



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & COMMUNICATIONS

**ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN MEDIA
ORGANIZATIONS: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA BROADCASTING
CORPORATION**

By

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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MEDIA ORGANIZATION: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIAN
BROADCASTING CORPORATION**

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A Thesis submitted to the school of journalism and communication in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations and Strategic Communication

January, 2019
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DECLARATION

I the undersigned Tsigereda Demis herein declare that this thesis is the product of my own research based on reliable data obtained from both primary and secondary sources that are totally acknowledged and cited.

Signature

**Assessment OF PUBLIC RELATIONS practices IN MEDIA
ORGANIZATION, THE CASE OF EBC**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is aimed at investigating the practice of public relations in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. It followed a qualitative case study approach. Data is obtained from field work that entailed participant observation, individual interview, focus group discussion and document review. The researcher employed qualitative method of data analysis and interpretation. The major findings of the study indicate the fact that public relations was given very little consideration until very recently. Even after recognition was given to a multidimensional role it could play, there is still lack of dedicated support for its efficient service and it is not yet involved in decision making activities. It is also pointed out that, despite lack of budget, shortage of publication staff and wholehearted support of the top management; existing practitioners are doing their level best as image builders, link builders, public opinion investigators, informers, awareness creators, event organizers, capacity builders of the organization. Yet there is still a need to work on capacity building of public relations practitioners, employing sufficient number of public relations professionals.

The organization should also employ professional public relation practitioners. Finally the organization should also arrange internal self-assessment and external audit workshops to improve the existing practice and to make corrective actions with regard to identified constraints of the public relation team.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Public Relations is the youngest field of research in the academics and the practice is indispensable in the corporate environment. Legion, A. (2002) Comprehensive definition of Public Relations holds the very gist of the existence of the profession itself in today's world.

Yeomans,(2006) states "Public Relations is distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion".

The essence of Harlow's description uncovers that the practice sets a channel of communication among stakeholders and executes that role in a systematic and planned fashion. Public Relations specifically in media organizations stand apart as a distinct subfield of media management for two primary reasons. The first is that, from and media *content economics* standpoint and the second is the *audience*. Media firms produce content for distribution to audiences and audiences for distribution to advertisers Napoli,(2003). Both of these predictors—content and audiences—have a number of distinctive "public relations characteristics that effectively differentiate media industries from other industries" Hamilton: (2004).

Today every organizational relations and public activities are almost impossible to think without communication. Communication is a very important constituent of our lives and existence and no society has been known to exist without communication. Communication is the art of successful exchange of information, idea, views, knowledge and experience which culminates in the establishment of mutual understanding between two or more individuals and groups. This fact clearly shows that PR plays a role of paramount importance since it is a prime communicator. One of the means for this communication to take place is public relations. Public relations are the major means to keep the public and organizations connected. This demands a continuous study in the area of mass communication and how it affects different societies and people.

Theoretically, though media and PR subscribe in two different sets of interests, public relations is considered to be the integral part and the life blood of media organizations. Indeed it plays a role of paramount importance in a wide variety of institution in society such as business, trade union, governmental and non-governmental agencies and media.

Furthermore Public Relations is a vital part of every organizational activities. As a result it needs efforts to expand its service delivery through the positive dynamics of the organization, which in turn needs a strong emphasis on interaction and reaction with other key groups within the organizational environment. Public Relations profession has grown to encompass the building of important relationship between an organization and its key audience through its action and communication. Therefore the above mentioned idea shows that public relations as a subsystem of an organization plays an important role. Many organizations do not show the existence of public relations as an independent activity. Public relations have multiple functions from marketing or service management by organizing different types of events to participating and doing different media activities. More over public relation can contribute to the success of the media organization functions whether it is print and broadcasting media. Thus public relations relates to the total communication sub – system inside and outside the media organization.

When the case is in point, media and public relations, the paradox remains one of the key features that differentiate a profession from an occupation is service to society as a whole. The service “adheres to the ideal of serving all of humanity in need regardless of monetary reward or the status of the client” Kultgen: (1988). The paradox then emerges when the PR outfits the major role of the media. In contrary, when the PR practice becomes stronger and much professional, the vigilance of the media becomes sustainable and backs-up the brand and the marketing engagements of the public relations priorities.

Nowadays, media organizations are under increasing pressure. In many traditional media entities, advertising revenue is migrating away while the fragmentation of audience is a critical vantage point that alarms the media management to strengthen the public relations as a core function. However, it seems that organizations still battle to advance the functions and the roles of Public Relations. It is evident that increasingly, media houses like TV channels have become more inclined to making profits in a context where serving which public interest becomes a

fundamental and very complex, question. Equally, the interdependence for PR in maintaining corporate identity and media bringing more audiences that is a direct implication to the revenue is an important area of inquiry. Therefore, this study has tried to investigate the practices of public relations play in the corporate services of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (here after EBC) and the continuity for the development of positive relationships with various audiences and market segments.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Public Relations profession might be regarded critically as being beneficiary to the various institutions, stakeholders, media organizations and the people. Devis (2004: 202) argues that the public relations industry simply lacks credibility people just do not take the industry seriously . Furthermore, the discipline might be regarded dispassionately as being positively beneficial to society but also questions why organizations are reluctant to let public relations, professionals “Beat their own collective drum” public relations deserves to be taken seriously by organizations. But most times, it is assigned solely low end tasks given roles that invariably underestimate its value. Therefore, the home for public relations functions is still not clear in most media homes, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and the people .The relationship that subsists between public relations and society is an age long one. From the era of press a gentry when public relations was in its crude form, practitioners inside media organizations have found themselves having to give society a proper place in public relations decision-making processes. On the other hand, due to the media profit motive in most aspects of public relations practitioners run roughshod on society’s interests. This has generated lots of debate and concerns among stakeholders in public relations thus leading to the evolution of formal and informal controls on contents like news and political debates.

Specifically, a public relations is all about corporate image and the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation has its own PR department to safeguard its identity and promote contents. To elucidate this purpose, Joep Cornelissen enlightens that “corporate identity involves the self-representation of an organization through communications, products and services, and employee behavior. It is based on the basic, distinct and enduring values of an organization that guide its operations and that, when figuring in communications, set it apart from rival organizations in the

eyes of the audiences” (2004). However, the practices of PR in media houses as a mediator between the producer and content consumers, brand manager, reputation guard has not been well understood either by the industry, corporate houses or by the leadership. Even though EBC has been practicing cross-promotion and image building ventures, its identity is often fluid in the perceptions of the Ethiopian society Terje, (2017) and lost the tax payer’s trust. These contexts thus warrant an exhaustive study to identify the missing links.

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The main objective of this study is to explore the practices of Public Relations in the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

The specific objective of this study is to:

- Investigate the perception of the top management of EBC on PR department of the organization.
- Find out the place given to public relation team in EBC.
- Explore the major practices of public relations in EBC.
- Examine the challenges facing public relations practitioners in EBC.

1.4. Research questions

This research report addressed the following research questions:

- How do the top management and the various stakeholders of EBC perceive the practices of public relations profession in the media organization?
- Where is the place given to the public relations team in EBC?
- How to practices the public relations profession in EBC?
- What are the challenges facing public relations practitioners to render efficient service?

1.5. Significance of the study

It is expected that this study contributes to the improvement of the practice of Public Relations department in EBC. The study will enable the institution to enhance its PR professional activities including image building of the organization as a leading media house in the country. Beside the research will help EBC as a public service broadcasting to reach the community and the public by using PR Department as a nodal platform for connecting people and its stake holders apart from using its media channels to reach people and create public sphere. In addition this research enables to recognize the importance of PR as a two-way communication between the community and stake holders with the EBC as a media organization. Finally this research can serve as academic reference materials for policy makers and scholars interested in related Public Relations research undertakings.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study is confined to the practice and functions of Public Relations, branding management and identity maintenance in the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. The study assessed the Public Relations department, specially its communication role in bridging between the institution and its audience. Finally, in terms of time coverage, the study is delineated to 2014-18. The time span is selected depending on a research based restructuring of the Public Relations by merging with branding management as an integral team under marketing department. The year 2014 also marked the golden jubilee celebration of the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency whose name is at the same time changed to EBC.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The research could by no means claims to have done an exhaustive research .The research has also its own limitation for missing data (information) from stakeholders' level satisfaction or dissatisfaction about public relations activities under Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. This is however very difficult to manage since the number of the general public and stakeholders is uncountable and the researcher found it difficult to select a representative sample. In addition to this the researcher couldn't find any related academic research paper written before and the paper also lacks sufficient number of the participants in the office.

1.8. Organization of the study

This study has five main chapters. Chapter one presented an introduction consisting of the statement of the problem, objectives, basic research question, application of study results, and the limit of the enquiry. Chapter two describes an overview of related literature review and theoretical perspectives on the research topic. Chapter three examines the methodology of the study. Chapter four Presents data presentation and analysis .The last chapters i.e. Chapters five, presents summery of main findings of the study, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Definition of Public Relations (PRs)

Public Relations play a part in a wide variety of ways throughout all the lives of the modern society. It has no one universally agreed definition. Instead it has been differently defined by different scholars and subsequent to the varying definitions emerge different competencies and skills for Public Relations practitioners (Yeomans,2006). Wilcox and Cameron (2009:5) explain that people often define public relations by some of its visible techniques and tactics, such as publicity in newspaper, a television interview with an organization's spokesperson or the appearance of a celebrity at a special event. What people fail to understand is that a public relations is the process involving many subtle and far- reaching aspects. Public relations include research and analysis, policy formation, programming, communication, and feedback from numerous publics. Its practitioners operate on two distinct levels - as advisers to their clients or to an organization's top management and as technicians who produce and disseminate messages in multiple media channels. However, the term, according to Philip Henslowe, is often either misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted, so that it is used in a pejorative way, associating it with propaganda, 'economy of the truth' or evasion (1999).

The British Institute of Public relations (BIPR) defines public relations as "the deliberate planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics" Baskin *et al.*:(1992). This definition suggests that a public relations is the creation or establishment of mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. It also suggests that a public relations is not a haphazard process. It must be consciously designed. Planning calls for attention, deliberation, research, anticipation, analysis and consequences. With these regard, in tracing the professional origin of the field, Bernays, an author and educator is considered as public relations pioneer. He coined the famous public relations term 'public relations counsel' in his first book by the title 'Crystallizing Public Opinion' published in 1923. Bernays later published two other public relations books Propaganda in 1928 and Public Relations in 1952. According to Bernays, "he invented the phrase Public relations counsel

because of the negative connotations attached to such terms as propagandist, publicist and press agent” (NOUN Nigeria, 2006: p.31). A widely known definition which elaborates PRs quoted from Wilcox *et al.* 2003 is:

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Theaker,(2001).

The management function role of Public Relations is also viewed as an “art and social science of organizing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action which serve both the organizations and the public interests”. These are set up on the center of decision-making on any circumstances that might affect the business.

Theaker, (2001) argues that , the modern public relations initially developed as a tool used in power struggles. Today society is vastly different because they are living in a complex society and are confronted by a knowledge explosion which is fuelled by advanced technology, which changes the role of public relations. As institutions have grown larger, they have been forced to refine their methods of communicating with their publics. Therefore, the role of public relations practitioners today need to interpret institutions to the public they serve and to promote both the image and reputation of the institutions.

Rensburg and Cant (2009) state that public relations does not exist as a function on its own. It is an integral part of the communication function of an organization. During the past few decades’ public relations has increased prominence and professional stature. While marketing and advertising have their primary objective the promoting of organizations. Underpinning this perspective, the basic process of public relations just described is manifested in a variety of ways.

2.2 Models of Public Relations

The historical development of Public Relations showed four distinctive models of the profession. As identified by Gruning (1984) the one –way models are not based on scientific research on simple dissemination of information. Two-way models are based on research, which is what makes them the two – way management model. The following subsections elaborate the development of each model:

2.2.1. One –Way Model/Press a gentry/Publicity Model

A type of Public Relations model focusing on getting to publicity for persuasion - attention in which press agents attempt to generate publicity for their clients with little regard to the truth and needs high manipulation information. It is based on simple one way dissemination of information. According to Yeomans,(2006: P147) propaganda is the main function of this model which primarily focuses on sending a message to a receiver to an action; the sole purpose is to promoting to an organizations. According to Theaker (2001), “a press agent or publicist aims to secure coverage for a client, and truth is not an absolute requirement. This type of PR is most common in show-business – celebrity PR – where individuals are promoted through media coverage.” These press agents are the figures at the center of any ‘hype’ and have also been derogatively tagged as ‘flacks’ by journalists. According to Guth and Marsh (2000), a study in 1989 had revealed that this was the most practiced model of public relations in most countries and organizations.

2.2.2. One – Way Model/ Public Information (Journalistic Model)

This model does not seek to persuade the audience or change attitude; its role is similar to that of an in-house journalist, releasing relevant information to those who need it Theater, (2001). The specialists use an objective and factual information to educate the public about their clients though the practitioner may not know much about the audience, and tends to rely on one-way communication, from sender to receiver (*ibid*). It is used especially in government reporting, quarterly earnings, statements and reports. But it uses less manipulation and based on one-way dissemination of information. It is simply intended to inform in contrast to press a gentry. However, unlike the press a gentry/publicity model, it disseminates truthful and accurate information. It is a model, in which the public relations professionals act much like a

typical journalist or news reporter ‘in residence’ in the organization and the information he disseminated is relatively objective NOUN of Nigeria, (2006).

2.2.3. The Two–Way Asymmetrical Model

The essence of this asymmetrical communication model is scientific persuasion. It is research based modality in which imbalance of information favors the communication and the public beliefs about an organization or issue of importance are incorporated in to the Public Relations messages distributed by the organization and information dissemination for the public has less feedback. The information presented seeks to persuade the public to adopt the attitude and beliefs that are favorable to the organization. This model introduces the idea of feedback or two way communication; however, Theaker draws a critical line where the “asymmetric or imbalanced nature creates discomfort because the intended change is in the audience’s attitudes or behavior rather than in the organization’s practices (2001).

Due to this volatile nature of the model, Stan Tymorek in his well-known book *Advertising and Public Relations* published in 2010 clinches that persuasive communication relies on an understanding of the attitudes and behavior of the targeted publics, so planning and research are important to this kind of public relations.

2.2.4. The Two – Way Symmetrical Model

This model is sometimes described as the ‘ideal’ of public relations Theaker, (2001). Theaker further elaborates the claim since the model tries to describe a level of equality of communication not often found in real life, where each party is willing to alter their behavior to accommodate the needs of the other. It requires research used not with the intent to peruse but to public relations is the management of communication between organizations and its publics” Windahl *et al* (1992), also simplify the terms ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’ are not applicable in such a communication process, where the goal is to build mutual understanding between publics and organization. It is collaborative approach to building understanding in which organizations are open to changing internal policy based on what they learned from the public’s.

2.3. Theoretical frame work: discussing Systems Theory

Literature written on different theory shows that, systems theory emerged in the second half of the twentieth century and established as a dominant approach to Public Relations theory, took the view that theory development should improve practice first and foremost. This approach has had a significant influence on the nature of academic thought around Public Relations Yeomans, (2006).

The study of systems was formerly introduced by organizational theorists. Historically, perhaps the most influential application of systems theory to organizational processes appeared in 1966 with Katz and Kahn's *The Social Psychology of Organizations*. Katz and Kahn (1978) argue that organizations should be conceptualized as complex open systems requiring interaction among component parts and interaction with the environment in order to survive Miller,(2012). The practice of Public Relations in a leading media organization will be examined in the light of the system theory as theoretical framework in this research.

In view of the fact that, system theory sees organizations as organic wholes that interact dynamically with their various environments communication is essential to the well-being of any organization. Because it is the central means by which organizations organize and structure themselves and simultaneously adapt themselves to often in not controlled environments.

Public Relations emerge as a holistic concern for the manner in which various systemic components adjust to each other. An inability to maintain effective internal and external Public Relations manifests as an organization that loses flexibility and adaptability. Where Public Relations in an organization are effectively managed, the organization remains adaptive, open, and viable.

As per Miller K (2012), three concepts characterize system components: **hierarchical ordering** where components are arranged in highly complex ways that involve subsystems and super systems; **interdependence** implying that the functioning of one component of a system relies on other components of the system, and **permeability**—typically sub-components have permeable boundaries that allow information and materials to flow in and out (pp.60-62). According to Hazleton, (2005).the view of organizations as open social system that must interact with their

environments in order to survive is known as system theory. He also suggests that, organizations depend on their environment to get for the next fundamental resources. These are, client who utilizes its service, supplier who produces materials, employees who provide productive force or management, scholars who invent and governments that regulates. In such case the Public Relations key role is to enable the organizations adjust and adapt to changing environment. Theoretically, system can be either open or closed.

Open organizations exchange information, energy or resources with their environments, whereas closed system do not. In reality, no social system can be closed or open. They are usually identified as relatively closed or relatively open. The distinction between closed and open systems is determined by the level of sensitivity to the external environment. Closed system are insensitivity to environmental deviation, whereas open system are responsive to changes in the environment.

Systems theory perspectives of public relations are based on a central claim that public relations professionals act as boundary spanners who seek to understand the organization's environment and counsel management on how to secure a strategic fit between the organization and its environment Grunig & White, (1992) as cited in Bartlett, Jennifer L. (2005). To brief this, System theory offers a unique and profitable way to achieve competitive and profitable way in an organization PR practice. This view places Public Relations practice in a central position with regard to the strategy associated with system theory. Those who are able to understand and manage Public Relations from this perspective are more likely to adapt effectively to their relevant environments and fulfill their most deeply held ambitions. In general, this sub-section has argued that effectively managed Public Relations leads to an important and useful means of understanding for mutual beneficial relationship of organization and its clients. Hence, Theaker (2001) reaffirms the strong link between public relations and systems theory; she claims that many public relations scholars like Cutlip *et al.*; Grunig and Hunt refer to systems theory to explain the structure and operation of organizations and their interaction with the environment. Hence, in essence, systems theory describes an organization as a set of parts (or subsystems) which impact on each other and which together interact with the organization's internal sub-systems and how they interact on the embedded environment. Systems theory in its general sense provides a useful theoretical underpinning for the role of

public relations because it stipulates that an organization's well-being is dependent on establishing and maintaining relationships both within itself and with its environment.

2.4. The Historical Development of Public Relations

It is generally believed that Public Relations industry is a very recent phenomenon M.oliver, (2005). Modern day Public Relations are clearly a 20 the century phenomenon, for which different writers have mentioned at least two major early founders and contributors of modern Public Relations. Lvyledhetter Lee who was invited by John D. Rockefeller to help him in the problem created in the coal company he owned was one of the great contributors to the emergence of modern Public Relations. In 1914, in Ludlow, Colorado a bloody massacre happened between Colorado militia men and company guards because of evicted miners and their families. It was at that crisis time Lvyledhetter Lee who was a journalist by profession was called for help. Lee who started his Public Relations job in such a manner went on to contribute significantly to the creation of modern Public Relations practice and accordingly came to be considered as one of the fathers of modern Public Relations. Seitel, (2011)

Even though modern Public Relations is considered as very recent happening , there is a wider agreement among scholars on the fact that some Public Relations practices that were used to be employed during the earliest times of humanity will make it one of the ancient phenomenon. It is known that ancient Rulers of Egypt, Sumerian, Babylonia and Assyria were using different techniques which more or less fall in the Public Relations category, for their personal as well as political publicity. Baines *et.al.*,(2004).

The recently emerging Public Relations discipline has got some enabling conditions for its encouraging expansion and recognitions. The strength of the practices of Public Relations today is based on enduring commitment of the public to participant in a free and open democratic society. This situation has paved the way for the establishment and growth of big institutions which in turn created a huge demand for the practices of Public Relations. Moreover, the existing small government and private organizations, now a days have been replaced by the giant ones. So, Public Relations professionals are to a great extent important to introduce the institution to the public as well as the public to the institutions whom they serve. Moreover, they are vital to ensuring mutual benefit of the public's as well as the institutions. Ledingham (2008)

The ever increasing public awareness and the sophistication of media are presumed to create another opportunity that contributes for the development of Public Relations. The vast media opportunity created as a result of technological advancement has come up with audience segmentation where continuous flow of information from organizations through different media would be very vital. Similarity providing relevant and timely information for a public whose awareness as well as the vast variety of the media created would a range a good opportunity for the demand of Public Relations Seitel,(2011) .

The dynamic societal change, conflict and conformation are other important factors that might positively influence the development of Public Relations. Globalization and the growing power of global media together with the ever increasing demand for public opinion are the other factor that has positively influenced the development of Public Relations. Grefory,(2003).

This is an era where news of an incident like earthquake or public unrest in a local village can reach the whole world within a fraction of minutes by the powerful global media. In fact, the social media which is faster, easier and cheaper has greatly accelerated the global flow of information .Grefory,(2003:). On the other hand, public opinion, which is very important to measure the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the public, is getting more and more important. Hence, Public Relations have got an increased prominence as a result of two important tasks namely, information provision to the always hungry media and survey of public opinion.

2.5. The History of Public Relations in Ethiopia

The evolution of modern Public Relations in Ethiopia is obviously a very recent practice. But it is true for most nations in the world; the earliest manifestation of some form of Public Relations in the ancient Ethiopia will make Public Relations one of the oldest phenomena in Ethiopian civilization. It would be difficult to detach the effort of persuasion which underlies most of Public Relations activities from government Public Relationships. It is possible to imagine that all the indicators of Ethiopian ancient civilizations haven't been realized without mobilizing the public and of course that mobilization has demanded a huge effort of persuasion. In deed state formation in Ethiopia could be dated back to 4th BC. Thought it is not possible to find out when modern Public Relations have begun in Ethiopia there is a belief that it might have been in the

1960s Solomon , (1998) Prior to this period , the beginning of newspaper since 1900s that provided advertisement space for business organizations together with the introduction of printing press, telecommunication and the rail way by Emperor Menilik II in the late 19th century paved the way for the development of mass media and communications in all aspects including the emergency of modern Public Relations Bahru Zewudie,(1990). According to Solomon, there were a number of Public Relations resembling practices during those times, such as preparing and distributing newspapers entitled “ Bandirachen” (Our flag) in order to arise patriotism among Ethiopian guerrilla fighters during the Fascist Italian occupation of 1936 - 1941 , and Amharic language newspaper entailed “ Yetor Wore” (war news) that was distributed by the Aallied forces during world war II can be mentioned Solomon, (1998).

The establishment of the ministry of pen in 1940s paved the way for the creation of Public Relations in government offices. The then information and propaganda section was organized within the Ministry of Pen Mol, (2004). The post-world war II and the expulsion of the fascist Italian invading force brought a need to centrally coordinated media organization such as Radio, TV and news agency. Accordingly those media organizations were made to be organized under the Ministry of Pen, which was later replaced by Ministry of Information and Tourism in 1950’s. In 1960’s the Ministry of Information was established. While the ministerial offices were replacing one another the media organizations were continued to be led under the newly emerging offices. Mol (2004)

The process of modernization continued with some element of capitalism mixed with the then strongly founded mentality of feudalism. In 1960,s significant political maneuvers took place which made Addis Abeba the capital of Africa. The creation of the Organization of Africa Unity in 1963 as its Headquarters in Addis Abeba which was followed by the establishment of the UN Economic Commission for Africa were among the significant dynamics that were worth mentioning . While such huge developments were talking shape in the country, the Public Relations practices in the country remained without any remarkable progress. Solomon,(1998).

There was no incident such as the 1974 famine that exposed the weakness of the then government Public Relations. The British Journalists, Jontahn Dimblebey by not only exposed “the hidden hunger “to the world but also the ignorance and the weakness of the government

Public Relations Solomon ,(1998). Though an effort was made to stop the story from being broadcast as far as traveling to London that was just a futile exercise. The “hidden hunger “together with other critical economic, political and social issues caused a revolution that brought the reign of the Emperor to an end.

In the history of Public Relations in Ethiopia 1960s was also a period when private Public Relations practice have emerged; Consultancy Firm and Mennen Magazine were two examples of private Public Relations.

The Soviet model of socialism adopted by the military government following the 1974 revolution led the Public Relations and the media practice to the full-fledged propaganda. The media institution and the few government public institutions fulfilled this special mission that the then Ministry of Information and National Guidance came to existence. Public Relations practices in government as well as mass media political organizations were masterminded by political cadres especially assigned for this purpose. Obviously in such a condition, it would be difficult to expect the professional progress of Public Relations practice in the country. Solomon (1998) has summarized the Public Relations practitioners at those two periods, j e Monarchical and Military regimes as follows.

First Public Relations, which entered the Ethiopian scenario in 1960s, remained to be government tutelage, secondly, except for their differences of political philosophy, PR in both regimes were preoccupied in creating, preserving and promoting images of their respective rulers; and third, communication models employed in the Public Relations activities during the time falls under the press a gentry, propaganda and persuasion models, devoid of democratic substances.

2.6. The Roles and Functions of Public Relations in Media organizations

The basic process of Public Relations just described is manifested in a variety of ways. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) foundation lists various aspects of Public Relations activity that are done by individuals working in the field. The following major roles are adapted from PRSA: seitel (2005:25) argues that , although modern public relations initially developed as a tool used in the role of public relations practitioners today to interpret institutions to the

publics they serve and to promote both the image and reputation of the institutions. Rensburg and cant (2009: 49) affirm that

Public relations does not exist as a function on its own. It is an integral part of the communication function of an organization. Public relations affects almost every one, all of us practice public relations in one way or another. During the past few decade's public relations has increased prominence and professional stature. While marketing and sales have as their primary objective the selling of an organizations, products. The aim of public relations is to sell the organization itself.

Understanding this perspective are variety of activities that are basic and endemic to the public relation perspective. Lubbr and puth (2002:10) further maintain that public relations practitioners are involved in variety of work functions which may include the following.

Strategic planning: the situation and the data need to be formed in to a strategy this involves asking, where are we now? How did we get here? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? Wilcox and Cameron (2004:7) reinforce that essentially planning and advising means collaborating with management or clients in a problem solving process.

Counseling: Providing advice to management concerning policies, relationships and communication. They may have a role in implementation and at lest will need to explain it to the staff. Oliver,S.M .(2004).

Research: the first step in any project is to gather intelligence, in order to understand the variables in the case. What are the key publics, opinions and attitudes? Who are the opinion leaders that matter? Which groups or persons are concerned enough to act? This involves gathering information about public opinion, trends, emerging issues, political climate, media coverage, concerns of consumer and environmental special- interest groups, and so forth, and to plan programs responsive to publics and problem situations. Research also includes monitoring program implementation and assessing program impact to evaluate program effectiveness. Parson, E (2012).

Media Relations: This is one of the key functions in which practitioners may be engaged. It involves contacting the news media, magazines, freelance writers and trade publications with the intention of getting them to publish or broadcast news and trade publications with the intention of getting them to publish or broadcast news and features about the organization. It may also involve responding to media requests for information and acting as a spokesperson for the organization. Finally, it may mean arranging for the production, booking and placement or broadcasting of corporate advertisements used as part of a public relations program. Media relation is one of the best known elements of public relations because the outcomes can be seen every day in the media. Rolared ,C (2010).

Publicity: disseminating planned messages through selected media including social media, to further the organization interest. Publicity is a multi-directional approach to changing the way the public thinks, feels and reacts to a certain organization, person , service ,or product ,by a third – party affirmation. It is also very different from advertising that company to speak directly to the public about its product because the message has been credible. Yeomans (2006)

Marketing Communications: Combination of activities designed to sell a product, service or idea including, collateral materials, publicity, promotion direct mail, trade shows, and special events. Legion,A .(2002).

Advertising : Works almost exclusively through mass media outlets , public relations relies on a number of communication tools , brochures , slides presentations , special events , speeches , news releases , feature stories and so forth. And advertising is often used a communication tool in public relations activity often supports advertising campaigns. Advertising is the primarily function is to sell goods and services. Gruning, (1982) .

Speech Events: Stimulating interests in a person, product or organization by means of a well, planned, Events, also activities designed to interact with publics and listen to them.

Organizing: public relations practitioners could handle a variety of functions ranging from media conferences, conventions and exhibitions, to open – house days, anniversary, celebrations, fund – raising events contrast awards , programs and sponsorships. Yeomans (2006).

Editing : in addition to research and writing special features , practitioners are involves creating in editing special publications , employee newsletters , shareholders, reports and other communications directed at internal and external publics.

Production: production is multifaceted and very challenging. It involves creating communication using multimedia knowledge and skills, including art, photography and design for brochures, booklets, reports, corporate advertisements, and occasional publications, recording and editing audio and video tapes and preparing audiovisual presentation.

Training: this involves working with executive and other organizational representatives to prepare them for dealing with the media and for presentations and other public appearances practitioners could also assist with in service staff development.

Management: another very important duty is the management of the public relations function with regard to personnel, budget and action programs.

Internal communications

Organizational internal communication enhances recruitment , retention , development of communication interests and commitment to organizational goals by an increasingly diverse , extended and segmented set of “ internal” publics that include everyone who works there at any time , retirees , consultants , suppliers agents , distributes and volunteers.

The role of the public relations and communication managers is to see constant feedback for a mutual understanding of how frontline people comprehend, accept and achieve the organization’s strategy : how and how well organizational leader collaborated and communicate with stakeholders , how knowledge and policy are being shared , how process and structures are identified , developed and enhanced , and most importantly , how the organizations reputation depends largely on the actions taken by internal stakeholders. Kruckeberg, (2013)

External communications

As the network society expands and accelerates organizations. Must review and adjust their policies, actions and communications behaviors to improve relationships with increasingly influential stakeholders as well with society at large. So public relations and communication managers have to bring the organization’s “ voice “ and interests in to stakeholders deliberations and decisions: to assist all organizations functions in crafting and delivering effective

communication, and promotion of products, services or processes that strengthen brand loyalty and equity.

According to Storch (2007) “public relations should be the umbrella function that manages the communication between an organization and its publics to build and enhance healthy relationships to the benefit of all parties involved. Therefore, this view of relationships, being at the center of the function of public relations can be seen as one of the most important ingredients for an effective organization. This perspective puts public relations on the level of strategic management functions because it can influence the way stakeholders support an organizations goals.

Gruning et al. (2002: 553) reinforce that public relations professionals add value to an organization when they develop communal relationships with all publics affected by organizational behaviors, not just those who give the organization something in return.

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

Communication relationship building, involvement in strategic management and recognition of communication as a critical management functions are integral functions of public relations. More importantly emphasis should be placed on the strategic and management role that public relations can play within an organization.

Tench and Yomans (2006:40) further postulate that apart from playing public relations plays a managerial role , operational , reflective and educational roles within an organization.

The operational Role is responsible for preparing means of communication for the organization in order to help the organization formulate its communication strategies.

This role is also concerned with communication plans developed by others and is aimed only at the implementation and evaluation of the communication process.

The reflective role is there to analyze changing standards and values in society and discuss these with members of the organization in order to adjust the standards and values of the organization.

Educational role aims to increase the communication competence of employees.

According to Tench and Yeomans (2006:29) identify two dominant public relations roles. The communication manager, who plans and manages public relations programs, advises management, make communication policy decisions and oversees their implementation. The communication technician, who is not involved in organizational decision making. But who implements public relations programs such as writing press releases, organizing events or producing web content.

Technicians usually do not get too involved in research or evaluation; they are the ‘doers’.

The communication manager role is divided in to three identifiable types. Firstly **the expert prescriber**, who researches and defines public relations problems, develops programs to tackle these problems and implement them. Secondly, **the communication facilitator** broker, maintaining two way communications between an organization and its publics, liaising, interpreting and mediating. Thirdly **the problem solving process facilitator who helps** others solve their communicator on problems, acts as a counselor or advisor on the planning and implementation of programs.

Tench and Yeomans (2006:29) further note that there are two other roles, sitting between the manager and technician. The first role is the media relations roles a highly skilled job requiring profound knowledge and understanding the media. This is not just about the dissemination of messages, but a crucial function where the needs of the media are met in a sophisticated way. The second role is the communication and liaison role, meaning the individual who represents the organization at events and meetings and creates opportunities for management to communicate with internal and external publics. The classification in to manager and technician roles does not mean that the lines are fixed. Most of public relations professionals perform a mix of manager and technician work. But the point is that one role will tend to predominant.

Steyn and Puth (2000:20-21) reinforce that there is enormous Varity within this roles. A technician employed for their writing skills may be involved in a range of work such as writing

press releases, speech writing, and writing for the web or may be involved in just one job, for releases, speech writing for the web, or may be involved in just one job. For example producing the in – house journals.

The communication manager may be responsible for the full public relations program or, if they work for a large corporate organization may be responsible for one specialist area such as government or investor relations.

Tench and Yeomans (2006: 38) argue that there is a lot of confusion about who does what in public relations the lack of an agreed definition is however still a problem for the practices. Some of the long –winded definition still does not easily convey what the discipline stands for and what professionals do.

These roles define the everyday activities that practitioners assume – through these roles; organizations delineate expectations of individuals that make up the organization.

From the above view, it is evident that public relations play an integral part in the functioning of an organization. Gruning (2006:151) states that public relations make an organization more effective, when it identifies strategic constituencies in the environment and then develops communication programs to build long – term, trusting relationships with them. However, despite the clear identification of the roles and functions of public relations, some organizations are still battling to position the discipline as the confusion of the public relations functions still exists.

2.7. The Location of Public Relations In organizations

Today's world is a world of communication and in every second, millions of information units are exchanged in the world. Since development of human life improves, thus increase need to information and communication every day increased and having accurate and up to date information for people is the important and people with more information will be more successful.

YeoMans (2006), states that as a management function , Public Relations is in a position to evaluate internal and external opinions , attitudes and needs on an ongoing basis , advice

management regarding their possible effect and to act as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and in directing new courses of action.

Wilcox and Cameron (2006:) maintain that in changing environment, and faced with the variety of pressures, executives increasingly see Public Relations not as publicity and one - way communication, but as process of negotiation and compromise with a number of key publics. In many organizations, top - level management perceive Public Relations as primarily a journalistic and technical function (media relation and publicity). In large scale mechanical organizations of low complexity, there is also a tendency to think of Public Relations as only a support function of the marketing department. Such perceptions by top management severely limit the role of the Public Relations, departments as well as its power to take part in management decision making. Instead, Public Relations is relegated to being a tactical function simply preparing messages without input on what should be communicated. The following figure of a corporate management organization describes the position occupied by Public Relations.

Figure 2.1: The organ gram of a corporate management organization

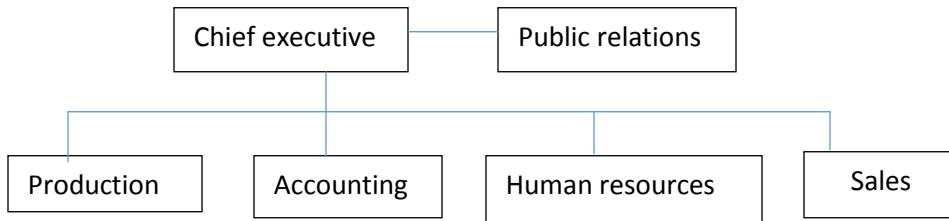
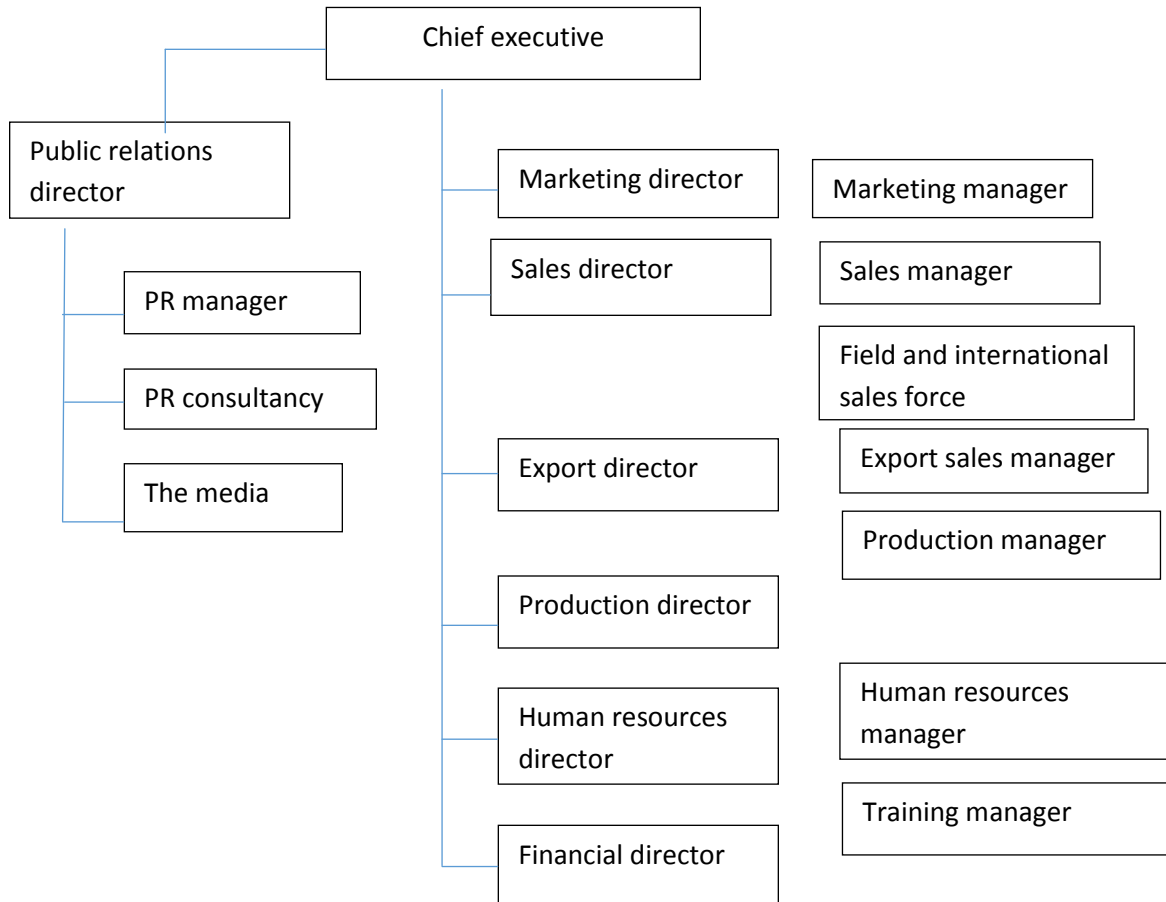


Figure 2.2: The organ gram of a corporate management organization indicating public relations as a director status



In order for an organization to function effectively, Skinner et al. (2004) maintain that Public Relations managers need to be positioned at management level so that they are responsible to top management and serve all departments of the organization. Ideally the Public Relations manager should have a Board of Directors, as this happens in the world's successful companies as depicted in the above organ grams. Both figures 2.1 and 2.2 indicate that Public Relations is a management function. Public Relations help organizations by assisting them to reach decisions and fulfill functions more effectively and help the organization to contribute to mutual understanding between the organizations and its environment. Seitel (2004) further argues that Public Relations, rightfully, should be the corporate conscience. Organizations Public Relations professionals should enjoy enough autonomy to deal openly and honestly with management.

Skinner et al. (2004) reinforce that public relations is regarded as, and should of necessity be, a management function. This obviously refers to public relations practiced at an advanced level by experienced practitioners. The role of public relations in strategic management within organizations is viewed in terms of four areas, namely; the environment, strategy, organization and people.

- ❖ **The environment:** The conventional perception of public relation is that it is concerned primarily with communicating with the organization's external publics and involves a more or less one- way flow of information from the organization to the outside world. Lubbe and puth (2004) argue that as a management function , public relations has a major role to play in acquiring information of relevance from outside and analyzing and interpreting it.
- ❖ **Strategy:** without public relations' input of information about trends and developments within the environment, no meaningful strategies can be constructed. Gruning (2006) states that public relations must help to define the target audiences to be reached by the organization and develop and implement communication plans to reach those audiences.
- ❖ **Organization:** public relations interprets and transfers environmental information in to the organization. It focuses on communicating corporate messages to its external audiences. According to Teaker (2004).
“Public relations ‘external communication functions can be relevant only in an environmental analysis and strategic planning. “Public relations are a vital tool for strategic management in building and maintaining the reputation of an organization.
- ❖ **People:** Employees are one of the critical success areas in which management effectiveness may be evaluated. Lubbe and Puth (2004) maintain that one of public relations' roles is to communicate with employees as one of the target audiences that an organization attempts to reach as part of its overall public relations strategy.

2.8. Basic Principle of Public Relations

The Public Relations industries have evolved greatly since it first began in the early 1900s. In fact it has dramatically changed even in the last decade with the introduction and expensive growth of the social media. Basic principles are those proved to be true over and over again in the world. Culbertson,(1996) . These principles are based on the idea that the purpose of Public Relations is to identify, establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its various publics. The following are the generic principles of Public Relations which are excerpted from Christopher Lasch, Journalism (1990), Theaker, Allison (2001), Tymorek, Stan (2010), NOU of Nigeria (2006), Baskin, O, and Aronoff, C.E. (1992):

- i. Public Relations is preoccupied with establishing and maintaining mutual understanding and good will between an organization and it's publics, a government and it's subjects, a rural and the ruled , a statesman and his compatriots, etc. .;
- ii. Public Relations is largely a communication discipline or profession with its tentacles in various other branches of knowledge or , put simply , it is an interdisciplinary field;
- iii. Public Relations is at once a science and an art;
- iv. Public Relations is primarily a management function, even though like other management functions it has it's technician operations;
- v. Public Relations activities are planned and deliberate not whimsical or fortuitous;
- vi. Public Relations activities are sustained or continuous , not ad-hoc or tied to the expedient : in other words , they help to build a constant reservoir of goodwill which we can readily tap in times of need;
- vii. Public Relations is essentially proactive and predictive , though it is often compelled to be reactive and backward – looking;
- viii. Public Relations thrive on dialogue and persuasion, but is antithetical to social monologue and whimsical.

2.9. Challenges of Public Relations

There are some major challenging issues in the Public Relations domain that demand due attention and further intervention.

Spin is the major one. The common perception of spinning with Public Relations is one critical problem in relation to the reputation of the practices Thurlow, (2009). As Grefory (2003) noted, spin not only damage the reputation of Public Relations but also will make people cynical about the political process and may end up in disengagement from exercising political rights. Of course, the decision of the public to give up political participation as a result of mistrust greatly affects democratic process.

Lobbying is the other staggering challenge. Public Relations is often related the ethics of lobbying. Many people believe that the rich and the powerful will hire the professional lobbyists and would be in a position to deceive the right image of a person or something, which in turn may affect the process of decision making Grefory,(2003). There is still another key Public Relations challenges i.e. it is independent profession or not. As it stands now many Public Relations activities believe that Public Relations are unregulated technical crafts. If it is going to be considered as an independent profession it needs a clearly demarcated territory where only those educated and licensed enter in to Johnston, K . (2017).

The third challenge is public suspicions. These are revealed in the form of Questions like is Public Relations in effect different from propaganda and spin? Who does Public Relations serve the rich and the powerful or the public interest? Can a practice involve both in the trivial as well as major issues as Public Relations are trying to do? Are there clients or causes that will be refused by Public Relations? Such common questions will significantly contribute in denying the level of legitimacy that Public Relations desperately need Gregory, (2003).

2.10. Public Relations Practice under Media Houses

The question of PR professionalism in media looms largely within the overall landscape of ethical behavior. Media organizations PR practitioners are supposed to have strong standards and ethical forms that, in some ways, set them apart from other institutions. At the same time, because these standards set the purpose apart, the potential for protecting the social image is much stronger.

Media organizations carry out public relations activities. They often advertise their prime times to raise revenue and call for sponsorship or may invite companies to disseminate information to

their respective clients; however, according to Christopher Lasch, today press has abdicated its role of a proper forum for public debate by subscribing to the notion that information alone is the proper product of the media. In Lasch's words: "democracy requires public debate, not information"; and "unless information is generated by sustained public debate, most of it will be irrelevant at best, misleading and manipulative at worst," and eventually the role of media gets diminished (1990). That balance between serving the public interest by providing people with what they need to become knowledgeable citizens of a working democracy and selling them to the profit-making entities is a delicate one. This is escorted by, as Trevor Morris and Simon Goldsworthy claim: "media organizations are under increasing pressure; in many countries then advertising revenue is migrating away from traditional media while the fragmentation of advertising-funded broadcasting means that many more channels have to be paid for out of a similar-sized or shrinking pot" (2008). As a result, large media organizations often aspire to maintain an effective PR function. Now in-house PR departments are expanding, and are given a due attention (*ibid*).

An enormous amount of what appears in the media originates in the hands of PR people. PR's impact on what media audiences watch spills over from news and current affairs into entertainment and drama. The media's modes of production and, very importantly, the costs of production, and the existence of a well-resourced PR industry able to supply or, at the very least help with, the production of media content. On the other side of the fence PR people may not be wholly reliable witnesses, "as they oscillate between a desire for self-promotion and the need to maximize profit Thomas H. Bivins, (2004). Some may boastfully overstate their influence and their ability to exert control over the media. Others seek to draw a veil over their achievements for a reason. After all, the aim of gaining "positive media coverage is to make readers, viewers, and listeners think that what they are seeing or hearing is not just a paid-for advertisement" (*ibid*), but the outcome of a journalist's independent work. PR effectiveness is closely associated with not being noticed.

Therefore, PR's role as a content supplier to the media has been termed "information subsidy." There is no such thing as a free lunch, and the material supplied by PR people is prepared with a persuasive purpose in mind. The cumulative effect of this has led some to point to the **PR-ization** Trevor Morris & Simon Goldsworthy, (2008) of the media, raising the specter

that the media will lose the reputation for independence and objectivity which made it such a valuable vehicle for PR people in the first place. If such acts persist, then, Media organizations PR are commonly portrayed as being about the promotion of media contents.

2.11. Public Relations Vs Media practitioners

Writing is a common activity of both public relations professionals and journalists. Both also their jobs in the same way. Pearson. E., (2012) .They interview people gather and syntheses large amounts of information, and write in a journalistic style. In fact, many reporters eventually change careers and become public relations practitioners.

This has led many people, including journalists, to the incorrect conclusion that there are no differences existing between public relations and journalism. For these people public relations is simply being “ a journalist - in - residence “ For a non-media organization, however , despite the sharing of many techniques , the two fields are fundamentally different in scope , objectives , audiences and channels.

Scope

Public relations , as stated earlier , has many components , ranging from counseling to issues management and media relations , although important , are only two of these elements. In addition effective practices of public relations entails strategic thinking, problem solving capability and other management skills.

Objectives

Journalists gather and select information for the primary purpose of providing the public with news, and information. Public relations personnel also gather facts and information for the purpose of informing the public. But the objective is not only to inform. It also aims to change people’s attitudes and behaviors in order to further an organization’s goals and behaviors. Harold Burson, makes the point

“To be effective, credible public relations messages, must be based on facts”.

Audiences

Journalists write primarily for a mass audience, readers, listeners or viewers of the medium for which they work. By definition mass audiences are not well defined, and a journalist on a daily newspaper, for example writes for the general public.

A public relations professional in contrast, carefully segments audiences into various demographic and psychological characteristics. Such research allows messages to be tailored to audience needs, concerns, and interests for maximum effect.

Channels

Most journalists, by nature of their employment, reach audiences through one channel- the medium that publishes or broadcasts their work. On the other hand public relations professionals use a variety of channels to reach the audiences previously described. The channel employed may be a combination of mass media outlets- Newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. They may also include direct mail, brochures, posters, newsletters, trade journals, special events, broadcasts, blogs, websites, and even video posting on YouTube.

2.12. Branding

Brands can be perceived quite differently depending on the clients/ audiences social and political context. Ralph Tench and Liz Yeomans in their book, *Exploring Public Relations* published in (2006,) present the perceived critics of branding as the worst manifestation of capitalist society; others see them as something with which the target groups have deep, longstanding and emotional relationships. It was not until the early 1990s that electronic media, in the form of radio, television, cable, satellite, telephony, and Internet delivery systems, began to experience massive competition for the attention of scarce audiences. Therefore, the specific study of media brands is relatively new and fertile ground for research Alan B. Albarran,(2006).

The idea of branding in media houses is widely associated with value of a name of that media organization, position, and how these affect people's image towards it. Dominantly, brand extension is a breakthrough concept and area of practice where new formats, templates and structures are introduced like a TV station launches new but segmented channel or a web version

or a radio program. During such occasions, the former, well-known brand extends to the newly emerging one.

2.13. The Brief History of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

The Ethiopian Radio and Television agency is one of the only governmental media in the country. It was established in 1964 (E.C), during the time of Emperor Haile Selassie, with the technical help of the British firm, Thomson. EBC was initially established to highlight the Organization of African Unity (OAU) founding heads of state meeting in Addis Abeba in that same year. The establishment of the Ethiopian television has had a considerable influence on the political, economic and social life of the Ethiopian society over the last several decades. It has contributed a lot in providing a platform for the government and to promote as well as mediate the government and the public. It also played an important role in covering various national and international issues.

During the imperial regime, “apart from serving as disseminating of information to the public, EBC used to build the Emperor’s personality cult” (Birhanu, 2009). In the dictatorial Derg regime, in 1982, Color television broadcast began in commemoration of the founding of Workers’ Party of Ethiopia (WPE). The military junta firmly controlled its everyday activities Leena, (2012). With the coming of the EPRDF in 1991, EBC has seen restructuring processes. It is shifted from monolingual to multilingual transmissions. All regions have transmissions through their own languages, but depend on EBC’s network for transmission Skjerdal,(2012).Skjerdal also added EBC covers 42% of the geographical area of the country.

Since its establishment, as Simon (2005) claims “EBC has remained in the hands of government, with its operations and content regulated by government”. Simon also noticed that, “ most of the programs are made to promote the government’s policies, and the quality of journalism is often weak”. Currently, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) broadcasts its news and programs through three mediums, namely radio, television and website. The accountability of EBC is to the House of People’s Representatives and is led by a management board in accordance with the Establishment proclamation of EBC 858/2006.

In 2014 the channels changed logo and in 2015 it changed its name to EBC and the name of the motto is called “The Voice of Diversity and Renaissance”.

According to EBC’s editorial policy (2014) creating awareness about the political, democratic and social benefits citizens can get by mobilizing themselves around the constitution; and creating the realization that the rights and benefits of all citizens could be respected through peaceful and legal means, and hosting differing ideas are the main bases of contents of EBC. EBC also claims to support Ethiopia’s continental and international participation and recognition by disseminating information that reflect the development, peace and democracy as well as good image of the country.

2.14 Contributing Factors for the development of public relations

Public relations professionals are to a great extent important to introduce the institution to the public whom they serve. Moreover, they are vital to ensuring mutual benefit of the public as well as the institutions Ledingham, (2008). According to Seitel(2011) “ The strength of the practice of public relations today is based on the enduring commitment of the public to participate in a free and open democratic society”. This situation has made smooth the way for the establishment and growth of big institutions which in turn created a huge demand for the practice of public relations.

Public awareness and the sophistication of media are presumed to create another opportunities that contribute for the development of public relations. The media opportunity created as a result of technological advancement has come up with audience segmentation where continuous flow of information from organizations through different media would be very vital. Similarly, providing relevant and timely information for a public whose awareness is sensitive so much would greatly require professional information delivery on a very sustainable manner. In fact, the sensitive public awareness as well as the variety of the media created would avail a good opportunity for the demand of public relations.

The dynamic societal change, conflict and conformation are other important factors that might positively influence the development of public relations. A sort of different right issue that extend from human interaction are part of our everyday life. The management of such societal issues will require effective delivery of information from all the concerned bodies. So the chance

to be perceived properly demands sustained, effective communication where professional public relations practitioners or institutions are important.

Globalization and the growing power of global media together with the ever increasing demand for public opinion are the other factor that has positively influenced the development of public relations Alison,T.(2004). We are living a period where news of an incident like earthquake or public unrest in a local village can reach the whole world within a fraction of minutes by the powerful accelerated global flow of information Polarde,C (2010). Public opinion, which is very important to measure the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the public, is getting more and more important. Hence, public relations have got an increased prominence as a result of two important tasks namely, information provision to the always hungry media and survey of public opinion Ridway, (1984).

The advanced roles of communication manager, communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator, and expert prescriber are not optimally performed with the latter dismal at very low level. PR officers were largely limited to performing basic roles of technician. Despite that, the roles still contributed immensely to effectiveness of the organization. There is a moderate inclusion of PR heads at strategic management level but this has not necessarily meant that they are contributing much to strategic decisions because their input is no duly sought Onsongo et al (2017).

The dominance of the internet and growth of social media as noted by Seitel(2011) is one of the influencing factors to the development of public relations. Currently, the number of people using the internet is exceeding 1.5 billion. The expansion of the internet has created hundreds of millions of people who are not only consumers of information but also generators of communication as well. The huge and accessible vehicle which is the internet demands a huge amount and variety of information that it conveys to consumers. Obviously this situation will create a very conducive environment of communication where public relations are getting a vast opportunity to demonstrate their important role, Yang & Lim (2008).

Kowalski (2000) points out that there is no list of universally acceptable functions for PR: “The needs and idiosyncrasies of communities determine which are selected”. In other words, the practice of PR practitioners is influenced by the needs and idiosyncrasies of the organization.

Hogg and Doolan (1999) also claim PR practitioners not only play different roles in different organizational environments, but also perform these roles differently depending on a number of organization-linked and individual factors. Other researchers argue that the work of PR practitioners is influenced by organizational factors that support for and perceptions of PR, PR practitioners' participation in decision making.

2.15 Qualifying Factors of professional Public Relations

According to Watson et al (2007) indicated that, the qualitative axes start to put some flesh on the bare bones of the quantitative axes. Different media will have different raw circulation and readership figures, and it may be appropriate to adjust for these variances. It may be appropriate to account for the proportion of readership or audience that fall into the target market. Attribution concerns the extent to which volume can be attributed to one name check; for example, can the whole clipping be attributed to a company or brand name when there is one name check in a two-page article? Normal practice might be to leave the decision to the practitioner but to have a default value of, say, 50 column centimeters. BNA (beneficial, neutral, and adverse) refers to the extent that editorial coverage is positive, negative or neutral.

Currently we are on the verge of recognizing the fact that public relations are a profession. A lot of research works are conducted that may help to place a century old modern public relations practice on a firm foundation. Those emerging modern public relations theoretical frameworks are winning supports around researchers which greatly contribute to pave the way for the acceptance of public relations as an independent profession. The unfolding recognition to the public relations profession deserves talking about specific characteristics of professional public relations career and individual technical skills and attitudes that might be required from practitioners.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present research deals with the practice of public relations in media organization with focus on EBC as a case study. To this end , this chapter will describe components of research methods like , research approach ,source of data , study population , sample population , data gathering tools , method of data analysis and interpretation.

3.2 Research Approach

In this study the researcher has used a qualitative case study approach. Kothari (2003) stated that Qualitative research is a research approach which is based on flexible and exploratory method. It enables researchers to explore information in depth and breadth. Qualitative research is more concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinion and behaviors.

In this study qualitative research has been selected because it has many advantages, like it :

- Helps reveal the nature of certain situations,
- Enables researchers to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon and
- Also allows researchers to test theories within real – world context, so that a deeper understanding of what is being investigated can be achieved.

Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon that is phenomena relating to involving quality or kind. The Importance of qualitative research is discovering the underling motives and desires, using in depth interviews for the purpose. The other techniques of such research are word association tests, sentences completion tests, compilation tests and similar other tests of attitude or opinion that the research is designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution. Qualitative research is especially important in the behavioral science where the Aim is to discover the underling motives of human behavior. Through such research's we can analyze the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing. It may be stated, however, that to apply qualitative research in practice is relatively difficult job and therefore,

while doing such research, one should seek guidance from experimental psychologists. Holloway (2004)

3.3 Source of data

This study gathered its data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of mainly face to face interview with professionals working in the public relations and branding management as well as journalists. Interviews were conducted individually and in focus group discussion. In addition to informants, review of documents that deal with policies, relations and branding management team is conducted. Finally participant observation was conducted by the researcher based on designed observation checklist (see appendix2). The focus of observation is on the relation of public relations practitioners with the different departments, and their relation with different stakeholders. Observation was made for one month. The secondary sources of data consisted of related literature, journals, proceedings, research outputs that are published and unpublished.

3.4 Target population of the study

Population of the study consists of individuals and groups. A research problem therefore relates to specific population. A population is a group of people that are potential participants selected for which the researcher intends to base his or her research Neil (2012). I want to generalize the results of their study based from data obtained from study population. The target population of the study is professionals employed in the public relation team, journalists and heads of departments working with public relations practitioners of ETV.

3.5 Sample

Sampling is the process of selection of some part of a collective or totality of the basis of which a judgment or inference about the aggregate or totality is made. In most of the research work and survey, the usual approach happens to make generalizations or to draw inferences based on samples about the parameters of population from which the samples are taken. Kothari (2004)

On the one hand samples are small group of people selected by different sampling techniques, like random, purposive and available. This is because it is impossible to study the whole population. Researchers make use of sample to select research subjects (participants) who would represent the whole research population. A sample is therefore the subsets of a population

selected to participate in research study. This study has targeted one corporate organization within the ETV named public relations as a sample organization.

3.6 Sampling technique

Sampling method is the process of selecting the sample from the population to obtain information regarding a phenomenon that represents the entire population of the study. Lewis, (2003). Here, a sampling method is devised to select the population eligible for the research which can provide an insight on the practices of public relations within the selected media organization. In this study purposive sampling techniques is chosen as the most appropriate method for this research. To this end informants have been purposively selected for their rich experience and information on the capabilities and constraints of public relation activities in EBC. They are permanently employed staff members of the public relations, journalist's department heads of other departments.

3.7 Sample size

The researcher has, interviewed seven informants, head of public relation practitioners, journalists and the general staff members. The researcher found them to be directly involved in the selected area. The participant's level of qualification and position within the organization vary. However they all work for public relation team or other departments working with public relations practitioners.

3.8 Data gathering tools

The word data is both plural and singular noun and comes from the past participle of the Latin verb dare which means collection of organized information , usually the result of experience observation and experiment which may consists of numbers , words , or images , particularly as measurement's or observations of a set of variables Yin (2012). Data collection method is involved close contact between the research topic and the research participants as interactive and developmental which allowed for emergent issues be explored. Lewis, (2003) . The researcher employed two data gathering tools described below.

3.8.1 Interview

The in-depth interviews are a major source of data in qualitative research and a way of exploring informant perspectives and perceptions. Holloway, (2011) Qualitative interviewing differs from

Quantitative interviewing in that it is relatively non – directive and less structured. Although the aim of the research guides the Qualitative interview process, the best interview involves participants and interviewers in a form of social interaction through which they collaborate to produce meaningful, and situated a accounts of participant’s experiences.

According to Yoomns, (2006) the main purpose of in depth interview is that it helps the researcher to develop understanding and collaborative explanation by delving in to the past and present experiences of participants in order to discover their feelings , perception and thoughts.

This study has used a semi- structured interview schedule as an appropriate method for this study. The researcher knew in advance exactly what is needed to be known and could then frame Appropriate Questions to obtain the necessary information. Questions were set for individual interview and focus group discussion.

After preparing the Questions (see Appendix I) , the researcher did a pilot testing which involves trying out a Questioner on a small group of individuals before using it for substantive research. Pilot testing is important since, it gives the researcher an idea of whether or not the questions will be effective in order to gather adequate information for the study. Pilot testing has been conducted by the researcher for the purpose of insuring reliability and validity of the interview Questions. To this and a pilot test was conducted with three informants, the head of public relations team and its two experts.

The output is found to be encouraging and certain readjustment of questions through omission and addition is made by the researcher. To elaborate the issue, the result of the test reveled two concerns. The three respondents felt that some Questions were vague and needed more clarification. Secondly the researcher was also advised to include more open ended Questions and thus the researcher found their comments as a constructive feedback. Interviews were totally recorded by obtaining the consent of informants and the researcher has taken notes simultaneously. The records were repeatedly heard and transcribed for factual verifications, analysis and interpretation.

3.8.2 Focus group discussion

A focus group involves a group of people often with common experiences or characteristics who are interviewed by a researcher who is known as a moderator or facilitator for the purpose of

eliciting ideas, thoughts and perceptions about a specific group interviewing is to see the topic which may concerns a service product or issues from the participants point of view..Holloway, (2011)

Focus group discussion helps public relations researchers to gain substantial insights in to a variety of issues and strategies from the macro such as the influence of national cultures and public relations or strategic decision making. The focus group approach does not rely merely on the ideas of the researcher and a single participant, instead, Questions and answers are produced by members of the group themselves.

According to Yomans (2006) focus group interviewing is like an intensive interview , with 6-10 respondents who interact with each other and not more than one hour. The researchers play the role of moderator leading the respondents in a relatively free discussion about the topic. The interactions between the group members create a dynamic environment that gives respondents additional motivation to elaborate on their attitudes, experiences and feelings. To this end the researcher used nine informants for FGD.

3.9 Data analysis method

The researchers begin with a large body of information and must through inductive reasoning, sort and categorizes it and gradually boil it down to a small set of abstract underling themes. The researcher often determines the specific characteristics to be studied only after carefully scrutinizing the body of materials in search of potentially meaningful characteristics to identify and count this is known as content analysis. (Holloway, 2011)

Data analysis method note that field notes can be described as detailed notes made by hand, tape recording, and observations, that are compiled during Qualitative interviewing in order to analyze the raw field notes. These have to be processed which entails converting the notes in to write ups which should be intelligible products that can be read and edited for accuracy, commented and analyzed. Since raw field notes, when reviewed stimulate the researcher to remember things said at that time that were not included in the original notes, write up can be used to replace some of the missing content. Tape recordings and dictation should be transcribed to text before it can be subjected to the same processing as hand written notes it is important that

the “ uns” “ers “ pause word emphasis miss pronunciation and incomplete sentences are taken in to consideration in the written up.Larissa A.Gruning, (2002).

The data analysis presents the results of the study and conclusion that were drowning from the study. If further presents a set of recommendations based on the interpretation of the result.

In this research Qualitative method of data analysis and interpretation is employed. Accordingly, data obtained is categorized pertinent to the basic research Questions and core areas of the study. Then first data obtained from interview, focus group and observation were checked independently, secondary data obtained from both published and un published primary or secondary written materials were cross checked with data obtained from the field work. Data analysis was followed by interpretation and presented.

3.10. Ethical consideration

The researcher followed an ethics of research in social studies. And first, set clear objectives of the study and interview Questions. Secondly took permission letter from AAU school of journalism and communication department that enabled to get access to key informants and relevant documents at the disposal of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. Then the researcher explained for participant’s objectives of the study and its significance. Finally, interview was conducted and recorded with the consent of the respondents. Their permission was asked on the confidentiality or disclosure of their name in the research report. Out of seven informants only two did not want disclosure of their name and it remained confidential.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETION

This chapter presents the main findings of the study from the field work, targeted at addressing the basic research questions. Accordingly data obtained from informants and observations and comparison was made with written documents and the literature reviewed. More specifically informant's perceptions and reflections on core issues like the location of public relations in ETV, roles and functions of public relations, the relation of public relations with other departments of EBC, the relation of public relation with media practitioners, the capabilities and constraints of public relations in EBC and intended plans to improve the role of public relation in this media organization will be described.

4.1 The location of public relations team in EBC

As it has been described in the review of literature above , the location of public relations in a given organization is determined by the perception and understanding about the meaning and practice of public relations and the missions and visions of specific organizations. With regard to this view, all informants have unanimously agreed to the fact that there is little understanding of the role of public relations in EBC. Finding indicates that there are various factors that influence the location of the PR department within the organization. The responses received reveal that depending on the history of the organization, public relations cannot function independently of others departments such as, human resource, sport and entertainment, news and programs. However, the organization has never had a public relations department that function independently from other departments. On the other hand the organization has its own public relations department that function under marketing department. (See the organ gram of EBC below) For instance, informant supports this idea by stating the fact that “ even if the history of EBC in Ethiopia goes back to the last five decades, public relations has been understood as an activity of no significance and was only seen as a spokesman of the organization.”

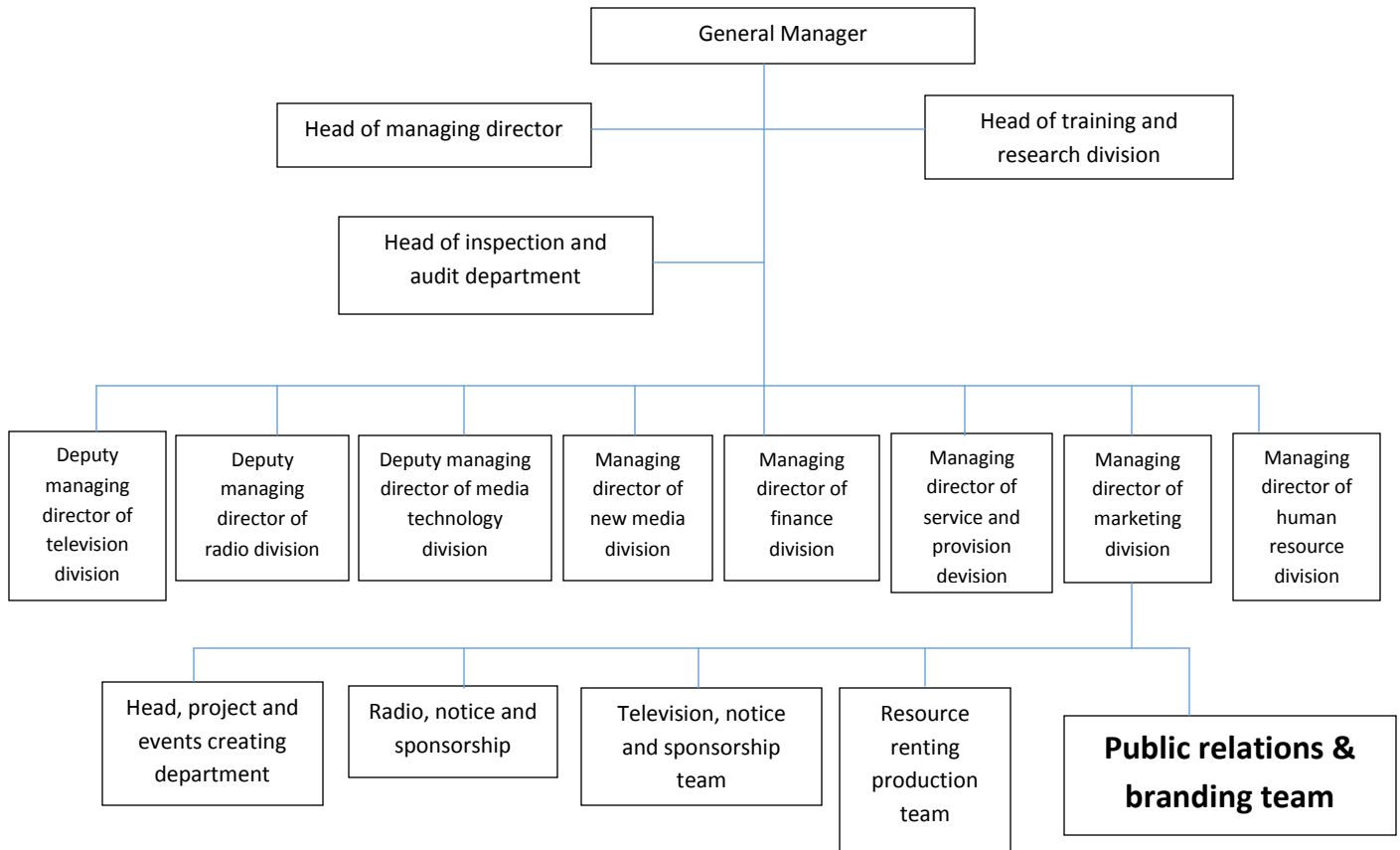


Fig. Organ gram of EBC showing the location of PR

Aiming at filling certain gaps and evaluating changes and continuities in the practice of PR in EBC the researcher has conducted a second round interview with head of public relation and branding teams. The interviewee said that, the top management of EBC had still little regard for PR. its role still not seen as a priority, it is seen as a support team, messenger, promoter and communicator and event organizer some even see it as of calendar, and photographer at workshops and meetings. The tradition functions of promoting stakeholders products and services are still its major role. The department has returned back to a one man office staffed by the head who is not a professional PR.

Besides it was not established as an autonomous or integral department up to 2014. Till that year it was a one man office. Her view indicates that PR in EBC was not able to play its role outlined by Yeomans (2006) states that

as a management function , public relations is in a position to evaluate internal and external opinions , attitudes and needs on an ongoing basis , advice management regarding their possible effect and to act as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and in directing new courses of action. It also indicate that Yeomans PR is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its public involves management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion defines and impasses the responsibility of management keep abreast and efficiently utilize change; serving as an early warning system to an anticipate trends ; and uses research and ethical communications techniques as its principal tools.

It was after a research based examination of the role of public relations during the celebrity of the golden jubilee of ETV in 2014 that the team of public relations and branding management was established as an integral part of the organization under the department of marketing. Of course the golden jubilee celebration has provided an ample opportunity for recognition of the importance of public relations this is because the then public relations performed significant role organizing the celebration, designing and printing T-shirts, pens, key holders. Cups, brochures that promote EBC. Organizing panel discussion on the history of EBC ,and on the challenges and prospects of the media organization participants of the panel discussion include members of parliament high ranking government officials , scholars , stakeholders and retired staff members of EBC. Beside the public relations and branding management team has organized exhibition in Oromia culture center at which photographs, printed materials, archives and different technology materials used by the organization from the beginning to the most recent ones. This shows a paradigm shift on the part of the top management of EBC regarding the multi-dimensional functions of public relations in media organization. At the focus group discussion of public relations practitioners informants said that “The top management of EBC are reported to predominantly expect the PR to play a role of a promoter, bridge builder rather than playing an investigative role of public opinion, government and non-government institutions they also refrain from involving PR practitioners in decision making likewise PR of other institutions the PR of EBC is not required to other roles.

This response of informants corroborates with Davis (2004, P.202) who argues that “the home for public relations and functions is still not clear in this organizations.” *The public relations industry simply lacks credibility people just do not take the industry seriously. Furthermore, the discipline might be regarded dispassionately as being positively beneficial to society but also questions why organizations are reluctant to let public relations, professionals*

“Beat their own collective drum” public relations deserves to be taken seriously by organizations. But most times, it is assigned solely low end tasks given roles that invariably underestimate its value. Therefore, the home for public relations functions is still not clear in most media homes, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and the people.

4.2. The practice and functions of public relations and branding management team in EBC

According to respondents mostly the PR practitioners in EBC are not significantly playing the role of the professional technicians like those in other organizations. They do not concerned properly give like press releases, press conferences; event organizing and connects the general public with the government such as by addressing public grievances, complaints and other issues. Instead the PR practitioners of EBC are predominantly playing the role of promoting the media organization for its sustainable publicity.

In the following section, presents the informants view regarding the functions of public relations from internal and external perspective.

4.2. 1 Internal functions

On this point too, all informants have almost a similar replication, except some omissions and additions of functions which was observed during the focus group discussion. To start with, leader of public relations and branding management team and Ato Amanuel, a PR practitioner stated that this team has the following functions within EBC. These include:

Informing function

This refers to public relations practitioners often introduce employees of the organization with new policies and strategies set by the administration of EBC. It is obvious that employees should be informed about dynamism of their organization order to render efficient service.

Problem solving function

Within the corporation, the public relation practitioners play the role of conflict resolution among the employees and the departments of the organization as well as the conflict between employees and top management. One PR practitioners told the researcher that

the conflict between employees for management often emanate from quest for salary increment promotion, unsatisfactory fringe benefits , insufficient paradigm e.t.c. Conflict between different departments often Comes from role conflict even distribution of resources, goal

Incompatibility resistance to reforms e.t.c Asked how far PR intervention in resolving conflicts, the head of the PR and branding team explained that PR practitioners do their level best mainly as communicator gap minimizers and advisors of the top management. There are times when their intervention could be totally rejected such as conflicts related to promotions, paradigm and fringe benefits”

This they do by organizing forums for discussions on existing problems and complaints of employees and finding solutions. This view corresponds with what Pearson (2012) argues

“PR practice is more effective and efficient, when it is a strategic and integrated part of decision making by the top management. The profession involves counseling, problem solving and the administrating computation and conflict”.

Corrective functions

The same informant also stated that, by investigating the critics and discontents of the audience and different stakeholders regarding news and programs, practitioners advise the editorial department to take a corrective measure in order to maintain sustainable publicity of the organization. In addition we closely work with journalists by consulting them what kind of branding or background needs to be designed for the different programs of the media transmissions. Nonetheless their comments are not always accepted by the journalists who believe that the PR practitioners lack knowledge about news and programs. This in turn comes from the journalist’s lack of understanding of the multi – dimensional role of PR practitioners.

This view corroborates with one of the functions of PR which (Lube and Puth, 2002) described as the first step in any project is to gather intelligence, in order to understand the variables in the case. What are the key publics, opinions and attitudes? Who are the opinion leaders that matter? Which groups or persons are concerned enough to act? This involves gathering information about public opinion, trends, emerging issues, political climate, media coverage, concerns of consumer and environmental special interest groups, and so forth, and to plan programs responsive to publics and problem situations.

Training facilitation function

Regarding this function another informant, who is an expert in public relations team added that in order to build the capacity of journalist the public relations practitioners work with the training team of EBC and arranges short term trainings in collaboration with international media organization like BBC, ALjeZIRA , South African Cable of Network(SACN) and France 24 . This has been conducted through short term scholarships and inviting international media professionals to Ethiopia for short term training of journalists.

Counseling function

During the focus group discussion, consisting of three practitioners they added that they closely work with the marketing department in counseling sponsoring stakeholders by preparing promotional activities.

The aforementioned internal functions of public relations and branding management team of EBC clearly show two key points. Firstly, they are evidences of a paradigm shift stated above with regard to recognizing multi -dimensional functions of public relations practitioners as an integral part of the organization, even if they did not function as an independent unit.

Secondly, respondents view also confirm the arguments of scholars on the functions of public relations practitioners as advisers, researchers, and problem solvers.(Davis 2004) Wilcox and Cameron: 2009),o argue these function have significant contribution since “the acceptability and the effective practices of the organization is integrally bound to the health of an organization”. (Lamb and Mc, KEE, 2005).

More over the response of informants regarding the interaction and interdependence of public relations with other departments of EBC agrees with Grunning *et.al* (2002) who maintains that “public relation functions also support other departments such as human resource, management, marketing and communication”.

One new function which the PR practitioners started was preparing a newsletter for internal consumption. It was started by the head and second practitioners. We have prepared some articles and announced to interested printers but it was not wholeheartedly supported by the top management. We are transferred to news and program unit as a journalist. The initiative was not continued. The general public and stakeholders too head little regarded to for PR. Majority of them care to be aware of the existence of PR in EBC. When we started organizing events like the EBC sport award and blood award.

4.2.2. External functions

Section 4. 2. 1 above dealt with the roles and functions of public relations within EBC. In this section the external functions of public relations practitioners with the general public and various stakeholders will be described. In general, the objectives and functions of public relations of the organization, as ambassadors of their organization will be presented. These functions are basically three.

1. To promote their organization
2. To influence public opinion
3. To build relationship with stakeholders

In practice their functions also include informing the public and investigating public opinion about the media organization. But the researcher will focus on the first three functions.

Promoting EBC

This function can be summed up to the role image building. On this issue, one informant maintains that public relations promote the organization using different promotional tools like, Logos, motto, brands, brochures and explaining changing names of the organization via radio, television and websites of the organizations. An informant who is a PR practitioner said that

Public relations practitioner is viewed as an ambassador of the organization who promotes and maintains the good image of the organization in their knowledge and by sharing valuable and required information to the relevant publics. His or her functions include putting together and insuring correct specification for the organization brand in order to maintain brand awareness but most importantly to manage all communication through the provision of accurate and useful information.

Regarding changes in the names of the organization she pointed out that initially the name of the organization was known as the ETV i.e Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency up to 2014. Until that time the organization has its budget directly from the government. But following research based restructuring and expansion of the activities of ETV, and its channels as well as the financial autonomy of the organization, its name was changed to the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation by proclamation number 858/ 2006.

Some of the changes in its service following the change of the name to EBC include.

- 24 hours transition
- Expansion of its transmission channels through seven mediums that are ETV News, National Radio, ETV languages, FM 97.1, ETV entertainment and sport, FM 104.7, and News Media, like face book, twitter, etc.
- Use of digital analog
- Opening of eight studios and
- Increasing the number of its employs that at present reached a total number of more than 2800.

EBC as a name worked until March 2018 when the name was changed to the older one ETV without promulgation of a proclamation. Another informant, journalist maintained that the change of the name EBC to ETV was made because the general public appears to be well coined with the historic name and organization did not want to lose its publicity for the sake of failure to change the name to a favorite one.

4.2.3. Building external relations

As we have seen in the literature review the central role of the public relations is creating communication between the media organization and its stake holders. According to Storch (2007) “public relations should be the umbrella function that manages the communication between an organization and its publics to build and enhance healthy relationships to the benefit of all parties involved. Therefore, this view of relationships, being at the center of the function of public relations can be seen as one of the most important ingredients for an effective organization. This perspective puts public relations on the level of strategic management functions because it can influence the way stakeholders support an organizations goals.

Obviously the central function of public relations is creating a link between a given organization and its various stakeholders such as individual or groups, private sectors, charity organizations etc. Public relation practitioners build this relation based on the mission and vision of ETV and policies and strategies set by the organization to achieve its goals. Data obtained from informants shows that public relation team is doing its level best in building relation with the above mentioned stakeholders. This link is built using both one - way and two -way models of relations. All my informants agreed on the fact that such relations are designed and facilitated by public relations team. The list of relations is described from the perspective of the two models of relations.

1. One way – model of relations

As an integral part of the media organization, public relation practitioners are involved in designing and facilitating the three major functions mentioned above. To this end, the one way model of link includes:

- i) transmission of the country’s economic , social , political , environmental, diplomatic policies and directives through daily news , special programs, press releases using different tools of transmissions and disseminations.
- ii) Regarding its function of influencing public opinion public relations team used to organize events and press conferences that enable the media stakeholders become well informed about local, regional, national and global issues.

iii) Organizing events which include mobilizing human and material resources for the benefit of the general public, like

- blood donation
- development programs like the Great Renaissance Dam
- arranging cost free media transmissions for charity organization like Makedonia
- supporting needy people like street children, victims of drought and famine, and war

iv) Awareness creation and clarifications on new policies, proclamations, election campaigns etc.

V) As spokesman of EBC public relation practitioners are reported to have provided information to requesting interested stakeholders. This data corresponds the one way public information model described by Seitel (2004, p 56) which reads

“One -way communication model designed necessarily to persuade but rather to inform. The public relations practitioner in this model, communicates objective information designed to enlighten the public. Seitel states that this model focuses on the technician role of public relations.”

Here the public relations practitioners’ role is to report information objectively about the organization.

2. Two-way model of relation

Tench and Yeomans (2006: 147) maintain that this two – way communication designed to persuade through the classic public relations functions of research objective setting , communicating and then evaluating to see if the communication changed attitudes and opinion as desired. Two – way asymmetric communicators use what they have learned to persuade publics to accept the organizations positions.

On the two - way model of public relations informants listed the following functions of public relation practitioners.

The first investigate public opinion both their satisfaction and dissatisfaction, on the news and programs of EBC and address them to the different departments and advise them to take corrective measures to maintain its publicity by its stakeholders and audience. Public relation

team also Investigates interests of stakeholders by making a need assessment of issues that need media coverage. According to my informants public relation practitioners address their stakeholder's demands to the top management of the organization for decision. They also Create Link between EBC and sponsoring private and government organization, local and international nongovernmental organization, donor agencies that require promotion of their projects, products, and investment programs. For instance during the focus group discussion consisting of different departments informant stated that the functions of PR within the organization the engagement and facilitation of business strategy and its implementation to provide communication consulting and planning services to business units for integrated communication through the organization and to manage internal events, most importantly PR practitioners are the custodians of the brand organization. They also facilitate the link between EBC journalists and different organization for interview, press conferences and investigative activities.

One of the reports of the public relations and branding management team as four years. Jun (2014 to 2018) on the its activities are listed to have been.

Printing note books brochures, folders banners, invitation cards, happy New Year postcards, posts and certificates for the different times EBC sport and for each Ethiopian New Year celebrity. If worked with EBC's sport department in organizing the sport award.

Printing different brochures that displayed announcements for market development through ETVs news programs and entertainment channels.

Preparing a proposal in the protocol of marketing and security workers and by discussing its approval with workers has presented the final document to EBC,s director.

Organizing the photographs of the first and the second sport awards for display.

Giving press releases on those sport awards and other medias where also invited to disseminate it for wider media coverage.

Preparing a five day event ' ' reading for life ' ' at which an exhibition was displayed showing the various electronic media tools photographs and videos.

Gathering television and radio programs dissemination in collaboration with media technology.

In collaboration with Addis Ababa rail way station and gathering the distance from one station to the next for promoting the rail way usage.

In collaboration with Addis Ababa communication affairs and justice for all information was gathered from journalists on how to bring media reform.

4.3. Challenges of public relations practitioners

The data on the challenges of public relations is obtained from the head and two experts of the team. These informants listed the following three major challenges.

The first is the negative perception of the top management and the different stakeholders about public relations on different bases. Regarding the top management, even if, they are reported to have showed a paradigm shift in recognizing the widening function of the public relations, they are not yet wholeheartedly happy on the investigative functions of the public relations for corrective measures. This is evident in the fact that they allocate insufficient budget for public relations and branding management team. The different stakeholders are also reported to perceive public relations as mere messengers and spokesman of their organization.

The second is shortage of staff of the public relations team (at present only three employees) is reported to have mitigated the efficiency of its function.

Thirdly staff of the team also lack qualified professionals in the field of public relations discipline. Thus out of the three personnel two were qualified in journalism.

Another challenges of public relations are the following.

1. EBC's logo change overtime in color form, size, philosophy, institutional vision acceptance in the eye of audience has been affected. The change has been very swift and made the brand making very hard. For instance from the researchers observation EBC had made three logo changes in the last decade. This logo change was not made alone. It was accomplice with Motto, organizational orientation to the media practices and its core values.
2. Naming; First it was ERTA .and later before five years, it evolved to EBC and then resumed its former name ETV and come up with multiple channels and platforms. Consequently the

above swift changes in logo and naming shows that EBC didn't place its brand in the minds of its audiences in the last two decades.

Fifthly, the public relations and branding team of EBC has been challenged by lack of experience. As mentioned above the team was established in 2014 and it is not very well entrenched in the media organization. It has a very short experience which could not help it to become popular with sound success stories, innovations and publicity both within EBC and the different stakeholders.

The sixth challenge of the PR and branding team is the absence of a professional internal and external assessment of its activities of course there are quarterly and six-month and annual evaluations like other departments. But the evaluation focused on performance based on its plans as a team, not its professional activities of course the evaluations made confirmed that PR practitioners had an excellent performance. That is why we are transferred to other department with promotions. Finally in EBC, the perception for PR is still negative. Top managements are now using PR as secretaries to distract stakeholders whom they are reluctant to contact.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents summary of the major findings of the study, conclusion that can be drawn from the research findings and recommendations that the researcher suggests for future improvement and efficacy of public relations in the media organizations under study.

5.1 Summary

This section of the thesis will describe summary of the major findings of the study pertinent to the three basic research questions of the study.

5.1.1. Perception about the practices and functions including the location of public relations team in EBC

The two questions are merged because they define the status and functions of public relations in the media organization on the one hand, and the trust or distrust of the general public and stakeholders for public relation practitioners on the other hand. Thus, data obtained regarding these research questions shows that,

- Even if very recently i.e since 2014 when public relations and branding management team is established as an integral unit in EBC and the subsequent recognition for public relations wide range of functions, the top management of the media organization used to give little regard for the role public relations could play. Indeed it was simply taken as a spokesperson and messenger of the organization. This is evident from the fact that until 2014 public relations was a one expert office. For that matter even at present it has only one team leader and two experts, despite recognition for its multi-dimensional role.
- The general public and stakeholders are reported to perceive public relations practitioners as mere messengers and spokespersons of the media organization. Informants told the researcher that public relation practitioners are viewed as biased and partisans, who hide the truth and who execute only top-down initiatives. Despite this majority negative perception, stakeholders that are collaboratively working with public relations practitioners in promotions, humanitarian activities, mass mobilization of resource to tackle emergent problems affecting society like supporting victims of drought and

famine, internal and external wars are reported to have positive attitude towards public relations practitioners.

5.1.2. Practices and Functions of Public Relations team in EBC

Data obtained from the field work shows that public relations practitioners of the EBC are doing their Level best in performing sound internal and external functions as an integral unit of the organization.

5.1.2.1. Internal functions

Within the media organization under study public relations team perform duties such as

- Making clarification to the employees of the organization on new policies, organizational structures, programs, channels, strategies etc. This could be summed as educative role.
- Involving in solving conflict between employees or among different departments, in cooperation with the Human resource department.
- Advising different departments to take corrective action based on investigated complaints and dissatisfaction of stakeholders.
- Organizing events
- preparing brochures , pamphlets , Logos , Mottos , Brands , in an attempt to promote the organization
- Organizing training programs for different groups of employees aimed at capacity building.

5.1.2 External functions

As public relation practitioners they play three main roles of paramount importance. These are:

- Promoting the media organization
As spokesperson of the organization public relation practitioners are engaged in a great deal in
- Image building i.e. building a sustainable publicity and acceptability of the media organization using different means of disseminations such as , Radio , Television , Websites, Brochures , Logos , Brands, and Mottos for advertisement.

- Giving press releases on the visions and missions of EBC, new channels and programs, policies and directives.
- Preparing citizens charter that eases the link between the organization and its stakeholders.

i) Influencing public opinion

- This function of public relations is done by organizing forums, events, press conferences, and special programs etc. which help as a means of awareness creation on the economic, political, social, environmental policies of the country.

ii) Building relation between EBC, the general public and stakeholders

This external function of public relations team is effected through two - way model of relations i.e. both the team of the organization and its stakeholders can take the initiative to establish a link. In both cases public relation practitioners can serve as intelligence workers of their organization by:

- Investigating stakeholders and public opinion regarding satisfaction or dissatisfaction on EBC programs and addressing them to the relevant department and top management and advices them to take corrective measures.
- Making a need assessment of stakeholders on what types of programs to be added.
- Creating events for mobilizing human and material resources for crisis management related to natural and Man-made calamities such as displacement of people that are victims of drought and famine as well as war.
- Arranging cost free media transmission for charity organizations, such as Mekdonia.
- Creating link between EBC and sponsoring stakeholders, government and non-government organizations international donor agencies, and private sectors who want promotion of their products and projects via the media.

5. 1.3 The main challenges of Public Relations Practitioners in EBC

The findings of the research reveal the following major challenges facing public relations practitioners. These are:

- Negative perception and lack of trust by the general public i.e. Viewing them as partisan and mere messengers. The top management of EBC is still giving little regard to the functions of public relations

- Lack of budget
- Shortage of experts
- Lack of appropriate professional training in the field of public relations
- Lack of dedicated support of top management in the investigative public relations professionalism.

5. 2.Conclusion

From the above major findings of the study, it is conclude that that it is only for the last three years that public relations and branding management is established as an integral team of EBC shows that the role of public relation in the organization has for long been given little significance. However, Kruckeberg, (2013) indicated that the role of the public relations and communication managers is to see constant feedback for a mutual understanding of how frontline people comprehend, accept and achieve the organization's strategy : how and how well organizational leader collaborated and communicate with stakeholders , how knowledge and policy are being shared , how process and structures are identified , developed and enhanced , and most importantly , how the organizations reputation depends largely on the actions taken by internal stakeholders. In addition to this Public relations are increasingly about communicating credibly with key audiences who affect business results, such as media analysts, policymakers and policy influencers, customers and shareholders. It is an important element in supporting the power and value of an organization's brands to all stakeholders. All the elements of corporate brand, from tone and personality, functional and emotional benefits, core message and end goal, to its reputation – if fully leveraged with internal and external audiences – can help raise performance and credibility. Enhancing the awareness understanding and commitment to a brand through public relations is usually an essential part of any overall strategy aimed at sustaining and raising standards of performance and credibility. This in turn implies the fact that it used to predominantly play its traditional role of using as messenger or spokesperson and promoter of EBC. The basic process of Public Relations just described is manifested in a variety of ways. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) foundation lists various aspects of Public Relations activity that are done by individuals working in the field. .There is also, a paradigm shift towards recognition for a wider function and roles for public relations, the fact that there is still shortage of budget and experts, lack of professional training and half-hearted support makes the efficacy

and efficiency of the practitioners questionable. Moreover these problems indicate the fact that there is still a lot to be done on the part of the top management to create enabling environment for the public relations team. Two-way asymmetrical model uses research to identify messages most likely to produce the support of publics without the organization's behavior changing. The **two-way symmetrical model** argues that the public relations practitioner should serve as a liaison between the organization and key publics, rather than as a persuader. The term "symmetrical" is used because the model attempts to create a mutually beneficial situation Tom et al (2005). Skinner, (1994) A brand goes beyond programs, services, and products, displays; rather, it encompasses everything else about an organization including reputation, culture and core values. As such, it is not simply advertising or marketing. Branding has been referred to as a messaging instrument which helps the business reach its goals and encompasses the promotion of everything associated with the business (Fritz, 2011). However, EBC have change the logo overtime in color form, size, philosophy, institutional vision acceptance in the eye of audience has been affected. The change has been very swift and made the brand making very hard. The research finding also shows that public relations practitioners are not yet involved decision making, instead they remained to play role of investigators of public opinion, image builders, link creators and advisors.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are suggested by the researcher.

- The management of the EBC has to organize national and international conferences on which professional scholars of public relations present researches on the essence, practices, and prospects of modern public relations.
- The management also needs to arrange internal self- assessment and external audit on the capabilities and constraints of public relation practices in the media organization.
- Sufficient support needs to be given by way of allocating human and material resources to public relations practitioners and arrange capacity building schemes.
- There is also a need to participate public relations practitioners in decision making process and empower them to perform management function.

- EBC have to practice learning and recovery management of Public relation experience through interaction with key stakeholders via surveys, direct mail and other means enhances the feedback received through the media to help the organization determine how perceptions have change and to restore and protect the organization's image.
- The practice organizational public relations has to be expanded as evidenced in the shape of once specific boundaries between public relations, advertising, and marketing communications activities.
- It is important that the EBC public relations is to brand strategy and to building and sustaining corporate status.
- EBC should have to practice to work in collaboration with external groups, such as the media or industry partners in the development and testing of the plan are also part of interactive process.
- The organization should endeavor to employ professional formally trained in public relations.

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Appendices

Appendix I. Interview Questions

1. How do you define the term public relations and branding managements?
 2. Where is the location of public relations team in the organizational structure of EBC?
 3. What is the status of public relations team? Is it an autonomous team or an integral team?
 4. What is the perception of the top management of EBC regarding public relations?
 5. How do stakeholders of EBC perceive public relations?
 6. With which departments of EBC is the public relation team working together?
 7. What roles are public relation practitioners are playing within EBC?
 8. To what level are public relations practitioners performing their duties within EBC.
 9. What types of documents and tools are used by practitioners in performing their functions?
 10. What types of external function do practitioners practices? What models of relations do practitioners follow in building relation with stakeholders? One - Way or two - Way?
 11. Do practitioners involve in investigating stakeholders opinion?
 12. How do public relation and branding management team promote EBC?
 13. Tools of informing educating, investigating stakeholders opinion, channels TV promotion
 14. What are internal and external challenges that hinder the efficacy of practitioners performance?
 15. How do you rate the success or failure of public relations practitioners?
 16. What feasible suggestions can you forward for the efficient and effective service delivery of practitioners?
1. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስራን እና ድርጅታዊ ገፅታን እንዴት ይገልፁታል?
 2. በኢ.ቤ.ሲ. መዋቅር የህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍል በየትኛው እርከን ይገልጻል?
 3. የህዝብ ግንኙነት የስራ ክፍሉ የስራ ነፃነት ምን ይመስላል? እርሱን የቻለ ነፃ ክፍል ነው ወይስ በሌላ ክፍል ተደረጎ ነው የሚሰራው?
 4. የኢ.ቤ.ሲ. የበላይ አመራር ለህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍሉ ምን አይነት አመለካከት አላቸው?
 5. የኢ.ቤ.ሲ. አጋሮች/ተመልካቾች ኢ.ቤ.ሲ.ን እንዴት ይመለከቱታል?
 6. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍሉ ከየትኛው የስራ ሂደት ጋር ነው አብሮ የሚሰራው?
 7. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያዎች ለኢ.ቤ.ሲ. ሚናቸው ምንድን ነው? ሀላፊነታቸውስ?

8. የኢ.ቢ.ሲ. የህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያዎች የድርጅቱን ስምና ዝና ለመገንባት ምን ያክል ተግባራቸውን ይወጣሉ?
9. ለህዝብ ግንኙነት ትግበራ ወቅት ምን አይነት መርጃዎችን እና ዘዴዎችን ይተገብራሉ?
10. ከውጭ ተመልካች እና ሌሎች ባለድርሻዎች ጋር ምን አይነት የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስልት ይከተላሉ? ምን አይነት ሞዴል/ ዘዴ ይከተላሉ? ሁለትዮሽ ወይስ የአንድ ወገን?
11. ባለሙያዎች የተመልካች ሃሳብ የሰባስባሉ? ጥናትስ ያደረጋሉ?
12. የህዝብ ግንኙነትና የሚዲያ ገፅታ ግንባታ ቡድን የኢ.ቢ.ሲ.ን ገፅታ ለመገንባት ይስራሉ?
13. የተመልካች ፍላጎት ለመለየት እና መረጃ ለማስተላለፍ ምን አይነት መንገድ ይከተላሉ?
14. የውስጣዊ እና የውጭ ተግዳሮቶች ምን ምን ናቸው?
15. የህዝብ ግንኙነቱን ክፍል ውጤታማነት እና ውድቀት እንዴት ይገልፁታል?
16. ለዘላቂ ውጤታማነት ማን ምክረ ሀሳብ አለህ/አለሽ?