

JIMMA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS



**AN ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
PRACTITIONERS' IN DAWRO ZONE CULTURE, TOURSISM AND GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATION AFFAIRS OFFICE**

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October, 2018
JIMMA, ETHIOPIA

**An Assessment of Perceptions and Practices of Public Relations Practitioners' in Dawro
Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Masters Degree in
Public Relations and Corporate Communications**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRIMENT FOR THE
MASTER DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONSAND CORPORATE
COMMUNICATIONS**

Declaration

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis entitled “Assessment of Perceptions and Practices of Public Relations Practitioners’ in Government Organization: The Case of Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs” is my original work and has not been presented for a master degree in any other University, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared

by:

Name: Getahun Girma

Signature -----Date: -----

Certificate

We certify that the research entitled “*An Assessment of Perceptions and Practices of Public Relations Practitioners’: The Case of Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office*” was done by Getahun Girma for the partial fulfillment of Master Degree in “Public Relations and Corporate Communications” under our supervision.

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Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

Public Relations practice has been widely recognized as an essential part of modern life, and has made significant contribution in various sectors including government agencies globally. The main purpose of this study was to assess perceptions and practices of public relations practitioners' in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communications Affairs Office. To that end, a descriptive cross-sectional design, and a mixed research methods approach was employed. Data were collected using, questionnaires, document analysis and interviews. A total of 42 public relations practitioners involved in thesis survey from both zonal and three woreda of government communication affairs. In addition, five heads of government communication affairs office from districts and zonal levels participated as key informants. The participants were selected using available sampling methods and for woredas depend of two successive year's performance. The result of the study indicated that PR practitioners' perceive their roles & its value to organizational achievement positively. However, due to misunderstanding of the roles, lack of skill and knowledge the practitioners execute the functions to play technician roles as government communication facilitator. The roles of PR found at low or technician level. The most often employed PR models to reach the public were one way models (press Agency and public information). The tools the practitioners utilized in their communication management were: press release, meeting, letters, brochures and magazines as well as radio & TV. Using social media to reach the target public was not functional. In short, the study showed that the practices of PR in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs Office found in low level. Thus, the study also recommended that to achieve the effective practice, the top management of the Zone's & Woredas' Communication Office should give opportunity to Public Relations Practitioners to participate on managerial functions like decision makings, setting objectives, strategic planning, counseling and so on.

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Acronyms/Abbreviations

DZCTGCA Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs

BIPR British Institute of Public Relations

INT interview

PR public relations

PRP Public Relations Practitioners

SNNPRS Southern Nation, Nationalities and People's Regional State

IABC International Association of Business Communicators

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Science

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, thanks to almighty God for helping me throughout the MA program. Secondly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisors: Dr. Asnakech Demissie, for her unreserved support and encouragement and giving constructive comments throughout the thesis work. She is: always open to discussion, a good listener, and open to challenges. I would also like to convey my gratitude to Mr. Dawit Tesfaye for his support and constructive comments in this study. Further, my heartfelt thanks goes to Dawro zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office for allowing me to pursue my study and to all PR practitioners and participants of Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communication Affairs in this research.

My special thanks go to Dawro Zone administration office for budget support for the study.

Finally, I am very grateful for my, brothers and friends without their ideas and support this paper may not look as it appear now.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Public relation (PR) is a very crucial process for the sustainability of every organization for the relation with its publics. In the 21st century organizations operate in ever more complex environments and the intended and unintended consequences of their actions may be seen and judged differently in a variety of arenas. While public relations (PR) may have a significant role in helping organizations to deal with various challenges of contemporary world; perceptions regarding the role, functions and importance of PR vary a lot among different actors – including PR scholars and professionals. Public relation is “a communication function of management through which organizations adapts to alter or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organizational goals” (Long & Hazelton 1987, p. 6). In General, PR is an applied social and behavioral science which measures, evaluates, and interprets the attitude of the various targeted publics (internal & external). Moreover, PR is the management of relationship to establish good will and mutual understanding between an organization and its target publics (Kumar, 2006).

The role of PR is vital in improving organization’s image and for organizational effectiveness. According to Grunig and Hunt (Jethwaney & Sarkar, 2000), PR is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

Public relations research has the potential to build the foundation not only for better public relations, but also better organizations in general. In today’s 21stc, organizations have faced different problems that emanated from globalization, customer pressure, and change in landscape of media and rapid change of technology. Therefore, the magnitude of Public Relation may differ to size and nature, no matter what the philosophy, the strategy and method is alike, but it has a power to influence the global understanding or to escalate relations with in the firm and its customer, agents, employers (Black, 2004).

Although these are some of the roles (functions) of PR, countries like Ethiopia, research based PR practices and practitioners' perceptions concerning their key roles and functions as well as models of PR in government organization is not well investigated. Thus, profession is suffering several problems or challenges that emanating from misunderstanding of the clear roles and functions of the public relations, low recognition from the government and managers for the field. Besides low understanding of the difference between public relations as a discipline on its own, and as a management tool, as marketing expert as well as a communication process in an organization. To show these, Ethiopian public relations practitioners (PRP) do not have a national association and there is no national data when the public relations started in Ethiopia and how many practitioners are found currently in the country (Biniyam, 2006).

The effective public relations have various roles that make mutual understanding between an organization and targeted audiences. Grunig (1992) provides a summary of the 10 normative, generic principles of effective public relations programs: Involvement of public relations in strategic management, Empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management, Integrated public relations function, Public relations as a management function, separate from other functions, Public relations unit headed by a manager rather than a technician, Two-way symmetrical model of public relations, A symmetrical system of internal communication, Knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical public relations, Diversity embodied in all roles and Organizational context for excellence.

Also public relation officers are often treated as errand people who must top the list of those to be terminated from service whenever the need arises. Due to this, the practice of PR in government organization is in infant stage and less performed. The practices of public relations critically is very essential since the practice continue to build a positive image of an organization and government and publicize government development agenda and policies among the citizenry. PR is an important subsystem of an organization and its effective practice is integrally bound to the success of an organization. It provides an opportunity for organizations to effectively monitor, interact and react with other key groups within the organizational environment. Nowadays, public relations activities are mainly considered as hub of developmental activities; thus, in each federal and regional government offices of

Ethiopia, there is public relations department. However, in zonal level in SNNPRS PR independently structured to culture, tourism & government communication affairs. Hence, major duties of this PR department is communicating with different public on developmental activities of the zones and surrounding area. The office is expected to integrate employees (internal publics) and connects the different government and non-government agencies (external publics) in facilitating communication services and controls various activities of other sectors.

Dawro (or Dawuro) is a zone in the Ethiopian Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPRS). The name "Dawuro" represents both the land & the people. Dawro people belong to Omotic family. The language of Dawuro people is 'Dawurotsuwa' (in Latin orthography). It is located at about 500km southwest of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia and 275 km of Hawassa, the capital of the SNNPR and 148km from Jimma town. Dawro is bordered on the south by Gamo Gofa Zone, on the west by the Konta special woreda, on the north by the Gojeb River which defines its boundary with the Oromia Region-Jimma Zone, on the northeast by Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro Zones, and on the east by Wolayita Zone; the Omo River defines its eastern and southern boundaries. The administrative center of Dawuro is Tarcha. It is divided into five woreda & one city administration. In 2010 E.C other five woreda structure was added by regional government. The total coverage is about 466,082ha (Tigicho et al., 2012). Current total population of more than 608,947 (projected from 2007 Ethiopian Census result).

The office of Culture, tourism and government communication affairs of Dawro Zone is one of the twenty two sectors that found in Zonal structure that established in line with SNNPRS government communication Affairs office in 2003 E.C; that disseminate important information to the public about the of Dawro people and government of political, economic ,social and cultural issues too. Generally, the sector play a great role in making a communication management within the office, between the other sectors as well as government and the zonal public at large by communicating different developmental and good governance issues from the government to people in order to strengthen information flow & make common consensus between them, to make transparence, and enhance ownership and encourage community participation. This department has multidimensional activities with different sectors and used as

bridge with internal & external public. In other words, it is central in designing, implementing and monitoring all communication activities within the office and between the different sector offices by feeding different policies & strategies of the government.

Therefore, assessing the practice of public relations Practitioners in Dawro zone critically is very essential since the practices continue to build a positive image of government and publicize government development agenda and policies among the citizenry. It is an important subsystem of an organization and its effective practice is integrally bound to the success of an organization, provides an opportunity for organizations to effectively monitor, interact and react with other key groups within the organizational environment. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the perceptions and practices of PR practitioners' in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office (DZCTGCA).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Public relations accomplish different tasks in both government and corporate organizations (firms). As earlier stated, the roles of Public Relations in government varies widely. The diversity of goals and activities in government is greater than in any other area of Public Relations practice. Government touches every aspect of society, and virtually every facet of government is closely tied to and reliant upon Public Relations (Cutlip *et al.*, 1994). Thus, calls for Public Relations practices in government have to be given serious consideration. Governments were created to represent their citizens. More and more, local governments are trying to engage their publics to find out what they want and what they are thinking about. Governments need to engage with the citizens in a two-ways communication with those they represent in order to be most effective in this all-important task and enhance mutual understanding.

This is to emphasize that the government in general and local government in particular has a great role to facilitate in various issues. Since the local government has a direct relation with citizens and it monitors the process in terms of budgetary allocations, staffing, positioning, structuring and recognition.

However, the status of the practices of public relations in Ethiopia looks like it is in the early stage of its maturity and formation. Most of its practices lie at the limits of Grunig's first model

of public relations, which focuses on only publicity or press Agency. The major communication channel can be described as one-way official communication and can be equated to the earlier concept of Westerns' public relations (Challa, 2017).

According to authors, the roles of PR practitioners within the organizations can be seen as a communicator, a mediator, an interpreter or communication link between the organization and all its stakeholders. Challenges such as lack of sufficient budget allocations, lack of understanding and misconceptions towards the roles and functions can greatly affect the organization's overall aims and objects (Ibid).

In Ethiopia, due to educational background, lack of knowledge and experience of PR the Public Relations Practitioners didn't accept their role in appropriate manner and they perceive themselves as information disseminator only for media relations and not working for managerial roles. According to Bereket, (2015) most of the PR practitioners have not perceived the management function of Public Relations & the PR office has not involved in creating mutual understanding with the publics as it is expected of. As a result, the practice of PR is only limited to promotional activity and tends to propaganda in government organization. According to Biniyam (2006), described that PR practitioners feel they did not well understood their professional roles. According to him, they were considered as a lair and only promoter of their organization".

In addition to these the practice of public relations is found at its infant stage, and this is mainly emanated from lack of having skilled manpower in the form of division in relation to the profession (Ibid).

Thus, the activities are limited to routine assignments other than including various parts of the profession like public affairs, employee relations, financial relations and investor relations etc. As a result, the intended objectives of the discipline might be failed to be accomplished Berhanu (cited in Nigusse, 2008).

Different studies conducted in Ethiopia regarding PR practices. Bereket, (2015), conducted the study on assessment of PR in eastern Tigray, and his finding indicates, the PR office was not structured and organized professionally which emanates from belittling its role especially from the top leaders. And the practitioners remain stages the debate rather than mediate the debate.

Challa, (2017) conducted the study on PR practices and challenges in Dire Dawa and Harer town. Their study found that the roles of public relations practitioners within the organizations can be seen as a communicator, a mediator, an interpreter or communication link between the organization and all its stakeholders. Challenges such as lack of sufficient budget allocations, lack of understanding and misconceptions towards the roles and functions can greatly affect the organization's overall aims and objects.

Gubay, (2017), PR practices, tools and models in Gambela region Government Communication Affairs and the result shows; in Gambella regional government communication affairs office has not established system of participating strategic publics` on planning and decision making process. Thus, a plan without the general public's participation is hardly credible. Besides, there were no framework at central level used for planning and implementing the overall PR activities.

According to Salilew .A. *et al.*, (2017) an investigating roles and functions of PR in eight first generation public universities and the findings indicates in that public universities are weak internal communications, lack of doing researching or survey about the opinion and attitude of the publics and the stakeholders about the institutions public affair issues, lobbying and fundraising matters.

Hence, as far as the researcher's knowledge concerned, in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communication affairs office (DZCTGCA) during public relations practicum internship and two years of real working time experience. Unlike the other parts of Ethiopia in Dawro Zone, there is only one department of public relations structure is established in Culture, Tourism and Government communication affairs office only, but work for all sectors in Zonal and woredas level. It contains several activities like media relation, internal and external relations and promotional programs in different form for different purposes.

Moreover, among the above studies as far as the researcher knowledge no one has been conducted on Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communication affairs office and the issues related with perceptions and practices of PR practitioners.

Therefore, the researcher tried to assess how PR practitioners perceive and playing their roles. In general, this study assessed the perceptions and practices of PR practitioners' in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office, SNNPRS.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How do the public relations practitioners' perceived PR practices in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office?
- ii. What roles do the PR practitioners most often play in communication office?
- iii. What models of public relations are utilized most often in communication office?
- iv. What the specific tools utilized in PR practices of Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and government communication affairs office?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is assessing the perceptions and practices of Public Relations practitioners' in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communication Affairs office.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To describe the perceptions of public relations practitioners' in culture, tourism and government communication affairs office.
- ii. To identify specific roles being played by PR practitioners in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government communication affairs office.
- iii. To identify the most dominantly used PR models by the PR practitioners in the organization (DZCTGCA);
- iv. To identify the specific PR tools utilized by Practitioners in the Zone's Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Since the study is a first investigation of PR perceptions and practices conceptually in the context of Culture, Tourism and Government Communications office of Dawro Zone, SNNPRS. It was expected to provide new information on the Practitioners' perceptions and public relations practices in the public relations department at the study area. Hence, it will be an input for practitioners, to compare the types of performed public relations roles; the most often used models & tools in the organization. Moreover, the general status of the public relations activities will be appraised and empirical outcomes will be verified in light of theoretical grounds that will direct practitioners maintain, shape or defuse current trends.

Generally; the findings of the study could help: to show whether the PR practitioners perceive their roles appropriately, play their roles effectively in government communication affairs or not; the PR practitioners to use the appropriate models and tools for the success of public relations (PR) practices and organization's goal achievement; to increase their awareness toward their roles and base themselves for future plans on public relations research based. Also it will help to isolate the tools that PR practitioners utilize to reach their target public and practice in government organizations and be as a source of information for further study in the area and researchers who want to conduct research on the practitioners' perceptions and practice of public relations.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

This study focused Geographically Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs office in SNNPRS in general and government communication affairs in particular. Because, of the PR department was structured and established only in CTGCA Office in Zonal and Woreda levels. Conceptually, it focuses on assessment of Practitioners' perceptions and practices of Public Relations in government communication office. Because the researcher believed that the public relations department has been fully filled with PR practitioners and have structures at that office only in line with SNNPRS, communication affairs office and as the practitioners have an experiences of media relations and event management to build the offices and zonal image. There are no other organizations that have PR department and practitioners to practice PR at the zonal level sectors in the same line with, bureau of SNNPRS, Ethiopia.

It looks at the perceptions of PR, level of professionalism in PR practice in culture, tourism and government communication affairs, the roles, tools and models they utilized, and ways of improving the practices of PR in government organization. The other PR practices such as PR ethics and corporate social responsibility as well corporate organizations were not part of the study. Generally, this study was delimited to assess the Practitioners' perceptions and practices of PR in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs, SNNPS, in general and Government communication affairs department in particular.

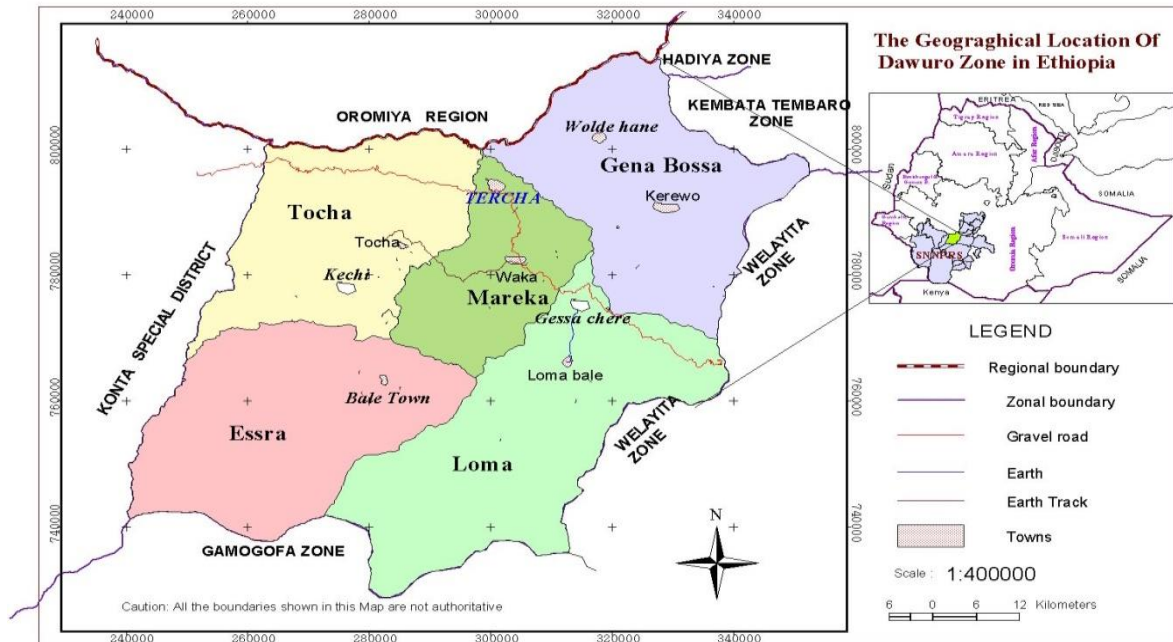


Figure1. Map of Dawuro Zone from <https://www.google.com/search?q=dawuro+zone+map>

1.7 Limitations of the Study

In conducting this study the researcher was limited, in voluntariness of the participant to share information in appropriate time interval, may the interruption with their work time, and shortage of time and budget during investigation. To overcome such problem, the researcher took the measure during the investigation the following actions as remedies: motivated the participants to share the information at the right time, asked the permission from heads of the office and inform the practitioners about the aim of the study clearly, making effort to gain per diem from the Zone administration office to solve the budget problem by using negotiation and to accomplish the study within a given time interval; as much as possible the researcher used at most effort and time day to night effectively.

1.8 Organizations of the Study

This research was organized in to five major chapters. The first chapter incorporated things like Background of the study, Statement of the Problem, Objective of the Study, Scope, limitation and organization of the study. The second chapter discussed the review of related literatures. The third chapter discussed methodology and design part in detail. The forth chapter provides results and discussions of the research. The last or the fifth chapter was wheezing up the general conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of PR

In field of public relations, many scholars, organizations and associations gave different definitions for different purposes at different time regarding the public relations profession. All the definitions directly or indirectly comprise two concepts: the public linkage with an organization and the management function of the public relations. In other word, public relations focus on relation building, image building, earning credibility with telling the truth and communication management between the organizations with its publics. According to (Cutlip et al., 1985) indicated that public relation is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends.

(For instance (Harlow, 1976) found 472 different definitions of PR coined between 1900 and 1976. Then, he built his own definitions from these findings as follow: 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 and issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinions; define and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Harlow, 1976, p.36).

This indicates that public relation has the responsibility to do the research before starting a public relations program, and after conduct surveys regarding the opinion & attitudes of the public to find out how much the management and their publics understand each other.

Cutlip, Centre and Broom, in their classical book, *Effective Public Relations*, (1994) defines public relations as “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public on whom its success or failure depends”. This definition clearly underlines the fact that public relations is a two-way process between an

organization and its identified publics that is meant to benefit both parties. In other words, mutual understanding requires by definition, two-way communication.

The above definitions, share a common understanding of PR as serving both the organization and its publics. The definitions compare with the dictionary based definition of public relations as “the state of the relationship between an organization and the public”. (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2004).

In other words, Public relations monitors and researchers issues in the environment and tries to align the policies and programmes of the organization in such a way that it will favor both the organization and the public so that, there will be a mutual outcome. From these various definitions you should note some key and important terms for formulating a good public relations. What are the roles in the organizational environment to achieve the desired goals?

The First World Assembly of Public Relations Associations held in Mexico City in 1978, defined it as “the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organization and the public interest”. This definition was adopted at the First World Congress of National Public Relations Associations held in Mexico in 1978. This definition is accepted to be broad, all-embracing and multidisciplinary. It suggests that public relations take expertise and knowledge from the social sciences and arts. For instance, the survey method has become very useful in public relations to find out peoples’ opinions, attitudes and beliefs in order predict human behavior.

The British Institute of PR (BIPR) defines the function as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. This definition suggests that public relations is not a haphazard endeavor. It is a process that is deliberately planned to achieve a given goal or objective, which is mutual understanding between an organization and its publics and must be planned. “Sustained effort” means that a process does not end until it has achieved its objectives. This means that as a public relations officer, you must always endeavor to carry our plans to a logical end, despite any difficulties you may encounter in the process.

2.2 A Theoretical Basis for Public Relations

Theory is a set of principles that provide an explanation of some aspect of the natural or social world, based in observation, experimentation, and reasoning. According to Robert Cox “Theory is always for someone and for some purpose.” The main goal of theory is explanation, understanding, prediction, and social change. More important, theory explains how to make public relations most effective for organizations and society.

Tan (1985, p. 14) defines a theory as a set of interrelated laws or general principles (hypotheses that have been repeatedly verified) about some aspect of reality. The function of theory is to explain, predict, and discover systematic relationships between facts. Public Relations practice is anchored on a number of theories. Some of these include the excellence theory, the systems theory and the social systems theory.

There is no one theory that will explain all public relations practices. Public relations practitioners consider several theories when they practice and make decisions about how they can build successful relationships with their publics. These scholars introduce six types of theories that public relations practitioners use every day: relationship theory, persuasion and social influence, mass communication, roles, models, and approaches to conflict resolution ([Http://www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

James E. Grunig, (1992) contributed a landmark theory focused on public relations as a strategic management function of organizations. Based on the Excellence study, he helped explain how public relations contribute to building valuable relationships between organizations and their publics in order to achieve organizational goals. His work helped explain how public relations professionals participate in the strategic decision-making processes of organizations.

No single theory covers all you need to know in public relations or any other discipline; therefore, it is valuable to look at theories by grouping them according to how they are used. For this study the researcher included: the excellence theory will be used and discussed.

2.2.1 Excellence Theory

Excellence Theory is the foundation theory in public relations. It aimed to examine public relations roles in organizations. The theory also discussed the internal and external environment management that argued organizations have to maintain a good relationship with their

stakeholders and their employees as well as the theory also examined the public relations roles in strategic management. It introduced symmetrical communication model to increase customers' satisfaction with organizations.

Excellence Theory was an integrated collection of theories (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 2008) that developed from 1970s to 1980s by James E. Grunig, Larissa A. Grunig, and David M. Dozier. It was a 15 years study sponsored by International Association of Business Communicators Research Foundation. The theory was tested through interviewing "heads of public relations, CEOs, and employees in 327 organizations," (Grunig, 2008, p. 1) including corporations, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and associations in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2008) defined a set of contributes of public relations functions that can enhance effectiveness of an organization. They defined "excellence in public relations as a set of attributes and practices that helped to build quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies" (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Ehling, 1992, p. 86; as reviewed in J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 2008, p. 328).

Excellence Theory argued public relations could help an organization to adapt its internal and external environment that allowed it to behave the way it wanted (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 2008, p. 331). The theory also examined public relations practitioners' role in organizations. According to J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2008), public relations assisted organizations in strategic decision-making that proved the practitioners were in a strategic management role in behavioral management. Beyond a strategic management role, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2008) also explained senior public relations executives had to become "a member of the dominant coalition of the organization"(p. 335) and had a power to influence the decision-making of the organization. What's more, the head of public relations department must be a strategic manager not an administrative manager (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 2008) or other managers from other departments to lead public relations programs or champions.

Linda Hon (2007)'s study examined the experiences of James and Larissa Grunig's former students that related to Excellence Theory. It tried to find out "the empowerment of the public relations function, roles, organization of the communication function, and models of public

relations” (p. 5). The research was conducted throughout large organizations including public relations agencies, government, corporations, and nonprofits and so on. The results showed public relations did play a strategic management role in most organizations and public relations aimed to manage the relationship between organizations and their environment. The study also argued that several practitioners help their organizations to implement two-way symmetry because organizations concerned more about their “transparency, corporate social responsibility, and the importance of getting feedback” (p. 14).

In some previous study, scholars focused on the public relations strategic management roles, and thorough retested and examined Excellence Theory through interviewing public relations professionals and capturing their experience of their jobs. Some critical public relations defined excellence as an idea theory that it could not conform to the real public relations practice. Therefore, I will examine whether the PR practitioners practicing their roles from excellence theory perspective or not to achieve organizational goals and to play managerial roles.

2.2.2.1 Symmetrical Communication

Symmetrical communication is a significant part of Excellence Theory. Grunig and Hunt (1984) defined public relations as “management of communication between an organization and its publics,” (p. 6, as reviewed in Laskin, 2009, p. 38) and public relations maintained the relationship between organizations and its publics.

Public relations developed through following four steps. The first step is press agent/publicity model (Laskin, 2009), which represents press agency play an important role in public relations industry at that time. Public information model (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) comes the second. Instead of press agency, public information dominated (Laskin, 2009) in public relations practice. It concerned about public’s value and interest, and aimed to tell the truth (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The third model was two-way asymmetric model (Laskin, 2009) that developed before the forth model, two-way symmetric model (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Asymmetric model viewed public relations as a “scientific endeavor and introduced persuasion and other social science concepts in to practice of public relations” (Laskin, 2009, p. 38). On the contrary, two-way symmetric model encourage an “open dialogue” (Laskin, 2009, p.40) between organizations and their publics. It also focused on balanced communication to enhance mutual understanding.

According to Laskin (2009), the last two models both focused on two directions of communication and concerned both talking and listening. However, symmetrical communication aimed to build an equal environment among organizations and public, instead of persuading publics to accept (Laskin, 2009) organization's perspective as asymmetrical communication advocated.

2.3 Public Relations Roles

The concept of roles is rooted in structural-functionalist theory and refers both to the acts performed by people in certain positions within an organization as well as their relationships with people in other roles (Bivins, 1989). Research on the role of public relations is well developed and has a long history. In a review of roles research in public relations, Dozier (1992) proposed that "practitioner roles are keys to understanding the function of public relations and organizational communication" (p. 328). Therefore, this section of the literature examines the role the public relations practitioner plays within his or her public relations department.

Research on public relations roles began in 1979 with Broom and Smith's exploratory study of clients' perceptions of practitioner job tasks. In this study, Broom and Smith proposed the existence of four public relations roles. The four theoretical roles of public relations as Gruning has it, (in Heerden, 2005) are: The communication technician, communication facilitator, expert prescriber and Problem solving facilitator.

2.3.1 The Communication Technician

The communication technician role of public relations is mostly conceptualized as the beginning of professionalism (Gruning & Gruning, 2002). The practitioners are often responsible for the communication tactics of news releases, organizing press conferences, employee newsletters, position papers, designs brochures and media placements (Castelli, 2007). Gruning and Gruning (2002) further maintained that the practitioners, in performing this role, are usually not involved in defining problems and developing solutions, but base their tactics on the technical skill of writing. Theaker (2004) further stated that the communication technician's role of public relations may not require them to undertake researches or be involved in organizational decision making; except to decide which communication mechanism suits their prescribed purpose.

In other word, the role of communication technician refers to the practitioner as a technical services provider, generating the collateral materials needed to implement a communication or public relations program planned through another communication role (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Dozier (1984) argued that the communication technician would be conceptualized as the ‘beginning professional’ expected to undertake basic research in the preparation of public relations materials. The public relations technician is the practitioner who writes the news release or designs the brochure, handling graphics and the production of materials.

2.3.2 The Communication Facilitator

The communication facilitator of public relations is a boundary spanner who listens to and brokers information between the organization and its key publics (Theaker, 2004). According to (Cutlip *et al.*, 2000), the goal of this role is “to provide both management and publics the information they need for making decisions of mutual interest.” Practitioners serving as the public relations manager within an organization are expected to be knowledgeable about innovations in public relations and are expected to demonstrate leadership in new approaches to old problems (Dozier 1984, cited in Castelli, 2007).

2. 3.3 The Expert Prescriber

The expert prescriber’s theoretical role of the public relations is associated with the responsibility to handle consultation function or participation by other senior management. It is the role where the practitioner is responsible for describing and solving public relations problems independently. The expert prescriber acts as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions (Castelli, 2007).

The expert prescriber is the role where the practitioner is responsible for describing and solving public relations problems independently. The expert prescriber acts as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions. Broom (1982) acknowledged that practitioners often perform multiple roles, but he argued that a practitioner can be classified according to the role he or she plays more frequently. Grunig, Toth and Hon (2001) argue however, that the two major roles that have been identified are not mutually exclusive. Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2001) argued that public relations practitioners tend to carry out both managerial and technical tasks.

2.3.4 Problem Solving Facilitator

The problem-solving facilitator's roles of public relations, according to (Dozier cited in Castelli, 2007), is the role where the practitioners are assumed as problem solver, decision-maker and planner. They are expected to be knowledgeable about innovations in public relations and expected to demonstrate leadership approach to solve problems. Ströh (2007, p. 1) explaining the importance of public relations stated that it must be the parasol function that manages the communication between an organization and its publics to build and enhance healthy relationships to the benefit of all parties involved. As Rosenberg (2013) put it, "the most valuable type of public relations activities involves anticipating problems, planning to prevent problems or at least trying to solve them while they are still small" (p. 13).

The issue of the roles of public relations was also dealt by Cutlip *et al.*, (in Theaker, 2004, p. 57). They identified two dominant roles of public relations: the communication manager role and the communication technician role. The communication manager plans and manages public relations programs, advises management, makes communication policy decisions and oversees their implementation. On the other hand, the communication technician is the one who is not involved in organizational decision making, but implements public relations programs.

Research on these four original public relations roles found that the first three were highly correlated, but the role of communication technician was not correlated with the others (Dozier, 1983). Because of this, Dozier simplified the roles and combined the first three to become what is known as the manager role, and the technician role he found to remain separate. In the two-role typology, technicians are still those who tend to produce and disseminate materials based on what the client or manager deems important (Broom, 2009). Managers are practitioners who are part of decision-making (Dozier, 1992). Managers also use research to inform their strategies (Dozier, 1981, 1986; Judd, 1987) and evaluate their success (Dozier, 1984). Whether using the original four roles, or the two-role dichotomy, no practitioner will fall into a single role at all times (Broom, 2009; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005). However, practitioners do tend to have a dominant role they enact most often (Broom, 2009).

Since the original conceptualization by Broom (1979) and then by Dozier (1983), there has been a great deal of research on public relations roles and how they relate to other phenomena in the

practice of public relations. Due to this, it is important to identify which roles have been played by PR practitioners in Dawro Zone culture, Tourism and Government communication affairs office.

2.4 Misconceptions of Public Relations

In most parts of the world including Ethiopia, the profession of public relations has been subjected to wrong perception of what a public relations person actually does. To make matters worse, some of the practitioners themselves do not have a clear idea of what public relations actually is. This situation has created credibility problems for the profession in general and the practitioners in particular. Daramola (2003) and Nwosu (1997) have identified some of these misconceptions to include:

1. **Courtesy:** Some people view public relations as consisting of good manners or being polite or respectful to others. But, good manners alone do not constitute public relations.
2. **Protocol:** Even institutional officials erroneously believe that good public relations is about protocol or the proper procedure of conducting official ceremonies.
3. **Goodwill:** Every individual or organization needs the cooperation of others to be able to achieve any mission or vision because no one is an island by himself.
4. **Fine Appearance:** A lot of persons and companies assume that public relations is equivalent to a fine appearance, an attractive face or glamorous front. For this reason, such people and institutions maintain a strict dress code or policy. While a good cover is essential a good book cannot be judged by its cover.
5. **Free Gifts:** Many company executives in Ethiopia in particular and around the world in general, believe in projecting their organizations as charitable and benevolent through the giving of free annual gifts such as Christmas's hampers and Sallah rams. Effective public relations does not begin and end with gifts.
6. **Annual Parties:** The yearly staging of grand get-togethers such as Annual Dealers Dinner, Staff Children, Christmas Fun Fair, Employees New Year or end of year party is another popular method of generating goodwill and friendship among both internal and external publics of an organization.

7. Public relations is not about employing pretty ladies to woo men into acting against their wishes.

8. Public relations is not about lying and selling falsehood about your organization and product. Equally, it is not about denying every statement that does not favor your organization. Public relations is about telling the truth and not prevaricating or what an Israeli government spokesman once described as “Strategic Ambiguity” (neither denying, nor admitting).

9. Public relations is not about being a yes-boy or a bag carrier for year boss madam or relations. Instead, it is a dignified and noble profession that attracts knowledgeable, self-confident, intelligent and self-respecting women and men.

The display of professionalism and ethical conduct by public relations practitioners in their relationship with their organization and the public will go a long way to correct some of these misconceptions.

2.4.1 PR and Propaganda

When public relation is misused, people equate it with propaganda. One of the most common misconceptions is to think that public relations, means propaganda, the manipulation of people’s minds by shady character (the Hidden Persuaders). However, PR and propaganda are widely different while PR’s objective is to achieve consent true dialogue, complete openness, understanding and collection of information through ethical fact finding methods respected worldwide, the objective of propaganda is to build a movement, direct information to a people already brainwashed, use and accept monologue, obscure facts or gives half-truths; promote a following whether or not the people understand the issue at stake.

Propagandists obtain information through questionable means. Since propaganda's main objective is influencing people by spreading information which may be false or exaggerated, it gives no regard to public opinion and seeks to serve selfish interests. Harrison (2000, p. 8) says that because Public Relations is sometimes seen as an instrument of persuasion, it is useful to distinguish it from propaganda which Bhushan (1991, p.244) refers to a conscious, systematic, and organized effort which is designed deliberately to manipulate or influence the decisions, actions, or beliefs of a large number of people in a specified direction on a controversial issue. Whereas, PR practitioners are also

obligated to explain issues to the public before these problems become crises; and PR practitioners should be measured by only one standard: ethical performance or effective practices.

Newsom, Turk and Kruckberg (1996, p. 4) in Van Heerden (2004) describe the function of and/or role of PR practice by using the following ten principles: PR deals with reality, not false fronts. Conscientiously planned programmes that put the public interest in the forefront are the basis of sound PR policy; PR is a service oriented profession in which public interest, not personal reward, should be the primary consideration; PR practitioners must go to the public to seek support for programmes and policies; public interest is the central criterion by which programmes and policies should be selected: PR practitioners reach many publics through the mass media, which are the public channels of communication; the integrity of these channels must be preserved; PR practitioners act as intermediaries between organizations and their publics and they must be effective communicators - conveying information back and forth until understanding is reached; PR practitioners expedite two-way communication and are responsible for the extensive use of scientific public opinion research to understand what their publics are saying and to reach them effectively; PR practitioners must employ the social sciences psychology, sociology, social psychology, public opinion, communications study and semantics; PR practitioners must adapt the work of other related disciplines, including learning theory and other psychology theories, sociology, political science, economics and history. Thus the PR field requires multidisciplinary applications.

In general, propaganda gains credibility by sensationalism and focus on good results whatever the means bad whereas PR works for long term relation building through ethical means, two ways communication in order to enhance mutual understanding between the organization and the public.

2.5 Models of Public Relations

There have historically been four models of public relations that have been used to define the variations in the way public relations is practiced. Grunig and Hunt (1984) generally defined the four public relations models based upon whether they used one way or two-way communication between the organization and its publics. The two-way communication models are further

broken down into whether or not the relationship was symmetrical, with both the organization and its publics sharing equal amounts of the power in the relationship, or whether it is asymmetrical with the organization having and exerting more power in the relationship. These models are defined as the press agency/publicity, public information, two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical (J. Grunig, 2001). Grunig (2001) points out that the press agency/publicity and public information are both one-way communication models.

An understanding of Grunig's Four Models of Public Relations which describe the evolving types of PR practice from Press Agency through Public Information to Two-way Asymmetric and Two-Way Symmetric communication is important to study the PR practices, because different objectives pertain to each model. Besides, the four models have been promoted, practiced, criticized and deliberated among global PR professionals for decades (Stephen, 2012).

James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) suggested four perspectives in which PR is practiced in modern way. Their suggestion is based on two dimensional combinations; directions of communication—one-way versus two-way, and purposes of communication—asymmetrical versus symmetrical. The models describe the different forms of communication (relationship) between an organization and its stakeholders. These are, the Press Agency, the Public Information, the Two-way Asymmetrical and the Two-way Symmetrical models of PR (Theaker, 2007 & Stephen, 2012).

Table A: James Grunig and Tod Hunt's Four Models

Model	Type of communication	Characteristics
1.press a gentry or publicity	One-way communication	Uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires
2.Public information	One-way communication	Uses press releases & other one-way communication techniques to distribute organizational information. The public relations practitioners is often referred to as in-house journalist.
3.Two-way asymmetric	Two-way communication	Uses persuasion & manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires. Does

		not use research to find out how stockholders feel about the organization.
4.Two-way symmetric	Two-way communication	Uses communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding respect between the organization and its stakeholders.

Adopted from Theaker, A. (2007)

2.5.1 Press Agency Model

Press Agency/Publicity model follows one way communication where the flow of information is only from the sender to the receiver. The sender is not much concerned about the second party's feedback, reviews/responses and so on. This model is a one-way communication from the press agents to their publics that uses persuasion and manipulation to influence behavior of an audience. Besides, accuracy and credibility are not priorities with this kind of model. The method is usually employed by practitioners for one way communications to sell products or services without any quantitative analysis of the results. The press agent invests no time in research and even less in the discussion of ethics. The aim is behavior manipulation. With roots in the 19th century, press agents worked to influence public opinion.

Scholars like Haywood, (2002) consider the act as a one-way communications value, constantly transmitting but never receiving; they are all mouths and no ears. Press agency model applies when a public relations program strives only for favorable publicity in the mass media, often in a deceptive way which can be called as propaganda. Thus, propaganda is not about communication between an organization and their publics; it is about miscommunication. Its first aim is to dissolve communication between people in order to disable their ability to form publics. This act cannot be taken as the function of public relation since its basic purpose is to create constraints to communications or one sided information flow.

2.5.2 Public Information Model

Public information is the second model which is practiced basically to inform the public and started somewhere in the early 20thc. It is enlightened public relations types shifted toward truth and accuracy in communication, but they did little more than distribute information. So, it does not seek to persuade or change the attitude of the public directly but to disseminate any relevant

information to them. It is thus predicated that if the public has sufficient, relevant and truthful information about the organization, then the public will believe and behave to what the organization desired.

In Public Information Model, the job of PR practitioners, also referred as the ‘journalists in residence’, is to report objectively information about their organizations to the public through mass media and controlled media such as newspapers, brochures and direct mail (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). While One-way communication is the feature of the public information model, tools such that, press releases, brochures, even static Web content, are tools used by these information dispensers. They tell the story and hope someone is paying attention (Simpson, 2014). Today's practitioners (and students training to be practitioners) greatly benefit by understanding the crucial role that the news media plays in public life, how to deal with the media and, more generally, how external communications efforts can be used to advance the work of public agencies (Theaker, 2007).

This model emphasizes on maintaining and enhancing the image of an organization simply by circulating relevant and meaningful information among the target audience/public and common model in government organizations they do a lot of one way storytelling to “get the word out”

2.5.3 Two-way Asymmetrical Model

The two-way asymmetrical model is the third level model in public relation. The post-world war second rise in consumer products created a need for targeted, scientific marketing and public relations played a role. Two ways asymmetrical model of public relations revolves around two ways communication between both the parties, but the communication is somewhat not balanced. In this type of model, public relations experts position their organization and brand on the whole in the minds of their target audiences through manipulation and force the public to behave the same way they would want them to do. In two way asymmetrical models of public relations, organizations do not utilize much of their manpower and resources to find out the reaction of the stakeholders, investors or for that matter the public. Grunig and Hunt call it ‘scientific persuasion,’ and it remains the stock-in-trade of advertisers everywhere. While the asymmetrical communication is two-way it is about persuasion to trigger a transaction in favor of the organization’s interest. It is imbalanced and mainly works towards the interest of the

organizations goal. In this model of PR the research is to be done to determine how effective this program has been in changing people's attitudes (Rice and Atkin 2001).

2.6.4 The Two-Way Symmetrical Model

This model usually attempts to find a mutually advantageous solution to problems and a PR uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflicts, and promote mutual understandings and respect between the organization and its public(s) (Theaker, 2007). This implies the two-way symmetrical model allows for more input from publics that can provide innovative solutions and corrective discourse, both essential for sound strategic PR management.

Free flow of information takes place between the organization and its stake holders, employees, investors and vice-a-versa. Conflicts and misunderstandings are resolved through mutual discussions and communication. A two way communication takes place between both the parties, and information flows in its desired form. The feedback from stakeholders and target audiences are also taken into consideration.

However, it is a utopian model, for these clients are rare to be found nowhere in the world. It has also been labeled as, "the ideal model" by Grunig (1984). This is mainly because in this model both the flow of communication and influence between the organization and its publics is more balanced.

2.6 Public Relations in Government

Government is intended to provide services that would otherwise be impractical for individuals to provide, such as law enforcement and fire protection, wildlife preservation, national defense, public transportation systems, justice systems, social programs, and national museums and so on. Thus, the most basic function of government Public Relations is to contribute to the definition and achievement of government program goals, enhance government responsiveness and service, and to provide the public with sufficient information to permit self-government (Aronoff & Baskin, 1983).

The goals for government Public Relations programs, regardless of the level of government, have at least three things in common: informing constituents about the activities of the government agency; ensuring active cooperation in government programs for example, voting, as well as compliance in regulatory programs (for example, mandatory seat belt use, antismoking

ordinances); and fostering citizen support for established policies and programs (Cutlip *et al.*, 1994).

The diversity of goals and activities in government is greater than any other area of Public Relations practice. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that governments touch every aspect of society, and virtually every facet of government is closely tied to and reliant upon Public Relations. In a very real sense, the purpose of government itself closely matches the purpose of Public Relations. Successful governments maintain responsive, mutual understanding based on two-way communication with citizens (Cutlip *et al.*, 1994, pp. 462-463).

Contradicting this view, the belief by most people that government communication is "propaganda" is a great challenge to government public relations. Specially, when Public Relations in government is associated with elected officials or politicians the cynicism about PR practitioners' trustworthiness is greatest. Public Relations activities in the modern world help individuals and organizations to build prestige, to promote products, and to win elections or legislative battles; in short, to achieve their aims in the public sphere (Encarta Encyclopedia, 2005).

Thus, Public Relations is neither a barrier between the truth and the public nor is it propaganda to impose a point of view regardless of truth, ethics and the public good. It is not publicity aimed directly at achieving sales, although Public Relations activities can be very helpful to sales and marketing efforts. In the democratic system, it is assumed that government will respond to the wishes of the governed and Public Relations work to determine the wishes of the governed and strive to make government responsive to those wishes, (Aronof. T. & Baskin, 1983).

Government Public Relations activities, many embraced by terms such as public affairs and public information, have developed as a political and administrative response to various organizational goals. They are a key component of the administrative system, specifically designed to bridge the gap between popular and bureaucratic government (Cutlip *et al.*, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter described and explained the reason why the method was chosen for this study. It tell the procedure adopted in effectively carrying out the research work with particular emphasis on the determination of the study size from the estimated population of the study, the sources of data and instruments of data collection and the way information obtained from the respondents was analyzed and interpreted to draw conclusion and recommendations.

Therefore, this chapter was discussed how data for the study were collected, collated and analyzed. In particular, it outlined the research design, population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, as well as reliability and validity of the work.

3.1 Research Design

Research design essentially refers to the plan or strategy of shaping the research. Design deals primarily with purposes, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of location, time, money and availability of staff (Hakim, 1987). Burns and Grove (2003, p.195) defined a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. Parahoo (1997:142) describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed”.

To accomplish this research descriptive cross-sectional design was employed. Since, the researcher was gathered data from both zonal and woreda levels as well as from heads of the offices and PR practitioners to describe the perceptions and practices from real working settings.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach employed for this study was mixed approach (qualitative & quantitative). In line with the principles of triangulation, mixed research approach offered the researcher an opportunity to check the findings from one method against the findings from different methods (Densombe, 2007). Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this study to gather the relevant research data from the sources or participants. And according to (Greene et al 1989) Mixed approach ‘seeks convergence, validation, correspondence of results from the different methods’. Where different methods produce data that are more or less the same, the researcher can feel more confident in assuming that the findings are accurate.

Qualitative research is intended to deeply explore, understand and interpret social phenomena within its natural setting (Creswell, 2002). Accordingly, qualitative in-depth interviews were used for the key informant heads of public relations officers and the heads of offices in both woreda and zonal levels.

3.3 Population of the Study and Source of the Data

The total population of the study is forty seven (47); that were the forty two PR practitioners, and five heads of the communication office that found in Dawro Zonal office, three woreda and one city administration of culture, tourism and government communication affairs offices.

In order to gather the relevant data for this study, both primary and secondary sources were employed. The primary sources were: PR practitioners, and heads of culture, tourism and government communication affairs office. While secondary data compiled from document analysis. Primary data were gathered from the subject of the study from three woreda, one city administration and zonal levels of the offices.

3.4. Sample Size & Sampling Techniques

The researcher utilized three woredas out of the five, namely: Loma, Mareka and, Tocha and one city administration (Tarcha). The sampling technique for selection of woreda was through the performance report of two successive years of 2008 and 2009 E.C. obtained from the zonal office; with highest, medium & low respectively and for one city administration it was selected by using purposive sampling. To use sampling technique, there is no other city administration in Dawro Zonal structure, thus, city performance was selected purposively.

For the selection of the communication office; purposive sampling was used to investigate Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication affairs office for the study as the researcher knowledge, the PR department has only established, structured and PR practitioners in the government office of SNNPRS at Zonal and woreda levels. The practitioners have been working with media relation, event management and community relations to promote the image of the organization and to reach the public with government policies and strategies as well as different social, developmental, political and good governance issues.

Available sampling technique was used to select the practitioners since the size of the PR Practitioners was small in number and believed appropriate to consider all of them and to

manage. Moreover, the head of the offices were selected using purposive sampling technique whereas PR practitioners were selected using simple lottery method for in-depth interview as key informants. According to Tracy (2013) a sampling plan is the design for how to specifically choose sources for your data. Therefore, sampling is a necessary step in terms of choosing people to interview (p.134).

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher employed different tools to collect relevant data from both primary and secondary sources for the study. To collect both primary and secondary sources the major instruments were used in this research: the questionnaire, interview, and document review.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

For the purpose of quantitative data, the researcher employed the questionnaire that includes five standard likert scales to collect the appropriate data from the participants regarding the perceptions and practices of public relations practitioners'. It was structured by using five likert scale questions to ensure that the responses from the respondents did not distort or derail the research's objectives and questions. The instrument consisted of Likert type statements items that required practitioners to rate their agreement about the perceptions and practices of PR in the department. In addition, to collect the data regarding the specific PR tools the researcher used 'open ended" question to list the PR tools utilized by practitioners to practice it.

To collect the data concerning the perceptions the five likert scale item questioners developed by the researcher. The standard questionnaire items regarding PR roles and models were adopted from questions asked by L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) in their IABC Excellence Study and Castelli, 2007 of graduate thesis and dissertation. The extensive quantitative survey instrument allowed for an analysis of public relations practice of government offices in Dawro Zone. The other parts of questions were developed by the researcher from different related sources.

3.5.2 Interviews

For the purpose of getting detailed information an in-depth interviews were conducted with officers of public relations, and heads of the office in both woreda and zonal levels as key informants. The researcher prepared five guide questions for ten (10) interviewees. This was

with a view to obtaining their views on public relations practitioners' perceptions and practices and how they are linked with key management functions of their respective organization. It also assessed the dominantly used PR models and tools in the PR department of the organizations in their practices to reach their publics.

These interview questions were prepared by English language. Then, the interviewees interviewed by the researcher separately in Amharic language orally and recorded using the smart mobile phone. Lastly, the recorded interview was transcribed in to English during the data analysis.

The choice of qualitative interview for this study was informed by the statement that unlike other qualitative methods, in-depth interviews provide a unique research opportunity to get the root of the issue being investigated (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Moreover, Patton (2002) argued that interviews allow respondents to openly discuss their opinions, choices and motivation which made an in –depth interview the most appropriate methods for this study.

The researcher also attempted to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewees' point of view or situation about, the practitioners' perceptions toward their roles, and models as well as the PR tools the researcher were used in- depth face to face interview separately during data gathering. Because this helps the participant is free to talk about what he or she deems important, with little directional influence from the researcher. Thus, the randomly selected PR officers and all the heads of offices for interview, from three woreda and one city administration, were being interviewed as key informants.

Intensive and well performed in-depth interviews provide detailed background about the reasons why respondents give specific answers. It elaborates data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences, and feelings (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 127).

Generally, in-depth interviews are more detailed; and as Wimmer & Dominick (2003, p. 127) argue, when compared to traditional survey methods, intensive in-depth interviews provide more accurate responses on sensitive issues.

3.5.3. Document Analysis

This part of data collecting instruments utilized to gather data on what the specific PR Tools have been utilized in the organization to reach their target public in order to inform, teach, and promote the organizational activities. In general, what kind of PR tools to communicate with the target public. The data collected from documents, archives and other communications materials were reviewed to assess the kinds of tools of PR with internal and external stakeholders or media. Analyses of documents include the analysis of posters, billboards, brochures, calendars, video recordings, and magazines and other footages (communication archives). For this purpose, the researcher reviewed the available PR tools to identify the kind of tools that have been utilized in the organization by PR practitioners.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The perceptions and practices of PR in the DZCTGCA were collected and discussed with 47 respondents from the communication office through questioner, interview, and document analysis. To preserve the confidentiality of respondents in qualitative data, all the 10 interviewees were coded as Int.01 (interviewee 1), Int. 02 (interviewee 2) ...for the analyses. So, instead of their names, coded identifications were used during analyses of qualitative data. The data collected through document analysis to, open ended question and interview to answer the question regarding the utilized tools were had been merged. As the thematic analysis revealed PR perceptions and practiced practices to achieve four specific objectives.

The chapter begins with description and analysis of demographic variables of the respondents selected for the study although these do not include details. The information regarding gender, age and educational level were included for the sake of identifying what kind of respondents participated to respond to the questionnaire as well as interviews, but not discussed in detail. However, the work experience before joining the organization and now in the organization and educational background were discussed how this affects PR practitioners' perceptions and practices in the study area or, the work experiences of the PR practitioners were assessed to identify their perceptions and practices.

The information from in-depth interview, questionnaire, and document analysis was critically analyzed. The in depth interview data were transcribed, checked for accuracy, grouped, and analyzed thematically after completion of all the interviews by using narration. This approach is

an efficient way to review each transcript and compare it with others on a continuous basis. All interview transcripts were reviewed several times until likely units of analysis could be identified, and then coded into meaningful themes involved with and relevant to the research topic. The researcher prepared the interview guidelines questions that was written by English language and interviewed in Amharic language orally by recording smart mobile phone then translated it into English language during the data analysis.

Some quotes from the qualitative interview data that best explain the context of the study were identified and translated in to the nearest English version. Those similar items from the discussion were categorized under a theme according to the research objectives and the interviewees were coded to protect confidentiality. After reducing the data in to a systematic manner, the presentation was made in such a way that it gives more insights in to the perceptions and practices of the public relations practitioners' role and models as well as the utilized tools in the context of Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs offices.

The data collected from questionnaire by using likert scale questions were analyzed by using descriptive statistics like percentage, frequency and mean. SPSS 20, 2018 version was used in analyzing quantitative data and open ended questions were analyzed by using thematic narration by merging with interview in collaboration. In addition, the data collected using document review was described and narrated.

Finally, the data obtained from the three tools were being cross checked by using triangulation method. And all the collected data through questionnaire were tabulated in the form of table. The organized data were evaluated for each specific objective and the conclusion and recommendation drawn for designed objectives.

3.7 Reliability and validity

3.7.1 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated results. Reliability in research is influenced by random error. As random error increases, reliability decreases. Random error is the deviation from a true measurement due to factors that have not effectively been addressed by the researcher. Errors may arise from

inaccurate coding, ambiguous instructions to the subjects, interviewer's fatigue, interviewee's fatigue, interviewer bias, etc (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, pp. 95-96) cited in (Milton 2012)

In this research, therefore, random error was minimized through giving clear instructions to the respondents, having standard questions to avoid interviewers' and interviewee's fatigue and pursuing objectivity. In -the reliability of the data consistency was tested using Cronbach's alpha.

3.7.2 Validity

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. In other words, validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under study. Validity, therefore, has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003, p. 99) cited in (Milton 2012)

To ensure the validity of the research process, utmost care was taken in collecting accurate and analyzing data to ensure their credibility.

Additionally, the investigator attempted to validate the facts passing through triangulating data from the zonal office in line with data from woredas and authenticated the data from DZCTGCA and three woredas' /in –depth interview, against data from questionnaire and document analysis.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

During data collection there might be rejection from the respondents. To avoid such problems, the researcher used formal cooperation letter written from Jimma University College of social science and humanities to Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs. After the submission, the aim & importance of the study was explained to heads of the Zonal offices and PR practitioners. For woreda participants, the researcher brought the letter from zonal office to approve the legality. During data collection the respondents were informed about the importance of the research before participation (informed consent). Secondly, during analysis confidentiality of respondents was kept by giving a code. In general, the ethical considerations were taken to protect participants' rights & safety in detail include: a permission asked from the office head officially or permission to engage respondents or access documents from the communication office were officially requested; explaining the purpose of the study to the target respondents clearly, collecting data for analysis only from the voluntary participants, undertaking the data collection process without interrupting their work time, and Ensuring confidentiality of the information (the data to be gathered).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4. Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of the study based on the method discussed in the previous chapter. The research contributes by identifying: (1) the perceptions of PR practitioners toward the PR roles (2) the roles filled by government PR practitioners; (3) the public relations models used by government PR in study area; (4) by identifying the tools have been utilized by PR practitioners in Government Communication Affairs offices of Dawro Zone, SNNPRS.

This is also organized around the research questions presented in chapter one with the purpose of seeking answers to the questions:

1. How the public relations practitioners' perceived their roles of PR in government organization or DZCTGCA?
2. What roles do government public relations practitioners play in the organization, (DZCTGCA)
3. Which PR models were frequently used in the in communication office (DZCTGCA)?
4. What tools the PR practitioners utilized to reach their target public in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs?

The research questions provide the frame for constructing the study as well as analyzing the data. The results that come from the data collected through methods discussed in chapter three were analyzed under each research objective to answer each research question. The chapter concluded by interpreting and discussing the findings obtained from three tools. At the end the researcher cross checked the result with the information obtained through in depth interview, questionnaires, and document analysis about the understanding of their roles as the management functions as well as the dominantly used models and specific tools of PR practitioners from the organization heads and practitioners of the actual practices.

To summarize, this chapter presents a summary of the results of the practical nature of the research. The research data collected during the study was subjected to both statistical and narrative analysis. The intention of the study was to critically examine the perceptions and practices of Public Relations in government communication affairs. The chapter starts by

providing the background of the respondents, population sample, and then followed by response rate of the study, data presentation & discussion and, a summary of all results of the questions included in the questionnaire follows.

4.1 Response Rate

The survey was distributed to 42 public relations practitioners in both zonal and selected woreda levels of Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communication Affairs. Out of the total 42 questionnaire distributed, 40 (95%) percent were collected that was valid for analysis.

4.2 Respondents Background

The study sought to establish basic data about the respondents in terms of their category: gender, age, educational status, and their work experience before and after joining communication office, and professional training.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

No	Items	Valid	NR	%
1	Gender of the respondents	Valid male	32	80
		female	8	20
		Total	40	100.0
2	Age of the respondents	Valid 18-29 years	7	17.5
		30-39 years	23	57.5
		40-49 years	10	25.0
		Total	40	100.0
3	Educational status of the respondents	Valid Diploma & below	8	20.0
		Degree	28	70.0
		Masters & above	4	10.0
		Total	100.0	100.0
4	Work experience of the respondents	Valid less than 5 years	26	65.0
		5-10 years	14	30.0
		Total	40	100.0
5	Previous work experience before joining the organization	Valid less than 5 years	17	42.5
		5-10 years	19	47.5
		11-15 years	4	10.0
		Total	40	100.0

In table 1 for item1 the profile in terms of gender of Dawro Zone culture, tourism and government communication affairs PR practitioners most of PR practitioners 32 (80%) were

male while female respondents account for 8 (20%) this part of the data was not discussed in detail because the researcher used only for sake of distinguishing the gender of the respondents in the study.

The respondents were asked to state their age and the researcher gave no estimates. But according to the research statics the largest group 23(57.5%) falls under the age group of 30-39 years, 10 (25%) falls under 40-49% and 7 (17.5%) under 29 years and bellow and there were no older PR practitioners in the sample; even the respondents falls under age of 30-39 were spent most of the working time in other offices out of profession. This can be explained by the fact that PR is still a fertile and growing profession in the organization that needs training to improve the skills to enhance effective PR practices.

Regarding the levels of education of the respondents: 8 (20%) of respondents were Diploma and below holders 28 (70%) were Degree holders and 4 (10%) were masters holders. None of the respondents was a holder of certificate in the organization. Regarding the educational status most of the practitioners were degree holders and fulfill the minimum requirement to practice. Though, almost all practitioners come from different educational background and they were not having professional backgrounds. Having not PR background has its own negative impact on the way they practice.

Concerning the public relations related work experience of the respondents in communication office only, It indicated that 26 (65%) of the respondents fall under less than five years or below 5 years in the organization, 14 (35.5%) 5-10 years, and none of the respondents categorized under more than ten years of PR work experiences in the organization.

From the above data interpretation, the majorities of PR practitioners were young to the organization and inexperienced in the area of public relations profession. The practitioners were not senior expert at the PR department, since; they spent most of their work time in other organizations and out of the profession. In addition to lack of training, spending more time out of communication office is hampering the perceptions, skills to practices of the PR practitioners and the data reveals that there is high movement from the communication office to other sectors. Senior practitioners are responsible protecting the company's public reputation to align the

interests of organizations with those of the significant publics in their operating environment, (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2006, p. 55)

This part narrates the work experience before joining the PR department or communication office in other organization. The information obtained from the participants reveals in this section: 17 (42.5%) fall under five years of experience, 19 (47.5%) categorized under 5-10 years and 4 (10 %) under 16 and above years of experience. This indicates that most of the PR practitioners spent their work time out of PR profession and lastly joined to PR department.

In addition to the quantitative data from the respondents' response from the open ended question regarding the professional background of practitioners all of the practitioners were not PR professionals and even to improve their skill through gradually they spent long time out of the communication office.

4.3 Results on Perceptions and Practices of PR practitioners' in DCTGCA

4.3.1 Perceptions and Practices of PR Practitioners' in DCTGCA

This part answers how the PR Practitioners perceive and working different PR roles and differentiate it from related fields to achieve the organizational goals by practicing the PR from excellence perspectives.

Table 2: The perceptions of PR practitioners towards PR roles

No	Items	alternatives	NR	%	Mean
1	Public relations and propaganda is the same; we use to persuade our public.	Disagree	11	27.5	3.10
		Undecided	14	35.0	
		Agree	15	37.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
2	The role of PR is handling the technical aspects of producing & editing public relations materials- like news release, brochure, magazine etc.	Undecided	9	22.5	4.35
		Agree	8	20.0	
		St agree	23	57.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
3	PR practitioners are usually responsible to get the media coverage or publicity in the organization.	Undecided	9	22.5	4.33
		Agree	9	22.5	
		St agree	22	55.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
4	PR department is more important to gain publicity than engaging in two ways communication.	undecided	6	15.0	4.48
		Agree	9	22.5	

		St agree	25	62.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
5	Public relations and journalism is the same which helps to inform the public.	Disagree	8	20.0	3.23
		Undecided	15	37.5	
		Agree	17	42.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
6	Public relations and advertisement are the same.	Disagree	21	52.5	2.80
		Undecided	6	15.0	
		Agree	13	32.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
7	Participating in strategic planning & top level management decision making is the role of PR practitioners.	Disagree	27	67.5	2.33
		Undecided	13	32.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
8	The PR Practitioner taking responsibility for the success or the failure of public relations plans.	Disagree	20	50.0	2.70
		Undecided	12	30.0	
		Agree	8	20.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
9	PR Practitioners conducting opinion research about the organization before and after implementation of the activities to explain to top management the impact of their behavior on key external publics.	St disagree	27	67.5	1.33
		Disagree	13	32.5	
		Total	40	100	
10	PR Practitioners give Counseling service to the top managers in the organization.	Disagree	23	57.5	2.53
		Undecided	13	32.5	
		Agree	4	10.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
11	PR Practitioners responsible to give a Response to major social issues in my organization.	St disagree	8	20.0	2.05
		Disagree	22	55.0	
		Undecided	10	25.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
12	PR Practitioners work for crises communication planning and response in your organization.	St disagree	19	47.5	1.75
		Disagree	12	30.0	
		Undecided	9	22.5	
		Total	40	100.0	

Source: own survey, 2018

Table 2 for item 1 “Public relations and propaganda is the same; we use to persuade our public.” Reveals that 11 (27.5%) respondents responded disagree, 14 (35%) replied that neither agree nor disagree and 15 (37.5%) replied on agreed and mean is 3.10. For item 2 ”The role of PR is handling the technical aspects of producing & editing public relations materials the respondents replied that 9 (22.5) undecided, 8 (20%) replied agreed and the rest of 23 (57.5) falls under

strongly agreed and its mean is 4.35. The respondents replied for item 3 "Public Relations practitioners are usually responsible to get the media coverage or publicity in the organization." Reveals that: 9 (22.5%) undecided, 9 (22.5%) responded under agree and 22 (55%) replied strongly agreed and its mean for the item is 4.43.

For item 4 "Public relations department is more important to gain publicity than engaging in two ways communication." the respondents responded that 6 (15%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 9 (22.5%) said on agree and 25 (62.5%) replied strongly agree and the mean score in the above table for the item is 4.48. Respondents' responded. For item 5 "Public relations and journalism is the same which helps to inform the public." that 8 (20%) on disagree, 15 (37.5%) undecided and 17 (42.5%) of the respondents replied on agree and its mean is 3.23. For item 6 "Public relations and advertisement are the same." shows that 21 (52.5%) responded on disagree, 6 (15%) of them replied on undecided, and 13 (32.5%) agreed on the idea, and the mean score in the above table for the item is 2.80.

In table 2 the respondents replied for item 7 "The role of PR Practitioners is participating in strategic planning and top level management decision making." indicated that 27 (67.5%) answered disagree, 13 (32.5%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and its mean score is 2.33. While for item 8 "The PR Practitioner taking responsibility for the success or the failure of public relations planning" replied that 20 (50%) disagree, 12 (30%) of them replied neither agreed nor disagreed and the rest of 8 (20%) agreed. The mean score in the above table is 2.70. Whereas for item 9 "PR Practitioners conducting opinion research about the organization before and after implementation of the activities." data shows that 27 (67.5%) strongly disagreed, 13 (32.5%) responded on disagreed and the mean score in the above table is 1.33. For item 10 "PR Practitioners give Counseling service to the top managers in the organization." indicated that the respondents 23 (57.5%) answered on disagreed, 13 (32.5%) undecided for the question and the rest of respondents 4 (10%) responded agree and its mean score is 2.53. While for item 11 "PR Practitioners responsible to give a Response to major social issues in my organization" revealed that 8 (20%) strongly disagreed, 22 (55%) disagreed and 10 (25%) of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and its mean score is 2.05. Finally, for item 12 "PR Practitioners work for crises communication planning and response in your organization." The practitioners' responses shows that, 19 (47.5%) strongly disagree, 12 (30%) disagree and 9 (22.5%) neither agree nor disagree.

4.3. 2 Roles of PR Practitioners in the Department

The descriptive statistics for the public relations role items were presented in the table below.

This is focused on the practitioners executing what functions & the most often playing roles in the organization to enhance the organizational goals achievement from managerial perspectives.

In a review of roles research in public relations, Dozier (1992) proposed that “practitioner roles are keys to understanding the function of public relations and organizational communication” (p. 328).

Table3. Descriptive Statistics for Public Relations Roles (Technician (T), Communications Liaison (CL), Manager (M), and Media Relations (MR))

No	Items	Alternatives	NR	%	Mean
1	I'm the person who writes communication materials such as brochures, pamphlets & other publications. T	Valid rarely Sometimes Mostly Total	9 11 20 40	22.5 27.5 50.0 100.0	3.28
2	I do photography and graphics for communications materials in the department. T	Valid rarely Sometimes Mostly Total	7 10 23 40	17.5 25.0 57.5 100.0	3.40
3	I edit or review grammar and spelling in materials written by other departments. T	Valid rarely Sometimes Mostly Total	9 11 20 40	22.5 27.5 50.0 100.0	
4	I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials, maintain media contacts & responsible for placing news releases. T	Valid rarely sometimes mostly always Total	6 9 1 24 40	15.0 22.5 2.5 60 100.0	
5	I create opportunities for management to hear the views of internal and external publics. CL	Valid never rarely sometimes	17 11 8	42.5 27.5 20.0	

		mostly	4	10.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
6	I am a senior counsel to top decision makers when communication or public relations issues are involved. CL	Valid never	20	50.0	
		rarely	9	22.5	
		sometimes	11	27.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
7	I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication or public relations programs. M.	Valid never	11	27.5	
		rarely	18	45.0	
		sometimes	11	27.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
8	Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving communication or public relations problems. M	Valid never	19	47.5	
		rarely	11	27.5	
		sometimes	6	15.0	
		mostly	4	10.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
9	I participate and provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendation, and plans as well as make communication policy decisions for my organization. M	Valid never	30	75.0	
		rarely	10	25.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
10	I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization. MR.	Valid mostly	13	32.5	
		always	27	67.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
11	I keep others in the organization informed of what the media reports about our organization and important professional issues.MR	Valid never	2	5.0	
		rarely	27	67.5	
		sometimes	11	27.5	
		Total	40	100.0	

The respondents' responses in table 3, for the item 1 "I am the person who writes communication materials such as brochures, pamphlets and other publications." Reveals 9 (22.5%) of the respondents replied rarely, 11 (27.5%) sometimes, 20 (50%) mostly writes the communication

materials in the PR department and the mean score of the question is 3.28. on the other hand, for item 2” I do photography and graphics for communications materials.” the responses of the respondents’ indicates that 7 (17.5%) replied rarely, 10 (25%) sometimes, and 23 (57.5) mostly do photography and graphics for communication materials and the mean of the item is the standard 3.40. while for item 3” I edit or review grammar and spelling in materials written by other departments.” The respondents responses reveals 9 (22.5%) edit and review grammar and spelling of the written materials rarely, 11 (27.5) sometimes, and 20 (50%) mostly and the mean is 3.28.

And also for item 4” I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials, maintain media contacts & responsible for placing news release.” indicates 6 (15%) rarely, 9 (22.5%) sometimes, 1 (2.5%) mostly and 24 (60%) always handle the technical aspects of producing PR materials, maintaining media contacts and responsible for placing news releases in the organization to reach their public and the mean of the question is 4.08 while for item 5” I create opportunities for management to hear the views of internal and external publics.” Shows that: 17 (42.5%) responded never, 11 (27.5%) rarely, 8 (20%) sometimes and 4 (10%) mostly creates opportunities for management to hear the views of internal and external target publics and its mean score is 1.98 and participants replied for item 6”I am a senior counsel to top decision makers when communication or public relations issues are involved.” 20 (50%) never, 9 (22.5) rarely and 11 (27.5%) sometimes were participated on giving a counsel during communication or PR issues were involved in the organization. The mean score in the above table is 1.78.

The result obtained from the table 3 for item 7”I take responsibility for the success or failure public relations programs.” the respondents reveals that for item 11 (27.5%) replied never, 18 (45%) rarely 11 (27%) sometimes takes a responsibility for the success or failure of organization’s communication program and its mean is 2.00. whereas, for item 8”Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization’s expert in solving communication or public relations problems.” The responses reveals that 19 (47.5%) never, 11 (27.5%) rarely, 6 (15%) sometimes and 4 (10%) replied mostly on their experience and training, others consider them in the organization in solving the public relations problems. The mean score in the above table is 1.88 and for item 9 “I participate and provide decision makers with suggestions,

recommendation, and plans as well as make communication policy decisions for my organization.” Shows that 30 (75%) of the respondents replied never, and 10 (25%) rarely participate in decision making process and come up with and recommendations for communication policy makers in the organization and its mean score is 1.25.

In table3 above, the respondents replied that for item 10 “I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization.” in the above table reveals 13 (32.5%) mostly, 27 (67.5%) and always use their journalistic skills to figure out what will the media reports consider newsworthy about the organization and the mean score for the above item is 4.68.while, for item 11” I keep others in the organization informed of what the media reports about our organization and important issues.” The participants replied that 2 (5%) never, 27 (67.5%) rarely and 11 (27.5%) sometimes keep others in the organization or department what the media reported about their organization and the mean is 2.23.

4.3. 3 The frequently used PR Models in the Organization

Different theoretical models and concepts exist regarding the roles and function of public relations. In order to play the various roles and functions of the public relations, what models have been utilized in DCTGCA office?

The tables below shows that the four public relations models proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984) and among the PR models what are the frequently practiced in the government organization of DZCGCA and the statistics of the respondents as well as the data analysis were discussed below.

Table4. Descriptive Statistics for Public Relations Models (Press Agency (PA), Public Information (PI), 2-Way Symmetrical (2S), 2-way Asymmetrical (2A)

No	Items	Aliteratives	NR	%	Mean
1	In organization, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing; the purpose is to get publicity. PA	Valid disagree	6	15.0	3.53
		neutral	9	22.5	
		agree	23	57.5	
		st agree	2	5.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
2	In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the mass media and to keep unfavorable publicity out. PA	Valid disagree	7	17.5	3.85
		neutral	9	22.5	
		agree	7	17.5	

		st agree	17	42.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
3	In public relations, we disseminate accurate information but we do not volunteer unfavorable information. PI	Valid neutral	1	2.5	4.63
		agree	13	32.5	
		st agree	26	65.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
4	In your work, public relations is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization. PI	Valid disagree	18	45.0	2.80
		neutral	12	30.0	
		agree	10	25.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
5	Keeping a news clipping is about the only way we have to determine the success of our programs. PI	Valid neutral	13	32.5	3.68
		agree	27	67.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
6	Before beginning a public relations program, we conduct research to determine public attitude toward our organization and how those attitudes might be changed. 2A	Valid st disagree	26	65.0	1.70
		Disagree	2	5.0	
		Neutral	10	25.0	
		agree	2	5.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
7	After completing a public relations program, we conduct research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people's attitudes. 2A	Valid st disagree	8	20.0	1.93
		Disagree	27	67.5	
		Neutral	5	12.5	
		Total	40	100.0	
8	In your work, public relations provides mediation to help our managers and their publics negotiate conflicts. 2S	Valid disagree	26	65.0	2.35
		neutral	14	35.0	
		Total	40	100.0	
9	The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between our management and the publics they affect. 2S	Valid st disagree	21	52.5	1.70
		disagree	10	25.0	
		neutral	9	22.5	
		Total	40	100.0	

In table 4 for item 1” In organization, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing; the purpose is to get publicity” the responses indicates that 6 (15%) of respondents were disagree, 9 (22.5%) neutral, 23 (57.5%) agree, and 2 (5%) were strongly agreed on the similarity of PR with publicity in the organization and its mean score 3.53 while for item 2 “In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the mass media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.” the data reveals that 7 (17.5%) were disagree, 9 (22.5%) were neutral, 7 (17%) were agree and 17 (42%) were strongly agree on the practitioners were attempt

to get favorable publicity to the mass media and keeping unfavorable publicity out. The mean score of the above question is 3.85.

The responses for item 3 “In public relations, we disseminate accurate information but we do not volunteer unfavorable information.” reveal 1 (2.5%) neutral, 13 (32.5%) agree, and 26 (65) were strongly agreed that on disseminating accurate information and not volunteer with unfavorable information in the public relations department and its mean score is 4.63. The response for item 4, “In your work, public relations is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization.” shows 18 (45%) replied disagree, 12 (30%) were neutral, and 10 (25%) were agreed for the item PR is more a neutral disseminator of information than advocate for the organization and the mean score is 2.80. And item five “Keeping a news clipping is about the only way we have to determine the success of our programs” the respondents replied that 13 (32.5%) neutral, and 27 (67.5%) were agree and its mean score is 3.68

On the other hand, for the item 6 “Before beginning a public relations program, we conduct research to determine public attitude toward our organization and how those attitudes might be changed.” the respondents responses reveals 26 (65%) were strongly disagree, 2 (5%) disagree, 10 (25%) neutral and 2 (5%) were agree and its mean score is 1.70. in the same way, for item 7 “After completing a public relations program, we conduct research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people’s attitudes.” the respondents’ response reveals that 8 (20%) were strongly disagree, 27 (67.5%) were disagree and 5 (12.5%) were neutral and the mean score is 1.93.

In contrast, the respondents’ replied for the item 8 “In your work, public relations provides mediation to help our managers and their publics negotiate conflicts.” shows that 26 (65%) were disagree, and 14 (35%) were neutral and the mean score is 2.35 in the above table whereas, The responses for item 9 “The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between our management and the publics they affect.” of the two ways symmetrical PR models question the respondents responses reveals 21 (52.5%) were strongly disagree, 10 (25%) were disagree and 9 (22.5%) were neutral and the mean is 1.70.

4.3. 4 Levels of Public Relations Practices in your Organization

Table 5 indicated the analyzed data about the level of PR practices in the study area: whether or not the practitioners have been practiced effectively in to achieve excellence PR practices in the department.

Table 5. Analyzed data about the level of PR practices in the study area

No	Items	Alternatives	NR	%	Mean
1	Public relation in your organization is well organized and trained.	Valid disagree neutral agree Total	25 9 6 40	62.5 22.5 15.0 100.0	2.53
2	Public relation in your organization is well recognized and influential.	Valid st disagree disagree neutral agree Total	18 4 12 6 40	45.0 10.0 30.0 15.0 100.0	2.15
3	Public relations practitioners in our organization is highly knowledgeable and performs complex activities than routine one.	Valid st disagree disagree neutral Total	26 7 7 40	65.0 17.5 17.5 100.0	1.53
4	Public relations in my organization independently functions every activity it is concerned with their roles.	Valid st disagree disagree neutral agree Total	6 21 12 1 40	15.0 52.5 30.0 2.5 100.0	2.20
5	In your own opinion, rate the real status that the PR department has had in your Office.	Valid very low low average Total	1 11 28 40	2.5 27.5 70.0 100.0	2.68

The Responses obtained from table5 for the item 1 “Public relations in your organization is well organized and trained.” Shows 25 (62.5%) were disagree, 9 (22.5%) were neutral, and 6 (15%) were agree and its mean score is 2.53,for item 2 ” Public relations in your organization is well recognized and influential” reveals 18 (45%) were strongly disagree, 4 (10%) were disagree, 12 (30%) were neutral and 6 (15%)were agree and the mean score was 2.15; for item 3 “Public relations practitioners in our organization is highly knowledgeable and performs complex activities than routine one”. 26 (65%) were strongly disagree, 7 (17.5%) were

disagree and 7 (17.5%) were neutral” the mean score for the question is 1.53 while, for the item 4” Public relations in my organization independently functions every activity it is concerned with their roles” reveals 6 (15%) were strongly disagree, 21 (52.5%) were disagree, 12 (30%) were neutral and 1 (2.5%) was agree and the mean score is 1.53; for item 5 “In your own opinion, rate the real status that the PR department has had in your Office” the responses reveals 1 (2.5%) very low, 11 (27.5%) were agreed on low, and the rest 28 (70%) were on average and the mean score is 2.68.

4.4 Qualitative data analysis

This part deals with qualitative data analysis about the perceptions and practices of public relations (PR) practitioners’ gathered through in-depth interview. The key informants such as head of the office and public relations practitioners were interviewed separately to gather the detail information.

The analysis comprises of the issues of the perceptions of PR practitioners’ regarding the practices: roles of public relations practitioners fill in the organization, the most often used models in the organization and the specific PR tools in the organization to reach the internal and external publics. The following analysis was categorized thematically according to the research objectives to answer the questions listed in chapter one.

4.4.1 The perceptions of PR practitioners’ towards their Roles

The results obtained from interviewees showed that, the PR practitioners were perceived and view their roles positively but most of the time they do the routine functions in their daily career and play technician roles rather than the managerial roles.

For the question “how do you perceive the PR roles and what are the practitioners’ daily functions?” the Int. from the both zone and woreda stated that:

“We believe PR as crucial for government relations with citizens and for organizational success. However, we have critical skill and attitude as well as experience gaps regarding the profession and its roles to perform effectively. Therefore, we take ourselves as media relation worker to disseminate the information from the organization or government to the public as facilitator and we give attention in writing the press release,

documentation of video & audio, producing communication materials as well as coordinating the events to give the media coverage about the organizational activities.”

The above interview showed that the PR practitioners perceive the importance of PR and its role positively, but the skills and background influence them critically to play different PR roles from managerial perspectives.

As one of the PR practitioner from woreda mentioned:

“In addition to educational background, there was insufficient capacity building training, in the sector to improve our skills & knowledge through gradually. The low support and interference of the top management to perform in managerial roles: to conduct research and counseling. Due to this reason, the practitioners recognize their role as only working for information dissemination through media”. (Int. 05)

To make PR practices effectively, the practitioners should perform the managerial roles or incorporate both on their practices. However, in the above quotation due to inadequate capacity building the practitioners perceive and execute routine functions only to play technician their roles.

According to the zonal public relations practitioner:

“There was lack of critical understanding of PR practitioners regarding our functions to play different roles. The perception of PR practitioners’ was the same as that of the public, politicians & managements that they only consider PR as journalist and work for media relations only; the practitioners also do mostly the routine media relations functions in the organization such as writing a press release, managing events & reporting, publication and documentation for sake of media coverage as communication technician roles to publicize the organization’s activities and to build image about the zone by using printed and electronic media such as magazines, Waka FM 93.1 & STV and sometimes EBC to inform external publics.”(Int. 02)

The above interview shows there is understanding gap for the practitioners to execute different managerial roles as senior expert to solve the problems and enhance mutual understanding between the organization and the public.

In the same way, other PR officers from woredas' mentioned that:

“We perceive our roles as information disseminator and our ultimate goals were to reach the public with new information rather than long term relationship building. This, communication management also took place by participating different forums, conferences and meeting that was arranged by the head of zonal and woreda sectorial offices and communication offices. In such kind of events the practitioners participate, arrange and coordinate the setting; writing speech, taking a position as spokesperson, take a photo and video, gather other important messages from the concerning bodies to document in archive and give a media coverage to publicize the organization's activities. (Int. 04, 06, 07, 08, 09 and 10)

Effective PR practitioners play the roles as strategic planner to achieve excellence theory perspectives. However, the PR practitioners in the above data were not perceive themselves as strategic communicator and have not strategic plan to execute their functions. Most of the time they were participates on events that were arranged by sectorial heads to publicize the activities.

For the question do you perceive and executing the PR roles such as conducting PR research, participating on decision making, strategic planning and counseling in you department?” the interviewees from Woreda & Zone stated that:

“We did not consider performing conducting research, participating on strategic plan and top level decision making as part of our duties. We were being busy on facilitating communication and, disseminating information from the organization to public and producing communication tools such as brochure, magazine and promotional material. However, sometimes we collect the public opinion formally and informally to counsel the heads of the organization but there is no adequate response to the public in this reason the public take as spy that working on behalf of the government. Conversely, the heads or politicians did not take us the part of the organizational success but, consider as the activist of the public on the weak side of the government or the organization. Due to this, the managers reject our counseling service. In this reason, there is movement from the office to other sectors” (Int. from both woreda and zonal PR practitioners)

The practice effective PR practices must be supported by PR research, decision making, counseling, etc. however, the above interpretation did not fulfill such activities in the and there is misunderstanding with roles in the department.

The interviewee mentioned from the heads offices of woreda & zonal CTGCA office stated:

“The practitioners’ understand & execute usually in the departments were: playing the media relations, promotional and event management activities in the organization. Additionally, they work for the image of the government and to enhance the community participation in different social, economic and political activities by informing the publics. This is due to inadequate support from the government for the department and lack of practitioners’ skills as well as knowledge. Considering these, we could not also consider the practitioners and their roles well and support them to perform managerial roles. Even the practitioners were not skilled to give to others the skill training in the professional area to improve the managers’ understanding and attitude. (Int. From zone and woredas)

The interview showed the PR practitioners in both woreda and zonal levels did not understand their roles properly but, they consider themselves as journalist and working only for media relations to publicize the organization’s activity and inform the target public.

How do you see PR with other fields such as propaganda and advertisement? For the question majority of the interviewees replied that:

“Due to lack of educational background, we couldn’t differentiate one from other. We use both PR and advertisement to publicize and propagate, persuade different government policies, strategies as well as the accomplished activities to scale up the best practices and enhance community participation”(int. from zone and woredas)

PR is different from advertisement and propaganda from the goals, the way it reaches to the target public and ethics. However, the above quotation implies PR Practitioners perceive PR with that of both advertisement and propaganda and working.

4.4.2 Roles of public relations practitioners in the Communication Office

This part is focused on the discussion about PR practitioners' functions they execute to play the roles in the communication office. According to the result obtained from the interview, the daily functions of government public relations practitioners were: publicity, media relation, and event management to play technician roles. The practitioners did not take a part in top decision making, conducting research and strategic planning as well as counseling.

To address specifically: collecting public opinion, writing press release, publication, and documentation for archive, arranging different organizational events and acting as spokesperson of the office, writing speech, and collecting video and audio information, etc. In other words, the public relations department in general and practitioners in particular focused on technician roles rather than playing the managerial roles to enhance mutual understanding from excellence PR perspectives in DZCTGCA office.

According to the interview held with head office of zonal for the question what functions the PR practitioners execute to play their roles:

“In the organization, the roles of PR practitioners were: disseminating different information about government policy and strategy from the government or organization to public; therefore, this department to play a great role in building democracy by enhancing community participation by informing the public. In addition, the usual activities of the PR practitioners in the organization were arranging events, documentation and publication: writing press release, publicizing the best practices of the organization by collecting and documentation from different sector offices and through site observation from the community in the overall aspects of the government activities to scale up. This is done through electronic and printed media to giving media coverage to the target public.” (Int. 01)

In the above quote, the role of PR practitioners were executing different functions to play technician roles and publicize the organizational activities by collecting, organizing audio and video messages as well as writing the press release to give the media coverage.

One PR practitioners at woreda mentioned:

“our main functions in the organization as well as in the woreda level, working as bridge between the government and the publics by reaching with new information; different sectors with their target publics by giving different information about the activities that have been done of the woreda and sectors. We facilitate the overall communication issues and build the image of the woreda or the organization that matters the survival of the office and the reputation of the woreda through printed and electronic media such as waka FM 93.1 radio, TV by collecting the best practice from kebeles.”(int. 03, 06, 09)

According to the above data, the usual roles of PR practitioners were communication facilitator between the organizations and the target publics as bridge.

The majority of the interviewees suggested:

We work to reach the target publics with different policies and strategies through printed and electronics media. However, there is a shortage in publication of magazines and brochures to disseminate about the organization’s activity to their internal employees’ communication and external target stakeholders. In contrast, using social media- (creating websites) were not available. This is due to lack of budget allocation. This budget shortage is also emanated from the low recognition from the top government leaders to the sector in general and top management to public relations department functions specifically.”

The PR practitioners’ were serving different policies and strategies only by disseminating to teach by narrating to reach the citizen on electronic media. Though, due to shortage of budget and low recognition; there is inadequate printed communication materials and no social media usage.

Both Woreda and Zone’s PR practitioners mentioned that:

“The PR practitioners work as government information disseminator. In Both in zonal and woreda levels public relations practitioners’ functions in the department taken as media institution and the practitioners also work for media relations by publicizing the sector’s activity by participating on different meeting and forums for working

documentation and writing press release to media to inform the publics.” (Int. 04, 05 and 10).

The above data interpretation showed that the PR practitioners more focused on media relation and other managerial roles were focus lacked.

According to PR practitioner from woreda, zonal and city administration:

“We serve as the bridge between the government and the public we work by disseminating information about the government’s policies and strategies to the public. This is done through by participating and facilitating different forums and conferences to write press release, brochures, and magazines and using community radio and collecting as well as recording formal and informal information to the government, promoting different best practices to the public, documentation with video & photo. We were propagating for the meeting for different government’s agendas, collecting daily information about what the public said about the government and observing different best developmental practices and enterprises activity to give media coverage.” (Int. 03, 04, 07, 09 and 10)

The above respondents’ responses revealed the usual function of PR practitioners was the information disseminator between the organization and the public. This implies not PR functions rather propaganda and journalism to play the technician roles by executing media relations and event management.

Majority of the interviewees suggested for the question do you perform the managerial functions in both woreda and zonal level stated that:

“Other managerial functions such as conducting research, strategic planning, participating top management decision and counseling roles were overlooked. We did not understood and play such roles as part of our duties. In addition to academic background, the low recognition of top managements, even the public towards PR practitioners’ and their roles take the practitioners as spy. This is the results from unsolved questions elevated from the public, leaders’ censorship of idea or interference in the practices and the need of political leaders wants to support PR practitioners to

stand behalf of them and talk or narrate the best story of the organization or the government only. In addition to the practitioners' low understanding of PR practices the managers also reject our counseling service regarding the public complaints towards the organization to play the managerial roles in the organization."

The above quotes reveal, due to misunderstanding of the PR practitioners, low recognitions of the top managements and censorship of government leaders for the PR roles, the managerial roles were not performed. These hinder the excellence practices of the practitioners in DZCTGCA office.

During the interview with PR officer at both zonal & woredas level, suggested that;

"The functions of practitioners were writing press release, speeches, brochures and magazines, arranging events, acting as spokesperson, documentation and publication as well as facilitation and coordination in different organizational events such as forums, exhibitions and bazars and the practitioners did not understand the managerial roles of the PR practices in the organization. The practitioners take themselves as journalists to disseminate the information to their publics and narrate the best story of the organizations on behalf of the government through different media outlets.

In the above, the data showed the practitioners execute the technician functions and view themselves as journalist in communication office rather than playing different managerial roles. To make the practices excellent, practitioners' roles should be supported in public relations research by conducting the public opinion and attitude survey to solve the conflict between the organization and public in order to give the right decision at the right time by the top management that satisfy the public interest, the employer, the professional organization's code of ethics, and their personal values the practitioners that help the organizations to manage a crisis. Yet, this part was missed in the DZCTGCA office.

As woreda and city PR practitioners interview indicated that:

"in the organization, the practitioners collect public opinions through in meeting at rural kebeles and town level by woreda and city practitioners they participate, from town meeting hall, and record the public complaints from the town and community leaders and

take to local radio- Waka FM for recommendations from the top management in some selected sensitive issues in both woreda, city and zonal levels. On the other hand, other more of the issues were recorded and filled in questioner format and disseminated to; from woreda to zone and from zone to region to get solutions whereas most of the time it could not be solved. Due to this, the public take PR practitioners as spy or work in behalf of the government only to collect the information to propagate.”(Int. 03, 05 and 06)

The results of interview reveals that majority of the functions that the PR in both Zonal and woredas levels were serve as bridge to disseminate information from the organization to the public by using one way communication model.

As observed in the above findings the practices of PR by practitioners were not effective. Since the effective Public Relations should incorporate both technician and managerial roles. To attain effective PR practices, the practitioners must be prepared to work in five major areas: counseling, communication service, research and analysis of public affairs; action programs (planning) for public relations, and integration of all communication functions.

The other thing, the interview indicated that there were variations with idea between the heads of the organizations and PR core process officers in the influence on collecting different public opinion or formal & informal research to solve the problems and to bring to top management for decision without censorship.

The PR practitioner stated that:

“The top management also did not take us as the supporter of the organization working for the success of the organization as well as have responsibilities for success or failure of PR plans but they consider as activist of the public in failures or weak side of the organization or the government. On the other hand, the public take the practitioners as spy and working on behalf of the government only. This is emanated from the censorship of politicians to collect the information and communicate with target publics to enhance mutual understanding through dialogue and to apply two ways communication models in the organization freely. Finally, we collect the opinion and pass the information; however, there is no solution at all for the public questions in most case and these

degrade our trustworthiness in our work to target publics.”(Int.01, 03, 05, and 08 and 10)

The above interview indicated that there is no open organizational communication between the office and its public to solve the crisis.

In contrast; the head of the culture, tourism and government communication affairs were stated that:

“We give freedom for whatever PR roles for practitioners to do and accomplish their daily functions and collect the public opinions as mediator of both the organization and public interest to build the relationship, enhance mutual understanding and to make the right decision. In this, for public complaints, we arrange the forums to give suggestions on the raised issue to the citizens in meeting as well as by using community radio. We did not force the practitioners to do on behalf of the organization or government only for sake of government image by promoting the best practices as well as narrating the best story.”

From the unsolved complain one can suggest that there is no research work in the office during the practice and the communication flow is from the sender to the receiver, and no credit is given for feedback. it also shows that there is managers force to stand on behalf of the organization.

For the question how do you rate the levels of PR practices in your organization and its contribution to organizational success? Majority of the respondent replied:

In our organization, PR practices focused on routine activities. Its contribution to the organization’s goal achievement is weak and not influential and well facilitated in human power and technology to enhance effective practices. Other PR roles were not functional due to inappropriate organization’s structure, shortage of skilled human powers, low recognition from the leaders, low experiences of practitioners and shortage of budget. Therefore, it is found at low level.

To this end, the efforts were made to describe the views of five heads of Culture, Tourism and Government Communication affairs and the PR practitioners from zonal and woreda levels. The

in-depth interview held with the participants, stated that the public relations roles is at technician level and not effective.

The main functions is working publicity, media relation, event management such as facilitation, writing speech, acting as the spokesperson, managing workshops and conferences, writing press release, & writing and publishing newsletter, and brochure, about the activities of their organization and disseminating information both internal employee through notice board, letters and brochure and external publics through Waka FM radio & STV and rarely they to EBC. However, using powerful and accessible social media to reach the internal and external public within short period of time without boundary were the not functional in the organization.

In addition, lack of the public relations practitioners' contributions in strategic planning in the organization and that was also the responsibility of the development planner rather than the PR department to prepare an organizational plan to follow up the implementation and to write the reports to concerning body.

However, in both zonal and woredas offices the data analysis of the research indicated that there were weak internal employee communication in the organization and employee relations internal communication; that was lead and coordinated by human resource management department. Exceptionally, informing them in the notice or simply communicating, by writing letters, monthly meeting, quarterly & half year performance report evaluation to inform the events taking places in the organization to them.

Also there were inadequate internal communication tools in organizations such as screen board, billboard, organization's websites as well as newssheet. Without enough internal communication we could not forecast the satisfaction of the employee and without employee satisfaction we also couldn't achieve the goals of the organization in general and PR in particular. In addition, employee communication is really essential for employers to stay in constant touch with employees and keep them abreast with the latest developments and happenings within the organization. Since, Management or public relations experts should circulate latest events, new product launches among employees through emails, telephones, letters and notices or simply communicating with them.

4.4.3 The most often used PR Models in DZCTGCA Office.

According to Grunig and Hunt, (1984) there were four models of public relations. Traditional literature has stated that the public information model of public relations is the model of public relations practiced in local governments. And this interview section in the study also to determine the kind of public relations models (one-way or two-ways) followed in study area was assessed.

For the question “Do you know the four models of PR and describe the most often utilized public relations model in your daily careers pointed out by all PR practitioners:

“we don’t know to explain the types of PR models, its roles and their names but the usual functions of PR practitioners in the organization were disseminating information to inform, teaching, to create awareness concerning different issues: common member activities such as sending press release, posting information on announcement board, informing on meetings, recording information in archives newsletter, letter, or leaving a telephone message for the public. Most of the time, the flow of information tends from the government or organization to the public regarding different government policies and strategies issues.” (int. from both zone and woreds)

The above mentioned information indicates, the most often utilized PR communication model in the PR department was one way (press agency) model. According to James E. Grunig, & Hunt’s (1984) Press Agency/Publicity model follows one way communication where the flow of information is only from the sender to the receiver. The sender is not much concerned about the second party’s feedback, reviews or responses and so on. Public relations experts enhance the reputation of the organization among the target audiences, stakeholders, employees, partners, investors and all others associated with it through manipulation. In this model the practitioners influence their potential customers by simply imposing their ideas, thoughts, and creative stories of their brand. (n. d)

One of the interviewee stated that:

We are not well informed about the models of PR but, we work disseminating accurate information to reach our target audiences with different political, social and economic policies and strategy issues as well as accomplished activities of the organization to

inform them. Public relations experts depend on press release, news release, video release or any other recorded communication often directed at the media to circulate information about our activities and best practices among the public. (Interview from Pa7)

The above interpretation revealed that: the used model of PR in the organization is public information model. Since, the Public information model emphasizes on maintaining and enhancing the image of an organization simply by circulating relevant and meaningful information among the target audience or public. This type of PR model focus on informing accurate information and leave the inappropriate one.

As the interviewees mentioned from both woreda's and zonal levels:

“Working the researches after and before the PR plan is not the usual function of the practitioners in the department. However, rarely we collect the public opinion formally and informally to convenience the public regarding the complaints raised by recording from meeting, community leaders and site observation. If there is the complaint, the practitioners rarely collect different current issues from the public to the government's leaders and organization's manager to set the event on selected issues of public grievance to convince on issues through community radio and public meeting.”

The above quotation of interviewees, the rarely applicable model in the department was two ways asymmetric model. For the reason that, they do not work formal research but collect public opinions to convince and enhance the reputation of the organization among the target audiences, stakeholders, employees, partners, and all others associated with it through manipulation. The formal research was not conducted to change the public attitudes only rather to enhance balanced communication between the organization and the public.

All of the interviewees from zonal and woredas agreed that:

Our communication models focused most of the time on informing and teaching the citizens about the issues regarding the government policies and strategies. In addition, we disseminate the accomplished activities of the organization to the targeted publics to

inform and enhance the community participation. Most of the time, the communication flow is one direction from the organization to the public.

From the above discussion point of view, one can suggest the most often used PR models in the organization are one way (press agency and public information models). The communication flow tends from the sender to the receiver (one direction). On the other hand, the two-way symmetrical model is not practiced by PR practitioners in the organization and the rarely practiced model is two-ways asymmetric.

4.4.4 PR Tools used by PR practitioners in DZCTGCA Office

As the interview held, in both zonal and woredas communication Affairs office public relations practitioners and heads of the office reported that the office uses various public relations tools which help them to reach their target publics, customers and clients, inform the public of new policies and strategies, promote the goals of the government organization through public service campaigns that encourage (or discourage) certain behaviors, or increase public cooperation, inform and scale up the best practices with the organization, such as through printed and electronic media.

According to the PR practitioners view:

“The PR practitioners use commonly mass media such as waka FM 93.1 community radio and south TV to reach the majority of their audiences. we use the possible communication tools where the office reaches out its target publics: customers, stakeholders and clients were: face to face, face to face meetings, annual meeting, speeches, letter, phone calls newsletter, press release, TV, radio and sometimes brochures & magazine.” (Int. from zone and woreda)

The practitioners use the electronic and printed media as PR tools to reach their target public as in the organization and they also use oral communication, letters and annual meeting.

One of the PR practitioners from woreda identified that:

“To reach the internal publics and potential customers as well as clients and serve as a bridge for the government and the society at large; using of waka FM and south TV as tools to reach the target publics in both zonal and woreda level. However, air time was

not arranged strategically or periodically, but it was broadcast as the news to inform if there were new events and meetings in the organization as well as zonal and woreda level.” (Int. 06)

The above interviews reveals that the PR practitioners were utilize the electronic media to reach their public with news that was not arranged periodically.

The heads of the office from woreda stated:

“The tools and techniques used by PR practitioners in the department including exhibitions, interviews, speeches, brochures, newsletters, press releases, posters, radio and TV often thus, implying their knowledge and professional approach to PR practice.”(Int. 04)

The above interviewee’s point shows the PR practitioners also the events management as tools to reach their publics with different agendas.

For the question do you use the social media to reach the target public? All the PR practitioners agreed that:

“We were not using social media as tool to reach the public. Sometimes we utilize the individual’s Facebook accounts to promote different organizational activities to reach the public but there is no its own official organizational created Facebook and other social media account and website in the organization. Since, there is the shortage of budget & low recognition from the management to facilitate the department with appropriate technologies.” (Int. from zone and woreda)

Using social media help the PR practitioners to encourage symmetric communication. However, it was not available in the communication office of DZCTGCA. One of the interviewee stated that:

“we work with concerning bodies to disseminate information and control the situation when an unexpected incident (crisis) occurs in the office or zone by analyzing information or public opinion collected through questionnaire and interview as public complaints from sample audiences and produces programs and makes them broadcast on

community radio and STV productions that will enable to publicize the office's as well as government's policies, strategies, plans, programs and projects and that will help to have a common consensus and build zonal image. However, all the workers in the communication office internally communicate by working side by side, in order to really integrate and moving in the same direction." (Int. 01, 02, and 04)

The above interview indicated that there are inadequate communication tools in the department. Working and communicating side by side is may be one of communicating style but not effective always to reach all the departments and the employee in the organization.

Other PR practitioners in the department admitted that:

"sometimes we undertake media monitoring and environmental assessment activities through distributing a questioner to collect public opinions from community leaders, as well as prepare analysis, it collects and analyze suggestions of the staff and customers and reports to the to the heads of the organization and regional government as an input to come up with possible solutions for the concerns of the public." (Int. 06)

The above data interpretation shows the practitioners collect the public opinions to give reactionary responses rather than being proactive to handle the crisis.

As the researcher handled the observation conducted to review available documents which showed PR tools in the culture, tourism and government communication affairs office, the PR communication tools: press releases, brochures, pamphlets, letters, posters, and calendars, as well as audio and video messages in the archive which are sent at public meetings, event creation and promotion materials, photographs and audio-videotapes sent to STV and Waka FM 93.1 radio stations and SNNRS information desk.

From the information discussed above, all the respondents participated in the interview agreed the practitioners seriously limited on traditional media (printed and electronic) to communicate with their target public. The most used tools in this kind were STV, Community Radio, news releases, letters and face to face meeting. There is a shortage in types and frequency regarding printed communication materials such as brochures, newsletter and magazines due to budget scarcity. Most interviewees had good working relationships with their local media which is

Waka FM 93.1 radio and STV. The least used mass media in the both zonal and woreda was EBC. However, the communication office is not quite with using social media which is the most easily accessible and reachable media within short period of time to many audiences, without geographical demarcation.

The researcher found from open-ended questionnaire, in-depth interview, and document analysis: the PR department in the organization using press release, letters, meeting, brochures and magazines, as well as Radio and TV were the dominantly used tools. However, internet, websites and generally, using social media were not functional. The organization has not its own created website and social media such as face book, twitter to promote the organization's activity and inform the publics with different current issues. In addition, there is shortage in internal communication material such as office announcement boards, screen boards, magazines and brochures as well as internet access.

Using social media also encourage Two-way communication principles, unlike one-way principles, by promoting dialogue and conversations rather than one-directional information flows – these new technologies help organizations create and continuously maintain ties to key publics. (Lattimore et al. 2004, p. 385)

4.5 Discussion of the Result

Public relation is a new & emerging field in developing country in general and Ethiopia in particular. Due to this, there is misunderstanding with the concept of PR with different fields and roles played in the organization the practitioners are working. Hence, the researcher motivated to assess the perceptions and practices of PR practitioners' in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs, SNNPRS, Ethiopia. This part combines and draws upon all three data sources to discuss the overall findings, while highlighting the similarities and differences this study has in relation to related literature on the topic.

Concerning the demographic characteristics of the respondents from table one, about 70% of the respondents were degree holders and they are supposed to practice PR activities relatively but, almost all practitioners come from different educational backgrounds and low experience: that hinders the practitioners' perceptions to practice PR. Even, to enhance the skills and knowledge of the PR in the organization to change their attitudes gradually through work & training, about

65% of the respondents' work experience was less than five years in the communication office. While, the PR practitioners work experience before joining the communication office, the majority (47.5%) were falls under 5-10 years of experience. Due to this, the practitioners did not understood and executing the different functions to play their roles properly. In addition, the result show there is high in-out rate or the practitioners from the office to other sectors. This can be explained by the fact that PR is still a fertile and growing profession in the Dawro Zone that needs training to improve the skills and attitudes of PR practitioners to play the roles effectively from excellence perspective.

The previous study shows, most practitioners begin their careers as communication technicians. This role requires executing strategies with the communication tactics of news releases, employee newsletters, position papers, media placements, Web site content, speeches, blogs, and social media messaging (<http://landbucket.org>).

4.5.1 Perceptions of PR practitioners towards PR roles

The above data interpretation in table 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents (37.5%) agreed and 35% were neutral as the PR and propaganda were the same and use to persuade the public. PR is one of many strategies that government can utilize to increase policy dialogue with citizens. The aim is an effort must be made to maintain and promote the ethical practice of public relations to prevent public relations from becoming propaganda. But, the above information indicates that PR practitioners have misunderstanding regarding the two fields and their roles.

One can understand from table 2 the misunderstanding of PR practitioners regarding the PR role: they perceived the highest percent, (57%) strongly agree and (20%) agree PR as only handling technical aspects of producing and editing PR materials, (55%) strongly agree on PR is usually responsible for working media relations. On the same way (62.5%) of the practitioners understood PR for gaining publicity rather than engaging in two ways communication for building long term relationship between the organization and their target publics. Therefore, from the result one can suggest that the practitioners did not understood PR from managerial perspectives as two ways communication and that also causes lack of effectiveness for PR practices and organizational achievements.

Qualitative interview shows, “The practitioners’ understood and execute usually in the departments were: playing the media role, promotional and event management activities in the organization. In addition, they work for the image of the government and to enhance the community participation in different social, economic and political activities by informing public and others. Even the practitioners were not skilled to give to others the skill training in the professional area to improve the managers’ understanding and attitude.”(Int. 06). Previous study conducted by Bereket (2015) also found that most of the PR practitioners have not perceived the management functions of Public Relations.

Other points that drawn from quantitative results in **table2** reveals that the majority (42.5%) of the respondents agree and (20%) were disagree on considering PR as the same as with journalism. It is obvious that there is a symbiotic relationship between the two professions (journalism and PR): PR needs the journalist as a channel to broadcast its message, while the media or journalist needs PR to get access to source materials. However, they are different in their objectives, audiences, and channels. Though, from the respondents’ responses, the researcher concluded that there was misunderstanding PR from journalism.

In contrast, the Practitioners perceived the PR and advertisement differently (52.5%) were disagree in quantitative result, however, the qualitative interview as well as their functions in the organization shows they did not understood separately and in realty the practitioners working the advertisement activities in the study area to promote the organization.

According to the quantitative data, regarding the following PR roles, the majority of respondents’ results were showed: participating on strategic planning and decision making (67.5%) were disagree, taking the responsibility for the success and failure of PR program (67.5%) were strongly disagree, giving counseling services for top managers (57.5%) were disagree, giving response for social issues (55%) were disagree and working for crisis communication (47.5%) were strongly disagree and (30%) agreed. These, quantitative result insight the researcher argue that the PR practitioners did not understood the managerial roles in their daily career in study area. From this, the researcher considered and suggested that they were not strategic for their activity and most of their work for event management that was arranged by other concerning body in the organization. However, according to Cutlip, Centre and Broom,

(1994) PR is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends.

The result showed from the questionnaire and interview, in the study area the PR practitioners did not understand or perceived the following managerial functions such as conducting PR research, giving counseling services to top managers, responding for major social issues and working for crisis communication.

Qualitative interview shows, “We did not consider and functioning conducting research, participating on strategic plan and top level decision making as part of our duties. We were being busy on performing writing press release, writing speech, arranging events, and, disseminating information from the organization to public and producing communication tools such as brochure, magazine and promotional material...” (Int. From woreda & Zonal PR practitioners). The idea supported by Gruning and Gruning, (2002) further maintained that the practitioners, in performing this role (technician), are usually not involved in defining problems and developing solutions, but base their tactics on the technical skill of writing.

From the above discussion, the researcher concluded regarding the perception of PR practitioners towards the roles and concepts of PR with other fields. The PR practitioners in DZCTGCA office view the value of PR for organizational effectiveness positively. However, due to lack of knowledge and skills in the professional area, low experience, and low encouragement and support from top managers and the government for the sector in general and practitioners in particular; they did not consider PR from managerial and excellence perspective. There was lack of critical understanding and awareness of PR roles and understood their roles as media relation worker and execute the technician roles only. This agreed with previous study done by Theaker, (2004), (in Chala,2017) stated that the communication technician’s role of public relations may not require them to undertake researches or be involved in organizational decision making; except to decide which communication mechanism suits their prescribed purpose.

4.5.2 The practicing Roles of PR in DZCTGCA Office

This, the practicing role of PR in organization was mainly disused by using two methods of data gathering tools such questioner, and interview sequentially. This is focused on the practitioners executing what functions and the most often played roles in the organization to achieve the

organizational goals in managerial perspectives. In a review of roles research in public relations, Dozier (1992) proposed that “practitioner roles are keys to understanding the function of public relations and organizational communication” (p. 328).

From the summarized quantitative analysis in table 3 the result showed the majority of the PR practitioners executing functions such as 50% mostly writing communication materials, 57.5% mostly doing photograph and graphics for communication materials, 50% mostly editing and reviewing grammar and spelling in materials written by other departments as well as 60% always handling the technical aspects of maintaining media contacts and placing press releases to play the technician roles. From this, it can be understood that the practitioners playing the technician roles to publicize the organization’s activities through different media outlet and producing communication materials.

As some interviewees’ responses indicated,

The usual activities of the PR practitioners in our organization were arranging events, documentation & publication: writing press release, promoting the best practices of the organization by collecting and documentation from different sector offices and through site observation from the community in the overall aspects of the government activities to scale up. This is done through electronic and printed media to giving media coverage to the target publics.” (Int. from both -Zone and woredas)

The above results from quantitative & qualitative data shows that PR practitioners executing the functions and playing the technician roles in the organization. The previous study of (Castelli, 2007) showed that the practitioners are often responsible for the communication tactics of news releases, organizing press conferences, employee newsletters, position papers, designs brochures and media placements.

In contrast, regarding the managerial roles of PR practitioners in the organization; such as creating opportunity for management to hear the view of internal and external (communication liaison) 42.5% never, counseling decision makers in public relations issues (communication liaison) 50% never, taking responsibility for the success or failures of PR programs (manager role) 45% rarely ,due to experience and training considering other PR practitioners as problem solving experts in the organization (manager role) 47.5% never, participating and providing

decision makers with suggestion and recommendation (managerial role) 75% responded never, by using the journalistic skills to figure out the organization's activity (media relation) 67.5% always and informing the organization about what the media said (media relation) 67.5% rarely, the majority of the respondents were responded negatively. This shows that the media relation is effective; managerial and communication liaison roles in the office were not being well performed by PR practitioners. In addition, there is weak internal communication-from the media (environment) to the organization and the flow of information from the organization to media is strong. The excellence study showed that a symmetrical system of internal communication increased employees' satisfaction with their jobs and with the organization. However, internal communication generally was not practiced unless organizations had a participative rather than authoritarian culture and a decentralized, less stratified (organic) structure rather than a centralized, stratified (mechanical) structure.(Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

This is further supported with data gathered from interview, as "We take ourselves as media relation worker to disseminate the information from the organization or government to the public as facilitator. Due to the influence of academic background about PR profession, the less experiences of PR practitioners in the organization and lack of the training in the sector to improve the skill and attitudes; we give attention in writing the press release, documentation of video and audio as well as coordinating the events to give the media coverage about the organizational activities." In contrast, other managerial functions such as conducting research, strategic planning, participating on decision making and counseling roles were ignored roles in our functions. (Int.09). this is in line with; the practices of PR by practitioners were not effective in the study area. Since the effective Public Relations should incorporate both technician and managerial roles and to attain effective PR practices, the practitioners must be prepared to work in five major areas: counseling, communication service, research and analysis of public affairs; action programs (planning) for public relations, and integration of all communication functions. As majority of the interviewees from zonal and woredas stated the organizational factors such as inappropriate offices structure, inadequate budget, professional human power, experience of the practitioners and educational background hinders the practice of PR in the department.

As seen from table3, regarding the PR roles the practitioner perceive themselves as journalists and consume their much skill and efforts to reach the target publics through media and working

for media relations to inform rather than other managerial PR functions. Thus, they have been playing their routine technician roles such as media relation, promotional work and event management in DZCTGCA. The previous study have also the same evidence as (Salilew, 2016) the study indicated that the PR practitioners didn't practice the functions of PR roles at managerial level such as counseling, lobbying, fund raising and research about the attitude of publics to the organization.

4.5.3 The most often used PR Models in the Study area

The result obtained from the research instruments such as questioner, and interview the results showed that:

From the quantitative data results in table4 shows that: The results of the from questioner shows the respondents replied for the items, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing; the purpose is to get publicity" (PA) model the majority 23 (57.5%) were agreed, and for item "In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the mass media and to keep unfavorable publicity out." (PA) 17 (42.5%) strongly agreed, for items" In public relations, we disseminate accurate information but we do not volunteer unfavorable information." (PI) model 26 (65%) strongly agreed, whereas "In your work, public relations is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization." (PI) 18 (45%) were disagreed and "Keeping a news clipping is about the only way we have to determine the success of our programs" (PI) were 27 (67.5%) agreed. The above result discussion reveals that the most frequently used models were press Agency and public information models of one way.

On the other hand, "Before beginning a public relations program, we conduct research to determine public attitude toward our organization and how those attitudes might be changed." 2AS model 26 (65%) were strongly disagree, "After completing a public relations program, we conduct research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people's attitudes." (2AS) reveals that 27 (67.5%) were disagreed.

In same way, the respondents' replied for "In your work, public relations provides mediation to help our managers and their publics negotiate conflicts." (2S) 26 (65%) were disagree, and for the item "The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between our

management and the publics they affect.” of the two ways symmetrical PR models item the respondents responses reveals 21 (52.5%) were strongly disagree.

From the above discussion drawn table4, the researcher concluded that the PR practitioners were focused on one way (press agency and public information) communication models to publicize the organizational activities through media to get favorable publicity and also disseminate accurate information to inform the citizens but, not come up with unfavorable one for discussion and dialogue to enhance mutual understanding.

In contrast, using two ways communication (two-ways symmetric and asymmetric models) in the study area was not adequately utilized to build the strong relationship between the organization and their publics. Since, it was not supported by PR researches to change the public attitudes towards the organization because in the organization their ultimate goal is to reach the public with news information rather than mediation and negotiation. In other words, the practitioners were not playing their roles in excellence perspectives, since excellence PR fulfill symmetric communication. See table4 in the above.

As one of the interviewee mentioned, “We are not well informed about the models of PR but, we work disseminating accurate information to reach our target public with different political, social and economic policies and strategy issues as well as accomplished activities of the organization’s to inform the public. To reach the public, through on writing news release, video release or any other recorded communication often directed at the media to circulate information about their activities among the public.” (Int.07). However, two-way asymmetric models were rarely utilized by PR practitioners to collect the public opinions to suggest the top managers on regarding the public complaints.

Some of the interviewees further said, “Working the researches after and before the PR plan is not the usual function of the practitioners in the department. However, sometimes we collect the public opinion formally and informally to convenience those in regarding the complaints raised by recording from meeting, community leaders and site observation to the government leaders and organization’s manager to set the event to convince the public on burning issues through community radio and public meeting.” From this opinion the applicable communication model in the study area is one way (press agency and public information), but the two ways asymmetric

communication models is rarely used to pursue the public. This did not fulfill the excellence theory perspective, since to be effective organizations must communicate symmetrically with publics (taking the interests of both the organization and publics into account) to cultivate high quality, long-term relationships with them. (Grunig, Grunig, 2008).

4.5.4 The utilized Tools of PR

To answer this objective raised in chapter one, the data gathered through open ended questioner, interview and document analysis. Regarding the specific PR tools that have been utilized by practitioners to reach, teach and inform different government policies and strategies to the citizens as well as to enhance their participations and to create awareness the practitioners have been used printed and electronic media such as press releases, magazines and brochures, annual reports, and letters, TV and radio. However, when the practitioners' usage of the media, they were not strategic: in choosing the appropriate media at the appropriate time.

As the interviewee stated, "To reach the internal publics and potential customers as well as clients and serve as a bridge for the government and the society at large; using of waka FM and STV as tools to reach the target publics in both zonal and woreda level. However, the program was not arranged strategically or periodically, but it was transmitted as the news to inform if there were new events in the organization as well as zonal and woreda level." (Int. 02, 04, 06, 08). Of course using mass media is important to reach the target public with different activities which is suggested to use both incorporate. However, using the powerful, accessible social media to reach the largest publics within short period of time to encourage dialogue and discussion were not available.

In addition, one respondent in his interview stated that, "We have been not using social media as tool to reach the public. Sometimes we utilize the individual's Facebook accounts to promote different organizational activities to reach the public and to scale up best practices of the organization but there is no its own official organizational created social media account and website. Since, there is the shortage of budget and low recognition from the management to facilitate the department with appropriate technologies." (Practitioners from both wored and Zonal office). Social media encourage dialogue and mutual understanding. This was supported by (Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008) social media technologies allow PR practitioners to reach

out and engage their publics in conversation and provides an avenue to strengthen media relations. However, it is missed part in the communication office.

From the above discussion point, the PR communication tools: press releases, brochures, pamphlets, letters, posters, and calendars, as well as audio and video messages in the archive which are sent at public meetings, event creation and promotion materials, photographs and audio-videotapes sent to STV and Waka FM 93.1 radio stations and SNNRS information desk. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the PR tools that have been utilized to practice were not adequate in quantity and frequency to communicate the public to achieve effective PR practices and build mutual relationship in the study area.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to better understand the perceptions and practices of PR practitioners' in the communication office of Dawro Zone. This was achieved by describing the perceptions of PR practitioners, identifying the roles the PR practitioners played in his or her organization; identifying what PR models the practitioners follow in their communication management, and identifying the specific PR tools the practitioners' utilized to reach the target public and achieve their organizational goals.

- Regarding the practitioners' perceptions towards PR roles for organizational goal's achievement the practitioners have positive attitudes or value and good working the different technician roles in the government organization of the study area. However, due to the influence of educational background, low experiences, skills and knowledge of the PR practitioners, low recognition and support of the top managers to the department in general and the practitioners in particular as well as the inappropriate office structure and shortage of the budget, the PR practitioners were not perceive the managerial roles, but perceive and executing different routine functions.
- Towards the PR Roles, the study found that PR practitioners in the study area in both zonal and woreda levels were play their roles such as media relation, publicity, event management, publication of brochures, newsletters, magazines, writing press release; media relation and promotional materials as well as event management, recording in video and photography and reporting to media. In addition, PR roles: the study established that PR work in government communication affairs mostly entail the monitoring of print and electronic media, writing and reviews press releases, writing and editing articles for organizational newsletters and design graphics and photography that the PR roles are predominantly at technician level.
- Additionally, lack of the public relations practitioners' contributions in strategic planning; conducting research, fund raising and decision making in the organization were not effective, and this indicates the practices did not fulfill the excellence perspective.

And the strategic planning was the responsibility of the development planner rather than the PR department in the office. From this one can conclude, the levels of PR practices in the study area were found in low level and it needs improvement. Because, it did not practicing from excellence perspective and fulfill the managerial roles or both.

- The study indicated that the most often used PR models in the organization by PR practitioners were one-way PR communication models (press agency and public information) models. However, the PR practitioners rarely utilize two-way asymmetrical model, to collect the public opinion during public complaints regarding sensitive issues or crisis.
- The specific tools have been utilized by PR practitioners in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs were press release, brochures & magazines, letters, face-to-face meeting, annual reports as well as radio and TV. While, using social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram, etc. was the ignored media outlets in the organization. There is no created organizational web page and social media accounts to reach the targeted internal & external public and to encourage dialogue. Even when they use printed and electronic media, the air time was not periodically arranged as well as which media outlets for what purpose to whom to be used is not well focused. Additionally, they utilize the printed and electronic media to reach their publics however; there is shortage in printed tools such as brochures, and magazines due to inadequate budget allocation. It is also not adequate both in quantity and frequency.

To summarize, the study found that the practitioners view the importance of PR and its roles positively, but due to lack of skill and knowledge they execute the routine technician roles only. Thus, the roles were focused on media relation, event management and publicity; they utilize one-way communication models with insufficient tools in type and frequency, to reach the public to enhance mutual understanding rather than promoting it effectively. Accordingly, the researcher concludes that their practice was not effective. To attain effective PR practices, the practitioners must play managerial roles or incorporate both. They must be prepared to work in five major areas: counseling, communication service, research and analysis of public affairs; action programs (planning) for public relations, and integration of all communication functions.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions and findings, the following recommendations were given for the improvement of practitioners' perceptions and public relations practices in government communication Affairs of Dawro Zone:

- ❖ For the betterment of PR practices, the practitioners view should be changed towards PR concept with other fields, importance and roles: More short and long term capacity building training are needed to better qualify future practitioners in the communication office from the regional as well as zonal government. Continuous education and professional development is a must to keep up with the latest developments in the field in the regional government for the practitioners.
- ❖ Regarding the roles, to reach expertise and excellence in public relations in the study area a lot has to be done: the practicing roles of PR practitioners' should transform their roles from technician to managerial or incorporate both for excellence practices and organizational achievement by focusing on strategic management, fundraising, evaluation research, environmental scanning as well as participating top decision making. More attention should be given to institutional and organizational communication, open communication with internal and external publics, and professional approaches to image building and reputation management rather than only media relation.
- ❖ Public relations need more engagement in social responsibility and mutual benefits by serving the public interest, the general good and the community rather than one-way communication in both woreda and zonal levels.
- ❖ The sector needed more attention regarding skilled man power and budget allocation to perform the best PR practices and to be supported in research work from zonal government.
- ❖ To encourage the practitioners' and enhance mutual understanding, the organization's top level management should give due concern to public relations practitioners to participate on managerial activities like decision making, counseling, setting objectives, strategic planning, motivating employees, training staff members, fund rising programs, community relations and so on.

- ❖ The regional government should give the attention to the organizational structure to be rearranged and separated to be independent in both zonal and woreda levels: Culture & tourism, and Government Communication Affairs.
- ❖ The one-way communication model of press agency and public information of the public relation practice in the organization changed or more or less the two-way communication models of symmetrical and asymmetrical modes should be practiced and the mix of all the four model practices should be in the organization to create smooth information flow from the organization or government to the public and vice versa to give strategic advice to the top organization's managers and make the right decision that satisfy the public interest, the employer, the professional organization's code of ethics, and their personal values based on tangible information and knowledge from the organizational environment.
- ❖ Concerning the PR tools in the office the PR practitioners should utilize different tools in adequate way to achieve effective practices. The organization's leader should give credit by allocating adequate budget and facilitating technologies to utilize the effective tools in both quantity and frequency.
- ❖ Finally, to make the PR practices effective in the study area of government communication affairs the more attention needed from the practitioners, the top organizations' managers and the government at large: the practitioners should skill up themselves by reading different materials, manuals as well as communication policy documents and upgrade using different technologies such as using social media. The organizations' top manager should support and encourage the practitioners on participation of strategic planning and communication decision making, counseling, research as well as two-ways communication models to enhance mutual understanding between the organization or government and the citizens. The regional government in general, should create conducive environment by allocating adequate budget, including PR courses in educational policy and generating the education chance for practitioners in higher educational institution, arranging short and long term capacity building training and rearranging the appropriate organizational PR structure.

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Appendixes

JIMMA UNIVERSITY

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

MA in public relations and corporate communications

A Questionnaire to be filled by public relations practitioners for partial fulfillment of M.A degree in Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is prepared to conduct a research entitled “The Perception and Practices of Government Public Relations Practitioners’ in Dawro Zone Culture, Tourism & Government Communication Affairs office” in partial fulfillment of Master of Arts (MA) in Public Relations and Corporate Communications (PRCC) at Jimma University. Hence, your cooperation is invaluable in conducting this research and you are kindly requested to cooperate. The information which is provided by you will be kept confidentiality and only used for academic research purpose. So, please spare a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and put [√] mark to answer the following questions correctly. Don’t write your name. Participation in this research is voluntary. Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Appendix A: Questioner

I. Background Information of the Respondents

1. **Gender:** 1. Male [] 2. Female []
2. **Age:** 1. 29 years and below [] 2. 30-39 years []
40-49 years [] 50 & above years []
3. **Highest Educational Levels:** Diploma & below [] Degree [] Masters & above []
4. **PR Work Experience:** Less than 5 years [] 5- 10 years [] 11-15 years []
16 & above years []
5. **Previous Work experience before joining this organization:**
Less than 5 years [] 5-10 years [] 11-15 years [] 16 and above years []

6. What is your professional background of education? Please, write down-----

II. Work Related Information

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 5 to 1 where 5=strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree.

A) Perceptions of the Respondents

Rate how often you perceive or view each of the following items in your department is.

Please give your best possible answer to each question. I perceive public relations or its roles:

7. Public relations and propaganda is the same; we use to persuade our public.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

8. The role of PR is handling the technical aspects of producing & editing public relations materials- like news release, brochure, magazine etc.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

9. Public Relations practitioners are usually responsible to get the media coverage or publicity in the organization.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

10. Public relations department is more important to gain publicity than engaging in two ways communication.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

11. Public relations and journalism is the same which helps to inform the public.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

12. Public relations and advertisement are the same.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

13. Participating in strategic planning & top level management decision making is the role of PR practitioners.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

14. The PR Practitioner taking responsibility for the success or the failure of public relations plans. (A Plan is the overall long term goals and specific short term objectives of communication)

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

15. PR Practitioners conducting opinion research about the organization before and after implementation of the activities to explain to top management the impact of their behavior on key external publics.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

16. PR Practitioners give Counseling service to the top managers in the organization.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

17. PR Practitioners responsible to give a Response to major social issues in my organization.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] Strongly disagree []

18. PR Practitioners work for crises communication planning and response in your organization.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] undecided [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

B. The next series of questions ask about your role in the communications department and the kind of expertise your department has. Rate how often you do each of the following items in your department is. Please give your best possible answer to each question.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 5 to 1 where 5=always and 1= never.

19. I am the person who writes communication materials such as press release, brochures, & other publications presenting information on issues important to the organization. T

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

20. I do photography and graphics for communications materials in the department. T

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

21. I edit or review grammar and spelling in materials written by other departments. T

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

22. I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials, maintain media contacts & responsible for placing news releases. T

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

23. I create opportunities for management to hear the views of internal and external publics. CL

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

24. I am a senior counsel to top decision makers when communication or public relations issues are involved. CL. Com. facilitator

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

25. I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's communication or public relations programs. M.

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

26. Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving communication or public relations problems.

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

27. I participate and provide decision makers with suggestions, recommendation, and plans as well as make communication policy decisions for my organization. **M**

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

28. I use my journalistic skills to figure out what the media will consider newsworthy about our organization. MR. com. facilitator

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

29. I keep others in the organization informed of what the media reports about our organization and important professional issues. MR

Always [] Mostly [] Sometime [] Rarely [] Never []

Roles: M = Manager T = Technician MR = Media Relations CL = Communication Liaison

C) Models of Public Relations in the Organization

Give your opinion on how the following statements describe how public relations is conducted in your organization as a whole:

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using a scale of 5 to 1 where 5=strongly agree and 1= strongly disagree.

30. In organization, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing; the purpose is to get publicity. PA

Strongly agree [] Agree [] neutral [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

31. In public relations, we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the mass media and to keep unfavorable publicity out. PA

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

32. In public relations, we disseminate accurate information but we do not volunteer unfavorable information. PI

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

33. In your work, public relations is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization. PI

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

34. Keeping a news clipping is about the only way we have to determine the success of our programs. PI

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

35. Before beginning a public relations program, we conduct research to determine public attitude toward our organization and how those attitudes might be changed. 2A

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

36. After completing a public relations program, we conduct research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people's attitudes. 2A

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

37. In your work, public relations provides mediation to help our managers and their publics negotiate conflicts. 2S

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

38. The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between our management and the publics they affect. 2S

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

Models: PA = Press Agency PI = Public Information 2A= 2way Asymmetric 2S = 2way Symmetric

D) Levels of Public Relations Practices in your Organization

39. Public relations in your organization is well organized and trained.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] neutral [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

40. Public relations in your organization is well recognized and influential.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

41. Public relations practitioners in our organization is highly knowledgeable and performs complex activities than routine one.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

42. Public relations in my organization independently functions every activity it is concerned with their roles.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Moderate [] Disagree [] strongly disagree []

43. In your own opinion, rate the real status that the PR department has had in your Office.

Very high [] High [] Average [] Low [] Very Low []

Tools questions

44. What are your specific tools that utilized in your organization or public relations department to reach the publics? Please list down-----

Thank you for your active participation!!

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Key Informants

1. As PR practitioners what are your daily functions in your organization or department (roles)?

2. Do you participate on PR as managerial functions such as on conducting research, counseling, strategic planning and decision making in your organization?
3. How the PR practitioners perceived PR functions & roles as managerial function and play which role?
4. How do you communicate with customers in your organization? (Models questions)
5. What are your communication tools to reach your target publics in your department?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important study.