



**PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALISM IN FDRE MINISTRIES:  
A STUDY ON FOUR MINISTERIAL OFFICES**

**By**

**Getasew Adane**

**SUBMITTED TO**

**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION ADDIS  
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REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER'S OF ARTS IN  
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PRSC)**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND  
COMMUNICATION PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION PROGRAM**

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**Advisor: - Amanuel Gebru (PhD)**

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**ADDIS ABABA  
JUNE 2019**

Approval

**Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Getasew Adane entitled “Public Relations Professionalism in FDRE Ministries: A Study on Four Ministerial Offices” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication (Public Relations and Strategic Communication) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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**Chair of the department or Graduate Program Coordinator**

Declaration

I, Getasew Adane, declare that this thesis entitled “Public Relations Professionalism in FDRE Ministries: A Study on Four Ministerial Offices” is my original work and has not been presented for a MA and/or for other purpose in any university or College.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

*The main objective of this study is to appraise the PRs professionalism practice in FDRE government ministries through such dimensions of PRs professionalism including professional education, availability of standards and code of ethics, autonomy, serving the public interest and existence of professional association. The study assessed four FDRE ministries PRs directorates by using a cross sectional survey study among the existing 20 ministries in the country. It used a descriptive method based on purposive sampling which is part of a non random technique. The study is a mixed type of study but inclined more towards a qualitative style having quantitative aspect. The study result grabbed from 30 questionnaires distributed for the PRs practitioners, five FGDs made with PRs practitioners and five interviews data conducted with three PRs directors in the target study area as well as two informants at AAU, SJC. Since this study is an appraisal about the professionalism of PRs; it is not expected to be a comprehensive study about PRs professionals' themselves or issues related with professionalization uphill of the PRs profession. In relation to the education background of the PRs practitioners the study finding shows among the 30 questionnaire respondents 25 (80.6%) of them have BA/BSc and four (12.9%) of them are MA holders. Again among the total 30 respondents 17 (57%) of the practitioners were teachers, three (9.7%) of them came from journalism and communication, and 10 (33.3%) joined from a wide-ranging of work background. Even though there is a reasonable educational background and prior work experience; the actual PRs practice lacks attention, understood by the public as a government*

*mouthpiece, lacks skillful practitioners, didn't maintain by extensive professional training, follow-up and care from the government and lacks center of excellence for its professional growth and experience sharing among practitioners. Besides to this, the usage of standards for PRs work is found at low level since the actual situation is dominated by customary practice than strategic issues in each organization. Independent work and role in stakeholders' activities also face bottlenecks to the PRs professionalism practice. The only positive result obtained from the study is the existence of practitioners' attitude to serve the public at large. Nonetheless, the FGDs and interviews conducted with PRs practitioners; PRs directors and academicians at AAU, SJC so as to triangulate the data confirm that PRs has to wait long time to attain a professional status. It is found at its infant stage in the FDRE ministries and thus it needs to get favorable situation from the government, nurtured by PRs association and feed by higher institutions. At last, the student researcher believes the study would give a glimpse of facts about PRs professionalism in FDRE government ministries and help to point out the PRs professionalism gap in relation to the actual standard usage and ethical level of the professionals. Besides to this, it surely used as a springboard to further studies either by Ethiopians or overseas informants in the field of PRs professionalism in other governmental offices as well as private organizations.*

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAU	Addis Ababa University
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BPR	Business Process Re-engineering
BSc	Bachelor of Science
BSC	Balance Score Card
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
ECPRA	Ethiopian communicators and PR professionals Association
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD/s	Focus Group Discussion/s
G.C.	Gregorian calendar
GCAO	Government Communication Affairs Office
HSI	Haile Selassie I
HR	Human resource
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
KPIs	Key performance indicators
MA	Master of Arts
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFEC	Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation

MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoT	Ministry of Trade
MoTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MSc	Master of Science
NGO/s	Non-governmental organization/s
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PRs	Public relations
PRO/s	Public relations officer/s
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
PRSC	Public relations and strategic communication
SJC	School of Journalism and Communication
SPSS	Spatial Package for Social Sciences

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

This study was designed to appraise the public relations (PRs) professionalism in FDRE government ministries including Ministry of Finance, Education, Labour and Social Affairs as well as Industry and Trade through such dimensions of PRs professionalism such as professional education, availability of standard and code of ethics, autonomy, serving the public interest and existence of professional association.

#### 1.1.1. Public relations (PRs) Profession

To begin with, Grunig and Hunt (1984) claim “PRs was formed as an ethical, socially responsible and scientifically grounded profession in 1922 when Bernays described the ‘new profession of the PR counsel’. This distinguished it from the journalistically-oriented occupation of press publicity. (p. 3)

Palea (2010) said “PRs is a “hot” subject nowadays and it outlines an extremely complex territory. The strategic role of PRs within companies has been obvious for some time now as PRs no longer represent a “Cinderella” domain. PRs is more than a simple promotion; it represents a combination of multiple strategic and creative elements, in which communication is the key element. (p.19)

On the other hand, Fawkes (2015) states “PRs is seen as an emerging profession, lacking some of the features of law and medicine but similar to journalism or marketing. There are degrees in the subject; it has a body of knowledge to pass on, and professional associations to maintain standards but only for their members. Anyone can practice but the hallmark of a professional is the commitment to social value and high ethical standards.” (p. 74)

Kruckeberg (1998) on his part said “PRs as a profession or occupation has its own set of professional values, curricular needs, beliefs, and theories of both humankind and society.” He underscores “professional values aimed to encourage discipline, excellence and service ethics in the ‘new professions.’” (p. 248)



So, Palea (2012) elucidates “PRs professional associations around the world seek to enhance the professionalism of the field, to support the development of the profession and the practitioners. PRs professional associations are aiming to promote professional standards and ethical principles, to provide a framework for discussing and finding a universally accepted definition and to increase the credibility of the profession.” (p. 17)

One of the manifestations of an occupation moves toward a profession is having an association conversely having an association is a powerful tool to catch professionalism. Within this there is a process which is called professionalization.

“Professionalization is a process that transforms an occupation into a profession and it includes five steps: emergence of an occupation; establishment of schools for training in the domain to which the respective occupation belongs to; establishment of professional associations; launching arrangements for legal recognition of that industry; and adoption of a formal code of professional conduct.” (Palea, 2012, p. 18)

According to the recently defunct Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO) web page, though it was not supported by formal education in higher institutions until recent times compared to other scientific field of studies, PR as a profession is not a new invention in Ethiopia.

The country’s first PRs related entity the Press and Information Desk was established during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I under the then Ministry of Writing in 1941/42. After 30 years, in 1972, the military government (Dergue) established Ministry of Information by which in 1983 it renamed to Ministry of Information and National Advisory. The new ministry was given a responsibility to supervise such government offices: Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), Revolutionary Ethiopian Voice, Press Office, PRs Office, Newspapers and Magazines Distribution Agency and Censorship Service. After 1991 the then Ministry of Information survived as a government publicity organ till 2008/9 and then replaced by GCAO (GCAO, NOVEMBER 2017).

As a result, in all FDRE ministries and their affiliate institutions, the directors or vice directors of the PRs desk were political appointees by GCAO. Besides to this, all governmental organizations hire and fire PRs practitioners by GCAO approval or recognition. Nevertheless, in October 2018, GCAO became one of the defunct offices by proclamation No. 1097/2018 and a new press secretariat organ established under the prime minister's office.

According to proclamation No.1097/2018 there are 20 ministerial portfolio offices and four of them are incorporated in this study so as to maximize the chance of getting dependable data that represent the government PRs practitioners. The ministerial offices that are incorporated in the study willingness to give information and make their doors open to data access was assessed by the student researcher during an observation and consultation time with communication directors from December 03-17, 2018 during the commencement of the actual study.

#### 1.1.2. Brief History of FDRE Ministries under study

In the beginning, Ministry of Finance was among the first ministries established in 1907 by Emperor Menelik II in the history of Ethiopia. When it was established, its name was Ministry of Finance and Treasury and later on it changed its name with merger and separation of other organizations at different times. (MoFED Finance and development bulletin, 2008, pp. 7-15)

Likewise, in October 2018 it was re-structured again by proclamation No.1097/2018 that determines the power and responsibilities of executive organs. As a result, its name was changed from Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) to Ministry of Finance (MoF). The Ministry has its own PRs and Information directorate having totally 14 staff led by a director. The directorate has organized under two desks: PRs desk (6 practitioners) and protocol desk (two employees). Both desks have mutual support staff including two audiovisual professionals, two secretaries and a messenger. (Interview with a senior PRs expert at MoF on December 03, 2018)

The second office included in this study is Ministry of Education. This ministry has a history of more than 100 years but now it was on the way to divide into two ministries by proclamation No. 1097/2018: Ministry of Education (General Aspect) and Ministry of Sciences and Higher Education. During the first visit of the student researcher in December 2018, the ministry PRs and Information directorate had totally 18 staff. These are a director, ten PRs practitioners, two cameraperson, one secretary, three information desk officers and a messenger. But after three months when the student researcher went for data collection purpose in March 2019; the new but expected reshuffle of staff members was underway. Thus, one audio visual personnel and two PRs practitioners of the PRs and Information directorate transferred to the new established ministry. And eight practitioners were at the spot but among the two PRs practitioners who moved to the new ministry one of them participated in questionnaires response voluntarily. (Interview with the MoE PRs and Communication director on December 05, 2018 and March 28, 2019)

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is one of the government ministries existed for more than 60 years and the third office included in this study. It was established during the period of HSI in 1956/57 by Legal Notice No. 15 as “Ministry of Community Development.” Nine years later, in 1966, it was reestablished by Legal Notice No. 46 as the “Ministry of Community Development and Social Affairs” and made to incorporate into its mandate programs pertaining to public life development, social security and labour affairs. Finally, in 1977 it had got the present name “Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs” by Proclamation No. 127/1977. Since then the Ministry has been coordinating the nation’s labour and social affairs and implementing programs. (MoLSA PRs and Communication Directorate booklet, June 2013, p. 1)

During the student researcher first visit to the ministry’s PRs and communication directorate, there were 10 employees. These include a director, three PRs practitioners’, two communication specialists (hired with special sub contract financed by UN offices), two cameramen, one website designer and an information desk officer. But during the actual data collection time in March 2019, two PRs practitioners’ added within the PRs and communication directorate. (Interview with MoLSA PRs and Communication director on December 06, 2018 and March 13, 2019)

The fourth office included in this study is Ministry of Trade and Industry. Separately, Ministry of Trade as an institution was one of the sub departments under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a new concept of modernizing Ethiopia and establishment of ministries during the reign of Emperor Menelik II in 1907. Through time the concept of Industry emerged and Ministry of Trade become a separate entity and developed into Ministry of Trade and Industry. Again, there was a history of separation and merger between the two ministries. After an official separation by proclamation No. 619/2003 in 2010; the two ministries again merged to be one ministry by proclamation No. 1097/2018. But the internal merger process was not actually done during the student researcher first visit in December 2018 and started at the time of the second visit to collect data in March 2019. Both entities have 22 employees together including two directors (since there were two ministries), 11 PRs professionals, three cameraperson, two secretaries, three librarians and an information desk person. But a new structure is on its final phase to be implemented. And the student researcher got access to interview the functioning MoT PRs director. (Interview with MoTI PRs and Communication director on December 17, 2018 and March 28, 2019)

## 1.2. Statement of the problem

PRs is a critical link between the government bodies and the citizens. Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2006) stated that “the diversity of technical skills, organizational goals, and specialized public activities of the function of government public affairs is far greater than traditional PRs practices. Thus, the paramount difference is the public advocacy role played by government communicators to government decision makers. (p. 240)

In October 2018, the FDRE government publicized a new proclamation No. 1097/2018 to redefine the government executive organs duties and responsibilities and established 20 new ministries. These new ministries and their satellite institutions under their jurisdiction undergo a PRs activity either at corporate or directorate level. Having a PRs activity in each governmental office is unquestionably helpful to communicate with stakeholders in particular and the public at large. Nevertheless, the PRs activities in government offices have not been merit based rather lead by political appointees. Besides to this it is practiced by unrelated field of study graduates after receiving a one month

political ideology dominated training that was given by GCAO. This has an impact on the communication activities effectiveness since the job lacks real professionalism. In addition to this, there is no tangible study about the professionalism status of government PRs practitioners whether they are doing their activities professionally based on standards and ethics or engage on it for the sake of accomplishing the tasks assigned to them. Thus, this study tries to appraise the governmental PRs professionalism practice in the selected four FDRE ministries through descriptive approach.

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

#### 1.3.1. Major objective of the study

The major objective of this study is to appraise the PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries.

#### 1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study

1. To reveal the educational background of the PRs practitioners in FDRE ministries.
2. To assess the type of standards the PRs practitioners use in FDRE ministries.
3. To indicate the ethical codes the FDRE ministries PRs practitioners apply in their day to day PRs practice.
4. To analyze the role of professional associations in regard to the PRs workforce practicing in FDRE ministries.

### 1.4. Research Questions

Based on the above listed objective the following study questions originated.

1. What is the professional background of the PRs practitioners' working in FDRE ministries communication directorates?
2. To what extent the PRs practitioners working in FDRE ministries communication directorates apply PRs based on its standards in their day to day practice?
3. How do the PRs practitioners in the communication directorates follow the ethical codes the FDRE ministries in their day to day PRs practice?
4. What roles the PRs practitioners working in FDRE ministries expect from PRs professional association establishment in the country?

### 1.5. Significance of the study

This study is mainly destined to appraise the PRs professionalism in FDRE government ministries. Dent and Whitehead (2002) state “Profession is a concept that has retained some element of status and prestige. Thus, it’s underpinning association with privilege, specialism, autonomy and trust has not been totally removed. It would be altogether too simplistic to suggest that professional status no longer bestows a degree of social elevation. Recognizing this, the term ‘professional’ remains a much sought topic for those agencies and agents seeking wider recognition and value of their particular knowledge specialism” (pp.2 & 3).

As far as the student researcher pursuit of knowledge able to seek out and search for the truth, no study is originated in relation to the PRs practitioners’ professionalism but many about PRs practices in Ethiopia. Thus, the study would give a glimpse of facts about PRs professionalism in FDRE government ministries. In addition, it would help to point out the PRs professionalism gap in government ministries in relation to the actual standard and ethical codes usage. Besides to this, it can be used as a springboard for further studies in the field of PRs professionalism in other governmental offices as well as private organizations in the future.

#### 1.6. Scope of the study

This study predominantly focused on PRs practitioners working in FDRE government ministries by taking four selected offices: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as well as Ministry of Trade and Industry as a result of time factor to assess additional offices at the given study period of only four months. So, it will not cover all the existing 20 ministries of the FDRE government PRs practitioners.

#### 1.7. Limitations of the study

The main limitation in this study was inaccessibility of complete data (both primary and secondary) from different sources. Among others, one ministry PRs directorate director who was part of the sample organizations become hesitant to give interview after so

many positive appointments including at morning and evenings. Due to this, the interview could not conduct. The second one was unavailability of secondary data almost in all of the four ministries PRs directorates about their past history and practices. Equally, due to its scope the study didn't cover the whole PRs practitioners working in 20 FDRE government ministries as well as other forms of government entities. Therefore, its findings may not fully represent all types of governmental PRs professionals except ministerial portfolios.

### 1.8. Structure of the study

The study contain five interrelated chapters: chapter one covers the study background, statement of the problem, study questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, purpose of the study, limitations of the study and structure of the study. Chapter two designated for literature review whereas chapter three covers study methodology, methods and design of the study. While chapter four assigned to data analysis and presentation and chapter five destined to the conclusion and recommendations part.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is dedicated to the literature review part. Besides, it comes up with theoretical and conceptual framework of PRs professionalism.

### 2.1. Brief history of Public relations as a profession

PRs as a concept has no central, identifying founder, national origin or founding date because it focuses on efforts to influence not only opinions but behavior (Newsom et al., 2004, p. 22). But PRs as a self-determining subject has a centenary history in USA.

Ruler (2003) on her side said “PRs is a flourishing industry all over Europe; in some countries the concept is fairly new, but in other countries as a specialism practiced for more than half a century.” (p. 20)

Alternatively, Eno Akpabio (2009) writes about PRs practice history in Africa as follows:

Though the practice of PRs in Africa predates the independence movement PRs scholarship and practice in Africa is not very visible to the rest of the world. This means that its contribution is relatively unacknowledged and invisible. Thus, it makes the practitioners and academics in the continent appear unaware of current theory, study and practice in the field. It also means that academics from other fields rush to fill the void by providing an outsider’s look at the practice. The disadvantage of the lack of local knowledge about PRs in Africa still becomes apparent. There are also efforts, some quite recent from the continent, that exaggerate the achievements of theory and study in Africa. (pp. 351-352)

The statement given by Akpabio clearly shows that due to lack of PRs professionalism in Africa; the knowledge and skill gap is filled by outsiders. This gap should awaken the field informants of the continent to work aggressively to bring change and strive to make PRs profession in Africa an exemplary to the rest of the world based on scientific study.

Fawkes (2015) puts the general trend like this “PRs is seen as an emerging profession, lacking some of the features of law and medicine but similar to journalism or marketing. It has a body of knowledge to pass on and professional associations to maintain standards but only for their members. Anyone can practice but the hallmark of a professional is the commitment to social value and high ethical standards.” (p. 74)

When one sees Ethiopia’s PRs history, there is no national data about its beginning. However, the defunct GCAO website states “the country’s first PRs related entity the Press and Information Desk was established during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I under the then Ministry of Writing in 1941/42.” After 30 years, “in 1972, the new military government (Dergue) established Ministry of Information by which in 1983 it renamed to Ministry of Information and National Advisory.” The new ministry was given



a responsibility to supervise such government offices: Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), Revolutionary Ethiopian Voice, Press Office, PRs Office, Newspapers and Magazines Distribution Agency and Censorship Service. (GCAO, November 2017)

After 1991, Ministry of Information survived as a government publicity organ till 2008/9 and then replaced by GCAO that contributed its own share for the PRs growth in Ethiopia. But it was able to survive for nearly a decade and become defunct in October 2018 and replaced by a new established Press Secretariat Office. Though, the PRs structure is visible for more than 60 years, the PRs professionalism status in the country is at its infant stage.

## 2.2. Theories of Professionalism

There are different theoretical approaches that are functional to explain professional identities. Mouza (2018) states “theory is defined as a statement or group of statements that clarify the mechanics of the world around us and frequently explains relations among phenomena. It constitutes the core body for analysis, assists in a resourceful development of the field, and is a necessity in applying real world problems.” (p.1)

The fundamental theories mostly found in PRs professionalism literatures are treated as follows.

### 2.2.1. Trait theory

Trait theory is one of the major approaches to the study of human personality. Novikova (2013) states “in the framework of this approach, personality traits are defined as habitual patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion that manifest in a wide range of situations. The most important features of traits are relative stability over time, different degrees of expression in different individuals, and influence on behavior.” (p.1)

Stephen (2016) added that “this theory is derived from early writers approach on the professions, amongst other things, made some attempt to describe the characteristics of professions which made them distinct from other occupations. (p.16)

Trait theory underscores relative stability of something for longer time. Grunig and Hunt (1984) state “PRs formed as an ethical, socially responsible and scientifically grounded profession in 1922; when Bernays described the ‘new profession of the PRs counsel.’ This distinguished it from the journalistically-oriented occupation of press publicity. (p.3)

According to Grunig and Hunt PRs celebrated its centenary as a scientific and independent profession in USA though its development is not even all over the World. Nonetheless, based on trait theory idea PRs emerged as a profession separated from different disciplines mainly from journalism in the course of time; then become stable, gets recognition and is progressing to catch a true professional status in different parts of the world.

### **2.2.2. Social identity theory (functionalists approach)**

Stephen (2016) said “functionalism theory proposes that groups and institutions exist because they are functional for society. The theory is described as ‘holistic’ because the reason for the parts taking their form is sought in the character of the whole.” (p.16)

PRs is functioning as a link between government and its publics and vice versa. As a result, its survival depends on communication. Freidson (2001) narrates “the functionalist approach expects professionals (in the course of their education) to become socialized to an ideology that asserts greater commitment to do good work than to an economic gain.” (p.127)

From this approach it is possible to conclude that the value of PRs organizations existence is serving the public and thus PRs practitioners should sacrifice their full talent and commitment without expecting any benefit so as to get recognition for their profession.

### **2.2.3. Constructionist accounts approach (symbolic interactionism)**

The theory focuses on individual actors participated in any specific issue having different perspectives.

Jacobs (2018) said “constructionist accounts approach addresses structural questions and pay heed to the individual accounts of actors involved in any specific issue. Common methods that are used to explore any issue include: discourse analysis that attends to the performative role of language in politics. Foucauldian inspired historical scholarship; and actor network and assemblage theory.” (p. 179)

Saks (2012) relates the theory with professionalism and explicate “interactionism focus on the downside of being micro oriented and viewing a ‘profession’ simply as a socially negotiated label based on occupational ideologies, not least of the knowledge and skills involved.” (p.2)

Based on interactionism theory; PRs as a profession is expected to be a real liaison and negotiation link between different views from individuals up to nationwide and beyond.

### 2.3. Ethical theories of PRs

Ethics is considered to be an essential element of professionalism. Nicholaides (2017) states “ethics is a branch of philosophy whose focal point is on normative value in human behaviour. It seeks to provide a justifiable, rational way to consider what is either good or bad in terms of human actions. (p.7)

The major ethical theories the student researcher used and also found in many professions including PRs are: cognitivism and non-cognitivism, consequentialist or teleological approach and non-consequentialist or deontological approach.

#### **2.3.1. Cognitivism and Non-cognitivism (the expressivists)**

Cognitivism is an inference to our conviction level about the world. Smith (cited in Harold, 2012) says that cognitivism is “the view that when we make a moral judgment we thereby express our beliefs about the way these moral facts are. In forming moral opinions we acquire beliefs, representations of the way the world is morally.” (p.167)

Harold (2012) relates this definition with supporters of the idea “cognitivists are said to hold that moral claims are both meaningful and truth-apt. They believe that moral judgments are beliefs. They distinguish themselves from non-cognitivists in their insistence that moral judgments are indeed a species of belief and are not themselves conative states. (pp. 165-167)

For cognitivists moral is the principal issue in relation to their view about life.

On the other hand, a non-cognitivist theory of ethics suggests that “ethical sentences are neither true nor false, since they are devoid of any truth values. Normative sentences, however, play a role, even though they are deficient in truth-values and this is a fact which is concealed by the indistinct use of such sentences in language. Ethical non-cognitivism maintains that prescriptions have a more singular nature than descriptive sentences, as they possess no truth-values. (Nicolaidis, 2017, p.6)

But “many cognitivists and non-cognitivists agree on the crucial question dividing them about the correct characterization of the psychological state expressed by a sincere utterance of a moral statement.” (Harold, 2012, p. 167)

So, to address the stand point of both cognitivists and non-cognitivists approaches; PRs professionals need to care for the usage of their wording appropriateness in delivering any message to the public.

### **2.3.2. Consequentialist or teleological approach**

Bowen (2012) writes “consequentialism approach as a normative paradigm of ethical decision making tool explains the decision maker to look to the potential consequences for a decision in order to determine what is ethical. Most of the useful consequentialist paradigms fall into the utilitarian school of thought, based on the utility of a decision as predicted by its consequences.” (p. 165)

This means decisions potential consequences should be assessed before implementation.

On the other hand, Benlahcene, A., Zainuddin,R.B., and Ismail, N.S., (2018, p. 33) states:

Teleological ethics also known as consequentialist ethics is the theory of morality that draws moral obligations or duties from what is desirable or good as an end to be attained (teleological from the Greek term telos, “end”; logos, “science”). The teleological perspective holds that an act is morally right if it produces a greater level of good over evil than any alternative act, and it is morally wrong if it does the opposite. The teleological theories accept utility as the basis for morality.

Nicolaides (2017) states “utilitarianism” narrates morality depends on the consequences of human actions and not on the actions that people take. Here an action is considered to be right or wrong depends only on its ultimate consequences and whether the consequences are good or bad. Thus, consequentialism teaches that we should do whatever produces the greatest amount of good consequences in all our actions, which supports the actions that turn out the greatest amount of contentment. (p.8)

So, PRs practitioners in Ethiopia, having a country with diverse society in many aspects, should perform their activity responsibly for good results and professionally predict the consequences of their communication actions. What expected from them is to focus on socially binding issues for peaceful coexistence of the people. This study, as a result, would approach the mere professional ethics by taking those ministries included in the study.

### **2.3.3. Non-consequentialist or deontological approach**

According to Bowen (2012) “non-consequentialist reasoning or deontology is based on a duty to uphold moral principle. Thus, discovering the underlying moral principle behind a decision and supporting it by its ultimate goal of deontology is crucial.” (p.171)

About the deontological theories root the following description states:

Deontological theories can be depicted as duty-based ethical theories. The word “Deon” originates from the Greek word “duty”. They focus on the nature of the action itself and also on its motive in order to figure out if it is right or wrong. In

contrast to the situation with utilitarianism; consequences do not matter in deciding which act is morally right; it is the rules that determine what motive to act from and what action you should make, i.e. what your ethical duty is. (Benlahcene, A., Zainuddin,R.B., and Ismail, N.S., 2018, p. 35)

To sum up, in relation to the theoretical aspects of ethics focusing on teleology and deontology; the first one concerned with the outcomes or consequences of decision or action while the later emphasizes on the decision or action itself. Thus, it raises the question that what really PRs concerns as a profession in a lens of these ethical approaches and indicates it needs a rigorous response in that decisions need to address well before adverse effects to happen and losing many things.

#### 2.4. Models of Professionalism

There are different models in relation to professionalism. Evetts (2010) notifies:

Professional values emphasize a shared identity based on competencies (produced by education, training and apprenticeship) and sometimes guaranteed by licensing. The analysis of professionalism as an occupational value has involved different interpretations; sometimes positive, sometimes negative. The features of occupational professionalism which made it distinctive and different to organizational means of controlling work and workers were somewhat idealistic and based on a model and image of historical relations. (pp. 5-8)

Evetts argues occupational professionalism has a liberal approach than organizational style of professionalism with its own manifestations stated earlier.

On the other hand, B.V. Ruler (2005) outlined the models of professions applicable to PRs as follows:

1. Knowledge model, in which professionalization develops from expertise, with a commitment to both the client and society;
2. Status model, whereby an organized elite secure power and autonomy;

3. Competition model, which focuses on the client's demands and evaluation in competition with other professionals; and
4. Personality model is suggested as the development of experts who build a reputation with clients by virtue of expertise and personal charisma.

**Table 1 The four models of professionalism**

<b>Model Variables</b>	<b>Relationship with client</b>	<b>Role of theory</b>	<b>Role of education</b>	<b>Role of association</b>
<b>Knowledge model</b>	Directive; expert decides what to do	Generates pre-defined body of Knowledge	Generates pre-defined expertise	Infrastructure for development of identity
<b>Status model</b>	Directive; expert decides what to do	Generates status and autonomy	Generates status and autonomy	Infrastructure for licensing & promotion of interest
<b>Competition model to do how</b>	Interactive; expert and client interact on what to do	Generates broad reservoir of new knowledge	Generates broad palette of knowledge options	Infrastructure for knowledge options
<b>Personality model</b>	Interactive; expert and client interact on what to do	Mentality is more important	Generates analytical and creative power	Infrastructure for experiences

(V.B.Ruler, 2005, p.161)

On the other hand, Evetts (2012, p.11) divided the professionalism models into two: organizational professionalism and occupational professionalism.

**Table 2 Comparison between organizational and occupational professionalism**

<b>Organizational professionalism</b>	<b>Occupational professionalism</b>
•discourse of control used increasingly by managers in work organizations	•discourse constructed within professional groups
• rational-legal forms of authority	• collegial authority
• standardized procedures	• discretion & occupational control of the work
•hierarchical structures of authority and decision-making	•practitioner trust by both clients and employers
• managerialism	• controls operationalized by practitioners
•accountability and externalized forms of regulation, target setting and	• professional ethics monitored by institutions and associations

performance review	
•linked to Weberian models of organization	• located in Durkheim’s model of occupations as moral communities

This study touches both organizational and occupational professionalism discourses since the study areas are government ministries and looks for the professionalism of PRs practice in Ethiopia.

## 2.5. Conceptual Framework of Public Relations Professionalism

### 2.5.1. What is Professionalism?

Different researchers define professionalism based on the perspective they stand for. For Andersen and Pederson (2012):

Professionalism is typically associated with specialized technical knowledge acquired from a formal educational program; ethical responsibility; working for the common good and lifetime careers. The first element in our understanding of professions is that professions have a specialized, theoretical knowledge. “Specialized” means that only the profession has the knowledge. “Theoretical” means that the knowledge involves general understanding of relevant concepts and causal relationships within the field, but the knowledge can’t be codified because of the complexity of the area and the corresponding need for discretionary assessment. And the second element in the definition of professionalism is the existence of professional norms. (p.47)

So, it couldn’t possible to talk about professionalism without including technical knowledge acquired from education based on ethics.

Freidson (2001) also expounds “professionalism is the most effective way to organize work when the tasks to perform or problems to work on lack of uniformity and it require ‘discretionary specialization’ where special knowledge and skills are needed. This special knowledge has a foundation in abstract theories and concepts. (pp. 23-24)



He further states “professions are privileged, autonomous occupational groups that they have gained control of specific, socially relevant sections of work. A profession can define professional education and controls the entry to a market. Today, the focus is less on professions than on professionalism as a specific mode of work.” (ibid, p.37)

To shape irregularities of tasks professionalism is a good means to organize it. When this happens professionalism will get focus from different organizations whether they are governmental or non-governmental by their nature.

Evetts (2012) also narrates “professionalism in occupations and professions implies the importance of trust in economic relations in modern societies with an advanced division of labour. It requires professionals to be worthy of trust, to put clients first, to maintain confidentiality and not use their knowledge for fraudulent purposes. In return for professionalism in client relations, some professionals are rewarded with authority, privilege and high status. (p.1)

This notion of Evetts shows professionalism requires or attaches itself with high ethical standards.

Meyer and Leonard (2014) assert “professions are set apart from other career paths by their status and public respect which allow them a proportionate degree of autonomy in decision making. In order for PRs practitioners to enjoy similar autonomy and recognition, professional status is essential.” (p.2)

So, to achieve autonomous professional status PRs practitioners should work hard to attain professionalism.

### 2.5.2. Profession, Occupation and Professionalism

Though there is an overlap between profession, occupation and professionalism; equally there is a marked difference between them. Evetts (2011) starts to explain beginning from historical roots “the analysis of professionalism as an occupational value in sociology has a very long history. (p.409)

Nolin (2008) also conveys “professionalization and professionalism has been dominated by sociological traditions like social interactionism, Marxism and social contextualism” (p. 9). All this indicates professionalism is long rooted.

B.V. Ruler (2005) on her part clarifies “the term ‘profession’ derives from the Latin word, *profiteor*, which means ‘to declare openly where you as a craftsman stand for’. The sociological study of professions as a special category of occupations is a long standing field of academic study with its own history and distinctive comparative and historical modes of analysis. (p. 160)

On the other hand, Lester (2014) states an occupation has “a Latin root *occupare* (to occupy), is an activity that takes up time in a normally remunerative role that occupies a person’s working hours. It is simply be concerned with how the time is spent and therefore with factors such as quality and efficiency. This perspective is utilitarian and it reflected in the way that the sector skills councils and their predecessors have gone about describing and creating standards for the work of occupations.” (p.2)

So, it is clear that profession is more related to academic based activities; whereas occupation is delimited to consumption of time to accomplish any task.

In relation to professionalism ideology Freidson (2001) states:

The ideology of professionalism that is so appealing to occupational groups and their practitioners includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge, and the power to define the nature of problems in that area as well as the control of access to potential solutions. It also includes an image of collegial work relations of mutual assistance and support rather than hierarchical, competitive or managerialist control, autonomy in decision making and discretion in work practices, decision making in the public interest unfettered only marginally by financial constraints and in some cases self regulation or the occupational control of work. (p. 232)

This notion about professionalism matches with the idea by which Evetts stated earlier in table 2.

According to Ericsson (cited in Harald, 2008) “today almost all sorts of human performances have been examined and the central results are: first, expertise is domain specific; skills in one domain usually cannot be transferred to a different domain. Second, there is a 10-year rule; it takes about 10 years of “deliberate practice” training and experience to develop excellence in a domain.” (pp. 366-367)

So, as the saying goes “experience makes perfect” PRs attained professionalism status in USA, Western Europe, Australia, South Africa and the like while it is struggling in other parts of the World.

To strengthen this idea Yang and Taylor (2014) affirm “PRs is undergoing a professionalization process in many countries. Professionalization occurs when there is a specialized knowledge in an area that identifies who is qualified to provide a service. It helped occupations solidify their role as valued societal functions because members are expected to provide a consistent, predictable quality of service.” (pp. 509. & 511)

Existences of specialized know how in a specific area of science is taken as one of the criteria to enter into professionalization process.

To do so, professional associations, often invisible to the public, play crucial roles in the professionalization process. Associations create normative values, standardize practices and present a unified identity to both practitioners and organizations that use their services. The professionalization of a field allows certain occupational practices to be acknowledged by society and for maintaining autonomy in the practice. One step toward greater societal respect and recognition is the creation of strong professional associations. Professional associations revolve around occupational control and socialization. They define professional work, establish boundaries and demarcate fields, standardize work methods and form professional loyalties. (Yang and Taylor, 2014, p. 511)

Thus, the professionalization of PRs is a must to do task so as to attain recognition from the society and independence from any domination.

The following definition states: “profession is a concept that has retained some element of status and prestige. The term ‘professional’ has been subject to significant cultural and social disruption and redefinition, thus its underpinning association with privilege, specialism, autonomy and trust has not been totally removed. Recognizing this, the term ‘professional’ remains a much sought topic for those agencies and agents seeking wider recognition and value of their particular knowledge specialism. (Dent and Whitehead, 2002, pp.2-3)

As indicated above there are many cultural and social ups and downs; professionalism relates with recognition. This recognition embedded to status and prestige.

On the other hand, Scott (2008) takes professions as “institutional agents that define, interpret and apply institutional elements.” But he said “professionals are not the only but the most influential contemporary crafters of institutions.” (p.223)

Kruckeberg (1998) relates the idea of profession with PRs “professionalism is important for PRs field because it gives to the PRs practitioners’ monopoly and autonomy for defining the field, which would mean that PRs can no longer be defined from outside serving whose and whatever interests.” (p. 235)

There are claims from the PRs field informants to get a professional status. One element of their claim to a professional status is an emphasis on well-qualified practitioners.

Baines and Watson (cited in Theaker, 2004, p.56) suggested three models of professional education.

The first is apprenticeship or pre-technocratic, where professional education takes place mainly on the job. The emphasis is on practical techniques. The technocratic model is more associated with professions and consists of a systematic knowledge base founded on academic disciplines, the application of that base to practice and

supervised placements in practice. The post-technocratic model emphasizes professional competence and bridges the gap between education and employment.

These models are crucially important to know the level of PRs professionalism in a specified environment.

Due to this, Palea (2012) said “PRs professional associations around the world seek to enhance the professionalism of the field, to support the development of the profession and the practitioners. PRs professional associations are aiming to promote professional standards and ethical principles, to provide a framework for discussing and finding a universally accepted definition and to increase the credibility of the profession.” (p.17)

She further illuminates “professionalization is a process that transforms an occupation into a profession and it includes five steps: emergence of an occupation, establishment of schools for training in the domain to which the respective occupation belongs to, establishment of professional associations, launching arrangements for legal recognition of that industry and adoption of a formal code of professional conduct.” (ibid, p.18)

In Ethiopia, since the start of PRs practice in government offices it counted more than 70 years and PRs emerged as a distinct field of study in higher institutions with in the last decade, there is an interest group that actively works to establish a professional association for the professionalization of the field.

Fawkes (2015) said most professions possess the following qualities: “esoteric knowledge (theoretical or technical) not available to the general population; commitment to social values, such as health or justice; national organizations to set standards, control membership and liaise with wider society; as well as extra-strong moral commitment to support professional values.” (pp. 62-63)

The issues discussed in relation to profession, occupation and professionalism wrapped up as follows by Shapiro (2005) “There is a need to uphold certain standards that leads to the institutionalization of professional norms. Despite the information asymmetry, an occupation can hardly keep its status as a profession in the long run if sloppy practices are wide spread among individual professionals. The professions defend their status by

boasting careful and competitive selection procedures, training and credentials and by establishing protocols, specifying best practices, and creating codes of ethics to limit agent discretion.” (p. 275)

### 2.5.3. Ethics and Professionalism

Ethical professionalism is important because it minimizes risk to professionals and organizations. Bowen (2012) states:

Ethics and government PRs intersect at a function called issues management. The public policy issues faced by governments, legislators, regulatory agencies and their counterparts at various levels of government across any national setting must be monitored and managed with vigilance. It is obvious PRs practitioners’ working either for an elected official, a government agency, a nonprofit membership association or NGO faces with ethical challenges regularly. So, governmental PRs professionals should constantly strive to include ethical analyses in their issues management, to identify ethical issues and to use the decision making frameworks of ethics. (pp.158 & 163)

In order to overcome challenges related with ethics; government PROs should assess the loopholes vigilantly.

On the other hand, “PRs practitioners have responsibilities to speak to the greater good whether they like it or not. To do so, professionals of PRs can use the following five ‘pillars’ that ‘carry the weight of ethical decision making in PRs’: veracity (tell the truth), non-maleficence (do no harm), beneficence (do well), confidentiality (respect privacy) and fairness (to be fair and socially responsible).” (Parsons, 2008, pp.14-21)

The PRs Society of America (PRSA) also sketches out the following five professional values’ that are expected from a PRs professional. These are advocacy, honesty, expertise, independence, loyalty and fairness. (PRSA, March 2019)

#### 2.5.4. Key performance indicators of PRs Professionalism

There are many different roles, functions, activities, works, results, feedbacks, practitioners' performances, competencies, level of ethics and other related issues that can be measured in the PRs profession. But each of these issues has their own distinct metrics. According to Cyber Alert (2015) "measuring different goals requires different metrics because the goal determines the metric. Like volume goals for visibility require volume metrics; quality goals require qualitative metrics and reputation as well as influence goals require perception/belief metrics. Metrics for PRs measurement sometimes called key performance indicators (KPIs). (p.10)

The focus of this study is to appraise PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries. To do so, PRs as a profession evaluated from different perspectives. Among others practitioners' competency and autonomy, availability of work standards, level of ethics, the practitioners willingness to serve the public, existence of PRs association included in the study. Most of the metrics incorporated are inclined to a qualitative type. The student researcher also add some factors in relation to the profession itself, the professionalism status of the practitioners and PRs professionalization process in the country through a lens of government PRs in ministerial offices.

##### **2.5.4.1. PRs Competencies**

PRs as a profession have many competencies. Andersen and Pedersen (2012) believe "many providers of public services are professionals. They belong to occupations with high levels of specialized, theoretical knowledge and strong intra-occupational norms. This means that their motivation and behavior potentially differ from other public employees." (p.46) This means public service professionals are expected to have high competency in their occupation.

On the other hand, Grit, Guit and Sijde (2012) state “a competency is a combination of knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviour needed for proper functioning in a given professional situation. To develop competencies, it is a must to constantly reflect on what we know, what we can do, what we want and what we are doing.” (p.14)

Respect to clients by practitioners also raised in relation to competency. Parsons (2008) states “respecting clients, communities and ourselves requires us to exhibit competence in our professional activities since we provide a service to society. In doing so, the society expect a certain level of competence in our ability. In a professional sense, there are two main objectives to achieving competence in any field. In PRs the primary one is to protect the public and the second one is to secure the future of PRs image as an ethical pursuit. (pp. 55-58)

Beyond the above definitions and characteristics of PRs competencies; the European PRs professionals’ approved a competence matrix having six measurements. Tench et al (2013) listed the knowhow, skill and personal attribute to each competency as follows.

**Table 3 European PRs professionals’ competence matrix**

Competency	Knowledge	Skills		Personal attribute
		Hard	Soft (Human & Conceptual)	
<b>1.Counseling</b> (build relationships, consulting, coaching)	Languages Intercultural theory & issues Learning curves of co-workers Personality profiles	Diversity Consulting Consensus building Negotiation	Team building Conflict resolution Persuasive communication Motivation	Empathy Trustworthiness Team minded Negotiation Sympathetic Political intuition Authenticity, Integrity, Humour Patience/tolerance Participative/Sociable Authority, Calmness Self-criticism Responsiveness Self awareness



<b>2.Organizing/ executing</b> (planning, making it happen)	Corporate strategy Financial systems Planning systems Project management	Strategy Planning Project and Time management Organizational skills Creativity with budgets	Strategic thinking Planning Decision making	Composure, Energy Competitive, Leadership, Proactive Enthusiasm Perseverance Self reliance Multi-tasking Agility/Flexibility Results orientation
<b>3.Managing</b> (cross functional awareness, business focus)	Management Economics Branding, Law Knowing own organization systems Risk, Stake holder, Public affairs, change management Language of the Board Understanding of own	Mapping Leadership	Negotiation Influencing Delegating Managing people Sense of timing (when to communicate)	Confidence Global & strategic vision Diplomacy Experience Courage Risk Taking Stress resistance Adaptability
<b>4.Performing and creating</b> (craft, e.g. writing, design, presentation)	New technologies Communication processes Web 2.0 tools and effects on communication Media systems Intercultural aspects of communication messages and products Global media environment	Writing, Editing, Design skills Computer and Multimedia skills Visioning Verbal coherence /concision	Communication Presentation Creative problem solving Story telling	Communicative Entrepreneurial Supporting diverse & differing perceptions Initiative Lifelong learner Innovative & creative Enquiring Openness Pioneering
<b>5.Analyzing/ interpreting</b>	study HR policies &	Critical thinking	Forecasting Listening	Curiosity Questioning

(study, listening)	communication Prediction Monitoring & Web monitoring tools Listening, understanding interpreting & recognizing trends	Reading comprehension Study Social environmental analysis		Good judgment Strong instincts
<b>6.Supporting</b> (vision & standards, ethics, developing others)	Corporate governance Ethics/ethical frameworks Legal issues		Visioning	Ethical, Objectivity Socially responsible Authority, Integrity Honesty, Influence Reputation, Sincerity Sensitivity/humanity

(Tench et al, 2013, p. 20)

The table indicates the six competencies have their own distinct characteristics. Counseling is about building relationships, consulting and coaching; organizing/executing is related with planning and making it happen; managing has a link with cross functional awareness and business focus; performing and creating duly attach with craft, like writing, designing and presenting; analyzing/interpreting is much connection with studying and listening while supporting has an association with vision & standards, ethics as well as developing others.

#### 2.5.4.2. Standards of PRs Practitioners

Standards are reference points to measure activities credibly with distinctive character. Tench and Laville (2006) listed the Global Alliance of PRs associations guiding principles of professionalism characteristics. These are “mastery of a particular intellectual skill through education and training, acceptance of duties to a broader society than merely one’s clients/employers and objectivity and high standards of conduct and performance.” (p. 107) Thus, without mastery of certain skill based on education and training for the benefit of the public one couldn’t be considered as a professional.

In relation to standards researchers like Waddington (2015) argued that “there are very few standards in PRs and it is surprising for a business that is tasked with the critical role of managing the reputation of an organization.” He said “time served as the typical measure of competence but not all experience is equal and when media and technology are evolving so quickly it’s a lousy metric. Without a competency framework it is difficult to benchmark one practitioner against another or apply a strategic approach in building educational, training or continuous professional development programs.” (p.36)

But beyond time and other old measurements of the PRs activities, the modern time PRs professionalism consider competencies as standards of the profession.

#### 2.5.5. Roles of PRs Practitioners

PRs practitioners have different role in accordance with the organization they are working for. Among the roles they played earlier Gregory (2001) listed the following:

There are two dominant roles of PRs practitioners: communication technician and the communication manager. The communication technician is often a highly skilled individual carries out communication programs and activities such as writing news releases, editing house-magazines and developing websites. They probably do not undertake study and will not be involved in decision making. On the other hand, the communication manager is in the dominant coalition, plans, manages and facilitates the communication program, counsels’ management and makes policy decisions. They can also find themselves in different roles. (p. 44)

Nowadays, the technician and manager roles of PRs practitioners became awkward and began replaced by other vibrant roles.

Vercic et al (2001) found four typical roles of European PRs “managerial, operational, reflective and educational roles.” (p. 380) Tampere (2008) added an “integrative role” as a fifth role of European PRs. “Integrative role is a role of an interpreter, dealing with the problems that are rising when different national cultures, religious views and worldviews are coming across.” (p.84)

Beyond all these roles of PRs practitioners, Tench & Laville (2006) said “there are a huge variety of job titles including PRs/corporate communications consultant, executive, manager, director, officer, advisor, counselor, etc.” But in general “there are three simple categories of where people work in PRs: in house (employed by an organization), consultancy (agency where practitioners work for one or more different clients for a fee) and freelance practitioner where an individual works for himself and is employed by in house departments or consultancies on a short term contract basis, either for a specific project or to fill in during peaks in demand or because staff absence requires additional resource.” (p. 97)

#### 2.5.6. Nature of Government PRs

Government PRs is a critical link between the government bodies and the citizens. Cutlip, Center & Broom (2006) expound “the diversity of technical skills, organizational goals and specialized public activities of the function of government public affairs is far greater than that of traditional PRs practices. The paramount difference is the public advocacy role played by government communicators to government decision makers.” (p. 240)

The avowal shows that these days government communicators’ should aware as a professional they should play higher roles beyond daily routine activities.

On the other hand, Bowen (2012) states “Government PRs is the type of communication function deals with the interaction of the citizenry with the government, governmental regulators, and the legislative and regulatory arms. It helps to facilitate communication with constituencies and governmental publics. Both government PRs and corporate public affairs have to deal with strategic issues on matters of public policy, meaning how their organizations interact with government and constituents.” (pp. 159-170)

Thus, government PRs practitioners have to have a competency of managing so as to create better communication between the organization they represent and the public.

##### **2.5.6.1. Responsibilities of government PROs (communicators)**

There are different responsibilities for government communicators based on their job levels. However, Martinelli (2012) indicates “government communicators at all levels should incorporate all three major government PRs purposes: the mandatory (media

relations, public reporting and citizen responsiveness), the pragmatic (customer and client responsiveness and outreach activities) and the political (increasing public support) into one master document. Such planning helps government employees identify and specify their priorities to support the vision, mission and goals of the larger agency or department.” (p. 144)

The idea raised above points support to an organization is the major purpose of government PRs so communicators should be aware about this responsibility.

Bowen (2012, p. 172), on his part, advises “government PRs practitioners should seek to avoid creating or working in the type of environment in which any group member is afraid to question assumptions, voice objections, or raise a point for ethical analysis whenever they feel it is warranted, no matter what level in the organization the person occupies.” Thus, they are expected to stand on the side of the truth and to the voiceless.

#### **2.5.6.2. Government PRs practice in Ethiopia**

Different studies have made in relation to the PRs practices in Ethiopia. Among others: Biniyam Wubishet (2006) said “the treatment of PRs information in Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) and the study result found out that the institution journalists do not consult other sources to cross check the information they received from government PRs professionals. Thus, there are so many flaws in relation to news sent from government PRs/communication practitioners.” (p.59)

Shimelis Mulatu (2017) examined “the PRs and communication practices of the defunct GCAO in line with its responsiveness to the diverse information needs of the public. From this study the researcher concluded though GCAO assumes special responsibility for coordinating government PRs/communication activities, its decision making power is weak.” (p.71)

On the other hand, Spurgeon & Bereket (2018) made a study on employees’ perception and practice of PRs within 11 municipality offices that found in different zones of the country. The researchers argued that “in Ethiopia the government is focusing on the significance of PRs departments to all governmental organizations throughout the

country.” But “there exists low understanding of the profession by the employees as well as there are few studies carried out in relation to PRs.” (p.438)

Nevertheless, the student researcher couldn't able to find any study done to fill the PRs professionalism gap in Ethiopia. So, this study aimed at appraising the PRs professionalism in FDRE government ministries through such dimensions of professional -ism PRs including professional education, availability of standards and code of ethics, autonomy, willingness of the practitioners to serve the public interest and existence of PRs professional association in the country. Thus, the study believed to fill the knowledge gap in the study topic, give an insight about the issue under study and initiate further studies on PRs professionalism in other perspectives.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the study methodology, methods used for the study and the study design that the student researcher employed to collect data for the research questions and manage research objectives towards analyzing the obtained data so that appropriate finding can be drawn.

### 3.1. Methodology

This study is focused on appraising the PRs professionalism in FDRE government ministries. To do so, it thoroughly chooses a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative methodology to generate a comprehensive result from the study.

Along with this, amid the three strategies cited by Creswell (2014) about mixed methods, i.e., sequential, concurrent and transformative; concurrent procedures are chosen for this study. By this strategy the student researcher link quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. At the same time the student researcher collect both forms of data and then integrated the information at the time of interpretation of an overall results. (p.15)

The idea of combination is one of the techniques of triangulation of data within the study.

In relation to the methodology applied, Creswell (2014) states:

Qualitative study is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. While quantitative study is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. And mixed methods study is an approach to inquiry involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a study problem than either approach alone. (p. 32)

### 3.2. Methods

The study uses descriptive method in order to depict what is going on in relation to the PRs professionalism practice in FDRE government ministries. Neuman (2007) states “descriptive method provides a detailed highly accurate picture; locate new data that

contradict past data; create a set of categories or classify types; clarify a sequence of steps or stages; document a causal process or mechanism and report on the back ground or context of a situation.” (p. 12)

So, this study tries to illustrate the actual picture of PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries and thus it locates new data for the reader.

### 3.3. Research Design

Durrheim (2004) states study design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between study questions and the execution of the study strategy. (p. 29)

The study, hence aimed to appraise the PRs professionalism in FDRE government ministries. Since the number of ministries at federal government level is far reaching to cover by this study due to multiple factors including time frame to assess all of them; it is designed based on cross sectional survey study so as to represent a wide range of population. The study employs cross sectional design so as to show what is actually happening in relation to PRs professionalism practice in FDRE ministries PRs directorates rather than studying longitudinally for an extended period of time.

In relation to this, Mathers, Fox and Hunn (2009) explained:

Surveys are a very traditional way of conducting study. They are particularly useful for non-experimental descriptive designs that seek to describe reality. Usually surveys are restricted to a representative sample of the potential group that the researcher is interested in, for reasons of practicality and cost-effectiveness. Surveys have internal and external validity, are efficient, can cover geographically spread samples, have ethical advantages since the individuals included in a study merely be exposed to events that occur in the real world, can be combined with other methods to produce richer data like FGDs or in-depth interviews. (pp. 5-6)



Thus, among the newly restructured 20 FDRE ministries in October 2018; four ministries selected for this study based on their willingness to access data.

Kraemer (cited in Glasow, 2005) identified three distinguishing characteristics of survey study. First, survey study is used to quantitatively describe specific aspects of a given population in which it often involve examining the relationships among variables. Second, the data required for survey study are collected from people, therefore, they are subjective. Finally, survey study uses a selected portion of the population from which the findings can later be generalized back to the population. (p.1)

Having this in mind, this study applied a survey on four FDRE ministries and its result has an implication to the rest of the population, i.e., more resembles in other ministries. The study also used a cross sectional study design as Neuman (2007) explains “it is usually the simplest and least costly alternative. This type of approach takes a onetime snapshot. Its disadvantage is survey cannot capture social processes or changes. It can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. But it is most consistent with a descriptive approach.” (p. 17)

So as to analyze the data collected from the study areas the student researcher used a convergent mixed method. As (Creswell, 2014) cited by this data analysis method both quantitative and qualitative data collected, analyzed separately and then compared if the results confirm or disconfirm each other. (pp. 268-272)

As a result, first an open ended questionnaire results are reported then FGDs and in-depth interview discussions are presented to indicate some truths about the PRs professionalism situation in FDRE ministries. But the student researcher believes that both quantitative and qualitative data have equal status in this mixed method of study.

### 3.4. Sampling Techniques

The study applied a purposive sampling technique which is part of a non random technique so as to pick out which FDRE ministries had to be included in the study.

Macnamara (2005, p.46) states “purposive sampling is a technique used when there is a defined purpose and it may be decided to focus on large high value customers.”

With this technique, the student researcher asked different ministries PRs and communication directorate offices with formal letter written from AAU, SJC in December 2018 to get their permission for data accessibility. At the end, it has got willingness from four ministries namely Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs as well as Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Due to insufficient number of PRs practitioners existed in each ministry to take samples census is applied for the actual data collection technique. On the other hand, questionnaire is used as a tool for quantification but it has a shortcoming to give detail information about the actual study targets. So, to amend this weakness the student researcher prepared a questionnaire having mostly open ended questions.

### 3.5. Data sources and Data collection instruments

The student researcher collected all the available sources of information from the informants (primary data) and documents (secondary data). Primary data were collected from the selected four ministries through structured in-depth interview, FGDs and entirely open ended questionnaires. Whereas secondary data were taken from different books, e-books, journals, bulletins, booklets, brochures, leaflets and websites.

Among others three booklets, three bulletins, two leaflets, numerous books mostly e-books and web pages are used to complete this study.

#### **3.5.1. Interviews**

Interviews are a valuable method of study for both planning and evaluating and can be used with a wide range of stakeholder groups. The main limitation of interviews is the demand on time for both the interviewer and interviewee. Interviews are mostly used for qualitative study with small sample sizes and particularly relevant to high level stakeholders. (Macnamara, 2005, p.47)

Kothari (2014) also claims “the method of collecting information through personal interviews is usually carried out in a structured way. Structured interviews involve the use of a set of predetermined questions and highly standardized techniques of recording. It follows a rigid procedure laid down, asking questions in a form and order prescribed. (p. 97)

Based on this, a maximum of one hour in depth interview having six main and other 10 follow up questions were prepared for the PRs and communication directors of each ministry included in this study. The student researcher succeeded to achieve three interviews among the selected four PRs directors; the fourth one resisted to be willing for interview after many appointments. Thus, the student researcher made totally a 2:10 hour interview with the PRs directors including MoLSA for 56 minutes, MoE for 32 minutes and MoT for 42 minutes.

In addition to this, to make the study more relevant, dependable and utilize it for triangulation purpose two informants from AAU, SJC contacted for a maximum of one hour in depth interview with six basic and four additional sub questions. The two informants attain their MA in journalism and communication studies; one of them has a PhD in communication studies while the other is on the way to finalize the PhD paper work. Both have rich experience in communication and teaching mainly in AAU.

As a result, a total time of 1:30 hour discussion was made with the two informants at their respective offices at AAU, SJC. Then, the data collected from the PRs directors through structured interview in Amharic language transcribed, translated into English language, coded and analyzed qualitatively. Whereas, the interview made with AAU, SJC informants in English language is directly transcribed, coded and analyzed accordingly.

### **3.5.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

FGDs are conducted with a small group of respondents and they provide qualitative information. There is no fixed number of focus groups that should be conducted. This decision is usually based on segmentation, i.e., ensuring that groups from different

segments of the target population studied. A benefit of conducting study with small groups is that the method often prompts discussion between participants, rather than relying only on the interviewer's questions. A comment by one participant may prompt others to recall something or provide their point of view either agreeing or disagreeing. This discussion component is useful for testing the validity of views. (Macnamara, 2005, p.48)

The discussion wrapped up when the discussants reached at saturation level; i.e. raise all their concerns and issues to tell in relation to the issue studied.

FGDs having six (6) questions with more than 11 sub questions was prepared and discussed with each ministry PRs practitioners based on a one and half an hour budget. After getting the consent of their respective directors; the student researcher contacted each ministry PRs practitioners and succeeded to handle five FGDs within four ministries. With the recent government structural change; the ministry of Trade and Industry merger didn't become effective till the first week days of April 2019 thus the student researcher forced to make two separate FGDs in each entity which are found in different locations. During the discussion time in all of the five FGD tables the student researcher played both a facilitator and note taker role by the quest of the PR practitioners themselves. Personal cell phone and lap top were used to record the discussions and discussants had the right to give an idea at any time as well as disagree and left the discussion if they believe it is unethical.

At MoTI, in its industry part five practitioners among the total seven staff attended the for 1:40 hour discussion and in its trade section three out of the total four discussed for 1:20 hour; at MoLSA five practitioners out of total six made a 2:10 hour hot discussion; whereas at MoF among the six PRs staff four practitioners come together for one hour discussion. At last at MoE among the total eight PRs practitioners five of them debated for 1:30 hour on issues related with PR professionalism. Generally, the student researcher could be able to manage five FGDs with 22 practitioners out of the total studied 31 practitioners totally for 7 hours and 40 minutes time with 71 % success rate of attendants.

### **3.5.3. Questionnaires**

According to Walliman (2011) “Questionnaires are a suitable tool for gaining quantitative data but can also be used for qualitative data. This method of data collection is usually called a survey. Using a questionnaire enables the researcher to organize the questions and receive replies without actually having to talk to every respondent. There is also no personal influence of the researcher and embarrassing questions can be asked with a fair chance of getting a true reply.” (p. 97)

In order to triangulate the study result, the student researcher prepared a twenty (20) questions package mostly open ended questionnaires having an additional ten follow up questions. The questionnaires were administered to all existing PR practitioners (excluding support staff) working in the four ministries and totally 31 questionnaires disseminated in March 2019. Among them 30 of the papers filled and returned to the student researcher.

### **3.6. Data Analysis, Ethical issues and Coding**

The data was analyzed using different data analysis techniques. The questionnaires administered were more inclined to qualitative type since most of the questions are open ended. But the student researcher maneuvers the data mathematically by using SPSS software version 25. All in all, interviews and FGDs are qualitative data and they analyzed thematically based on content analysis procedure.

To fulfill the study ethics and secure the informants anonymity, their real identity replaced by their job levels and other reasonable codes during analysis and presentation time. Finally, the result revealed based on the given codes consequently.

### **3.7. Reliability and Validity**

To make the primary data collected from four ministries PRs and communication directorates reliable and valid; the student researcher used a mixed methodology. With

this approach a pragmatic descriptive method is used and three data collection instruments applied for the purpose of triangulation of the final study result.

Neuman (2007, p. 115) states:

Reliability and validity are central issues in all measurement. Both concerns with how concrete measures are connected to constructs. Reliability and validity are salient because constructs in social theory are often ambiguous, diffuse, and not directly observable. Reliability means dependability or consistency. It suggests that the same thing is repeated under very similar conditions. On the other hand, validity suggests truthfulness and refers to the match between a construct or the way a researcher conceptualizes the idea in a conceptual definition and a measure. It refers to how well an idea about reality "fits" with actual reality.

To keep the reliability of this study, the student researcher took all cautious measures not to make either transcription or coding errors by cross checking and editing every time. In addition to this, the dimensions of PRs professionalism like professional education, availability of standard and code of ethics, autonomy, willingness to serve the public interest and existence of professional association applied accordingly.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This is the fourth chapter of the study assigned to data presentation, analysis and discussion collected through questionnaires, FGDs and in-depth interviews from the four ministries under study. The data presentation and analysis is conducted based on triangulation method and it starts with a questionnaire data then moved to FGDs and in-depth interviews collected from the four ministries. At the end it comes up with the views of two AAU, SJC informants' interview included for data validation.

### 4.1. Presentation and analysis of the questionnaire, FGDs and in-depth interview data collected from the four FDRE ministries and AAU informants

There are totally 30 respondents for the questionnaires distributed for 31 PRs practitioners working in four FDRE ministries. Therefore, the whole data analyzed based on SPSS software version 25 and the result presented as follows.

#### 4.1.1. Gender distribution of PRs practitioners

The gender distribution of the PRs practitioners within the four FDRE ministries under study is manifested by males' dominance.

**Table 4 Gender distribution of PRs practitioners in FDRE ministries**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
Female	5	16.1	16.1	19.4
Male	25	80.6	80.6	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

To put it explicitly, among the total 30 respondent PRs practitioners working in the PRs directorates of four FDRE ministries, 25 (80.6%) of them are males and only five are females. Among the five female practitioners; two of them work at MoLSA, the other three found at MoF and MoTI (equal one distributed at its trade and industry part). By and large, the actual PRs practice is dominated by males but the reason behind needs further research including its implication to the PRs professionalism in Ethiopia.

#### 4.1.2. Education level of PRs practitioners

**Table 5 Education level of PRs practitioners in FDRE ministries**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
BA	21	67.7	67.7	71.0
BSc	4	12.9	12.9	83.9
Diploma	1	3.2	3.2	87.1
MA	4	12.9	12.9	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

There is a good tendency in relation to educational background of the practitioners; 25 (80.6%) of them have either BA or BSc, four of them are MA holders and there is one diploma holder practitioner. Among the total four MA participants in the questionnaire study MoE has two PRs practitioners having MA degree. This type of experience adds value to the professionalization process of PRs in the future especially to develop the profession based on a research.

In relation to research works the AAU informant 1 overtly affirms “there are some research works that have done by students of SJC within the last five to ten year’s time. But in the last two or three years with the opening of PRs classes both in undergraduate and graduate level we are busy in teaching. This year we have set up a research team that can make a research in government PRs and corporate PRs. Beyond this, we have mostly training linkages with government institutions for the last 10 years. We give a recognition certificate for our school trainees. We give also advice to individuals including ministers.”



It is clear from the account that the PRs education at the AAU, SJC is more inclined to theoretical than research based. But with the opening of PRs post graduate program there is future hope to see more research works in relation to the specialization.

Tench et al (2013) indicates “analyzing/interpreting is one of the six competencies that deal about research and applied by the European PR professionals.”

AAU informant 2 further explains “We are just starting. We graduated a few number of the first batch PRs MA students last year. They are graduated after conducting a thesis but the amount of thesis research we have in PRSC is scanty. To conduct scientific studies in PRs we don’t have the capacity. We don’t know the nuances about the profession and we don’t get motivated to do in PRs lines and we don’t strongly identify with the discipline as well as go through the educational system.”

The two informants’ idea clearly shows PRs research found at lower level in consequence of many reasons as they cited including unavailability of capacity, motivation and real attachment with the discipline. But in order to capacitate PRs as a profession the AAU, SJC should be aware about a lot expectation from the public as well as in relation to expansion of the PRs education and research.

#### 4.1.3. Prior work experience of the PRs practitioners

Among the total 30 respondents; 24 (77.4%) have prior work experience but the rest four didn’t have any experience and the other two skipped the question. 17 (57%) of them came from teaching, three of them from journalism and the rest 10 (33.3%) came from different professional backgrounds: cameraperson, data encoder, studio technician, gender officer, support reader, IT expert, education quality assessor, editor and office manager.

The PRs practice in the four FDRE ministries is dominated by 20 (64.5%) senior practitioners who have 6 to 15 years experience, whereas there are two medium levels and six junior practitioners. The rest two identify themselves as a communication specialist and an audiovisual professional. Though technical staffs are not included the student researcher have got an audiovisual professional who promoted to be PROs in

recent times and included in the study. Among the total 30 respondents; seven replied they have attended their education at Addis Ababa, Arba Minch, Bahir Dar, Mekelle and Wollega Universities. Whereas 10 (35.5%) proclaimed they studied language & literature, other two practitioners cited IT and the rest came from business management, education, electronics, political science and international relations, sociology, public policy and management backgrounds. In fact, as Fawkes (2015) states “anyone can practice PR but the hallmark of a professional is the commitment to social value and high ethical standards.”

The study confirmed above 75% of the PRs practitioners who participated in the FGDs background before becoming PRs practitioners was language and literature. The rest 25% come from journalism and communication (two), IT (one) and military journalism (one). At the same time most of the practitioners join the PRs industry with their own interest. A senior PRO 3 at MoLSA testified “PRs is my life call. I like the occupation, follow its discipline and I have the expertise to do so. In a military school I took political science, propaganda, press and radio journalism training. But mainly my long time experience attracts me to immerse within it.” This is really an amazing individual testimony. The practitioner is passionate to the PRs profession. Having such kind of affection to the profession leads other practitioners to start to think about the PRs professionalism.

On the other hand, there are practitioners who said “I came to the PRs profession accidentally”; “I don’t have plan to be PRO”; “I became PRO to get better income and livelihood” and the like.

To the practitioners who joined the profession for survival a senior PRO 4 at MoF demonstrated “I didn’t have know how about PRs profession before joining to the industry but through reading and training I had got clues about it; now I have 17 years experience within the profession.”

Thus, the PRs practice at FDRE ministries is mostly dominated by language and literature as well as journalism graduates with teaching background. The student researcher cited a PRs practice dominated by any other background graduate practitioners in the study

problem and the assumption become more reliable in that among the total 30 respondents 17 (58.1%) of the practitioners background matches with the assertion.

#### 4.1.4. Availability of PRs training and its value

**Table 6 Having PRs training opportunity in FDRE ministries**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
-	1	3.2	3.2	6.5
No	2	6.5	6.5	12.9
Yes	27	87.1	87.1	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Among the total 30 respondents; 27 (87.1%) of them have got PR training and 24 (77.5%) of them trained by the defunct GCAO. Many of the PRs practitioners took the training given by the defunct GCAO for two up to four weeks long after joining their respective FDRE ministries as they indicated during the FGDs period. Others cite AAU, Institute of the Ombudsman, National Archives and Library Agency, Walta Information Center, the former Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (presently Ethiopian Foreign Relations Strategic Studies Institute), Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) and Loret promotion (a private company). Among the total 30 respondents; 17 (54.8%) of them said the training was very important, another four respondents said it was important and again four respondents forwarded it was fairly important.

Those positive respondents said the training helps to improve the communication activities, adds value to the practice, and informs about the country's policies and strategies as well as its diplomacy tactics at the international arena. Among the 27 trainees 22 (71%) of them received a recognition certificate as a PRs practitioner from GCAO. The problem in relation to PRs training is that a maximum of four weeks long training certificate is considered more valuable than any other formal course work

acquired from higher institutions and this is a major challenge to the profession dignity and the professionals' access to opportunity.

#### 4.1.5. Benefits of PRs associations existence

Due to the unreality of PRs association with in the country; all of the PRs practitioners in FDRE ministries didn't have PRs membership status. Nevertheless, they have strong conviction about its existence and said its existence will open the door to experience sharing and knowledge transfer, come up with its own ethics, correct the PRs system, defend practitioners rights and dictate on responsibilities, emanate rules and regulations and lead to get government attention, guide the practitioners, protect the dignity of PRs and show the profession benefit to the society.

Palea (2012) states "PRs professional associations are aiming to promote professional standards and ethical principles, to provide a framework for discussing and finding a universally accepted definition and to increase the credibility of the profession."

Nevertheless, there were trials to establish PRs association in Ethiopia. A senior PRO 3 at MoLSA participated in a FGD says "there was a trial to establish a PRs association following the 2005 G.C. national election. The then Ethiopian Electric Power Authority PRs director was the movement leader. However, the FDRE Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 declared government employees are disqualified to organize; only government development project workers enjoyed this right." Nevertheless "the right to organize is one of the pillars of basic rights. Having an association is a means for development and change and a right hand for the industry and the country."

The FGDs discussant PRs practitioners witnessed another initiation to establish a PRs association started in the months of July/August 2017 by the defunct GCAO initiative. Most of the organizers are the PRs directors who work at FDRE ministries and their satellite institutions. They invited the PRs practitioners to join the association, circulate membership rules and regulations as well as started monthly contributions. But before its formal set up GCAO that took the responsibility to coordinate the country's communication works became defunct as a result its progress halted.

MoE PRs director confirms this “beginning from 2017/18 onwards there is a movement to establish it and we are waiting to get recognition from the Federal Civil Societies Organizations Agency. To be inclusive, all the PRs practitioners and AAU graduates invited to join the association. Fortunately, I am the treasurer of the newly under established PRs association. The initiation to set up the PRs association comes since it has many benefits including: it is a means to attract many professionals; addresses social, economical and political achievements in the right way; helps to build the positive image of the country; paves the way for discussion among stakeholders’ for the PRs professionalism development and links professionals with international experience.”

The student researcher could be able to access the newly under established ‘Ethiopian Communicators and PRs Professionals Association’ (ECPRA) draft regulation (Amharic version soft copy). It is a 14 pages document that plainly puts four objectives: to defend the practitioners’ rights and to enforce their responsibilities; to strengthen the PRs professionalism status and to keep its dignity nationwide; to empower the association members’ professional status in accordance with the existing knowledge; and to attain and implement nationwide PRs professionals’ ethics based on international experiences.

Connecting with the aim of the under established Ethiopian PRs association, MoLSA PRs director also pinpoints “nowadays everybody joined PRs and journalism professions without the necessary educational background and skill. Anyone who educates animal science could become PRO. But those practitioners who have not the necessary educational background should do a related occupation in their field or must learn about PRs. The country should have an institution that teaches professional PRs. The PRs profession must be lead by educated personnel and should be free from political domination. So, in order to make the PRs industry truly professional it must be supported by education.”

Supporting the above notion but from different standpoint MoTI PRs director said “without the existence of the profession it is impossible to talk about an association. Working professionally and acting as a professional by assignment and experience is

different. PRs association should be established by professionals and immune from political perspective. The profession must publicize not only the strong sides of an organization but also the weak sides of it. It must create agreement between an organization and its publics; be loyal, fair and give authentic information to the media. To achieve all these activities PRs needs knowhow. To have effective communication it should be free from political favoritism. And PRs need its own national communication strategy.”

Yang and Taylor (2014) asserts that “professional associations play crucial roles in the professionalization process. Associations create normative values, standardize practices and present a unified identity to both practitioners and organizations that use their services.”

On the other hand, there was an academicians’ initiative to establish a PRs society of Ethiopia. For this the AAU informant 1 recalls this “five or six years ago we tried to establish an Ethiopian society. We communicate and appointed to meet at ‘Ye’Hagere Fikir’ (literally means Country’s Love) theatre. But the meeting was banned by unknown body. Having an association protects a profession not to be escort by people who are not professionals. The Ethiopian PRs ethics would be written by the association. So, people who came from different walks of life must get better training and practice it as a professional. To establish a PRs association, those practitioners who have an interest in the profession and the PRs schools all over the country could take part in the initiative.’

Palea (2012) addresses:

Professionalization is a process that transforms an occupation into a profession and it includes five steps: emergence of an occupation; establishment of schools for training in the domain to which the respective occupation belongs to; establishment of professional associations; launching arrangements for legal recognition of that industry; and adoption of a formal code of professional conduct.

So, based on the information given by the informant and the cited scholar professionalization process, Ethiopian PRs profession is at the verge of establishing an association that contribute to the PRs professionalism.

As one practitioner narrates “PRs is a mirror for the internal public and shield for the external public”; all of the participants included in the study support an establishment of an independent national PRs professionals’ association. Especially PRs practitioners believe its existence will/help to pinpoint the PRs field drawbacks (including misunderstanding) and forward solutions; contributes to the preparation of better policy to the profession and the professionals’ gain; make the profession the major contributor to the country’s development through communication based on stated rules and regulations; to bring international experiences to the country; give guarantee to the professionals to defend their rights and any political pressure; to apply standards for the PRs practice in the country; to set up professional competency to the profession; to widen research and further discussion about the industry in the country; to create link with different stakeholders and make the information flow effective and fast as well as to define the PRs status whether it is a profession or an occupation officially.

On the other hand, there were apprehensive views about existence of a PRs association. A senior PRO 1 at MoT explained “without the profession existence there will not be association. The profession does not stand on its feet. The idea is acceptable only in principle.”

Supporting this idea a senior PRO 1 at MoF said “existence of PRs association is not valuable but individuals may become beneficiaries. It will not bring professional development. The PRs profession for sure develops with passage of time and attains its status. Right is related with practice.

A senior PRO 4 at MoF gives a response to this “there is an obvious frustration of lack of independence in the PRs practice. But it is better to improve and correct this rather than saying no need of a PRs professionals association. The present problems existed in the country including hate speech, hampering to access information and others rooted with our weakness to manage communication works. So, in order to fill these gaps we urgently

need nationwide PRs and communication work. It is the right time to have an independent PRs association.”

Shapiro (2005) confirms this idea “despite the information asymmetry, an occupation can hardly keep its status as a profession in the long run if sloppy practices are wide spread among individual professionals. The professions defend their status by boasting careful and competitive selection procedures, training and credentials and by establishing protocols, specifying best practices, and creating codes of ethics to limit agent discretion.

Nonetheless, AAU informant 2 states “establishing associations have never been easy in Ethiopia since associations flourish in a democratic society. Undemocratic systems are suspicious of people organizing. When people are organizing they get stronger. That doesn’t make undemocratic governments happy and thus employ every means to stop that. If they form unions; they don’t give the legal requirement of registration. But the future has hope. FDRE government started to liberalize and it will be easy to establish PRs association within the coming months.”

From the given description the idea that indicates associations flourish in democratic societies is a striking point of discourse.

But the same informant affirms “coming together is peer review. Peer review ensures quality to say this is acceptable (professional) and unacceptable (unprofessional) based on its theories and philosophies. Associations set code of ethics. Members should have interest, commitment and some amount of contribution to show their support. But so as to stay independent the association should not accept money from the government because money comes with some requirement. So far, PRs and journalism professionals must not join together because their missions and goals are quite different. But associations become stronger when they accommodate large people.”

Ericsson (cited in Harald, 2008) expounds “today almost all sorts of human performances have been examined and the central results are: first, expertise is domain specific; skills in one domain usually cannot be transferred to a different domain. Second, there is a 10-



year rule; it takes about 10 years of “deliberate practice” training and experience to develop excellence in a domain.”

Based on these scientific measures the process of establishing an Ethiopian PRs association or society is urgently needed to speed up the PRs professionalization process in the country so as to benefit from the PRs activities in real terms.

MoE PRs director also recommends the following idea “scholars must act to save the deteriorating communication work in the country and stand to make it a scientific practice. Besides to this, the PRs industry must have its own ministry that focuses on training new professionals and contributes new professionals to the World PRs market.”

#### 4.1.6. Is PRs a profession or an occupation?

There is a debate about PRs is a profession or an occupation and the following table indicates some facts.

**Table 7 PRs a profession vs. an occupation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
-	4	12.9	12.9	16.1
Occupation	4	12.9	12.9	29.0
Profession	21	67.7	67.7	96.8
Profession & occupation	1	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

Among the 30 total respondents; 21 (67.7%) of them argue that PRs is a profession since it needs skill and knowledge, applies different techniques, requires experience, have its own responsibility and scientific application. Whereas four respondents said it is an occupation since everybody can do it by referring the actual Ethiopian practice and another four respondents withheld their opinion.

Grunig and Hunt (1922) state “PRs is a scientifically grounded profession” and Freidson (2011) underscores “it needs special knowledge and skills” to practice it in a scientific way. The result indicates majority of the practitioners measured PRs as a profession.

The MoE and MoLSA PRs directors said PRs is a profession. It is a science about how to communicate with the public. What are customers' interests? In what way the practitioners communicate with clients? So, if there is no strategy for all these activities; it is impossible to achieve the stated goals. The PRs profession needs a special skill. When a layperson engages on a professional work; it became an occupation. This doesn't bring effectiveness to the profession. The main problem in the past is related with professional effectiveness. The directors aptly stated that although PRs practice in need of professional performance; there was a gap in actual circumstances that resulted to ineffective communication activities within the government ministries.

On the other hand, MoTI PRs director states "unprofessional practitioner couldn't perform the PRs activities. It needs skill and education. In our organization PRs is a profession. The profession is an ingredient to the PRs tasks. But the existence of indeterminate structure of the PRs directorate creates role confusion. Even this year after the political change, our directorate became under the minister office head rather than directly responsible to the minister due to short insight of the top management about PRs contribution."

The above notion reported by MoTI director clearly indicates there is a misunderstanding about PRs roles and responsibilities by the management and thus they want to marginalize it considering as a support line task performed as business as usual.

On the other hand, in all the three ministries the expertise level of the PRs practitioners' pertaining to the number of staff and level of practitioners education is fine. All except one practitioner have completed their first degree and above as it indicated earlier from the questionnaires result. However, the expertise level of the practitioners is not standardized.

In relation to this, MoE PRs director recalls "earlier anybody who has a degree (with additional short term training) could join our PRs directorate but now we make a restriction on it. Thus, we decided to hire mainly language and literature as well as journalism and communication graduates who have the skills in writing, communicating and other ingredients."

In general, the directors who included in the study aware that PRs profession need a special skill and unskilled person practice makes a profession an occupation.

At the same time AAU informant 1 argues “PRs is a profession since it is a codified body of knowledge. It is important in selling the objectives of an organization to its publics; it is a skill in using communication tools mainly that of soft tools; it is an academic training offered in colleges and a multiplicity of professional societies; it has a formal code of ethics; it is an essential issue in contemporary society and it is nobility of purpose dealing with the mind.”

The idea forwarded in the above definitely assures PRs is a profession based on knowledge, skill, academic training, and formal code of ethics, essential issue and nobility of purpose having multiple functions and benefits to achieve an organization goal.

The second AAU informant also squarely speaks “PRs has its own philosophy, theories and principles. These are the things that form the body of knowledge anybody must learn. Claiming PRs is an occupation reduces its status. An occupation can be done by any one whether or not exposed to the body of knowledge since it only needs attention and exposure.”

Freidson (2001) concludes the debate by this notion “the ideology of professionalism that is so appealing to occupational groups and their practitioners includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge and the power to define the nature of problems in that area as well as the control of access to potential solutions.”

Based on the informants and Friedson ideas, PRs is definitely a profession but the actual practice of government communication in Ethiopia manifested by lack of expertise, knowledge gap and thus play insignificant role to bring solution to the whole mess that comes as a result of miscommunication. PRs didn’t carry out in appropriate way and with favorable ground thus it could not be able to reach professionalism status.

#### 4.1.7. PROs representation in management and stakeholders' relations

About PRs involvement within the management; 12 (38.7%) respondents said it has stake within the management; while 10 (32.3%) said it has no stake and eight respondents skipped the question.

Among the total 30 respondents; 20 (64.7%) of them said PRs doesn't have representation in their organization's relations with stakeholders. This issue raised especially in MoF and MoTI (Industry sector); 10 (32.3%) of the respondents said it has a legal stake including being a member of the management team in MoLSA and MoE, applied as an integrated activity in MoE and MoTI (Trade sector) as well as working as a joint taskforce in MoLSA. However, all of the four ministries PRs directorates covered by the study consistently serve their clients or customers through information delivery, decision making and minimal survey study.

#### 4.1.8. PRs tasks performed by FDRE practitioners

The PRs practitioner questionnaire respondents mentioned the following PRs activities accomplished in their respective ministries: information delivery (to the media, student researchers, etc), media monitoring, articles writing (news, speech and others), event organizing, teaching, documentary works, leading, media relations, print works, media tip, public opinion, print works (including brochures and bulletins), audio-visual works, survey study, press conference, press release, promotion, internal communication, web administration & graphic design, spokesperson, information and feedback analysis, leading forums, giving media training, preparing documentaries, experience sharing among stake holders and archiving event organizing as well as archiving (data base administration).

At the same time during FGDs time the PRs practitioners list both unprofessional tasks done in their day to day practices.

A senior PRO 4 at MoE specifies additional tasks like empowering the PRs practitioners through training; giving support to school mini media and higher institution community radios all over the country.

An assistant PRs head 4 at MoTI enumerates “we had difficulties to access information from other directorates in our ministry. These parallel directorates didn’t have the awareness about PRs means building the organization. This all happen because they imagine us as a fault finder. Starting from the top management to professionals they lack understanding about information is wealth. Experts are more accessible than officials.”

On the other hand, within all such challenges there is a ministry that transformed itself in delivering information to its stakeholders. A junior PRO 3 at MoF witnesses this “we have changed the method of information dissemination from traditional way to modern technology that includes face book, YouTube, twitter and LinkedIn to be more accessible to the public.” This is a positive manifestation of government information dissemination.

In contrast, a senior PRO 4 at MoF has an objection on information delivery effectiveness and said “the major problem of the communication work is its dependence on talking, giving, throwing not researching on what the receiver wants. There is no symmetric communication. No one cares about the public interest.” The objection clearly indicates that without working based on factual study on the ground the communication work could not become fruitful whatever activities and results expected at the end.

At last, a senior PRO 3 at MoT adds “there is no protocol job description but we act sometime like a protocol due to influence from the management. All in all, in relation to professional tasks performed by the PRs though there are positive trends still the practice focused on routine activities and there is a role confusion created by each organization management.

Though there are many tasks done in the day to day interaction of the FDRE ministries PRs and communication directorates in relation to PRs profession; the level of achieving the European competencies of PRs professionals cited by Tench et al (2013, 20) of PRs including counseling, organizing managing, performing, analyzing and supporting an organizational visions and missions is far reaching.

#### 4.1.9. PRs Standards and ethics applied by practitioners

Modern PRs applied competencies as a measure of standards that encompass counseling organizing, managing, performing, analyzing and supporting. This table shows standards applied in the PRs directorates of the selected four ministries in this study.

**Table 8 PR Standards used by practitioners in their daily activities**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
Unknown	24	77.4	77.4	80.6
Available	3	9.7	9.7	90.3
Not Available	3	9.7	9.7	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

There is a clear indication that PRs didn't have standards in the day to day practice of the FDRE ministries under study or unknown by most of the practitioners. Among the total 30 respondents 24 (77.4%) skipped the question or write unrelated issues while three respondents said there are standards (MoE practitioners) and other three respondents mentioned there are no standards at all.

Nonexistence of standards in the FDRE ministries PRs directorates may not be surprising; however, this situation is a clear evidence for the low level of PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries.

An assistant PRs head 4 at MoTI testifies “we don't have standard. We practice activities customarily.” Similarly, a senior PRO 1 at MoT said “GCAO didn't prepare work measurements for the PRs activities but we prepared our own internal standards. We prepare a work plan based on agreement and do our tasks by sharing each other. This comes due to lack of standard.”

But another senior PRO 3 at MoT said “there were works standards (in the former Ministry of Trade) cascaded till directorate level, but not become practical. We have standards such as informing and measuring result. The other standard is practitioners' occupation ladder. The framework is available; the problem is practicing and following the procedure.”

The practitioners' idea don't show disparity rather confirm that there are no standards applicable in their respective offices. Nevertheless, MoE PRs director said "we have standards. We use different communication tools. We tried to measure these tools in time, quantity and quality. Each activity has its own measureable steps till the end product."

The MoTI PRs director also supports this suggestion "we apply 16 communication tools for our plan oriented tasks. Each task has its own standard derived from education and practice. The minimum requirement to join the PRs sector is being a university graduate. We could able to change an old attitude about communication activities are immeasurable and start to measure it from quality, time, quantity and cost perspectives. We have an appraisal system. Practitioners themselves measured in line with their performance. But since PRs activities are cross cutting/dependent on others work/ this situation create problems on our activities."

But MoE and MoTI PRs directors talks about lousy metrics of PRs including time, quality, quantity and cost. These measurements could not able to indicate the professional qualities of PRs practitioners and the state of the profession.

In connection to this, Parsons (2008) states "the primary PRs professionalism competence is to protect the public and the second one is to secure the future of PRs image as an ethical pursuit."

Contrary to the above ideas MoLSA PRs director states "we don't have our own PRs work standards except the Federal Civil Service Commission standards like BSC. Yet, we have weekly evaluation mechanism about the jobs allotted to practitioners and we use measurements like bi-annual and annual plans for our job."

On the other hand, a senior PRO 1 at MoF argues "we have good record in giving information to anyone without hesitation. This is done not because of availability of either work or ethical standards." Nonetheless, a communication specialist 5 at MoLSA disqualifies this idea and said "any PRs work that does not pass through standards and

prepared within a short period of time doesn't have any acceptance. Even there is a difference on PRs tasks result when it is done by senior and junior practitioners. In relation to ethics it is necessary to tell the truth including weaknesses. But it is good to show weaknesses have the chance for improvement.”

On the other hand, most of the practitioners follow the Federal Civil Service Commission cascaded ethical guidelines that comprise 12 elements including honesty, responsibility, transparency, impartiality/fairness, efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, integrity, punctuality, independence/confidence, team work, and serving the public. In addition to the civil service ethical codes, the practitioners mention agreed in house codes such as timeliness (giving up to date information), media follow up and boldness. This is one of the positive trends the PRs professionalism practice in FDRE ministries.

A senior PRO 3 at MoLSA said “PRs work and ethics are related issues. Any work couldn't be achieved without ethics. A PRs practitioner should be objective, stable, listener, confident, honest and representative to others. A good personality is important for communication work. The professional is recommended also to have moral and discipline.”

Bowen (2012) substantiates the above notion “ethics and government PRs intersects at a function called issues management. The public policy issues faced by governments, legislators, regulatory agencies and their counterparts at various levels of government across any national setting must be monitored and managed with vigilance.”

On the other hand, the three PRs directors personally give priority to practitioners' honesty, efficiency, proactive, meeting deadline, transparency, quality work, creativity, communicativeness and responsiveness as a standard in their day to day interaction.

Beyond this, MoLSA PRs director said “PRs means standing for the public and the government. If the media exposes personal mistakes in our organization; we take this as an opportunity of support from the media. We have a standardized motto ‘we don't hide any information about our organization.’”



The MoTI director raised the issue of accountability “the PRs task is to make the organization accountable to the public. So, the country leadership has to know PRs is one part of the leadership. Without this standard only saying media is a fourth estate becomes rhetoric. Media is a hunger lion; if we do not fill its gap it leads us into crisis. Communication should get its status.”

Freidson (2001) asserts this “the functionalist approach expects professionals (in the course of their education) to become socialized to an ideology that asserts greater commitment to do good work than to an economic gain.”

MoLSA PRs director testifies “we don’t have special ethical codes at organizational level. However, as a directorate we have ethical principles like keeping classified information, effective time usage, being model to others and calmness. We have also work values that are included in our plans such as ethical communication, taking responsibility, giving timely information, confidentiality and stand for the benefit of the community. We practically testified this by standing on the side of the community but we defend if it is defamation on any of us. We do not stand with wrong doers and corruptors rather we stand with the side of truth.” This is truly professional application of PRs that contribute to the profession growth in a right direction.

On the other hand, in relation to the PRs practitioners’ level of ethicalness, MoE PRs director believed most of the staff members have good ethics in team work, organizational image building and in giving solution for public grievances. But the director points about practitioners who dislike teamwork by their nature.

MoTI PRs director have a compatible stand with the above notion and said the PRs practitioners have good ethics but not reached at very good level. There are top and classified practitioners and the opposite, too. Ethics is related with issues including work

ethics, time management, punctuality, respecting each other, free from corruption and the like. The evaluation system applicable in the directorate integrates these issues and the practitioners are cautious about it.”

In all the three ministries the PRs directors’ application and level of practitioners ethicalness in general found to be good since there is an attitude to serve the public interest as a vanguard principle.

In relation to standards and ethics education inclusion in the curriculum to their graduates at AAU, SJC, the AAU informant 2 says “we integrate ethical aspects in the courses we teach. The PRs people target is to win the heart of their publics. They want to make their organization acceptable but in so doing they may employ some unethical techniques. Thus, the professional PRs person is different from the unprofessional because the professional says no to some techniques; for unprofessional no matter what you employ that is fine.”

Shapiro (2005) states “professions defend their status by boasting careful and competitive selection procedures, training and credentials and by establishing protocols, specifying best practices and creating codes of ethics to limit agent discretion.” p. 275

AAU informant 1 on his part states “before opening the PRs and Advertisement under graduate and PRs and strategic communication post graduate programs; we did a nationwide need assessment study, refer different curriculums, assess the international standards and prepared 800 pages syllabus. We have made stakeholders meetings with practitioners. After all this, the University senate allowed the program based on the need assessment document.”

AAU informant 2 confirms the process to open a PRs program at SJC as follows “the PRs departments opened to give opportunities for communication studies applicants a subject other than media and mass communication based on a survey conducted. The study result shows there is a huge interest from different stakeholders mainly from the employers’ side. Besides to this, the government wanted to assign PRs people but there was none in the country at that time since most of the practitioners were unqualified and come from

different background like agriculture, health, education as well as hard sciences including mathematics and physics. The government used them but surely it wants them more of to their loyalty than to their profession.”

The above notion makes clear that the expertise level of PRs professionals within the government ministries who are expected to be loyal is a daunting task. Thus, the opening of PRs academic discourse that includes courses of professional standards and ethics in different universities including AAU, SJC will have a positive impact to promote the PRs field into real professionalism.

#### 4.1.10. Criteria to be PRs practitioners and PR professionalism in FDRE ministries

The criteria to hire PRs practitioner in FDRE ministries is supervised by the Federal Civil Service Commission and its preconditions are: education (BA or BSc holder in any subject), experience, GCAO certificate and computer literate. The respondents said the PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries lacks competency manifested in these forms: working to defend own organization, a PRs work dependent on the management, highly politicized & government biased practice, misunderstood/disliked PR by the public, lacks attention from the leadership, event focused works, unprofessional and unscientific practice. This signifies the PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries is not yet have competency, standards and practiced out of context.

Kruckeberg (1998) expounds “professionalism is important for PRs field because it gives to the PRs practitioners’ monopoly and autonomy for defining the field, which would mean that PRs can no longer be defined from outside serving whose and whatever interests.”

On the other hand, most of the PRs practitioners participated in the FGDs believe that PRs is a profession, it requires knowledge, wisdom and skill; ethics and techniques to achieve its goal. They said when there is unfavorable situation a profession becomes an occupation. So, any profession requires effort and struggle to attain a professional status.

A senior PRO 1 at MoF asserts “an occupation becomes a profession through time when its activities become a winner in the day to day life of the society. At present, in Ethiopia, the PRs occupation didn’t develop; it lags due to the socio-political, economical, cultural

and other related causes. If a PRs practitioner having a first degree and then attain MA, but works the same thing after graduation; it is a waste. In Ethiopia there are many wasted professions; even there are individuals who have PhD but wasted.”

Other practitioners list the following PRs professionalism challenges including: the PRs practice lacks skills and standards based on professional requirements, the political perspective makes it a one-sided tool, there is no transparent and independent PRs work, there is a problem in information delivery as a result only positive news entertained through the media and negative news thrown in the dark, the PRs practice mostly focused on the continuation of government ideology rather than scientific application, practitioners considered political cadres, warden to the leadership, hall decorators, microphone deliverers and water distributors than independent professionals, there was partiality on GCAO PRO recruitment and training system, trainers were harassed and barred by GCAO to get certificate when they expose malpractices of the government, GCAO discomfites PRs professionalism by giving 15 days training, hire practitioners from unrelated fields and assign federal parliament members who completed their tenure to the PRs task, GCAO deters the PRs development path and made not to have its own Ethiopian shape, there were discriminatory practices in relation to information delivery to private organizations and most of the PRs heads didn't have the communication skill to work either with the internal or external stakeholders.

All these challenges have negative implications on the level of PRs professionalism in the FDRE ministries. Due to these multiple factors Ethiopian PRs practitioners confined in writing and other technical knowhow as a senior PRO 4 at MoF narrates it. But there are strategic issues of PRs like advising, supporting, working with stakeholders, etc. that needs to be addressed. The practitioner puts the problem and its solution as follows “the issues the public raised didn't get attention; there is a problem of listening each other. For the PRs profession growth especially in major organizations specialized people should be assigned.”

A senior PRO 1 at MoLSA also reminds another challenge to PR professionalism “PRs as a profession requires know how and skill. In other countries it has its own occupation

ladder. In our country the field becomes recognized through time. The PRs directors assigned in each governmental office knowhow about PRs is less than the practitioners they lead.” But the leadership is expected to lead others being exemplary.

A senior PRO 3 at MoLSA raised the issue of company’s measurements of their profits and losses comparing with PRs activity success. As a result, people who came from different background establish a PRs company. So, the PRs practitioner must believe information has an imaginable power. It should also decide to whom, in what way and how the information has to be disseminated. This notion implies the professionalism level others countries achieved and Ethiopian PRs professionals should aspire to do so.

Evetts (2012) states its model inclines towards organizational professionalism than occupational professionalism characterized by hierarchical structures of authority, decision-making and managerialism.

In relation to the PRs practitioners’ professionalism status MoLSA PRs director recalls this “with a new wave of initiation beginning from 2008 G.C. many organizations establish a PRs office. With this motive from district up to regions the PRs section took a better structure. Nevertheless, the government used PRs in a wrong way; it was a propaganda tool and organization defender. So for the last ten years PRs did not play its role as a source of information between the government and the public. Most of the practitioners and heads of the PRs offices also didn’t have the actual professional background.”

In relation to this Evetts (2010) notifies “professional values emphasize a shared identity based on competencies (produced by education, training and apprenticeship) and sometimes guaranteed by licensing.”

MoE PRs director also said “earlier there was misunderstanding about PRs. The PRs practitioner was considered as a protocol person for an organization. But now we tried to guide the profession in the right way and thus we excluded mini activities such as committee membership and non skilled tasks.”

MoTI PRs director, on the other hand, states “when the former Ministry of Information transferred most of its duties and responsibilities to GCAO; organizations became open to information transfer. The PRs sector touches high level with better leadership, but then it comes down with bad leadership. In addition, the absence of nationwide communication strategy resulted into differences of practice between organizations.”

The three PRs directors agree the PRs practice in FDRE ministries lack professionalism as a result they are working to fill the gap. Besides to this, they recommend the industry to have a national strategy and lead by qualified persons.

AAU informant 1 confirms this “in many FDRE government institutions most of the PRs practitioners are not as they are expected to be due to the background they came from. Thus, they know only to communicate but PRs is winning the public mind through communication. Due to lack of knowhow about PRs; most government agendas don’t implement. Existing practitioners are lobbyists not PRs professionals. So, totally PRs is not practiced in this country. This idea of AAU academician loudly speaks about the level of PRs professionalism status in government offices.

The AAU informant 2 has the same view “PRs is at its infant stage. It is done traditionally by trial and error (seeing others and doing it). The PRs practitioners’ are gap fillers. They have very peripheral roles. There is a long way to go in Ethiopia before we said PRs is done professionally.”

The informants idea corroborate PRs in FDRE ministries has to wait a long time to attain its professionalism level due to low level of understanding about the profession, the practitioners unprofessional status and other correlated factors.

#### 4.1.11. Is PRs practice in FDRE ministries strategic or customary?

**Table 9 Existence of strategic vs. customary PRs practice**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3.2	3.2	3.2
-	13	41.9	41.9	45.2
Both	1	3.2	3.2	48.4
Customary	9	29.0	29.0	77.4

Strategic	7	22.6	22.6	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

In relation to the existence of either strategic or customary PRs practice; nine respondents said there is a customary practice mainly in MoTI (Industry part) citing lack of uniform and effective practice, little understanding of the leadership, the PRs obligation as a reporter within the management function, tact less and non standard practice, unprofessional practitioners as well as focusing on unplanned activities. On the other hand, seven practitioners said there is a strategic practice in our ministry like education sector strategy in MoE. Surprisingly, 13 (41.9%) practitioners were not sure about it. This result indicates the PROs do not have the knowhow in relation to the scientific PRs profession.

Bowen (2012) argues “the main function of government communication is to deal with strategic issues on matters of public policy; this means how their organizations interact with government and constituents.”

#### 4.1.12. PRs perspective applied in FDRE ministries

About the type of PRs perspective applied in their respective ministries; 20 (64.5%) of the respondents cite political PRs is dominant than the economic, social, cultural and other aspects. But there is a difference between each ministry according to their mission aligned to them. Among others MoF and MoTI (a merger of trade and industry) add economic aspects; while MoE and MoLSA inclined towards social aspects. Nevertheless, the dominance of political PRs practice affects the significance of the profession and resulted into partiality, staff filled by cadre (party members), confidence less practitioners and a one way communication practice in that information flows from top to down asymmetrically.

A senior PRO 5 at MoTI courageously speaks “the perspective of PRs professionalism and PRs organizations existed in Ethiopia are obscured. Politics come to the forefront rather than professionalism and thus PRs is forced to be a weapon of political liaison. Still there is a practice of hiding the truth rather than be transparent on malpractices of

organizations. So, the PRs profession in Ethiopia should restructure, liberate from domination or be independent and renovate.

Finally, the respondents said the PRs professionalism in FDRE ministries required to be a bridge between the public and the government, be ethical, research based and solution oriented, scientific practice, seek the leadership attention & have a defined role, get freedom to criticize, lead professionally not by management interest, immune from politics & cadre incubation, characterize by international standard, stop customary & unskilled person practice, serve equally to all stakeholders and establish a balanced PRs.

Supporting some of the ideas indicated above Bowen (2012) states “Government PRs practitioners should seek to avoid working in the type of environment in which any group member is afraid to question assumptions, voice objections, or raise a point for ethical analysis whenever they feel it is warranted, no matter what level in the organization the person occupies.”

#### 4.1.13. PRs definition and its intersection with journalism

The FGD participant practitioners relate PRs mainly with its bridging, liaison, promotion/publicity and spokesperson or informing functions to the media, the management, employees and external stakeholders by using different tools. But there are other practitioners who give technical definitions.

Among others PRs is a two way communication that links the government and the public. If there is feedback to the government from the public; PRs is at work. PRs is an activity that strives to achieve an organization plan, goal and mission by working with its stakeholders. The profession has great value because without communication nothing can be achieved. PRs is a continual process of informing to create better communication. It also relates an organization interest with its publics. PRs play many characters including an advisory and a researcher role. By doing these activities it facilitates the organization works. PRs is a technique to give and take information. It builds an organization by feeding the necessary information to the society. But if the society misunderstood it negatively; it will have an odd result.



The above definitions truly implies to what PRs is; without two way communication there will not be mutual understanding for the common good of the society. This type of communication is based on a continual process that relates the government and the public agenda. When this process breaks down the damage incurred on both sides of the beneficiaries is immense. So PRs should have strategies that arise from research work in order to play its expected higher roles that connect with competencies.

About PRs and journalism meeting point Fawkes (2015) proclaims “PRs is seen as an emerging profession, lacking some of the features of law and medicine but similar to journalism or marketing.”

AAU informant 1 expounds “the main purpose of PRs is communication that deals with ‘how the public to be told’ about the objective of an organization. It helps the management in getting support from the workers to achieve the objective of the organization. To do so, PRs has got four processes: study, action plan, communication and evaluation. Both journalism and communication fields share so many things like writing to the media and preparing brochures. But PRs is wider than journalism because PRs has so many tools/areas of communication including get together, face to face speech and many others. But journalism is fixed with television, radio, newspapers and website. To conclude, PRs is about winning the mind and the hearts of its public. It is about changing the opinion positively towards the organizations objectives. So, it is a special type of profession.”

This suggestion implies that PRs is a special profession other than journalism with its own specialty and have activities to be done by professionals so as to achieve its organization goal.

AAU informant 2 also paraphrases “journalism and PRs relates each other. Journalism has got to do with the business of gathering news, synthesizing, processing it and sending back to the society. Journalists don’t strongly attach themselves to any given organization. They basically don’t have some interests that they need to defend. But for PRs professionals’ doing this is their occupation that includes such activities: working

closely with publics, building the reputation of a company and helping the company to achieve its missions and goals. As a result, communication comes as a soft power in bringing together all the inputs, the stake holders, the understanding gaps and creating better partnership. But the PRs people especially need journalists because they want media coverage to their organization.”

The above notion indicates though there is an intersection point between journalism and PRs; they afar each other having their own characteristics and stand by themselves as an independent professions. Despite that, both informants agree on PRs and journalism not only has a symbiotic relationship but also are independent professions boldly stand to achieve their own professional missions by using different techniques. Journalism needs PRs as a source of information and PRs needs journalism as an outlet for its works.

#### 4.1.14. Existence of favorable working condition to the PRs professionals

In relation to the existence of favorable working environment to the PRs practitioners a senior PRO 5 at MoTI highlights “there are skill gaps. Almost all the practitioners found to be at equal level of expertise. Besides to this, the PRs practice has got little focus from the management. Beginning from the nearest director up to the minister the work environment is difficult. No one give response to our quests. The PRs work has got less attention.”

A senior PRO 3 at MoT also describes “in the last 11/12 years stay within the profession the top management has a key role in the PRs work. The practitioner is a follower. The profession is geared by the management interest. The leadership doesn’t want to hear negative news rather works to hide it. Such difficulties make the working environment uncomfortable to the practitioners. In addition, there are structure related challenges in the ministry’s PRs directorate; one time it became a team, another time it became a directorate.”

Again other PRs practitioners working at MoT give attention to the work equipment scarcity, unavailability of practitioners’ capacity building opportunity and career structure

to grow up. They argue these impediments hold them back to achieve the organization goals and have an influence to the PRs professionalism practice. All these challenges of the PRs practitioners in their day to day practices indicate how the PRs professionalism status is at its low level in FDRE ministries.

On the other hand, MoF PROs collectively stressed on the lower status of PRs directorate structure compared to other parallel directorates within the ministry, knowledge gap from the PRs director to lead the actual practice in the right way and facility problems. Although such constraint seen within the ministry since it is part of the primary cluster along with other government ministries; there is a favorable situation to perform PRs activities.

A senior PRO 4 at MoF exclusively pinpoints “PRs is directly responsible to the vertical ladder. This structure creates difficulty to access information within an organization. If a horizontal (matrix) structure applied; there may be a tendency from other directorates to see PRs as part and parcel of their daily activity. Again, the educated people perceive PRs as only promotion among the 4Ps (product, price, promotion and place) of marketing communication. Thus, different offices tried and even merge the PRs department with other divisions. But this trend must be corrected.” The practitioner stressed the need for structural change for the benefit of the PRs acceptance by then its growth as a profession.

A senior PRO 1 at MoF also mentioned the role of GCAO in creating unfavorable working environment for PRs professionals “before the establishment of GCAO the PRs practitioners in the country had equal status with other professionals. However, the coming of GCAO brought negative understanding on PRs practitioners and this resulted in role confusion. Thus, to see better outcome in the future it needs much struggle.”

A senior PRO 1 at MoLSA said “there are favorable conditions in our ministry. The director knows its work perfectly. We have better expert in the field of graphics. We have real experts in the PRs field. There is always learning and growth.” This positive perspective disqualified by MoLSA communication specialist 5 “in order to give up-to-date information to the public logistics should be fulfilled. We have ICT related problems. The government has the ownership on ICT but in vain; without filling this gap

there will not be communication. So as to build organizations it is necessary to strengthen the PRs section with such facilities. Besides to this, the government should know without communication survival of a nation is a day dream.”

Though such challenges manifested in the real situation a senior PRO 3 at MoLSA said “our ministry works to strengthen its PRs. The top managers had this understanding. The PRs directorate is part of the management and advises the ministry in relation to employee empowerment. It structured as one of the core processes. This is a great opportunity to the practitioners.” All in all, MoLSA PRs activities and the existence of expertise at communication specialist level ignite hope to the professionalization process to PRs.

Likewise, the PROs at MoE unanimously agree on the existence of a favorable work environment within the ministry. They said the PRs directorate is part of the management in line with plan directorate from the middle level management and has an advisory role there. This paves a favorable way to access material supply. There is better relationship and team work among practitioners. The only problem they face is labeling PRs as a political task by other staffs. Thus, the intra relationship between directorates has limitation due to lack of understanding about PRs.

On the other hand, there are challenges in relation to management less understanding about PRs in MoTI (both in industry and trade part) and MoF; whereas the PRs is part of the management and plays an advisory role both in MoE and MoLSA that created a boost in the PRs practice in these ministries.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter covers the conclusion and the recommendations part that arises from the data presentation, analysis and discussion of the study. Thus, the data collected through the three techniques from three different sources including the FDRE PRs practitioners and PRs directors as well as AAU, SJC (PRs and Advertisement as well as PRs and strategic communication departments) result combined. From the data presented, analyzed and discussed earlier the student researcher derives the following conclusion.

### 5.1. Conclusion

All in all, the FDRE ministries PRs practice is dominated by males including the upper hierarchy that implies this situation needs further research. Besides to this, the PRs practice at FDRE ministries is overwhelmed by language and literature graduates with some journalists and other miscellaneous fields of study practitioners. The education level of the PRs practitioners attained seems good to the PRs practice but due to the background they came from they know only to communicate rather than winning the public mind through communication as AAU informant confirmed earlier in the interview.

On the other hand, the PRs training certificate that was given by the defunct GCAO for a maximum of four weeks long time is considered more valuable to get better income and position than any formal course work acquired from higher institutions. This can be taken as the most challenging factor for the professionalization of PRs in the country since it leads to submission of the profession and professionals to the ideology of the government in power than being professional and contribute professionally to the development of the country. Besides to this, the unmerited criteria set by the Federal Civil Service Commission to hire PRs practitioners based on GCAO certificate create a major challenge to the profession dignity and the professionals' access to opportunity. Again, the government direct involvement in recruiting PRs practitioners based on political merit weakens the profession and crippled its reputation.

In relation to the debate about PRs is an occupation or a profession, majority of the practitioners' value PRs as a profession but the actual practice of government communication is manifested by lack of expertise, knowledge gap and favorable ground. Consequently, it plays insignificant role to bring solution to the nationwide chaos that resulted mainly from miscommunication.

Due to lack of knowhow about PRs and unfavorable working environment for the practitioners most government agendas don't implement. Existing practitioners are lobbyists not PRs professionals. In addition, the PRs in FDRE ministries doesn't play management role and haven't representation in the organizations work relation with stakeholders' and is not considered as a core process. This situation de-motivates the practitioners and impedes the PRs profession growth. There are also no tangible standards for the PRs work; the tasks mainly focused on current issues than strategic actions. Standard is seen as a luxury artifact by most of the practitioners and resulted into low level of PRs professionalism.

Due to lack of uniformity and effective tasks, little understanding from the leadership, existence of unplanned activities and unprofessional practitioners; there is a dominance of customary PRs practice in FDRE ministries.

There is a surprising result in all of the four ministries under study, i.e. the PRs practitioners and the directors have positive attitude to serve the public interest as a vanguard ethical code. Nevertheless, the PRs professionalism in the FDRE ministries lacks competency since it inclined towards defending an organization with noticeable bad governance, dependent on the management, highly politicized & biased, due to improper actions misunderstood by the public, tactless and non standard practice, as well as unscientific practice. The dominance of political PR practice the FDRE ministries affects the significance of the profession and resulted into favoritism, staff filled with cadre (party member), confidence less practitioners and a one way asymmetry communication practice. This weakness exposed in activity, leadership and work standard differences. PRs professionalism and PRs organizations existed in Ethiopia are obscured. Politics come to the forefront than professionalism hence the PRs was forced to be a weapon of political liaison. Still there is a practice of hiding the truth about malpractices of organizations.

Within these challenges, the PRs becoming part of the management and plays an advisory role both in MoE and MoLSA. Such type of progress is supportable since it boosts the PRs practice and professionalism.

The PRs industry in the country materializes a model inclined towards organizational professionalism that characterized by hierarchical structures of authority, decision making and managerialism. The FDRE ministries PRs practitioners perform major PRs tasks but they lack quality in many aspects and have accessibility challenges. The four FDRE ministries PRs practitioners appraised there is a pointless overlapping between PRs and journalism practice due to news writing is taken as a major task of the PROs as it was instructed by the defunct GCAO and practiced to these days.

The PRs directors and AAU informants agree that the PRs practice carried out in the FDRE ministries lack professionalism and the existing practitioners are gap fillers. On the other hand, so as to benefit the PRs professionalism growth, there is no study conducted within the FDRE ministries under study in the PRs field; except in scattered manner and irregular manner.

In general, the PRs professionalism in the FDRE ministries is at its infant stage and lacks attention; it is understood by the public as a government mouthpiece, lacks skillful practitioners, didn't get a professional training, follow-up and support from the government and lacks center of excellence that could help for its growth and experience sharing among practitioners.

## 5.2. Recommendations

- The Federal Civil Service Commission criteria that require GCAO certificate to hire PRs practitioners should be null and void then replaced by standardized national criteria based on merit and related education background.
- The PRs structure in FDRE ministries ought to have a management function role to boost the overall communication system and to take its lion share to bring a modest solution to the ailing problems of the country.
- The PRs professionalism in government ministries required being a functioning link between the public and the government with study based and solution oriented, defined role, free to criticize, immune from politics & cadre incubation that characterized by international standards.
- The PRs practice in FDRE ministries have to have competency, standards and scientific underpinning as well as liberated from domination or be independent.
- The PRs practitioners and directors attitude to serve the public interest as a vanguard ethical code should be broaden, get structural as well as committed executive support.
- PRs and journalism are independent professions with a symbiotic relationship; so they should keep their own professional identities to the PRs professionalism growth.
- In order to attain professionalism the PRs industry should be restructured, renovated and be independent having its own national strategy.
- Higher institutions that teach the future PRs professionals should become aware the public and the practitioners expect much from them in relation to expanding and supporting the PRs education and study.



- The Ethiopian PRs association or society is urgently to be established so as to speed up the PRs professionalization process in the country through professional training.

### 5.3. Implication for future researchers

- The dominance of masculine gender in the Ethiopian PRs practice uncovered with this survey study. So, this situation needs further inquiry in relation to the government PRs practice and the role of female practitioners to PRs professionalism.
- Furthermore, the PRs professionalism in Ethiopia is in need of further study and investigation in different perspectives and approaches like PRs professionalism in the private sector, NGOs, embassies and the like.

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- **APPENDIX 1-QUESTIONNAIRE PREPARED FOR FDRE MINISTRIES PRs  
PRACTITIONERS**
  - **Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication (SJC)**
    - **Department of Public Relations and Strategic Communication (PRSC)**

- **A questionnaire to be filled by PR practitioners working in selected FDRE**

**Ministerial Offices**

- I am **Getasew Adane**, PRSC MA student in SJC, at AAU. I am conducting a study entitled **“Public Relations Professionalism in FDRE Ministries: A study on four ministerial offices”**

- The main objective of these study questionnaires is to collect primary data to appraise the PR professionalism of practitioners in four selected FDRE ministerial offices.

- **Instructions**

- a. No need of writing your name.
- b. The information you are giving is confidentially used for study purpose only.
- c. For a question given below if you have elongated response you can use the back page.
- d. I will collect the questionnaires distributed to you within five days.

- **General information** (Please tick /√/ for your preference)

- ✓ Gender      Female \_\_\_\_\_      Male \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Level      of      Education      Diploma \_\_\_\_\_      BA \_\_\_\_\_ BSc. \_\_\_\_\_  
MA \_\_\_\_\_ MSc. \_\_\_\_\_ PhD \_\_\_\_\_ Other/s \_\_\_\_\_ If other/s, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

- **Section 1 – Practitioners Background Information**

- 1. Do you have any work experience before becoming a public relations (PR) practitioner? \_\_\_\_\_

- a) What kind of work experience do you have? i) \_\_\_\_\_

- ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. How many years of work experience do you have in PR? \_\_\_\_\_

- a) In which level and category (junior, medium, senior officer or else) of PR activity are you currently working in this ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Do you have any undergraduate or graduate PR/Media/communication degree? \_\_\_\_\_  
a. If you respond ‘Yes’, from which university? \_\_\_\_\_

- b. If not, from which background do you join to the PR profession? \_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Have you get any on job training related with PR practice elsewhere?

\_\_\_\_\_

- a. If you say 'Yes' which organization/s gave the training to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

- b. How valuable was the training to your PR profession?

\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 5. Do you have any recognition certificate or award as a PR practitioner?

\_\_\_\_\_

- a. If you say 'Yes' which organization/s gave to you? \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. Is there any PR or related professional association in Ethiopia you participate as a member? \_\_\_\_\_ a) If you respond 'Yes', what is its name?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 7. Does the existence of PR professionals association help the development of the profession? \_\_\_\_\_ a. If you respond 'Yes' in what way?

\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- **Section 2 – Organizational or Occupational professionalism**

- 1. How would you define public relations (PR)? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. How do you consider PR: is it an **occupation** or a **profession**? \_\_\_\_\_

- Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Do PR practitioners hold a managerial position (role) in your ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

- a. If you respond 'Yes', in what way/s this role could help to the growth of the PR profession? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Which responsibility/ies do you perform currently as a PR practitioner in your ministry? i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- iii) \_\_\_\_\_ iv) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Are the PR practices and/or practitioners in your ministry representing the higher authority in relation to working with stakeholders? \_\_\_\_\_
- a. What are its manifestations? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. How does the PR in your ministry serve customers/clients? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. If the PR directorate in your ministry currently applied any PR work standards for the merit of the profession; please list some of them?
- i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ iv) \_\_\_\_\_ v) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ vi) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. What kind of ethical guidelines the PR directorate applied to the PR profession in your ministry? i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ iv) \_\_\_\_\_ v) \_\_\_\_\_ vi) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9. What kind of expertise does your ministry asks to hire PR practitioners in the PR directorate?
- i) \_\_\_\_\_ ii) \_\_\_\_\_ iii) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- iv) \_\_\_\_\_ v) \_\_\_\_\_ vi)

\_\_\_\_\_

▪ **Section 3 – Contextual Professionalism**

- 1. Please give your personal thought about professionalism PR in Ethiopia.

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. What type of PR technique (**Strategic or Customary**) is practiced in your ministry PR \_\_\_\_\_ directorate?

\_\_\_\_\_

- a) What are its manifestations?

\_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What kind of PR perspective (political, economic, social, cultural, etc.) commonly used in FDRE government ministerial offices including yours ministry? \_\_\_\_\_

- a) What kind of influence does it have on the PR professionalism? \_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have any additional idea related with PR professionalism in Ethiopia? \_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

▪ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- **Thank you so much for your cooperation and contribution to this study!**

▪

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▪ **APPENDIX 2-FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FDRE  
MINISTRIES PRs PRACTITIONERS**

▪ **Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and  
Communication**

- **Public Relations & Strategic Communication Department**
- **Focus group discussion (FGD) questions that prepared to discuss with PR practitioners working in selected ministries**

- Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Allotted Time \_\_\_\_\_
- Venue \_\_\_\_\_

▪ I am **Getasew Adane**, 2<sup>nd</sup> year PRSC MA student in SJC at AAU. I am conducting a study entitled **“Public Relations Professionalism in FDRE Ministries: A study on four ministries.”**

▪ **Discussion Plan**

- a. Reception time (According to the appointment given in actual field work)
- b. Introducing each other (5 mins)
- c. Introduction (5mins)      –About the study                      -About the session

▪ **Starting questions (20 mins)**

✓ What is PRs? How do you come towards this profession? (10mins)

▪

✓ Is the working condition in your ministry favorable to the PR professionals? (10 mins)

▪

▪ **Main questions (1 hour)**

▪

1. Is PRs a profession or an occupation or else? Why? How do you rate the PRs professionalism in Ethiopia? What kind of educational background needed to work as a PRs professional? Why? (15mins)

▪

2. What kind of tasks do you perform as a PRs professional in your work place? Are these tasks directly related with the PRs science? If not why? (15mins)

▪

3. What kind of standards and ethical guidelines utilize in your work place? What are the standards? What are the ethical guidelines? (15mins)

▪

4. Is there any PRs/Media association you are a member within it? If not, what do you think if a PRs association established; does it have advantage or disadvantage? What criteria should set to be a member within this PRs association? (15mins)

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▪ **Thank you so much for your cooperation and contribution to this study!**

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- **APPENDIX 3-IN DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FDRE MINISTRIES PRs DIRECTORS**

- **Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication**
  - **Public Relations & Strategic Communication Department**

- **In depth interview questions prepared for discussion with the communication directors of selected ministries in the study**

- Date \_\_\_\_\_

- Time \_\_\_\_\_

- Venue \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- I am **Getasew Adane**, 2<sup>nd</sup> year PRSC MA student in SJC at AAU. I am conducting a study entitled **“Public Relations Professionalism in FDRE Ministries: A study on four ministries”**

- 
- **Starting question (10mins)**

- ✓ Would you please introduce yourself including your educational background and work experience? (5mins)

- ✓ What do you think about PRs professionalism in the country (in general) and in FDRE ministries (in particular)? (5mins)

- **Main questions**

1. How many PRs practitioners’ are working with in this ministry PRs/communication directorate? What is the actual educational background of the PRs practitioners’? What expertise do you expect from the graduates to hire as a PRs practitioner? Is PRs a profession or an occupation? Why? (20mins)

2. What kind of standards do you use to measure the professionalism of PRs practitioners working in your ministry PRs/communication directorate? By which professional performance do you satisfied with them? What weaknesses are familiar with them? (10 mins)

■

3. How do you rate the PRs practitioners' level of ethics in their day to day practice with in this ministry PRs/communication directorate? Do you use any ethical values designed to PRs professionals? (10mins)

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4. What are the conditions of professional associations in regard to the PRs workforce working in federal ministries? Are there any PRs or Media associations with in the country? What criteria they inquire to make a member for government PRs practitioners? (10mins)

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■ **Thank you so much for your cooperation and contribution to this study!**

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- **APPENDIX 4-INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR AAU, SJC INFORMANTS**

- **Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communication**
  - **Public Relations & Strategic Communication Department**

- **In depth interview questions prepared for discussion with SJC informants**

- Date \_\_\_\_\_
- Time \_\_\_\_\_
- Venue \_\_\_\_\_

▪

- I am **Getasew Adane**, 2<sup>nd</sup> year PRSC MA student in SJC at AAU. I am conducting a study entitled **“PR Professionalism in FDRE Ministries: A study on four ministries”**

▪

- **Starting questions**

- ✓ Would you please introduce yourself including your educational background and work experience? (5mins)
- ✓ Does PRs/communication management mean journalism? Why? (5mins)

- **Main questions**

1. Is PRs a profession or an occupation? Why? How do you rate the PRs professionalism in Ethiopia? Is it practiced based on the science of PRs or customarily like business as usual? (15mins)
2. Is there any study on PRs professionalism conducted in SJC that maximize the professionalism of PRs? (10mins)
3. What kind of expertise including standards and ethics you educate for the school graduates so as to cope and work proficiently as a PR practitioner at the external environment? (10mins)
4. Do you know any professional association that encompasses the PRs workforce in the country? What merits will come with the existence of PRs association? What prerequisite should be set to be a member in such associations? (15mins)

▪

- **Thank you so much for your cooperation and contribution to this study!**

- - **APPENDIX 5-LETTER WRITTEN FROM AAU, SJC FOR MoE, MoLSA, MoF, MoFA TO GET DATA ACCESS IN RESPECTIVE MINISTRIES (AMHARIC)**

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- **APPENDIX 6- LETTER WRITTEN BY MOE TO CONFIRM THE STUDENT RESEARCHER PRESENCE FOR DATA COLLECTION (AMHARIC)**

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▪ **APPENDIX 7 DATE, TIME AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS LIST FOR INTERVIEWS AND FGDS**

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▪ Informant/s	▪ Date	▪ No. of participants	▪ Time
▪ MoLSA PRs director	▪ March 13, 2019	▪ 1	▪ 56 minutes
▪ MoI PRs practitioners	▪ March 18, 2019	▪ 5	▪ 1:40 minutes
▪ MoT PRs practitioners	▪ March 20, 2019	▪ 3	▪ 1:20 minutes
▪ MoLSA PRs practitioners	▪ March 20, 2019	▪ 5	▪ 2:10 minutes
▪ MoF PRs practitioners	▪ March 22, 2019	▪ 4	▪ 1:00 hr
▪ MoE PRs director	▪ March 28, 2019	▪ 1	▪ 32 minutes
▪ MoT PRs director	▪ March 28, 2019	▪ 1	▪ 42 minutes
▪ MoE PRs practitioners	▪ April 02, 2019	▪ 5	▪ 1:30 minutes
▪ AAU informant 1	▪ April 10, 2019	▪ 1	▪ 50 minutes
▪ AAU informant 2	▪ April 11, 2019	▪ 1	▪ 40 minutes

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