.

The fact that interviews are a flexible form of data collection is their primary benefit and the main justification for their use in this study. In the event that respondents had any questions, the researcher might also clarify and elaborate on the questions. These interviews made an effort to comprehend how people (participants) perceive their surroundings in relation to their public relations activities and how they interpret their organisation.

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data, and the researcher himself administered the questions. The participant's first-hand knowledge of the organisation was highlighted, as was the

interviewer's main point of interest. Reports and manuscripts from the organisation were used as secondary sources after the interviews, which served as the primary source of the data. The interview questions were directed at the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions about the topic, which is "The role of the public relations department in effective tourism marketing: the case of the Ministry of Tourism in Ethiopia." With the help of the director of the ministry of tourism's public relations directorate, the researcher set up appointments with the respondents. With the consent of the interview subjects, the researcher self-conducted the interviews and recorded them on a voice note using a smart phone.

After the researcher had prepared interview questions, he asked the school to write a letter to the Ministry of Tourism, and the School of Journalism department wrote a letter of introduction to the Ministry of Tourism, informing the organisation and the Department of Public Relations about the study. In order to ensure the respondent's confidence in the ministry of tourism and to acquaint them with the gatekeepers at the institution, the goal of this letter was to formally notify them and establish the legitimacy of the study. Due to this, the researcher was able to interview the chosen people and gain access to the Ministry of Tourism. The interviews were planned for the day and time following the delivery of the letter. The researcher double-checked the recorder on the day of the interviews and obtained the interview guide and any other necessary materials. The researcher was cautious enough to examine the recorder's batteries as well. There were six sets of questions in the interview guide. Three questions were on the objective questions of the study, and three questions were on the use of public relations for some tourism-related events at Ethiopia's ministry of tourism. The next three questions discussed the roles of the public relations department in effective tourism marketing and the ways in which public relations contributes to the success of some tourism events in the ministry of tourism of Ethiopia. Five questions were also prepared for focus group discussions. By making these three questions major, there were additional questions in each question. Because the interview was semi-structured, other follow-up questions were asked along the way.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

There is typically no one "right" technique to examine the data in a qualitative study, according to Leedy & Ormrod (2005: 150). The researcher must use inductive reasoning to sift and categorise a large amount of data before gradually distilling it down to a few overarching, abstract concepts. The precise features to be researched are frequently only decided upon by the researcher after carefully

examining the body of work in search of potentially significant traits to identify and count; this process is known as content analysis.

According to Welman et al. (2005: 211), field notes are composed during qualitative interviews and include extensive handwritten notes, tape recordings, and observations. The raw field notes need to be processed before analysis. This requires turning the notes into write-ups, which must be clear and understandable documents that can be read, checked for accuracy, discussed, and studied. Write-ups can fill in some of the gaps in raw field notes because, when they are reviewed, raw field notes prompt the researcher to recall things that were mentioned at the time but weren't recorded in the original notes. Before being processed in the same way as handwritten notes, tape recordings and dictation must be converted to text. To change the voice notes into write-ups, the researcher has listened to the recorded voice again and again and changed it properly. This was done to prevent interviewer biases or inputs and to ensure that words were accurately recorded. During the interview, the researcher attempted to clarify any misunderstandings and collect the necessary information. The researcher carefully examined the data provided while writing the reports, keeping in mind the themes, concepts, and directions of the conveyed words.

To learn how public relations, is contributing to effective tourism marketing at Ethiopia's Ministry of Tourism, data from the interviews was analysed using content analysis. The study's findings and inferences drawn from them are presented in the data analysis. On the basis of the results' interpretation, it also offers a list of suggestions. The analysis and utilisation of the data—both primary data from the interviews and secondary data from the organisation's reports and manuscripts—led to recommendations for the study hypothesis. The identification of themes is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research, according to Ryan and Bernard (n.d.). The researcher typically identifies the "umbrella" constructs known as themes before, after, and throughout the data gathering process. As a result, the information gleaned from the interviews was arranged into manageable topics, examined, and then presented as findings utilising pertinent statistics.

3.9 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instrument

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 28), the degree to which a measurement tool measures what it is intended to measure determines its validity. Reliability, on the other hand, is the consistency with which a measuring device produces a particular answer while the object being tested has not changed. Only when we can measure something regularly can we measure it accurately. But routinely measuring something does not always imply accurately measuring it. Reliability is a required but not sufficient requirement for validity; say Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 28). Therefore, the degree of potential measurement error is reflected by both validity and reliability. Welman et al. (2005: 142) contend that the degree to which the research findings accurately reflect what actually occurs in the circumstances constitutes validity. Reliability is concerned with the research's findings and pertains to the veracity of the findings. An effect or test is valid if it demonstrates or measures what the researcher believes it does. We need to consider the following in establishing the validity of our results:

Will the facts and judgements withstand the most rigorous examination? The reliability of the research was ensured by making use of the research instrument, namely, the interview guide, for all the respondents. The researcher also made sure that, respondents completely understood the questions and they were asked appropriately. Where necessary, the researcher repeated the answers given by the respondent to ensure that the researcher had indeed understood the response given to each question. Face-to-face interviews were employed as a reliable data collection method in this study as a result of this. Contrary to telephone interviews, when information and messages may be unclear or misunderstood, which could result in erroneous information being gathered, the researcher was able to speak with the respondents without any issues. As both the researcher and the respondents were able to communicate properly and resolve any issues that arose during the interviews, there were very few misunderstandings in this instance.

Additionally, the test's content validity, which measures how closely the test items correspond to the area of study it purports to cover it was put to the test. After studying the literature and developing a conceptualization based on extensive first-hand knowledge of the field, the researcher created the instrument (the interview guide). The researcher's advisor has taken a look at the research questions and compared them with the research objectives. The questions were appropriate because they pertain to the broader study and are connected to the objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study. The chapter presentation is guided by the objectives and research questions set out for the study. The chapter is presented under the following title, The role of Public Relations Department on Effective Tourism Marketing, The Case of Ministry of Tourism. Most importantly, this study set out to ascertain the major public relations roles practiced in the bureau on marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism, the activities which the department performs, the medium of the department, and other tasks of the department. Hence, the findings of study are presented respectively as follows.

The analyzed is collected with various kinds of data-gathering methods. These are in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis. In a focus group discussion, the researcher's plan was to have two or more group discussions, but the department has only four employees. Due to this reason, the researcher used the document analysis method as an additional data gathering instrument to make the given data more broad and reliable.

4.2 Analysis of Interview Schedule to Public Relations and Communications Experts

The Ministry of Tourism has a public relations department, which has four professional employees. The researcher interviewed all of them and gathered data directly.

4.2.1 The major public relations' department activities practiced in Ministry of Tourism

Here, the raised question was, ‘What are the major public relations’ activities practised in your organisation on marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism?’

According to respondents, different uses and activities of public relations for an organisation include preparing press releases, product publicity, corporate communication, sponsorships, and influencing specific groups (communities). They all work in different ways (positions), but all have the aim of building a good reputation, attracting attention, and creating a good image of a product or service or an organisation inside (corporate communication) and outside the organisation.

According to one of the respondents, when the Ministry of Tourism was in charge of culture and tourism, its name was public relations and international relations. Here, all promotional and communication activities have been done by the public relations and international relations departments. Promotion of culture and tourism were their tasks or some of the activities performed by the public relations and international relations departments.

A respondent added that there are international relations officers in the department, and these officers do international relations well. Even though there was a marketing department in the ministry of tourism, all publications and promotional activities were approved by the public relations and international relations departments. After the public relations department approved these publications and promotional activities, they used them together with the marketing department.

Now in the Ministry of Tourism, the department is called Public Relations and Communication. There are also departments for marketing and promotion. It is these two departments (marketing and promotion) that perform promotional and marketing activities. The department of public relations and communication performs supportive tasks in relation to marketing and promotion. In addition, this department represents media and media relations activities. If any media comes to their organisation, said a respondent, it first meets the department of public relations and communication, and they do the task if it concerns their department and lead him/her/they/ to the concerned body if it doesn’t concern their department. So, the department is used as a bridge between the Ministry of Tourism and media relations, other departments, its top management, and the public. Furthermore, institutional events like

internal meetings and trainings are led by this department. They take responsibility for the work performed in the organisation. By representing the institution, this department also gives information to those who need it.

In the Ministry of Tourism, the department of public relations and communication has been newly restructured in the past 4 months. When the Ministry of Tourism was combined with the Ministry of Culture, this department was well organised. In the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, there is a Marketing Department that works cooperatively with the Department of Public Relations and Communication. In the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, promotional tasks have been performed by the Department of Public Relations and Communication. It was this department that identified what should be promoted, how it should be promoted, when it should be promoted, and so on. After identifying such tasks, they prepare promotional materials and share them with the marketing department. All promotional, public relations, and communications affairs have been approved and shared with the Marketing Department. But now, in the Ministry of Tourism, this department (Public Relations and Communication) does not do the same activities as the previous one. All marketing and promotional activities are performed by the Department of Marketing and Promotion. The Public Relations and Communication Department does supportive activities for other departments in relation to marketing and promotional activities.

Since culture is an input for tourism, when this department (public relations and communication) was within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, it was doing promotional tasks for cultures and avoiding bad habits. Both departments (public relations, communication, and marketing) have been promoting cultures and creating awareness about bad habits like female genital mutilation, early marriage, alcoholic and tobacco addiction, etc., cooperatively. Tare, who is a higher public relations and communication expert in the Ministry of Tourism, said that they have been doing more in the Afar and Somalia regions to reduce female genital mutilation. According to him, more and more awareness was created in these regions about the issue. Now, these activities are being done by the department of public relations and communications of the Ministry of Culture and Sport.

According to the respondents, public relations is utilised in a wide range of ways by organisations, the majority of which are aimed at assisting them in informing the public and creating a corporate image, both internal and external, about the organisation or its relations and services.

One respondent, who works for the Ministry of Tourism as a higher communication officer, explained that public relations specialists handle all of the information that needs to be shared with all parties. This covers event planning, all marketing initiatives, and the introduction of new organisational initiatives like weekly and monthly internal publications. In essence, public relations' job is to uphold the organisation's positive reputation among the public while ensuring that relations between the organisation and its audiences operate smoothly.

Based on the in-depth interview, the interviewed employees concluded that there are lots of activities performed by the department. According to the respondent, there are lots of activities to do. Among them are events leading and facilitating, preparing publications [brochures, magazines, newspapers, etc.], creating good relations between the ministry of tourism and the public, writing, making crisis communication and events management, being involved in media relations and networking, doing research and corporate social investment, etc.

4.2.2 The Role of Public Relations Practitioners in the Organization

This part of the data analysis is based on the respondents' responses to the question, 'What are the roles of public relations practitioners' in your organisation in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism?'

The department of public relations and communication has a vital role in the ministry of tourism. It plays a great role in the success of the Ministry of Tourism. The results of this study unequivocally show that public relations is crucial to building understanding and support for a specific cause or event. An organisation's important stakeholders, both internal and external (among employees and clients), can be defined and explained through the use of public relations. These relationships need to be controlled rather than allowed to grow naturally. Accordingly, public relations is a management

discipline that must exist within an organisation in order to effectively communicate with the goal of fostering support.

Public relations can be involved in research, planning, implementing, and evaluating projects, as well as continuing to be open to new ideas and results. Professionals in public relations add value to an organisation by fostering comradery among all members of the public. In addition to all the other tasks that make up the function of public relations, such as fundraising, community relations, crisis communication, corporate social responsibility, etc. Public relations assists organisations in surviving in their social environments by focusing on relationships in order to promote the social and economic development of tourism and its services. When seen from this angle, public relations' crucial function is to assist the organisation in adjusting and adapting to changes in their environment by providing appropriate awareness or creating a corporate image.

The importance of communication for an organisation's survival has been highlighted by the growing collaboration between an organisation and its surroundings and stakeholders. It is imperative that two-way communication channels and communication strategies be developed for organisations in order to foster mutual understanding and sustain balanced relationships between the organization and all of its stakeholders. In order to recognise the significance of relationship building, public relations is essential. Therefore, it can be said that internal communication within a company and public relations are both crucial. Public relations has always been considered a major part of the promotional mix to shape an organisation's reputation and communication in the tourism industry, and the need for public relations is compulsory.

According to a respondent, the main role of public relations and communication is to make institutional issues, tasks, and activities clear to stakeholders and the public.

Mainly, bringing stakeholders, the public, and the Ministry of Tourism together is the role of this department. This is the general role of the department, and it has many kinds of activities. This department gives information to the public, stakeholders, tourists, and concerned bodies about what the government is doing and will do to enhance tourism promotion and attract tourists.

A respondent also added that this department is a two-way consultant. It gives detailed information both to the government and the public, as well as consulting both the government and the public. The department also gives public opinions and ideas to the government. They try to understand public opinions and gather them through various kinds of mechanisms, like looking at public comments on the organisation's websites, receiving direct information from the public, and understanding public attitudes, and give all these to the organisation.

The primary purpose of public relations is to establish and maintain connections with all pertinent stakeholders and external clients. This includes holding events for service improvement, tourist perception studies, and service competitions with other countries. The function of public relations is to assist internal clients with service development, developing tourist handling, making new publications and communications, strengthening relations with the organisation, and so on.

Public relations plays a significant role in the Ministry of Tourism by increasing the organisation's and its services' visibility and positioning. The public relations department must develop and implement a variety of communication techniques to accomplish this. The department of public relations and communication at the ministry of tourism is doing its part to ensure the sustainability of the organisation by preparing publications, fostering positive relationships with its audiences, enhancing the organisation's reputation, etc. Establishing and maintaining relationships is another function of public relations, which is especially crucial in ensuring that there is open communication throughout all organisational subsystems.

Another respondent added that the functions of public relations within the organisation included the engagement and facilitation of communication strategy and its implementation, providing communication consulting and planning services to the employees and management of the ministry for integrated communication throughout the organisation, and managing internal events. Most importantly, public relations practitioners are the custodians of their organisations. Dozier and Broom (which is mentioned in the literature review) classified the administrative and technical roles of public relations operations. Public relations and communication professionals can also serve as managers and technicians in the communication field. Technical jobs are based on the artistic side of public relations and involve things like writing, editing, creating communication materials, preparing for media

appearances, etc. They set it up, keep it going, and manage it. The communication manager formulates communication policies, recommends them to management, prepares and manages public relations programmes, and supervises their execution.

On the other side, communication technologists implement public relations strategies instead of taking part in organisational decision-making, such as composing press releases, planning events, or creating site content. The respondents defined a public relations practitioner as being a communicator, a go-between, an interpreter, or a communication link between the organisation and all of its stakeholders, which can be inferred by critically examining the two distinct roles that public relations practitioners play within the chosen organisation. It is evident from the foregoing that public relations experts benefit an organisation. This is consistent with Grunig et al.'s (2002:553) assertion that public relations specialists offer value to an organisation by forging connections with all groups affected by corporate actions, not simply those that provide the organisation with benefits.

Generally, the respondents said that the tourism sector consists of selling services, and these services are hard to manage. That's why public relations and promotions are widely used in this sector. Public relations is used alone or with other elements of the promotional mix, but in this organisation, it uses the mix. The aim of promotion is to create a positive impact on the public. Public relations is very important here, as promotion is done through press releases, press conferences, sponsorships and prizes in competitions, and invitations to journalists to try new activities (hotel, attraction, flight) for free. So, they concluded that the importance of public relations is hard to underestimate; it helps the tourism sector grow, expand, and make profit quickly in changing circumstances. It is a relatively new but growingly popular area of science, with a demand for good public relations specialists, they said. Public relations is about creating and managing the image of the ministry, its services, its brand, and its whole activities.

4.2.3 Effectiveness of Public Relations on Playing their Role

Here, the raised question is, 'Do public relations practitioners play their role effectively in promoting and marketing Ethiopian tourism?'

Effective public relations doesn't happen by accident; it needs to be carefully planned. As with any plan, a public relations plan has objectives, strategies, and actions. The objectives may change with time; public relations planning is a constant process that reflects any change in circumstances and always uses any free or low-cost opportunity for publicity. Public relations is used to shape the favourable image of a service, organisation, or individual and to help the organisation meet its objectives effectively, efficiently, and successfully.

The researcher thinks that the reason for the underdevelopment of Ethiopian tourism is the improper performance of promotional activities by the public relations department of the ministry of tourism. That is why this question was raised. Even though the question was raised from this angle, they replied that they are doing promotional activities properly.

One of the respondents said that effectiveness is relative. What said is that they have a long-term plan of 5 or 10 years. They do various kinds of activities, but they do not have effectiveness measurement instruments. Even though they can evaluate their performances directly and indirectly through public comments and their performances, they are hesitant to say they are effective. He believes that even if they are doing various kinds of tasks, it is impossible to say they are effective. Since effectiveness is the result of different kinds of activities like proper planning, performing planned activities properly, and so on, either one or two tasks might not be properly performed. For example, during planning, they may plan below what should be planned or beyond what should be planned. So, this and other tiny mistakes might be obstacles to effectiveness. As a department, they perform all planned activities, but it is difficult to say they are effective.

As public relations experts, they provide value to the organisation by efficiently engaging with all of its stakeholders and making sure that they always uphold a positive perception of their organisation. Building and nurturing relationships for the organisation's long-term advantage is the responsibility of public relations professionals. In order to fulfill the objectives of the organisation, the public relations department is also in charge of creating and maintaining meaningful relationships with all stakeholders. The department does each of these tasks in order to be effective.

The researcher asked the Department of Public Relations and Communication whether the department is promoting Ethiopian tourism internationally or not by citing Rwanda, which has paid 40 million dollars for North London club Arsenal, as an example. The raised question was, 'Do you use international media to promote Ethiopian tourism internationally?' A respondent said, "Do you think the Ethiopian government can do this? Can it pay 40 million dollars for a single promotional activity? Hasn't it another task to do? How much is Ethiopia's annual budget? With all these questions, the respondent assured the researcher that such big promotions were impossible. The respondent also said spending that much money for promotional purposes is beyond the government's economy. According to the respondent, the fact that they paid this much money for promotion means that we have only this task to do. The respondent also mentioned that the Rwandan government itself hasn't paid that much money, but there are rumours that others have.

Furthermore, one of the respondents said that promotion doesn't matter for Ethiopian tourism. It doesn't matter whether we promote or not by spending that much money, said the respondent. It is sufficient to promote via organisation's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts. According to the respondent, we can attract/bring/ tourists by using these social media accounts. The respondent said that the main problem with Ethiopian tourism is a lack of sufficient accommodation, infrastructure, hospitality, and so on. The respondent added, "We have a limited number of hotels, we have limited hospitality skills, and so on". Even though hospitality problems can be solved by creating awareness, other tangible problems like limited number of hotels, lack of sufficient accommodation, lack of infrastructure,...etc cannot be solved by our promotional activity without the involvement of the government. The example that the respondent mentioned is that a great run was prepared in Bekoji, Oromia. For this great run, the respondent himself and his coworkers promote via Telegram, Facebook, and YouTube pages by writing short messages. By the day, there were lots of domestic and international tourists, but there were no enough hotels. Especially the international tourists were suffering a lot. The available hotels were not sufficient for both domestic and international tourists. Not only in Bekoji but also in other places, the same is true.

With all these ideas, the respondent doesn't mean that Ethiopian Tourism doesn't totally need promotion; the main mentioned point is that before investing with high amount of money on promotion, it needs to give emphasis for the problems of lack of infrastructure, more standardized

hotels, attractive accommodations, and so on. According to the respondent, if these problems are solved, then the bureau might invest much money for promotion; otherwise promoting through social media is sufficient.

The public relations and communications department in the ministry of tourism uses different kinds of mechanisms to measure its effectiveness. Among these, receiving feedback from awareness creation is one way to measure the department's effectiveness. Collecting public comments from electronic pages is also another measurement. They also use stakeholder witnesses for their activities like event management, messages transferred through electronic media, internal and external communications, and so on.

4.3 Focus Group Discussion Data Analysis

A focus group discussion is one of the data gathering instruments that the researcher has used to gather data by bringing members of the department together to answer questions in a moderated setting. The whole employees of the department were plan of the focus group discussion members. The questions are designed to shed light on a topic of interest.

As mentioned above, the researcher has planned to have more than one focus group discussion. But the department of public relations and communications has employees who are small in number and busy, and they couldn't be found together. Most of the time, the department members, spent their time out of Addis Ababa; performing various kinds of events. The researcher waits for them for more than two weeks to meet together, but they all cannot be found at the same time. Finally, the researcher met only three of them and had a focus group discussion by facilitating one by one.

The first question raised to participants of the focus group discussion is, what are the functions of public relations and communications department in your organization? The second question is, Do you use international media to promote internationally? The third question is, what major roles has the department?

According to discussion, the functions of the department are image building, making publications, creating good relations with customers, and so on. The department also uses social media to promote

internationally. Their major role is building corporate image and there are other roles like giving and receiving information, supporting promotion, making relations with media, etc.

4.3.1 Functions of Public Relations Department in Ministry of Tourism

The researcher provides the question, ‘What are the functions of the public relations department in the ministry of tourism?’ to employees of focus group discussions.

According to the group discussion, the primary function of the public relations and communication department is to create good relations or mutual relations between the ministry of tourism and stakeholder groups. The public relations and communications department in this sector also plays a crucial role in maintaining the good image of the organisational brand. With the right kind of media and tools, public relations practitioners act as the bridge between customers and management. There are also other functions like preparing publications, reporting events, building images, giving information to the media, receiving information from the media, and so on.

When it comes to the tourism sector, the value of PR cannot be overstated. The entire activity is mounted on public relations, as good public relations is the key to this industry's success. The first and foremost objective of public relations is to ensure that information is passed on to the public, tourists, and aspiring tourists. The details of the location, accommodations, points of interest, advantages and disadvantages of a location, and more are included in the material.

According to respondents, one of the functions of the public relations and communication department is to create awareness. The department creates awareness by disseminating messages through various kinds of media to get credit from the public (customers, investors, stakeholders, governmental and nongovernmental organisations, etc.). Awareness is an important part of public relations activities, as it gets attention from existing and new stakeholders and creates the basis for building relationships.

Based on the selection of the right media for the campaign, events, promotions, and other necessary programmes, the public relations and communication team decides to choose the right media that is appropriate for the campaign that is prepared by the ministry, like for new destinations that should be promoted, for yearly celebrated events, and so on. They work closely with people from the media, ensuring that there are articles and video bytes that are regularly aired or posted, which would help in

the institutional presence of the ministry of tourism. The role of public relations is not limited to conventional media. Sometimes a simple flyer or an email will do a world of wonders for the hospitality brand and tourism services.

Another function of the public relations and communications department in the sector is that public relations consulting is perceived in many different ways. It is frequently described as the strategic communication process that creates beneficial relationships between the ministry and its publics as well as the process of fostering positive relationships with the various publics within the sector by securing positive publicity, fostering a positive corporate image, and managing crisis situations. However, the central theme of public relations remains the act of shaping a favourable image. The travel and tourism industries thrive only when you have successfully created the desire to travel, and public relations can help immensely by building a favourable image.

Public relations succeeds better at brand and image building because it is mainly third-party endorsement. Most of the public prefers believing an article or blog rather than trusting self-indulgent advertisements. Also, when it comes to the tourism industry, a personal connection is better, which public relations can provide effortlessly. This department attracts various kinds of individuals and groups through its messages on websites, publications, and oral communications.

Public relations also brings valuable media connections, which help the tourism industry tremendously. The media's credibility helps build a positive image. Through public relations, creating awareness becomes easier. With the help of public relations professionals, whether it's the launch of new destinations or services or any promotions, organisations can easily promote themselves. Awareness can be raised through the media (press conference, press release), supporting charities, or organising any special events. Generally, for any organisation to sail smoothly, strong internal and external communication is essential. Public relations helps bridge the gap between the organisation, its employees, and the public.

4.3.2 Responsible Department for Promotional Activity and the Role of Public Relations and Communication Department

The question ‘Who is responsible for promotional tasks in your ministry of tourism? If it is not your department, what is the role of your department on this task?’ was another question.

In the Ministry of Tourism, the department responsible for marketing and promotional work is the Department of Marketing and Promotion. The main role of the public relations and communication department in the ministry of tourism is to do supportive tasks, perform communicational tasks, prepare publications, creating good image for the ministry, and so on. It also performs activities like coordinating events and preparing speeches to top management; media selection and providing press releases and brochures for the corporate communications department; and initiating marketing campaigns, branding, and publicity issues for the marketing department. This department also works cooperatively with the marketing department.

4.3.3 Communication Channels and Tools Used in the Department

In this part, the raised question was, ‘What kinds of communicational channels and tools do you use in the ministry of tourism?’

There are various kinds of communication channels and tools for public relations to disseminate information. Printed media, which include newspapers, magazines, journals, directories, and catalogues, always play a huge role in the advertising and public relations activities of the tourism industry. Some of the communication tools that the Public Relations and Communication Department uses in the organisation are press releases, brochures, newspaper and magazine articles, and so on. A press release is prepared by this department, and it contains new services or attractions with briefly noted explanations. Brochures are also used as message dissemination tools in this department, and the message that can be disseminated through them may be about an organisation’s services (hotel, flight, and travel agency), destinations, and other promotional tasks. Articles in newspapers and magazines are also prepared and distributed to domestic and international tourists. In addition, the department prepares flyers for tourists with contact information for attractions and venues. The printed press can cover a large number of customers at a time at relatively low cost and can be addressed to a specific group of customers (tourism and its service magazines, free newspapers read by a large group of potential travellers, etc.). Media bring the message to the target audience;

choosing the right media means choosing the best way to reach the audience. Media available for public relations specialists include the printed press, TV and radio broadcasting, conferences and events (charity events, sponsorships, opening parties, press conferences), and the Internet (a quite new but already very powerful means of communication and public relations).

As a communication tool, internal and external communications are very important areas of this sector's existence, and public relations is widely used in both of them. According to respondents, internal communication means communication with the organisation's employees, and external communication means keeping external parties (customers, tourists, stakeholders, etc.) informed about services and the environment at all times. This is usually done through media releases, conferences with the invitation of important guests (where the news is communicated face-to-face), various kinds of publications, and websites.

The public relations department in the ministry of tourism has various types of communication channels. The department uses publications from newspapers and magazines to disseminate information to the public. It also gives information to radio and television channels when they ask and receives it when they need it. It also prepares press releases on some topics and posts them on notice boards or disseminates them electronically. It also prepares oral speeches, brochures, leaflets, news releases, and electronic websites.

Different types of media have different kinds of advantages and disadvantages. The choice of an appropriate medium requires careful work and depends on the nature of the event or product being promoted. The public relations person can choose from editorials (printed media), press conferences, destination and service presentation events, and educational visits. The department gives its information to carefully selected media. They have well-known media houses that work with them frequently. If any media asks them to give information, they first check where they are, for what purpose the information is, and whether they are legal or not. After checking all these, they give the needed information.

Even though film, theatre, and relatively new electronic and social media are all considered to be a part of broadcasting, radio and television are frequently used as synonyms. Each medium has its own advantages and disadvantages, which is why broadcasting media are often used in complex situations. Television has always been widely used for promoting the cultures, destinations, festivals, and services of the ministry of tourism. The public relations department in the ministry of tourism gives information when they are asked to do so on specific issues to be transmitted via television. Since radio is owned and listened to by a large number of people and is very mobile (it doesn't require a special set and can be listened to on the go via a mobile phone), the department also gives messages to FM and radio broadcasts.

The major public relations tools used in the ministry of tourism are articles, brochures, magazines, newspapers, and social media. Social media is becoming important in public relations as the online trend picks up speed. Social media works mainly on word-of-mouth and the sharing of experiences and messages of good relationships in written form, which can benefit the tourism industry hugely. Public relations has always been considered a major part of the promotional mix to shape an organisation's reputation, and in the tourism industry, the need for public relations and its tools is inevitable.

4.3.4 Websites of the Department to Disseminate Information

The researcher raised the question, 'Have you used websites and social media pages to disseminate information? If yes, are these websites and social media pages active?', seeking brief clarification.

The popularity of electronic media is rising with the growing use of computers and the Internet, low-cost mobile broadband, and free Wi-Fi hotspots. Nowadays, public relations departments should be competent in light of globalisation. It is the time of digitalization, and this department should also use digitalization. Every activity of public relations is being performed within a short period of time by using the global results of digital technologies. Website pages on Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and others are some of the technology products used to fasten information exchange and the whole activities of the department.

The public relations and communication department of the ministry of tourism has its own websites on Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter to disseminate information to its stakeholders, domestic and international tourists, the public, and so on. Even though it is not controlled by the public relations department, there are also other electronic pages like MICE, which are used by the marketing and promotion department. Even though the public relations and communication department does not control or directly manage this page, it does support organisational achievement. Their Twitter page has over 19 thousand followers. They also have a YouTube channel, a Telegram page with lots of subscribers, and a Facebook account with lots of followers. New and recent messages are transferred to their main pages on Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. They transfer internal and external events, promotional messages, campaigns, crisis communication, planned activities, and so on.

Since they have a graphic design expert, their transferred messages are attractive and catchy. They transfer short and precise messages, transfer events with full information, build the corporate image of the organisation with good messages, and so on.

4.4 observed data analysis

Observation is one of the data-gathering instruments used in this study. The researcher has planned to check for nonverbal expression of feelings in the department, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how employees communicate and perform with each other, understand the practical and actual activities performed in the department, etc. with observation.

The researcher has observed lots of public relations and communication department activities in the Ministry of Tourism by participating in some of them. There are lots of opportunities in the department to make observations. Among the opportunities are access to different kinds of publications, the availability of annual and semiannual plans and reports, the presence of active and updated websites and channels, and so on.

The researcher has also observed various kinds of minutes. Among the observed minutes, some are detailed discussions of how to perform events, and others are discussions of performance evaluation details. For example, for the campaign ‘Liwekish Ethiopia’, they had discussions chaired by Alemayehu, who is the team leader. They have discussed how the campaign should be done, what its

graphics should be look like, what kinds of pictures should be included, how we can make it attractive, etc.

On May 13, 2023, a great run was prepared at Bekoji. For this programme, the department was preparing messages to transfer via Telegram, Facebook, and Twitter pages of the department. The researcher was a part of the message's preparation and transmission. After they came back from Bekoji, they also prepared the performances to share on these pages. In addition, they sit for discussion of the great run event and raised the problems that were happened during the event and possible solutions for such problems.

There is also an expert in graphic design in this department, and the researcher asked him to show magazine preparation. The graphic designer showed how it is prepared, and the researcher understood practical activities.

4.5 Document analysis data

Document analysis is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher interprets documents to give a topic under evaluation voice and meaning (Bowen, 2009).It helps the researcher assess the real and actual performance of the organisation and broaden his data. Even though document analysis is non-reactive, the researcher should clearly understand the analysed document and interpret it.

The researcher used this method to analyse the given data and its reality. During document analysis, the researcher tried to analyse documents like the annual and semiannual plans of the department, its report, its electronic websites, training manuals, and so on. By critically reading the department's plan, the researcher understood that the department has a good plan in which all public relations tasks are included. The researcher also analysed the department's report. Here, what is available in the plan is also incorporated into the report with good performance.

In addition, the researcher has also analysed the department's electronic pages on Telegram, Facebook, the website, YouTube, and Twitter. Here, the researcher has checked whether the electronic websites are functional or not and found they are active and functional, with the latest

transferred messages on various kinds of topics. In addition, during document analysis, the researcher found tasks that were performed but not included in the department's plan. They elaborated as they do activities out of plan as per the situation. As an evidence, the researcher has been a participant in disseminating messages on Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram. The other document that was analysed was the mandate that is given for the ministry of tourism, and this was analysed by comparing the given mandate and contributions of the public relations department to organisational achievement. In all document analysis, the researcher understood that there are well-organised, experienced, and skilled public relations department members.

The researcher observed practical activities in the document analysis. All flyers, posters, training materials, and other documents are well prepared and have good timing. All the physical evidence objects (artefacts) like flyers, posters, agendas, handbooks, and training materials found within the organization are good evidence that the organisation is performing its activities well.

4.5.1 Social Media Posts

Social media is one of the tools that the department of public relations and communication uses in the Ministry of Tourism to promote tourism and its services. To disseminate information to its clients, the department of public relations and communications in the Ministry of Tourism uses social media channels like the website, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. As evidence, the researcher has selected the latest social media posts that the department of public relations and communications in the Ministry of Tourism put out to announce and promote tourism and its services. The following are some of the analyses of the contents of social media.

a) **Facebook**

The public relations and communications department in the Ministry of Tourism uses Facebook as an information dissemination tool. The Facebook page of the department is in Amharic, and it has more than five thousand followers. Its Facebook page is available at <https://www.facebook.com/MinistryofTourismETH>. On the page, the researcher has analysed various kinds of posted messages. The latest message that was posted at the time of document analysis (May 13, 2023) on this page was a message that transfers as "Great Run" is prepared in Bekoji. The

message elaborates that the prepared great run has the advantage of promoting sport tourism in the local community as foreigners participate in it, and hiking and camping on Arsi Mountain are part of this sport. There are also a lot of other posted messages on this page. Messages that promote destinations, festival events, new destination buildings, tourism affairs discussions, etc. are some of them.

b) Twitter

As mentioned above, the department of public relations and communication in the Ministry of Tourism also uses Twitter as a social media page for reaching the public. The Ministry's public relations and communications department tweets contents in Amharic through its Twitter account, <https://twitter.com/motethiopia>. One of the tweets randomly selected for analysis was tweeted on May 18, 2023. The tweet announced that Ethiopia and Colombia have agreed to enhance tourism diplomacy, apart from cooperating in various fields. It contains the speech of Ministry of Tourism State Minister Selamawit Dawit and her message, as both countries are ready to share their best experiences in promoting and developing tourist attractions in each country.

c) Telegram

Telegram is one of the social media pages that the public relations and communications department of the Ministry of Tourism uses to reach the public. The department disseminates various kinds of messages through their Telegram page at <https://t.me/tourism>. One of the messages the researcher has picked is a message posted on May 2, 2023. It is a message conveyed to announce that the Ministry of Tourism is giving training to all regional employees in the tourism sector. The training is prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and CBI Enterprise of the Netherlands. The training is given for the second time by international trainers from CBI Enterprise of the Netherlands, and it is a practical training about destination development.

d) Website page

This is a website page that the department of public relations and communications uses to disseminate various kinds of messages. The department uses it to transfer messages with movable pictures that

contain transferred messages or documentary film-like messages are transferred through it. The page is <https://www.mot.gov.et>. The message that the researcher randomly selected is about marketing campaign of ‘Liwekish Ethiopia.’ It is a marketing campaign that includes movable pictures of mountains, monasteries, forests, and so on with a message that motivates people to visit.

4.5.2 Press Release

The Department of Public Relations and Communications in the Ministry of Tourism prepares various kinds of press releases on different kinds of issues. The department disseminates these press release messages through Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, and website pages. A randomly selected press release that the researcher has picked is about the announcement of the activities that the Ministry of Tourism has done through promotion, marketing, and MICE tourism. It stated that the ministry has achieved good results through its activities and departments.

Since press releases are the most common activity of the department, the public relations and communications department prepares press releases on each activity and disseminates them through its media. The Department of Public Relations and Communications in the Ministry of Tourism also uses local media to disseminate messages to the public. They have good relations with local media, radio, and TV houses. TV house media like EBC, Fana, and EBS, which have performed various kinds of activities with the Ministry of Tourism, specifically with the department of public relations and communications, are the closest media to the Ministry of Tourism. Each medium asks for information when it needs it, and the department also asks them to give and receive information.

The department has given information to EBC about national tourism day, and the medium disseminates information about how long it is celebrated, where it is celebrated, who celebrates it, etc. The department has also informed Fana TV about how much emphasis should be placed on the tourism sector. The given information is the general information that the tourism sector and concerned bodies have discussed.

4.6 The level of participation by public relations in top level decision

This is a data analysis of the question, ‘To what extent are public relations practitioners involved in top decision-making?’

In the organization that the researcher has observed, (the Ministry of Tourism), the department of public relations and communication is not merged with other departments. It has a department named public relations and communication. Due to this, it is clear that the employees of the organisation view public relations practitioners as a management function and acknowledge the role public relations professionals can play in top-level decision-making. They participate in top-level management, which requires decisions from the department.

In order to maintain a harmonious and balanced relationship between the organisation and its different target audiences and, ultimately, between the organisation and its environment, the public relations department should participate extensively in top-level decision-making. The Ministry of Tourism has departments of public relations and communication, marketing, and promotion. All of the heads of departments, such as the general manager for corporate communications, the marketing director, and the general manager of corporate affairs, are among the top decision-makers in the organisation. They are involved in top management decision-making when there is an issue that needs a decision.

Both marketing and communications directors have board of director status and represent both the marketing and public relations and communications departments at top-level decision-making. According to the respondents, the level of participation by public relations in top-level decision-making is high. The reason for this is that departments of public relations and communication, marketing, and promotion are not in the same department, like in some organisations that merged departments of public relations and communication, marketing, and promotion.

4.7 Collaboration of public relations and marketing departments

To check the collaboration of this department with other departments, the researcher has raised the question, ‘Is the department of public relations and communication collaborative with the department of marketing and promotion?’

Due to the perception that marketing and public relations have complimentary and overlapping roles, several organisations combine the two fields. The Ministry of Tourism has departments of public

relations and communication, marketing, and promotion. Each department has its own goals and activities. They are not merged into the same department. Even though each department has its own goal and activity, they do their activities by collaborating or helping one another. One helps the other directly and indirectly. In addition to the other departments, there is also a department for MICE. Especially with the marketing and promotion department, the public relations and communications department of the ministry of tourism performs various kinds of activities.

According to Tarekegn, who is the higher communication officer in the Ministry of Tourism, public relations activities are closely related to the marketing activities of the organisation; the targets and objectives of both departments are interrelated and often very dependent on each other's results. He added that the objectives of marketing are to introduce a product to the right customer at the right time, sell the product or services on the market, or promote destinations and their services. Public relations helps to achieve these objectives by making the public (market) aware of the organisation and its services and creating a good image for the ministry of tourism.

4.8 Discussion

As discussed in this chapter, this research aimed at examining the role of the public relations department in the Ministry of Tourism is well analysed with properly gathered data. This chapter is the analysis part, in which the data that is gathered through in-depth interviews, document analysis, focus group discussion, and observation is analysed and interpreted well. The chapter has shown that all of the respondents support the theoretical underpinning relating to the current practises in organisations relating to the role of public relations within an organisation. It also presents the results of the field work (observation) conducted amongst public relations and communications practitioners in the Ministry of Tourism.

The given and observed data shows that the two departments of public relations and communication and marketing and promotion are two distinct departments that help and support each other. Most organisations consider these departments to be part of the same department. The respondents concluded that these two disciplines work best when they are treated as distinct functions; they are also able to produce better results when working together with the aim of communicating with the various stakeholders of the organisation by supporting one another.

Both the Marketing and Promotion and Public Relations and Communication Departments participate in top-level decision-making functions, as both functions greatly impact the organisation's overall aims and objectives.

Based on the collected data, the public relations and communication department in the Ministry of Tourism disseminates messages through its social media (Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, and website), printed media (magazines, newspapers, brochures, flyers, etc.), and broadcast media (radio and TV). The public and the Ministry of Tourism have access to information since there are different kinds of alternative social media.

One of the roles of the Public Relations and Communication Department in the Ministry of Tourism is to perform media relations activities. In relation to media relations, the department does activities like contacting the news media, periodicals, independent authors, tour guides, and trade journals in order to persuade them to publish or broadcast news and features on the organisation.

The Public Relations and Communication Department of the Ministry of Tourism, aids in defining and explaining mutually beneficial connections between the Ministry of Tourism and its major stakeholders, including both its staff and its public. This management of connections between the organisation and its public is one of the roles played by this department.

When the findings of the study were compared to the literature review as well as the systems theory model to determine the role of public relations within the selected organisation, most of the activities were related and really practical.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

It has been established that the tourism sector presents numerous development opportunities to countries. Accordingly, the government of Ethiopia has developed a strategic plan for tourism development in the country. It has also been noted that the media, like public relations, is a powerful tool that can make or break the tourism industry, and therefore its involvement in the industry is essential.

This study was set out to investigate the role of the public relations department in effective tourism marketing in the Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism. Accordingly, the study found out that there is a practice of public relations and communication activities in the Ministry of Tourism for marketing and promoting tourist destination sites, tourism services, and tourism in general. Additionally, all interviewees mentioned that when the Department of Public Relations and Communication was under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, some effort was made to market and promote tourist destination sites through various communication tools like TV programmes, radio, prints, YouTube, and others. They also elaborated that marketing and promotion activities in the Ministry of Tourism are performed by the Marketing and Promotion Department. Accordingly, even though the Department of Public Relations and Communication does not directly perform marketing and promotional activities, it does supportive tasks with coordination towards a common goal.

Moreover, the study asserted that there are lots of activities in the Ministry of Tourism that are performed by public relations and communication experts in the department. As the researcher has observed, the Department of Public Relations and Communication in the Ministry of Tourism is performing the real and actual tasks of public relations that the theory part has put forward. The study found that the theoretical and practical activities in the Ministry of Tourism are the same.

One of the significant results emerging from this study is that public relations is the most important ingredient for an effective organisation. The Ministry of Tourism has a Public Relations and Communications Department that builds the corporate image of the organisation.

Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism has a department of public relations and communication which is playing great role by making corporate organizational image, making publications, managing internal and external meeting, releasing messages through social media, and so on.

Generally, when the Ministry of Tourism was in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, it used to play its role properly, but they have some confusion in relation to the structure and the role they are given now in the Ministry of Tourism.

5.2 Recommendations

The most important goal of the study is to examine the role of the public relations department in effective tourism marketing in the Ministry of Tourism. Hence, the following recommendations are forwarded based on the findings of the study: The findings of the study suggest a number of recommendations. Here are some of the recommendations that were forwarded:

- The Public Relations and Communications Department plays a significant role in building the corporate image of the Ministry of Tourism. This department has been performing marketing and promotional activities since it was with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Now, it is the Marketing and Promotion Department that performs marketing and promotional tasks in the organisation. The Public Relations Department performs only supportive tasks. The theoretical part puts marketing and promotional tasks as the functions of the Public Relations' Department, but this department is not directly performing this task. So, there is overlap in some activities within these departments, and their roles should be clearly identified.

- The Public Relations and Communications Department in the Ministry of Tourism was restructured within 4 months. In some instances, employees of the department are not happy with the new

structure due to its lack of clarity on roles. So, the organisation should clearly state the exact roles of each department.

- A budget is the backbone of any organisation's ability to achieve its mission. In order to be successful, the Ministry of Tourism should have a sufficient budget. The Department of Public Relations and Communication in this sector is facing budget problems and is limiting its activities due to this problem. This department can do more activities than this if it gets a sufficient budget.

- In addition to budget and other necessary requirements, sufficient manpower is a basic requirement for any organisation. The Department of Public Relations and Communications in the Ministry of Tourism has a limited number of staff (only 4). So, to get the full service of this department, the Ministry of Tourism should have additional manpower.

- To attract more domestic and international tourists, the Ministry of Tourism should do more promotional work. In order to make more promotion, the basic needs of tourists, like sufficient accommodations, standardized hotels, infrastructure, and other necessary inputs, should be fulfilled. To help with this promotional activity, the Public Relations and Communications Department does supportive tasks. In relation to this, they are facing some problems due to the lack of inputs mentioned above. For example, communicating with tourists about the lack of more 5-star hotels may not give confidence to public relations officers; convincing tourists about the lack of infrastructure in destinations may be a challenge; etc. So, the government should do infrastructure; it should also give emphasis to the hotel sector to get more international hotels, and so on. When these inputs get a solution, the Public Relations and Communications Departments will do more than this.

- Since the local community has no information about some tourist destination sites, it is better promoted via LCD/street LCD screens. This helps the community know destinations and increases domestic tourism.

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Appendixes

Addis Ababa University

School of Journalism and Communication

Department of Public Relations and Strategic Communication

Interview

My name is Addisu Dagneu, a Master of Arts student at Addis Ababa University, and I am studying Public Relations and Strategic Communications. I am conducting research on the role of the public relations department in effective tourism marketing: the case of the Ministry of Tourism (Ethiopia). Therefore, in dealing with the following items of the interview, you are kindly requested to provide genuine information about it. Your responses are extremely important to the study's success. I would like to assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and won't be applied in any other way.

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

Main Interview Questions

- What is the name of your organisation and your department?
- What are the major public relations' activities practised in your organisation for marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism?
- Who is responsible for promotional tasks in your ministry of tourism? If it is not your department, what is the role of your department on this task?
- What are the roles of public relations practitioners' in your organisation in marketing and promoting Ethiopian tourism?
- What kinds of communication channels and tools do you use in the ministry of tourism?
- Have you used websites and social media pages to disseminate information? If yes, are these websites and social media pages active?

Focus Group Discussion Questions

- What are the functions of the public relations department in the ministry of tourism?
- Do public relations practitioners play their role effectively in promoting and marketing Ethiopian tourism?
- To what extent are public relations practitioners involved in top decision-making?
- Is the department of public relations and communication collaborating with the department of marketing and promotion?
- We never heard of Ethiopian tourism being promoted internationally. Do you use international media to promote internationally

