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MA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

AN ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A MANAGERIAL FUNCTION AND ITS CHALLENGES: THE CASE OF WACHEMO UNIVERSITY

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An Assessment of Practice of Public Relations as a Managerial Function and Its Challenges: The Case of Wachemo University

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Declaration

I declare that the research entitled **"*An Assessment of Practice of public relations as a managerial function and its challenges: The case of Wachemo University*"** submitted to research and postgraduate studies' office of College of Social Sciences and Humanities is original research and it has not been submitted previously in part or full to any university or other funding organizations.

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Certificate

We certify that the research entitled *"An Assessment of Practice of public relations as a managerial function and its challenges: The case of Wachemo University"* was done by Negash Berhanu for the partial fulfillment of Master Degree under our supervision.

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Evaluation

We evaluate that the research entitled *"An Assessment of Practice of public relations as a managerial function and its challenges: The case of Wachemo University"* was done by Negash Berhanu for the partial fulfillment of Master Degree in Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Examiners	Signature	Date
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Abstract

University is one of higher educational institutions which demands public relations to create good image and reputation in the minds of public who are found around the institution. Quiet often, public relations office is charged with the responsibility of advancing the objectives of the university to enhance its corporate image. Therefore, this study assessed the practice of public relations as a managerial function and its challenges at Wachemo University. Participants of the study were public relations practitioners, management members and staff members of Wachemo University. The necessary data were collected from a sample of two hundred fifty seven (257) respondents through questionnaire and interview. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted through frequency and percentage and as well as discussion. The finding of the study showed that public relations office has some level of supports to the university, though these were not adequate enough to engender innovative and pragmatic practice of the public relations. Public relations office is underutilized and is performing a role that is below the ideal strategic managerial functions at the university. Furthermore, top management of the university is yet to fully empower the office to live up to its mandate and aid the achievement of the university's objectives. The study also showed that lack of enough experience and inadequate training, huge skill gaps of officers in understanding managerial roles of public relations were among the challenges. Besides, wrong perceptions towards the usefulness of the office, limited access to officers' decisions, lack of acknowledgement from top management, lack of awareness and poor logistics supplies were identified as challenges that hampered the work of the office. Finally, based on the findings, it was recommended that public relations officers should get enough experience and adequate training. The Wachemo University's top management and staff members should change their wrong perception towards department of public relations and should get continually awareness training. The study also recommended that top management of the university should give opportunity to public relations director when they participate on managerial activities like decision makings, setting objectives, strategic planning and so on.

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

BIPR	British Institute of Public Relations
IABC	International Association of Business Communicators
IPR	Institute of Public Relations
NR	Number of Respondents
PR	Public Relations
PRID	Public Relations and International Directorate
PRP	Public Relations Practitioners
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
SNNPRS	Southern Nation, Nationalities and People of Regional State
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
USIA	United States Information Agency
USA	United State of America
WCU	Wachemo University

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1.Background of the Study

Managing an organization is not easy task. This is because an organization usually contains people who have different personalities like political, economical and socio-cultural backgrounds. Thus, care should be taken not to offend persons who work in such kind of organization. Management is a collective process which demands public relations to be more effective and successful (Silas, 2016). This also suggests that the principles of public relations should be streamlined into the management process in the organizations. Therefore, public relation is the management functions that identifies, establishes and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various public on whom its success or failure depends (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2000).

The practices of public relations (PR) vary from one institution to another principally in mission, vision, goals and values. However, PR office has a responsibility of maintaining smooth and peaceful relationship in higher educational institution among the public and the management. The office further serves to create good image and reputation of its institution in the minds of the general public and stakeholders who are found outside the institution. Many units are usually found within the public relations office. In some higher educational institutions, there is a form of decentralization with a central coordinating body as well (Emma &Akua, 2015).

Seitel (2011) pointed out that the management function of PR is in a position to: 1) evaluate internal and external opinions, attitudes and needs on an ongoing basis and 2) to advise management regarding their possible effect and to act as an instrument in bringing about policy changes and in directing new courses of action. Hence, high-level organizations and practitioners of PR should know their publics to achieve organizational missions. These organizational missions can be determined by the external and internal stakeholders.

Public relations practitioners (PRP) identify consequences of decisions and the presence of public by engaging in environmental scanning and issues management. Environmental scanning means that they do research and talk to community leaders, leaders of activist groups, or

government officials to find out who the public are and what issues these public might create. Then, they help an organization to manage these issues by communicating personally or through media with the public who create them (Grunig, 2001). Besides, PR professionals in an institution advise senior managers about communication needs, and are responsible for broad organizational results (Emma &Akua, 2015). PRP acts as a counselor to management and as a mediator, helping to interpret private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action. This view clearly indicates that relationships are at the center of PR, and is seen as an important ingredient for the effective functioning of an organization. "PR as Management functions include: philosophies, policies, programs and decision making" (Geremew & Chala, 2017, p.145). PR is a management tool designed to establish and support among an institution's various internal and external publics (Thomas & Lane, 1990). Besides, PR helps a management of an institution to understand its potential and limitations. For example, an understanding of existing public attitudes and how the public can reach the desired goals. An institution needs PR professionals who undertake PR activities.

These days, university has adopted PR practice owing to rapid expansion of their stakeholders, increase in staff and students population and the complex social issues that they grapple with. So, effective management has also become a formidable task for the university. For instance, the crowd of campuses, inadequacy of accommodation, escalation of fees and limited amenities are some of the problems bothering all the employees and stakeholders that need to be explained to their satisfaction. Adequate and satisfying explanations to such problems certainly require a well-coordinated system of management which needs effective public relations (Emma &Akua, 2015). So, this suggests that effective PR plays managerial role with top management, staff members and other interested parties. So, an assessment of practice of PR as a managerial function and its challenges open new and more innovative ways to facilitate management between the employees and management.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

The role of PR has become a matter of great concern to many individuals, institutions and corporate bodies in recent years. However, there are conflicting views about its significance to the operations of such organizations. This is because PR officers who are responsible for public

relations which is often left out from decision-making. In several occasions, they are forced to implement decisions that they hardly understand because they were considered as not part of the decision making processes. They are not accorded the status that will make them part of those decisions (Eniola, 2011). As it is observed from experience, most decisions are made at the committee level which contains academics and administrative in educational institutions. Administrators serve as implementers of the decisions which have been made by others. PRP are also administrators and they are not fully recognized as part of management. Due to this, PR position is in dilemma than other senior management positions and involved inadequately in decision making (Emma & Akua, 2015). The practice of PR varies throughout the world. For example, PR accorded a prominent role in management from a position as a Vice President with board representation in USA (Seitel, 2009). In contrast, PR in Ethiopia is founded more on disseminations of information than managerial practices. Surprisingly, management and staff members have been an ambiguity about the roles of PR. "Practice of PR in Ethiopia looks like in the early stage of its maturity and formation" (Geremew & Chala, 2017 p.152). Bereket (2015) also states that practice of PR is found at the infant stage in Ethiopia and this mainly emanated from lack of having skilled manpower in the form of division in relation to the profession. PR was not internalized and remained theoretical because practitioners were not invited to involve in the management decisions and most of the time practitioners did not understand management function of PR (Bereket, 2015, p.594). The most common prevailing perspectives that influence the function of PR in broad concept is; putting PR are communication, management and marketing (Venter, 2004). However, practitioners are involved in a variety of functions which may include research, strategic planning, counseling, communication, evaluation, government relations, placement and organizing, training and managing (Lubbe and Puth, 2002).

In the context of WCU, public relations plays technician roles in the achievement of objectives by disseminating information, by recording and documenting different materials, by preparing brochures, by running and organizing special events, by making telephone calls to the media and so forth. The extent of managerial activities rarely performed by public relations practitioners at Wachemo University; but, their role is not clearly known. They are also not familiar with the ways which is more effective and appropriate to perform managerial objectives. There was also human power inadequacy as well as unorganized PR department structure. For example, PR is

wrongly perceived as just another form of advertising and journalism and they also viewed as only meeting facilitators as well as documenters. Surprisingly, public relations practitioners themselves have been an ambiguity in understanding managerial roles of public relations. Fortunately, the researcher has the information and heard those above mentioned problems/complains at WCU. So, these and related challenges have great influence on PR managerial effectiveness.

The earlier scholars have studied managerial functions of public relations only by linking with decision making. But, managerial functions of public relations are not only decision making and they haven't studied managerial functions in four-dimensions. Here, the researcher fills the gap by focusing in the entire of managerial roles and its challenges. Therefore, these above mentioned challenges initiate researcher to conduct empirical research on this topic. Thus, it might be timely and imperative to conduct a research on 'an assessment of role of public relations as a managerial function and its challenges at Wachemo University'.

1.3. Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

1. What are the managerial practices of public relations at Wachemo University?
2. What are the ways in which public relations practitioners use to achieve managerial objectives at Wachemo University?
3. What are the challenges which hamper the effective managerial practice of public relations at Wachemo University?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective of the Study

The main objective of this research was to assess role of public relations as a managerial function and its challenges at Wachemo University.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the research tried to:

1. Assess the managerial practices of public relations at Wachemo University.
2. Identify ways in which public relations practitioners use to achieve managerial objectives at Wachemo University.
3. Identify challenges which hamper the effective managerial practice of public relations at Wachemo University.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of the study help the top management members of WCU to use PR as a management function effectively; here by improving its present PR systems and practices. The findings also help higher educational institutions to develop and maintain effective management. Besides, the findings give up a chance to PRP in participating managerial activities rather than technical in an institution. Furthermore, the study provides valuable insights for future researchers. Thus, they can conduct researches related to PR in other contexts.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study was conducted only at WCU, which is found in Hossana, Hadiya Zone; SNNPRS. Moreover, it was conducted on managerial function of public relations and its challenges at Wachemo University from   January 15/2018 –May 30/2018.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced some problems: for example, this study was unable be generalized to all higher educational institutions; so that there was impossible situation to compare Wachemo University with other Universities. Therefore, the researcher provides only implication for other universities from the success experience of the WCU. Respondents were also suspicious of the people soliciting for work related information but the researcher attempted by building a rapport with the respondents.

CHAPTWER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1.Definition of Public Relations

Public relation is the management functions that identifies, establishes and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various public on whom its success or failure depends (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2000).

The well known definition of public relations as stated by the British Institute of Public Relations (BIPR); public relations is the deliberate planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public as well as the planned effort to establish and improve the degree of mutual understanding between an organization or individual and any group of persons or organizations with the primary object of assisting that organization or individual to deserve, acquire and retain a good reputation (BIPR, 2010).The above definition implies that the fundamental purpose of public relations practice is to establish a two-way flow of mutual understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information. Invariably, regularly public relations entail mutual understanding between an organization or government and the public. It should be noted that public relations is located within the field of governance, industry, community, social affairs, international affairs as well as educational institutions with a calculated vision of bettering mutual understanding.

The earliest definitions of PR emphasized press a gentry and publicity, while more modern definitions incorporate the concepts of "engagement" and "relationship building." According to Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)(1988), defines Public relations help an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.PR practice is deliberate, planned and sustained effort. It helps to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its public. In 2011–12, PRSA led an international effort to modernize the definition of public relations. PRSA initiated a crowd sourcing campaign and public vote that produced the following definition: A Public Relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and its public (PRSA, 2012). Public relations also consists of all forms of planned communication, outwards and inwards, between an

organization and its public for the purpose of achieving specific objectives concerning mutual understanding (Jefkins, 2006).

The 1978 World Assembly of Public Relations Associations in Mexico agreed that: "Public relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organization's and the public interest" (Wilcox, D.L., Ault, P.H. and Agee, W.K. ,1992, p.6).In 1976, Rex Harlow scoured through 472 definitions of public relations to come up with the following paragraph: "Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools" (Harlow, quoted in Wilcox et al. 1992: 7). The Institute of Public Relations (IPR) is the United Kingdom's leading professional body for public relations practitioners and was established in 1948. The definition framed by the IPR in 1987 is still useful: "Public Relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and understanding between an organization and its publics" (Theaker, 2002, p.4)

Grunig(2001),explains the first stream in the literature presents public relations as a management function, which uses the attributes of management (e.g., planning, collaborative decision making, and research) to foster the organization's ability to build mutually beneficial relationships on which the corporate vision and mission depend. The second stream in the literature presents public relations as communication management, which focuses on the flow of communication between an organization and its public to achieve effective relationships. The third stream of literature presents public relations as relationship management, so that communication is a property of those relationships rather than the conduit between organizations and public.

2.2.History of Public Relations

Public relations have been with us for thousands of years. The Greeks had a word for it: sematikos: to signify, to mean. Semantikos means semantics, which can be defined as how to get people to believe things and do things (Bernays, 1951).

In 50 B.C. Julius Caesar wrote the first campaign biography, *Caesar's Gallic Wars*. He publicized his military exploits to convince the Roman people that he would make the best head of state. Candidates for political office continue to publicize themselves with campaign biographies and accounts of military exploits to this day. In 394 A.D., St. Augustine was a professor of rhetoric in Milan, the capitol of the Western Roman Empire. He delivered the regular eulogies to the emperor and was the closest thing to a minister of propaganda for the imperial court. Thus, St. Augustine was one of the first people in charge of public relations. The modern equivalent would be the President's press secretary or communication director. In 1776, Thomas Paine wrote "The Crisis," a pamphlet which convinced the soldiers of Washington's army to stay and fight at a time when so many were prepared to desert so they could escape the cold and the hardships of a winter campaign. Paine was a master of political propaganda whose writing could get people to do things and believe things (Ibid).

In the middle of the 19th century appeared a man who was to become one of the leading publicists of all time, P. T. Barnum. His accomplishments include the founding of the American Museum and the establishment of the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Barnum was a master of promotion who could fill his enterprises with customers by using what we today would call sleazy methods of publicity. For example, he announced that his museum would exhibit a 161-year-oldwoman who had been Washington's nurse. He produced an elderly woman and a forged birth certificate to make his case. Furthermore, William Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state in 1861, gained a large American audience through his understanding of how to use the press. He told his friend Jefferson Davis (they were friends before the war): "I speak to the newspapers – they have a large audience and can repeat a thousand times what I want to impress on the public" (Ibid).Most reference books date the establishment of the "publicity bureau" in 1900 as the start of the modern public relations profession. Of course, there were many early forms of public influence and communications management in history. Let us see some history and practice of modern public relations profession in the context of some countries.

In the context of United State of America, Public relations become established first in the US by Edward Bernays, and then spread internationally. Many American companies with public relations departments spread the practice to Europe after 1948 when they created European subsidiaries as a result of Marshall Plan. The second half of the twentieth century was the professional development building era /public relations, trade associations, public relations news, magazines, international public relations agencies, and academic principles for the profession were established. Public relations took the next step toward professionalism in 1918 as Edward Bernays advised the President of the new country of Czechoslovakia to announce independence on Monday, rather than on a Sunday to get maximum press coverage. In 1923, Bernays considered as father of public relations and published "Crystallizing Public Opinion," in which he established several public relations principles. He is also one of the pioneers of public relation; He said that public relations had these functions: a) to interpret the client to the public, this means promoting the client and b) to interpret the public to the client, this means operating the company in such a way to gain the approval of the public (Bernays, 1951).

In the USA, democracy is structured upon principles that mandate effective Public Relations, with apathy and ignorance as its greatest enemies. Without an informed and active citizenry, elected and appointed officials may lose touch with true needs of their constituents. Programs costing millions may be undertaken to address public needs that have been overestimated, while the real needs remain hidden. Special interest politics may dominate decision making. Citizen discontent may linger just under the surface, but once it appears it can be fuelled by simplistic rhetoric in place of a deeper understanding of issues (Cutlip et al, 1994).

Most far-reaching of the federal government's Public Relations apparatus is the United States Information Agency (USIA). US1A employs nearly 10,000 people and is America's Public Relations arm in 129 countries around the world. Its budget (annual) is slightly under $1 billion. USIA's primary mission is "to support the national interest by conveying an understanding abroad of what the United States stand for as a nation and as a people; to explain the nation's

policies and to present a true picture of the society, institutions, and culture in which those policies evolve" (Seitel, 1987).

The rationale for expenditure such as this on central government Public Relations is threefold: a democracy should encourage the flow of ideas and information between itself and the country's citizens; the government should be accountable to the people it serves; and taxpayers have a right to get information about what the government is doing or is planning to do with their money (Baker, 1997).

USIA interprets public opinion overseas and provides analysis and feedback to the federal government. USIA, an independent agency within the executive branch, reports directly to the president. It is perhaps best known for its radio broadcast network. Overseas, USIA is known as the United States Information Service. In American embassies, the chief USIA officials are the public affairs officers. They advise ambassadors and other diplomats on relevant Public Relations issues affecting US interests and policy and on embassy operations and relationships within host countries. A vital responsibility of USIA is to correct information or to counter adverse propaganda that might have a detrimental effect on the United States (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 1994).

In the context of Britain, public relations first employed in 1912 when Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, organized a team of lecturers to explain the first old age pension scheme in 1912 (Jefkins,1992). Basil Clark is considered the founder of the public relations profession in Britain with his establishment of editorial services in 1924. Academic Noel Turn ball points out that systematic public relations was employed in Britain first by religious evangelicals and Victorian reformers especially opponents of slavery.

Ivy Lee professionalized public relations by following principles: 1) tell the truth, 2) provide accurate facts and 3) public relations must have access to top management and must be able influence decision. He saying: Public Relations means the actual relationship of the company to the people and that relationship involve more than the talk. The company must act by performing good deeds. Public relations activities entered the private sector in the 1920s and the

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international association of public relation was founded in 1955. A public relation is essentially non-political and has two main tasks: to give regular information on policy, plans and achievements of the department; and to inform and educate the public on legislation, regulation and matters that affect the daily life of citizens. It must also advise ministers and senior officials of reaction and potential reaction to actual or proposed policies. Local government public relation is the province of individual local authorities, each of which has its own arrangements or none. The staff working in government relations are drawn from the information officer class, a general service class of the civil service which first came into existence in 1949 (Black, 1976).

The job of the senior public relations professional in a government department is a one key. The press secretary or chief information officer in a government department advises the minister of state on all public relations matters, provides comments and quotes to the media, and sometimes writes speeches for the minister. It is important to remember, however, that the public relations staff is non-partisan. They are not there to perform the function of image-maker to a politician. Ministers have their own 'special advisers' to undertake that role. However, each minister is responsible for the public relations policy of his department (Ibid).

In the context of Kenya, The positions of public relations practitioners were created in 1983 by the ministry of information and broadcasting which decided to send its information officers to various ministries to act as the link between the ministry and the public (Ombara, 2001). The department of information in the ministry of Kenya responsible for communication; it was the recognized channel for all government information to the local and the international mass media. Therefore, ministries and departments are expected to maintain regular liaison through public relations officers seconded to them to ensure the fullest possible publicity for any information they wish to communicate to the public through the media.

In Kenya, the main functions of public relations officers are to help to articulate the government policy and to publicize the institution activities. Essentially, a public relations officer should try to make his or her institution more accountable to the public. The role of public relations officer is to channel out important information from the institution to the public through the press and other forums, make the institutions more accessible to the public and the press, handle press queries and chum out publications giving a positive image of institutions. Other functions of

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public relations officers include assisting in the preparation of institutional speeches by polishing them, issuing press releases, providing adequate press coverage for the ministry in a positive and meaningful way, highlighting institution activities, advising senior management on relevant publicity programs and creating rapport between senior management and junior staff (Ibid).

The practices of public relations practiced through the office of the government spokesperson under the office of the president in Kenya. The office of the government spokesperson aims at being an excellent facilitator of communication between the government of Kenya and its publics for prosperity by building an efficient and proactive government communication system through research, training and information dissemination for good governance and positive image of Kenya. The core functions of the office of government spokesperson/public communications secretary include: carrying out research on communication aspects of government and providing appropriate strategies for effective communication; propagating government policies and programs and disseminating accurate information.

Other functions are advising the government on best practices in dealing with the media; anticipating public concerns and responding to them appropriately; liaising with the media on matters touching on government; ensuring good working relations between the government, media and the general public; liaising with departments on matters relating to dissemination of relevant information pertaining to their operations; editing and producing journals and other publications aimed at improving government image; and using communication to encourage nationalism and patriotism.

In the context of Ethiopia, the history of public relations in Ethiopia goes back to the era of Queen Sheba, she traveled to Jerusalem to benefit from King Solomon's wisdom, and this is considered as breaking through for the beginning of public relations in Ethiopia. Following the establishment of Ethiopian Civil Service Agency, it includes public relations within the structure of government institutions (Bereket, 2015).

Practicing public relation activities in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. In the last regimes public relations profession was being underway in a traditional way. However, it is currently being used

and being well understood its benefits by private and governmental organizations. Yet, it is still in its low level when measured objectively from scientific point of view (Zeray, 2016).

Zeray (2016) also explains from the government point of view, public relations have two fundamental national missions: that is to create national consensus locally and building Ethiopia's good image in the outside world. It is to be realized through the two main missions mentioned above when seen from the national level policy. It was established to create awareness locally of the benefit of unity based on diversity and the need to intensify the democratic institutions and fair and fast economic development which are reportedly said pillars to save the nation from disintegration and engulfed by civil war. It is also equipped with the aim of building the good image of Ethiopia in the external world in the spirit of the investment, trade, tourism sectors flow steadily to the country so that the sectors can contribute hugely to the steadily growing and diversifying economies. It also aspires that Ethiopia should get its deserved place in the international politics through creating the true image and conditions of the country.

Ultimately, the purpose of practicing public relations was to teach the importance of tolerance, unity based on diversity and create good image and reputation of Ethiopia externally to collectively beat the acute poverty and strengthen the democratic principles which are the pillars of the nation to survive and continue politically stable.

However, it was not internalized, and remained theoretical because practitioners were not invited to involve in the management decisions that are the core concept of public relations. Now days, public relations activities are mainly considered as hub of developmental activities; thus, in each government institutions, there is public relations office. Among these institutions, higher educational institutions are the target point of this research and higher educational institutions are involving in the developmental activities of skilled manpower in general and in particular ways.

2.3. The Concept of 'Publics' in Public Relations

In general, publics are group of similar individuals; an assortment of persons having the same interests, problems, circumstances, goals; it is from such persons that opinion emanates. Public is a varied creature; it comes in many forms and sizes. Publics have a multitude of wants and

desires; it has its likes and dislikes, sometimes, strong likes and strong dislikes. Publics are any group(s) of people held together by a common interest. They differ from audiences in that they often self-organize and do not have to attune to messages; publics differ from stakeholders in that they do not necessarily have a financial stake tying them to specific goals or consequences of the organization. A stakeholder has a stake in an organization or issue that potentially involves the organization. All stakeholders are publics, but not all publics are stakeholders.

The definitions also raise that strange word 'publics', which will be discussed more fully elsewhere. It is important, however, to stress those public relations is not about dealing with 'the public' as people often assume like the above definitions. In public relations we can say that there is no such thing as the public – there are instead many different groups of people – not just consumers, but suppliers, employees, trustees, members, local and national trade and political bodies, local residents, among many others. One of the key concepts of PR is the idea that these groups – or publics – have different information needs and exert different demands on organizations. Understanding these differences is a vital skill of public relations (Theaker, 2002). The 'publics' in PR can be categorized in many different ways: traditional and nontraditional, latent and aware or active, primary and secondary publics, internal and external publics and domestic and international publics.

2.4.Managerial Functions of Public Relations

Management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals working together in groups to accomplish selected aims efficiently. Institutions usually have several management functions to help them to operate at their maximum capacity: research and development, finance, legal, human resources, marketing, and operations. Each of these functions is focused on its own contribution to the success of the organization. Public relations' unique function is to help the organization; to develop and maintain relationships with all of its key publics and stakeholders by communicating effectively with these groups. Therefore, public relation was defined as a unique management function that uses communication to help and manage relationships with key publics effectively.

According to Gruing (1992), public relations are becoming a management function rather than only a technical communication function. It provides the greatest value to an organization when it is used strategically. But what does this really mean? Think of it this in way: In an effective

organization, all the major functions are linked together by a common set of strategies that tie in to an overall vision of the future and an underlying set of values. Perhaps a computer company has as its vision, "To become the low cost provider of computing power to the developing world." From this vision, senior management develops a set of strategies that address areas like sourcing, the manufacturing footprint, marketing, design, human resource development, and product distribution. When all the elements are in sync, the company grows in a steady, profitable manner.

According to Rosenberg (2013), the practice of public relations from management perspectives has the oversight of organizational internal communications policies and actions, oversight of organizational external policies and actions and coordination of internal and external communications.

According to Theaker (2004), the management perspective of public relations is twofold: first helping to collect and interpret information from the social environment so that strategic decision can be made and second, the communication of the strategic vision. The notion of public relations as a managerial function is emphasized in many definitions put forward to explain the nature of the discipline. Numerous studies have been done in an attempt to explain the management role of public relations; e.g., Cutlip et al., 2000; Skinner et al., 2001 and Seitel, 2004 advocate that when managing an organization's PR system, practitioners must demonstrate comfort with the various elements of the organization itself. They must be the interpreter of the organization's decision making, philosophy, policy and programs, all which emanate from top management.

Gruning et al., (2002), contextualize that when public relations is part of the organization, it is likely to manage communication programs strategically. By drawing on the concept of the management's role of public relations, they have been able to show that public relations must report to those who run the organization. However, in many organizations, this reporting relationship has not always been in practice. Public relations as Management discipline include philosophies, policies, programs and decision making (Geremew & Chala, 2017).

As a whole, Public Relations as a management function encompass the following points:

- Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.
- Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.
- Researching, conducting and evaluating on a continuing basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing, financial, fund raising, employee, community or government relations and other programs.
- Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.
- Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities. In short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.

According to (Grunig, 1992), Public relations department of an organization involves a diversity of functions. The people who do the work of public relations, that is PR practitioners, do different kinds of work, and they are a multitude indeed. These functions are interrelated and are directed towards the achievement of a singular goal: the creation of mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. The work of public relations may be divided into many areas. Fundamentally, public relations department perform the following managerial functions:

2.4.1. Research

An important function of public relations department is the conducting of research of the organization's various publics such as employees, shareholders, consumers, dealers, clients and the community. Research enables an organization to find out what the public really wants to know about it. Public relations department conduct a research to determine attitudes and behaviors of relevant publics so as to plan public relations strategies. Research can be used to generate understanding as well as influence and persuade publics.

2.4.2. Planning

It is the managerial function of the public relations department to determine basic public relations policies, establish objectives and determine methods of communications, timing of programs and budgets for all public relations program.

2.4.3. Counseling

It is the responsibility of the organization's public relations department to interpret public opinion to the management and board of directors by gathering information about the attitude and opinions of the company's various publics concerning its policies and practices. It is the duty of the head of the public relations department to advise the management and board of directors on public relations aspects of the Policies and practices of the organization.

2.4.4. Policy

Policy is required for every organization. A policy is a statement of guidelines to be followed in the company. The public relations department has to develop and recommend corporate public relations policies. It has to contribute the public relations view point which helps in the formulation of decision. Its function is not merely to provide the policy mainly to the top management but also to the other sections and divisions. Organizations must manage public policy issues that they create as a consequence of their doing business. Organizational policy must continually be revised and updated to reflect the current regulatory environment as well as the demands placed on it by publics. So, the Public relations department of an organization designs the policy that can enable the organization to meet its long –term goal.

2.4.5. Government Relations

Government relations are the art of working with legislature and regulatory bodies that have influence on organization. The main focus of government relations is the analyzing and interpreting of government and legislative issues, counseling management and communicating the Organization's position to government bodies. In all spheres of activities the government interferes, regulates, controls and supervises. It is necessary to maintain liaison with appropriate governmental departments. This liaison covers both the local level, state level and national level.

Lobbying can be part of the government affairs program. Tasks of Lobbying can be as follows:

- Advise action as needed
- Report trends in government affecting the company.
- Help in preparing and directing corporate appearances before investigating bodies of legislative hearings.
- Keeping senior management informed on legislative or regulatory development
- supporting sales to government

A good government PR is essential for an organization's survival because of the key role of government, at all level that make decisions that can impact on an organization existence and operations.

2.4.6. Community Relations

The first step in community relations is to know the community intimacy. This requires knowledge of the community's strength and weakness an analysis of its needs and welfare. Community relations should focus on the building for the company, a reputation for good citizenship through social responsibility. Community contacts should be planned. It is the performance and coordination of corporate good neighbor activities, including compliance with environmental protection standards, fostering equal employment opportunity, cooperating in urban improvement programs, and developing community understanding of a company's problems and needs. The PR practitioner must identify ways of listening to and responding to the sensitivity of the local community and extending the facilities of the organization to the community and provisions of social amenities. For instance, the community may be in need such as water, schools, health facilities, job opportunity and vocational training, sponsorship and, sponsorship of cultural events and social activities like sports.

2.5. Role of PR in Higher Educational Institutions

The role played by public relations in higher institutions is to also manage the flow of both internal and external communications. Public relations departments in institutions set up do manage their organization's reputations with various groups including internal and external public. Seitel (2009) mentions that public relations practice is based on two-way communications facilitated through a multimedia approach.

In reference to public relations practice in the USA, Seitel writes that PR is therefore accorded a prominent role in management from a position as a vice president with board representation. The executive vice president presides over specialized functional areas headed by highly placed directions that handle specific activities and publics. In contrast to what exist in the USA, public relations practice in Ethiopian higher institutions are founded on disseminations of information usually coming from management of which the public relations practitioners is not part. Public relations practitioners report through a bureaucratic process as he or she is not accorded management status.

2.6.The Role of PR Practitioner on Higher Educational Institutions

The traditional role of public relations practitioners have been that of a scribe and paper mover, whose purpose typically was to inform but often to publicize. For the most part, the duties of the public relations specialist or practitioner was the recording and publishing of minutes of board meetings, the development of brochures for financial campaigns and even the supervision of the school newspaper when the positions was half rather than full time (Ojomo et al, 2006).

Today however, the role of public relations practitioners is seen as a much broader one. The leadership roles emphasized a variety of skills; publicizing, advertising, marketing (of existing and new products services), editing and knowing basic graphic design, conducting budget and building referenda campaigns, public relations in service for administrators and staff, relating effectively to adults and youth in community problem solving situations, dealing with oral and written complains and organizing and administering communications plans for university crisis, keeping accurate district public relations records, determining alternative futures and serving not only as the district peacemaker and public conscience but also as one of the superintendents key advisors which includes speaking for him or her on occasions. D'Almeida (2003) found out that the highest functions of PR officers among others as receiving visitors and seeing to their wellbeing, seeing of people and welcoming them at the airport as well as seeing to funeral matters.

According to Diabour (2000), public relations executives above the position of head of department level had no problems getting access to management and also being consulted frequently by management on corporate policies. Only few public executive of the status of heads of department and below enjoy that privilege. Cutlip et al (2000), stresses the great need for improving communication channel in the university.

2.7. Challenges in the International PR Profession

International public relations industry and its practitioners need to communicate effectively across nations and cultures. Additionally, we must keep in mind that the globalization of businesses has created needs that go beyond the standard level of proficiency and expertise required from public relations practitioners operating in their own domestic markets. In order to communicate effectively, international public relations professionals need to identify, to study and to understand the world view, mindsets, and habits of their global publics.

Grunig (1992) suggests that one of the assumptions to be challenged is the notion that the practice of public relations focuses on a variety of key public: shareholders, employees, suppliers, activists, the media and consumers. In many developing nations, it is the government officials rather than the general public who are most important to public relations practitioners. Public relations research suggests that active public can affect organizations and their missions. The assumption behind these positions that public composed of regular citizens actually have and can exert power to influence the fate of organizations, may hold true in the United States and other Western nations where there is a history and tolerance of activism but not necessarily in other countries.

Multiple public may be an important part of public relations communication in the developed world; but in the developing world, specific public: such as journalists and government officials may actually be more important public. Furthermore, in developing nations, government officials and bureaucrats make important decisions about licenses, contracts and business permits. Those who control access to scarce material resources may actually be the key public for practitioners. Although government has always been included in discussions about public relations, it is the issue management literature that most clearly identifies government as an important public to be

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watched and analyzed. The issue management literature shows that government can be key public for practitioners. Moreover, the relations between public relations practitioners and government officials will be partly determined by the social, political and economic development of a particular nation.

The challenges for public relations practitioners in administration of universities are evident in previous studies. Public relations cannot be overlooked in the management of the universities. D'Almeida (2003) explains that the university public relations office is confronted with a number of problems that hinder the effective performance of its functions. The major one was cash flow; messages must be timely so they have to be sent with dispatch. However, it needs money to send kinds of messages to the relevant publics at the right time especially to media and messages and advertisement for time bound events. More often, funds for these messages are not made available to the office; much later that it should be to make such messages meaningful and effective. They also lack adequate resource to ensure the effect running of the office. Furthermore, they have no research staff, efficient internet and phone system and depend on other offices for fax and e-mail facilities.

2.8.Professional Ethics for PR Practitioners

Whatever has done in any organizations, the activities need professional ethics. In this regard, public relations practitioners should have to adopt professional ethical codes which were developed by Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). The Public Relations Society of America's Code of Professional Standards (2000), presents the core values of public relations profession. Professional ethical codes for public relations practitioners in the organizations include:

➢ **Advocacy**: We serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those we represent. We provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate.

➢ **Honesty**: We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of those we represent and in communicating with the public."

➢ **Expertise**: We acquire and responsibly use specialized knowledge and experience. We advance the profession through continued professional development, research, and education.

We also build mutual understanding, credibility and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences.

- ➢ **Independence**: We provide objective of counsel to those we represent. We are accountable for our actions.
- ➢ **Loyalty**: We are faithful to those we represent, while honoring our obligation to serve the public interest.
- ➢ Fairness: We deal fairly with clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors, the media, and the general public. We respect all opinions and support the right of free expression.

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators has been revised within the past decade. But it seems to be less enforceable than the old code. It is certainly less clear than the PRSA Code is about communicators' primary obligation being to their clients/employers. However, the IABC Code is not limited solely to public relations practitioners. It is meant to extend beyond public relations and include the many other types of communication specialists who are IABC members. This includes communicators who deal with employee publications, marketing, advertising, training, and dozens of other communication functions. Communicators need to be aware of one another's professional standards. If you are aspiring to become a professional communicator, you should become familiar with all three of these organization's codes of ethics. And, this is not merely an academic admonition. Its practical advice that could pay long-term dividends once you're working and need to:

- Be fully aware of the ethical standards you're expected to follow in your chosen field so you can behave accordingly;
- Better understand and interact with other communicators whose actions may be based on different professional standards than yours; and
- Explain and, if necessary, defend your actions on ethical grounds.

The practice of public relations can present unique and challenging ethical issues. At the same time, protecting integrity and the public trust are fundamental to the profession's role and reputation. Bottom line, successful public relations hinges on the ethics of its practitioners (PRSA, 2000).

2.9.Theoretical Framework: Grunig's theory of excellence

Grunig's theory of excellence in public relations and communication management which resulted from a study conducted by James Grunig and his colleagues (Dozier, Grunig, &Grunig, 1995); success in public relation is achieved by applying the characteristics of the excellence theory of communication to the organizations. In sum, the more these characteristics are reflected in an institution's practices, the more successful that organization will be. Excellence in public relations is summarized as the ideal state in which knowledgeable practitioners assist in the overall strategic management of institutions, seeking symmetrical relations through management of communication with key publics on whom organizational survival and growth depends(Grunig, et al., 2002).

Organizations seeking support may use this model to find the best way to communicate with potential supporters. This model works well for organizations with large budgets, staffs, and resources because it was developed through studying them. These kinds of organizations have the ability to allocate more resources to accomplish goals and benefit from more perspectives and expertise in decision-making. There were various organizations examined in the original study that produced the excellence model. Because participation required a "major commitment of organizations resources" (Grunig et al., 2002, p. 37); institutions with fewer than 16 employees did not participate in the study and the model is thus not able to completely reflect their realities.

Excellence theory offers a number of specific characteristics that determine the extent to which an organization is successful in public relations and these characteristics are separated into three levels: the program level: "how excellent public relations is planned, implemented, and evaluated at the level of individual communication programs aimed at such stakeholders as the media, employees, communities, customers, or investors" (Grunig et al., p. 8). This level represents the outward product of the organization's communication and how it communicates with stakeholders. Secondly, the departmental level: "how public relations departments are organized and managed" (Grunig et al., p. 8). This refers to how the PR department can help the

organizations by the way it is structured and managed. It delves into the specifics of what makes an excellent PR department and why it is important for an organization to make use of it. Finally, the organizational level: "the organizational and environmental context most likely to nurture excellent public relations," (Grunig et al., p. 8). This refers to the broader consideration of institution activities, mission, and mandate and how PR should fit into the organizations. Despite the fact that the model was not developed taking into account in an organization, most characteristics of the model are transferrable but need to be adjusted to an organization scale. Specifically, all organizations and program level characteristics are present but the public relations department might consist of a single employee (likely the public relations manager) in this case.

2.10.   Conceptual Framework of the Study

Fig 1: Managerial roles of public relations in the organizations (source: researcher, 2018)

The above *Conceptual Framework* shows that managerial roles of public relations in the organizations. These roles also have four-dimension as a management disciplines which include decision making, policies, philosophies and programs. Due to the nature activities, each discipline has its own activities; public relations practitioners have to perform to create good image and reputation of the organizations. Therefore, any organizations demands public relations office which was charged with the responsibility of advancing managerial objectives the organizations.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.   Description of the Study Site

Wachemo University is one of the third generation public higher educational institutions in Ethiopia which is located in Hossana Town, Hadiya Zone; SNNPRS. Its distance is 230km from Addis Ababa to Hossana (south-west direction).The foundation stone of the university was placed by his Excellency the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2009. The University has three campuses namely: Main campus, Durame campus which is located on Kambata Tembaro Zone and Nigist Eleni Mohammod Memorial Hospital. Currently, 48 undergraduate and 4 graduate programs are given in 6 colleges. Such as: college of engineering and technology, college of natural & computational sciences, college of agricultural science, college of medicine and health science, college of business and economics, and college of social sciences and humanities and 2 schools include: school of law and school of graduate class found in the university. It offers courses in regular, evening, weekend and summer programs.

Wachemo University also aims to address the three areas primarily; teaching-learning, research and community service. As to PRID, the university is committed to provide quality education while conducting academic researches that can address the various social, political, environmental, economic concerns of the country. In doing so, WCU takes its own role to insure the development of the country in general and the region in particular. To that end, beyond increasing the number and quality of its staffs (academic & non-academic), the university is working with different organizations, external publics, the surrounding community and the media. Total population of Wachemo University is one thousand twenty seven (1,027) those are currently working in three campuses.

3.2.   Research Design

Research design essentially refers to the plan or strategy of shaping the research. Design deals primarily with aim, purposes, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of location,

time, money and availability of staff (Hakim, 1987). Due to the nature of study, the researcher used descriptive research design which helps to assess problems and associated with certain occurrences, outcomes, conditions or types of behavior. Yin (2003) states that descriptive case studies are useful to evaluate programs particularly for an intervention in the real-life context in which they occurred. Thus, descriptive research design was used in the study.

3.3. Population and Participants of the Study

Total population of Wachemo University is one thousand twenty seven (1,027). From this, total participants were seven hundred twenty (720) which includes1) The Public Relations Practitioners (8): those who are PR officers who have knowledge and experiences in public relations works. 2) The Management Members (45): which consists of presidents, college deans and directorate directors and 3) The Staff Members (667): those are staffs which comprised academic and administrative employees.

3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Researcher used convenience sampling technique for quantitative data. As the name implies, convenience sampling involves choosing respondents at the effortlessness of the researcher and the researcher select any members of participants who are more relevant, easily and readily available. Accordingly, the researcher also adopted a formula from Yamane's (1967) sample determining formula which indicates how many samples should be taken from a given population with the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05), and 95% level of confidence.

The formula is: $n = \dfrac{N}{1+N(e)2}$

Where, n = the required sample

N = total population

e = error (the level of precision)

Accordingly,   n= $\dfrac{720}{1+720(0.05)2}$

$n = \dfrac{720}{1+720(0.0025)}$

$n = \dfrac{720}{2.8}$ n $= 257.14$ approximately, n $= 257$

From the above sample determination, the required sample was two hundred fifty seven (257) from the total participants. The researcher took all public relations practitioners 8) and management members 45 decisively; because their information was more crucial and relevant for the study. The researcher also took the rest of sample size from the staff members 204 which reaches about thirty percent (30%) of the staff member participants.

On the other hand, the researcher used semi-structured interview and selected 5 key informants intentionally. Those were top management body 2 and public relations officers 3 of the university. This was because; they were directly concerned to the issue and can offer relevant information.

3.5.   Instruments of Data Collection
Primary data were collected using two data gathering tools which are questionnaire and interview. These data gathered tools are described below in detail.

3.5.1. Questionnaire
Questionnaire helps the researcher to collect data from large respondents within a short period of time easily Thus, questionnaire was used as the main data gathered tool in this study. It also

reduces chance of evaluator bias because the same questions were asked to all respondents (Catherine, 2007). The researcher prepared self administer questionnaire to the selected employees. The Questionnaire contained semi structured questions. With the exception background information questions, respondents were asked 6 semi-structured (open-ended and closed-ended) questions and 24 Likert-scale questions which touch on their insights of the status of the roles and challenges of public relations as a managerial function. These Likert-Scale items simply-worded statements to which respondents could indicate their extent of agreement or disagreement on a five-scales ranging from 1) Strongly agree, 2) Agree, 3) Neutral, 4) Disagree and 5) Strongly disagree. The questionnaire pilot tested to determine its strength after the questionnaire had been commented by the researcher's advisors.

3.5.2. Interview

In this study, interview was supplementary (additional) data gathered tool which conducted from the people who concerned to the issues to offer relevant information. The researcher used structured and semi structured interview to encourage interviewers to give information freely. The researcher also prepared six interview guideline questions to key informants.

3.6.   Methods of Data Analysis

The quantitative data were collected through questionnaire. Before analyzing, the collected data were edited for accuracy, uniformity and consistency. Then, the collected data entered in to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 2016 application and analyzed by using frequency and percentage in distribution tables. On the other hand, the qualitative data were collected through interview and analyzed qualitatively by submerging within quantitative interpretations and explained interviewer's view about the issues.

3.7.   Reliability and Validity

To answer the research questions, the incomplete and inaccurate primary data was omitted during data analysis. Data was collected by the researcher. So, the researcher was aware of some biases which occurred on the side of the respondents and care has been taken to internal reliability to avoid them.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

To get access to the research site, a formal letter was written from research and posted graduate coordinating office of the college of social sciences and humanities of Jimma University to Wachemo University. The necessary data were collected based on the informed consent of the respondents, and the confidentiality of the respondents was assured in the data analysis process. The collected data was analyzed honestly without data changing as well.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. General Concepts of Public Relations

Table 1: Respondents' General Concepts about Public Relations

No	Items	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Is public relations office of Wachemo University well understood by top management and staff members?	Yes	227	88.3
		No	30	11.7
		Total	257	100%
2.	Are roles of PR well understood by top management and staff members of Wachemo University?	Yes	111	43.2
		No	146	56.8
		Total	257	100%

Source: own survey, 2018

As the table4above, item1 shows that 227(88.3%) of the respondents replied that public relations office of the university was well understood by top management and staff members, 30(11.7%) of the respondents replied that public relations office of the university was well understood by top management and staff members. This shows that public relations office of Wachemo University is well known by top management and staff members. In contrast, item2 shows that 111(43.2%) of the respondents replied that role of public relations well understood by top management and staff members while 146(56.8) of the respondents replied that role of public relations didn't well understood by top management and staff members. This reveals that most of the management and staff members of Wachemo University didn't well understood roles of public relations. Hence, it is possible to conclude that top management and staff members of the university have an ambiguity about the general functions/roles of public relations which performed by public relations officers at the university.

4.2. Managerial Functions of Public Relations at Wachemo University

Managerial functions of public relations are used to maximize public relations impact on a University's ability to achieve its goals. To achieve the first objective of the study, the researcher tried to categories managerial functions of public relations at Wachemo University in four parts which are decision making, policy, philosophy and program.

Table 2: Functions of Public Relations in Decision Making at Wachemo University

No	Items	NR &%	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Public relations officers of Wachemo University take responsibility for the success or the failure of public relations.	NR	20	66	25	65	81
		%	7.8	25.7	9.7	25.3	31.5
2.	The public relations office of Wachemo University gives any decisions on communication needs.	NR	25	70	25	86	51
		%	9.7	27.2	9.7	33.5	19.8
3.	The public relations office of Wachemo University handles employees complaints (if any) properly.	NR	30	20	40	82	85
		%	11.7	7.8	15.6	31.9	33.1
4	The public relations director is participating in any decision making process with the top official.	NR	20	50	26	71	90
		%	7.8	19.5	10.1	27.6	35
5	The public relations office of Wachemo University is allocating its own budget.	NR	0	60	41	71	85
		%	0	23.3	16	27.6	33.1

Source: own survey, 2018

As table 5 above shows, in responding to item1, 20 (7.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that public relations take responsibilities for the failure and success of their plans and 66(25.7%) of the respondents agreed that public relations take responsibilities for the failure and success of their plans in the university, 25(9.7%) replied neutral while 65(25.3%) of the respondents disagreed that public relations officers take responsibility for the success and the failure of their plans and 81(31.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that public relations officers take responsibility for the success and the failure of their plans in the university. This shows that public relations officers done their activities with the exclusive of responsibility and they didn't worry about the success and the failure of their plans. Furthermore, in replaying to item2, 25(9.7%) of the participants strongly agreed that the public relations officers gave decisions on communication needs and 70(27.2%) of participants agreed that the public relations office gave decisions on communication needs, 25(9.7%) replied neutral while 86(33.5) of respondents disagreed that the office gave decisions on communication needs and 51(19.8%) of respondents strongly disagreed that the office gave decisions on communication needs. This reveals that the

public relations office of the university has limited power and authority to decide on any communications issue. Similarly, on responding to item3, 30(11.7%) of respondents strongly agreed that the public relations office handles public complaints and 20(7.8%) of respondents agreed that the public relations office handles public complaints properly, 40(15.6%) replied neutral while 82(31.9%) of the respondents disagreed that the public relations office handles public complaints and 85(33.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the public relations office handles public complaints properly. This shows that the public relations office was ineffective on handling employee complaints at Wachemo University.

Moreover, in replaying toitem4, 20(7.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the public relations director participated with the top management and 50(19.5%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations director participated with the top management on decision making, 26(10.1%) replied neutral while 71(27.6%) of respondents agreed that the director participated with the top management and 90(35%) of respondents strongly agreed that the director participated with the top management on decision making. From this, one can conclude that the public relations director has no prominent role in decision making at the university.

As some interviewees' responses, director simply writes minutes of top management rather than decisions. Item5 also shows that no one strongly agreed and 60(23.3%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office allocate its own budget, 41(16%) replied neutral while 71(27.6%) of the respondents disagreed that the PR office allocate its own budget and 85(33.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the PR office allocate its own budget. This implies that the public relations office has limited participation on budget allocation; as some of interviewees' response, the office budget has under the control of president office this means the office never withdraw its budget without permission of president office.

As a whole, from the above table, one can conclude that PR in decision making as a managerial function was performed by public relations practitioners/director. But, their contributions were ineffective on implementations, communication needs, taking responsibility to their plans, handling employee complaints as well as on budget allocation. However, the involvement of public relations director is very crucial in decisions making of the university. In this regard,

Mykkanen and Vos (2015), states that decision making is strategic actions and the involvement of public relations in organizational decision making helps the practitioners to change the organizations' environment.

Table 3: Functions of Public Relations in Policy at Wachemo University

No	Items	NR & %	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The public relations director of Wachemo University of participates on strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities with top management.	NR	15	96	45	66	35
		%	5.8	37.4	17.5	25.7	13.6
2.	The public relations director of Wachemo University of counsels and advices president and vice presidents.	NR	0	50	51	126	30
		%	0	19.5	19.8	49	11.7
3.	The public relations director of Wachemo University plays prominent role in setting objectives, missions and values of University.	NR	11	100	35	81	30
		%	4.3	38.9	13.6	31.5	11.7

Source: own survey, 2018

As table 6 above, item1 shows that 15(5.8%) of respondents strongly agreed that the director participated on strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities and 96(37.4%) of respondents agreed that the director participated on strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities with top management, 45(17.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 66(25.7%) of respondents disagreed that the director participated on strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities and 35(13.6%) of respondents strongly disagreed that the PR director participate on strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities with top management. This shows that the extent of strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities were effective.

Furthermore, in responding to item2 no one strongly agreed and 50(19.5) of respondents agreed that public relations director counsel and advice president and vice presidents, 51(19.8%) replied

neutral while 126(49%) of the respondents disagreed that director counsel and advice president and vice presidents and 30(11.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the director counsel and advice president and vice presidents the university. This reveals that the extent of PR performance regarding to counseling and advising president and vice presidents were ineffective. Lastly, in replaying to item3, 11(4.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the public relations director plays prominent role in setting objectives, missions and values and 100(38.9%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations director plays prominent role in setting objectives, missions and values of the university, 35(13.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 81(31.5%) of respondents disagreed that the director play prominent role and 30(11.7%) of respondents disagreed that the director play prominent role in setting objectives, missions and values of the university. More or less it shows that there was limited access in participating on setting objectives, missions and values of the university.

From the above table, it can be concluded that PR in policy as a managerial function was performed by PRPs/ director. But, their contributions were limited access on strategic planning, counseling, and setting of objectives, missions and values of the university. However, public relations director participation is very important in policy making and planning of the university. In this regard, Cutlip et al. (2000) also supports this notion by stating that in order to become involved in strategic planning, public relations practitioners should operate at the highest level of organizational management and have access to the most senior information and policy systems. This result shows that public relations practitioners of Wachemo University have skill gaps and haven't enough experience to perform their function effectively.

Table 4: Functions of Public Relations in Philosophy at Wachemo University

No	Items	NR &%	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The public relations of Wachemo University office anticipates and conducts research on any problems which affect the university.	NR	0	0	26	121	110
		%	0	0	10.1	47.1	42.8
2.	The public relations office of Wachemo University develops new ideas that are useful to the university.	NR	0	30	15	132	80
		%	0	11.7	5.8	51.4	31.1
3.	The public relations office of Wachemo University conducts public opinion on different issues.	NR	0	132	75	50	0
		%	0	51.4	29.2	19.5	0

Source: own survey, 2018

As table 7 above shows, item1 reveals that no one strongly agreed and agreed, 26(10.1%) of respondents replied neutral while majority of the respondents 121(47.1%) disagreed that the public relations office of Wachemo University anticipate and conduct research on any problems and 110(42.8%) of respondents strongly disagreed that the public relations office anticipate and conduct research on any problems which affect the university. This shows that the public relations office hasn't experience in anticipating and conducting research at Wachemo University. As some of interviewees' response, this activity was not intended as managerial functions of public relations at Wachemo University Surprisingly, they didn't obtain as managerial roles of PR.

Furthermore, in replaying to item2 no one strongly agreed and 30(11.7%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office develop new ideas, 15(5.8%) replied neutral while 132(51.4%) of the respondents disagreed that the public relations office develop new ideas and 80(31.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the public relations office develop new ideas. The result shows similar message like item1. In contrast, item3 shows that no one strongly agreed and 132(51.4%) of the respondents agreed that the PR office conduct public opinion on different issues, 75(29.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 50(19.5%) of the respondents disagreed that the public relations office conduct public opinion and no one strongly disagreed. This reveals that the extent of public relations performance in conducting public opinion were effective but not satisfactory.

From the table above, it is possible to conclude that public relations in philosophy as a managerial function were not performed by public relations practitioners/director at Wachemo University. The contributions of public relations practitioners related to conducting research, developing new ideas and conducting public opinion were ineffective at the university though the involvements of public relations practitioners related to these activities were very crucial.

Table 5: Functions of Public Relations in Program at Wachemo University

No	Items	NR &%	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The public relations office of Wachemo University participates in motivating employees and stakeholders by giving certificates or rewards.	NR	0	0	30	162	65
		%	0	0	11.7	63	25.3
2.	The public relations office of Wachemo University recruits and trains staff members.	NR	0	95	46	86	30
		%	0	37	17.9	33.5	11.7
3.	The public relations office of Wachemo University participates on marketing and event programming.	NR	21	96	45	85	10
		%	8.2	37.4	17.5	33.1	3.9

Source: own survey, 2018

As table 8 above shows, item1 reveals that no one strongly agreed and agreed, 30(11.7%) neither disagreed nor agreed while majority of the respondents 162(63%) disagreed that the PR office participate in motivating employees and stakeholders and 65(25.3%) strongly disagreed that the PR office participate in motivating employees and stakeholders by giving certificates or rewards. This shows that the role of motivating employees and stakeholders were not practiced and not designed as a managerial function of public relation at the university. Directly or indirectly this affects active employees' and stakeholders' motivation. This also results in bad perception towards image and reputation of Wachemo University.

Furthermore, in responding to item2 no one strongly agreed and 95(37%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office of Wachemo University recruits and trains staff members,

46(17.9%) replied that neutral while 86 (33.5%) of the respondents disagreed that the PR office of Wachemo University recruits and trains staff members and 30(11.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that PR office of Wachemo University recruits and trains staff members. This shows that recruiting and training staffs don't well intended as managerial function at Wachemo University.

In replaying to item3, 21(8.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the public relations office participate on marketing as well as event programs and 96(37.4%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office participate on marketing as well as event programs, 45(17.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 85(33.1%) of the respondents agreed that the PR office participate on marketing as well as event programs and 10(3.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the PR office participate on marketing as well as event programs. This reveals that the extent of public relations practitioners on participating marketing and event programs were effective. As some of interviewees' response, public relations practitioners actively were participating on fund raising, community mobilizing programs, flag, culture and holiday festivals, sport festivals and so on.

From the above table, one can conclude that PR in program as a managerial function was performed by public relations practitioners/director. But, their contributions were ineffective in motivating employees, recruiting and training staff members at Wachemo University. However, public relations practitioners' active participations are very important in programs at Wachemo University. In this case, the finding shows that it is not enough to achieve managerial objectives.

Some of the interviewees further said that the finding of the study shows that public relations practitioners have some level of support to the university, though not adequate enough to engender innovative and pragmatic practice of the public relations. For example, the respondents agree that the PR office participates on marketing and event programs. However, they believed that the effectiveness of the public relations office is dependent on elevation of the states of the office, inclusion of the office in top management decision making and empowerment of the office to function as the exclusive means of promoting the goodwill of the University and integrating the concerns of its different customers. The responses of the respondents also seem to

suggest that management is yet to fully empower the office to live up to its mandate and aid the achievement of the University's objectives.

4.3.Ways of Public Relations to Achieve Managerial Objectives at Wachemo University

Table 6: Ways of PR to Achieve Managerial Objectives

No	Item	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Is public relations office use different ways to achieve managerial objectives?	Yes	202	78.6
		No	55	21.4
		Total	257	100
2.	If your answer is 'YES', on 'item 1' which one is best effective and appropriate way to achieve?	Counseling and advising	19	9
		Training	41	20.5
		Meeting	50	25
		Collecting public opinion	28	13.6
		Preparing special events	64	32
		Total	202	100

Source: own survey, 2018

The extent of PR managerial activities performed at Wachemo University in different ways. As table 9 above shows, in responding to item1, from 257respondents, 202(78.6%) of the respondents replied "Yes", and 55(21.4%) of the respondents replied "No". Regarding to the responses, public relations office used different ways to achieve their managerial objectives. Furthermore, item2 shows that 19(9%) of respondents replied "Counseling and advising", 41(20.5%) of respondents replied "Training", 50(25%) of respondents replied "Meeting", 28(13.6%) of respondents replied "Collecting public opinion" and the rest 64(32%) of respondents replied "Preparing special events". From this, it can be understood that preparing special events are best effective and appropriate than the other ways.

As some of interviewees' response, public relations office actively involved in using events like fund raising programs, community mobilizing programs, celebrating flag, culture and holidays festivals, sport festivals and so on. The public relations office was involved in promoting access to the university's facilities as a means of enhancing managerial objectives and projecting university to its publics. But, using events are not enough to enhance managerial objectives of the university.

As a whole, above table shows that the public relations office is reaching out more or less to employees (internal public)and perhaps to the surrounding community (external public) of the university. Public relations managerial activities performed at Wachemo University especially by using preparing special events to employees of the university. The university management is yet to fully empower the public relations office to live up to its mandate and aid the achievement of the university's objectives.

4.4. Challenges of PR as a Managerial Function at Wachemo University

Anything, no matter how helpful, has its downsides. Likewise, the practice of public relations has its own challenges which hamper its practice. Hence, this study shows that public relations office has challenges of managerial function at Wachemo University. So, this study has an opportunity to identify and minimize challenges which militates managerial functions. For more clarification, the researcher categorized those challenges in three major areas:

Table 7: Skills and Experience Gaps

No	Items	NR &%	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The public relations clearly identifiable from other disciplines like advertising and journalism.	NR	0	15	71	126	45
		%	0	5.8	27.6	49	17.5
2.	Public relations managerial roles are clearly known from technical roles.	NR	0	0	55	131	71
		%	0	0	21.4	51	27.6
3.	The public relations office of Wachemo University is well organized in trained (skilled) human power.	NR	0	0	40	157	60
		%	0	0	16.6	61.1	23.3
4.	Public relations officers have enough experience on public relations works.	NR	0	32	45	140	40
		%	0	12.5	17.5	54.5	15.6

Source: own survey, 2018

As table 10 above shows, item1 reveals that no one strongly agreed and 15 (5.8%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations clearly identifiable from advertising and journalism, 71(27.6%) replied neutral while 126(49%) of the respondents disagreed the public relations

clearly identifiable from advertising and journalism and 45(17.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the public relations clearly identifiable from advertising and journalism. Amazingly, they have an ambiguity on differentiating public relations from other disciplines like journalism and advertisement. This also implies that there was misconception (false impression) towards the profession PR.

Besides, in responding to item2, no one strongly agreed and agreed, 55(21.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed while majority 131(51%) of the respondents disagreed that managerial roles of public relations clearly known from technical roles and 71(27.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that managerial roles of public relations clearly known from technical roles. From this, one can concludes that even those PRPs who are the owner of the functions; have huge skill gaps in understanding managerial roles. There was great uncertainty in differentiating managerial and technical roles of public relations at Wachemo University. Moreover, in replaying to item3 no one strongly agreed and agreed, 40(16.6%) replied neutral while majority of the respondents 157(61.1%) disagreed that the PR office well organized in skilled human power and 60(23.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the PR office well organized in skilled human power. This shows that the public relations office didn't well organized in trained (skilled) human power; this create great collision on effectiveness of activities in the office.

Furthermore, in replaying to item4 no one strongly agreed and 30(12.5%) of the respondents agreed that public relations officers have enough experience on public relations works, 45(17.5%) replied neither agreed nor disagreed while 140(54.5%) of the respondents disagreed that they have enough experience on public relations works and 40(15.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they have enough experience on public relations works. This also shows that public relations officers haven't enough experience on public relations works and they are not professionals with the public relations and related fields. As a whole, it can be concluded that there were huge skill gaps in understanding managerial roles of public relations, lack of enough experience which sharing with other university practitioners and inadequate training.

Similarly, some of the interviewers further said that major challenges which militant against effective managerial practice of public relations were huge public relations officers' skill gaps in

understanding the prominent roles, lack of enough experience sharing with other university practitioners and inadequate training. In this regard, Hornaman (2000) said that public relations education can greatly contribute to public relations status as a profession. Public relations qualified individuals in Ethiopia are rare. Unlike other professional public relations training in Ethiopia did not get attention for many years and now. But, later three years some of Ethiopian universities are offering public relations as its own field of studies with the exceptions of few courses within language, journalism and communication studies. However, Kruckeberg (1998) asserted that the public relation is a professional occupation which requires specialized professional education. Scholars such as Grunig (1989) and Bissland & Rentner (1988) cited in (Hornaman, 2000) have argued that public relations education is the key to developing the profession of public relations.

Table 8: Wrong Perception and Awareness Gaps

No	Items	NR &%	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Public relations officers of Wachemo University perceived as meeting facilitators.	NR	25	131	41	40	20
		%	9.7	51	16	15.6	7.8
2.	Public relations officers of Wachemo University perceived as only documenters.	NR	26	120	51	60	0
		%	10.1	46.7	19.8	23.3	0
3.	Public relations officers of Wachemo University perceived as propagandist and manipulators of peoples' minds.	NR	0	40	65	96	56
		%	0	15.6	25.3	37.4	21.8

Source: own survey, 2018

As table 11above shows, item1 reveals that 25(9.7%) of respondents strongly agreed that public relations officers perceived as meeting facilitators and 131(51%) of respondents agreed that public relations officers perceived as meeting facilitators, 41(16%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 40(15.6%) of the respondents disagreed that they perceived as meeting facilitators and 20(7.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they perceived as meeting facilitators. This shows that university employees have huge awareness gap on the role of public relations and practitioners' performance were misguided in Wachemo University. Similarly, in replaying to

item2, 26(10.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that public relations officers perceived as only documenters and 120(46.7%) of the respondents agreed that public relations officers perceived as only documenters, 51(19.8%) replied neutral while 60(23.3%) of the respondents disagreed that they perceived as only documenters and no one strongly disagreed. This shows that the university top management and staff members have huge understanding gap to managerial roles of public relations and practitioners' activities misinterpreted in the university.

Furthermore, item3 shows that no one strongly agreed and 40(15.6%) of the respondents agreed that public relations officers perceived as propaganda and manipulation of peoples' mind, 65(25.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 96(37.4%) of the respondents disagreed that they perceived as propaganda and manipulation of peoples' mind and 56(21.8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they perceived as propaganda and manipulation of peoples' mind. This also shows that there was little bit misconception (false impression) to the profession of public relations.

Similarly, some of the interviewees also said that there were huge awareness gaps in understanding managerial functions of public relations in top management and staff members' level. The university officials failed to acknowledge public relations practitioners to their extent of activities and participation of PR director were very low at top-level decision making. As a whole, perceptions and awareness gaps have a great impact on managerial practice of the public relations. This above table presented perspectives which were the most common prevailing perspectives that influence the function of public relations; emanated from top management and staff members.

Similarly, some of the interviewers further said that major challenges which militant against effective managerial practice of public relations were limited access to PR director on top management decisions, lack of acknowledgement from top management, lack of awareness and feedback on how the public relations office is performing from top management, wrong perceptions/attitudes about the usefulness of public relations office. These were the major challenge while practicing public relations in the university that leads to inadequate assistance

from the president and vice presidents office. Due to this, PRP have not eagerness to their activities and directors' participations were very low at top-level decision making.

Table 9: Shortage of Logistics and Finances

No	Items	NR &%	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	The public relations office of Wachemo University has enough budget/finance to achieve objectives.	NR	0	31	50	101	75
		%	0	12.1	19.5	39.3	29.2
2.	The public relations office of Wachemo University is well organized with logistics (equipments).	NR	0	45	30	126	56
		%	0	17.5	11.7	49	21.8
3	The public relations office of Wachemo University is well structured.	NP	5	46	30	121	55
		%	1.9	17.9	11.7	47.1	21.4

Source: own survey, 2018

On the above table, item1shows that no one strongly agreed and 31(12.1%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office has enough budget/finance, 50(19.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 101(39.3%) of the respondents disagreed that the public relations office has enough budget/finance and 75(29.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the public relations office has enough budget/finance to achieve its managerial objectives. This implies that the public relations office has insufficient finance. As some of interviewees responses, public relations office budget allocated under the umbrella of president office; this means they can't withdraw budget without the permission of president office; in any time to achieve their objectives. Similarly, item2 shows that no one strongly agreed and 45(17.5%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office well organized with logistics, 30(11.7%) replied neutral while 126(49%) of respondents disagreed that the public relations office well organized with logistics and 56(21.8) % of respondents strongly disagreed that the public relations office well organized with logistics. This shows that the public relations office didn't well organized with important logistics.

As some of interviewees' responses, there was scarcity of equipments like video camera, laptops computer to practitioners so on. Furthermore, item3 reveals that 5(1.9%) of the respondents

strongly agreed that the public relations office well structured and 46(17.9%) of the respondents agreed that the public relations office well structured, 30(11.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 121(47.1%) of the respondents disagreed that the office well structured and 55(21.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the office well structured. This reveals that the public relations office not well organized (structured) in the form of international department structure of public relations or else in the form of highest educational institutions public relations work duties and responsibilities.

Similarly, some of the interviewers further said that major challenges which militant against effective managerial practice of public relations were lack of autonomy and finance, poor logistics as well as unorganized office structure were also identified as challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMANDATIOS

This chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendations of the study findings which analyzed and interpreted from the data.

5.1.Conclusions

Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that:

- ❖ The finding of the study shows that office of public relations have some level of support to the university, though not adequate enough to produce innovative and pragmatic practice of the public relations. However, top management believed that the effectiveness of the public relations office is dependent on elevation of the states of the office, inclusion of the office in top management decision making and empowerment of the office to function as the exclusive means of promoting the goodwill of the University and integrating the concerns of its different customers.

- ❖ The finding of the study shows that public relations in decision making were performed by public relations practitioners/director. But, their contributions were ineffective on implementations, communication needs, taking responsibility to their plans, handling employee complaints and budget allocation. However, the involvement of public relations director is very crucial indecisions making of the university.

- ❖ The finding also shows that public relations in policy were performed by public relations practitioners/director. But, their contributions were limited access on strategic planning, counseling, and setting of objectives, missions and values of University. However, public relations director participation is very important in policy making and planning of the university.

- ❖ The finding of the study suggests that the public relations in philosophy were not performed by public relations practitioners/director at Wachemo University. The contributions like conducting research, developing new ideas and conducting public opinion were ineffective at the university though the involvements of public relations practitioners related to these activities were very crucial.

- ❖ The finding of the study reveals that public relations in program were performed by public relations practitioners/director. But, their contributions were ineffective in motivating

employees, training staff members, participating on marketing and event activities in the university. However, public relations practitioners' active participations are very important in program of the university.

❖ The finding seems to suggest that the university management is yet to fully empower the public relations office to live up to its mandate and aid the achievement of the university's objectives.

❖ Findings of the study also suggests that office of public relations at Wachemo University underutilized and performing a roles that is below from the ideal strategic managerial functions in bonding university with its public.

❖ On the other hand, the findings reveal that 'preparing special events' are best effective and appropriate way to perform managerial practices at Wachemo University. Special events like fund raising, community mobilizing programs, flag days, holiday's festivals, sport festivals and so on. Furthermore, the public relations office was effective and involved in using special events and promoting access to the university's facilities as a means of enhancing managerial objectives of the university and projecting university to its publics. But, this way is not enough to enhance managerial objectives of the university.

❖ The finding also shows that the office of public relations is reaching out more or less to employees (internal publics) and perhaps to the surrounding community (external publics) of the university.

From the finding, researcher also categorized challenges of managerial roles of public relations in three major areas:

❖ Firstly, there were huge skill gaps of practitioners in understanding managerial roles of public relations, lack of enough experience which sharing with other university practitioners and inadequate training of PR practitioners.

❖ Secondly, there were wrong perceptions/attitudes towards the usefulness of public relations office, limited access to PR directors on top management decisions, lack of acknowledgement from top management, lack of awareness towards managerial functions of PR and lack of feedback from top management on how the public relations office is performing.

❖ Finally, there were lack of autonomy and finance, poor logistics as well as unorganized office structure were also identified as challenges.

The combination of these factors evidently must have contribution to low enthusiasm of public relations practitioners to make a great impact on the goodwill of the university. All of these suggest that public relations department is yet to be well empowered to perform its functions effectively.

5.2.Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions and findings, the following recommendations are given for the improvement of public relations office and its managerial practices:

➢ For better improvement and effectiveness, Wachemo University should use public relations as a bridge between top management and staff members, university and internal publics as well as university and external publics.

➢ The study recommends that Wachemo University top management and staff members should change their wrong perception towards department of public relations and its managerial roles. They also should get continually awareness training through different methods like meeting, counseling, training, preparing special events and so on.

➢ The university top level management should give unlimited access (opportunity) to public relations practitioners/director when they participate on managerial activities like communication needs, setting objectives, strategic planning, motivating employees, training staff members, fund rising programs and so on.

➢ It is also recommended that the top level management should acknowledge and give feedback to public relations office when they perform activities.

➢ The study recommends that public relations office should utilize and perform their role in terms of ideal strategic managerial planning.

➢ The study recommends that office of public relations should use ways like meeting, counseling, training and conducting public opinion effectively besides preparing special events to perform managerial objectives at Wachemo University.

➢ On the basis of the conclusions made on challenges, the study recommends that public relations office should have to organize with important logistics like video camera, laptops computer to practitioners…etc.

- Public Relations office should be well funded, preferably by having their own budget allocation, to enable public relations practitioners discharge their duties effectively and professionally.

- The study recommends that public relations office budget should be free from the control of president office. They should have to withdraw without the permission of president office.

- Public Relations office should be fulfilling by skilled manpower (professionals) who have good knowledge and experiences in public relations works.

- Practitioners also should have to fulfill their skill gaps by getting adequate training and enough experience through by sharing with other organization practitioners.

- Finally, the study also recommends that public relations office should be well organized (structured) in the form of international department structure of public relations or else in the form of highest educational institutions public relations work duties and responsibilities.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

JIMMA UNIVERSITY

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

MA in Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is prepared to conduct a research entitled *"An Assessment of Practice of Public Relations as a managerial Function and Its Challenges: The Case of Wachemo University"* 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. Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Work Related Information

1. Is public relations office of Wachemo University well understood by top management and staff members?　　　Yes [　]　　　　　　　　　　No [　]

2. Are roles of PR well understood by top management and staff members of Wachemo University?　　　　　Yes [　]　　　　　　　　　　No [　]

3. If your answer is 'YES', on 'Question Number 2', specify some of them--------------------
   ----

4. If your answer is 'NO', on 'Question Number2', why? ---
   ----

5. Public relations officers of Wachemo University take responsibility for the success or the failure of public relations.

   Strongly agree [　]　　　　　Agree [　]　　　　　Neutral [　]

   Disagree [　]　　　　　Strongly disagree [　]

6. The public relations office of Wachemo University gives any decisions on communication needs

   Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

   Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

7. The public relations office of Wachemo University handles employees complaints (if any) properly. Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

                        Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

8. The public relations director participating in any decision making process with the top level management.   Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

   Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

9. The public relations office of Wachemo University is allocating its own budget.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

   Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

10. The public relations director of Wachemo University of participates on strategic planning, implementing and evaluating of activities with top management.

    Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

    Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

11. The public relations director of Wachemo University of counsels and advices president and vice presidents.

    Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

    Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

12. The public relations director of Wachemo University plays prominent role in setting objectives, missions and values of University.

    Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

    Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

13. The public relations office of Wachemo University anticipates and conducts research on any problems which affect the university.

    Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

14. The public relations office of Wachemo University develops new ideas that are useful to the university.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

15. The public relations office of Wachemo University conducts public opinion on different issues.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

16. The public relations office of Wachemo University participates in motivating employees as well as stakeholders by giving certificates or rewards.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

17. The public relations office of Wachemo University recruits and trains staff employees.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

18. The public relations office of Wachemo University participates on marketing as well as event programs.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

19. Is public relations officers use different ways to achieve managerial objectives?

        Yes [   ]   No [   ]

20. If your answer is 'YES', on 'Question Number19', which one is best effective and appropriate way to achieve?

Counseling and advising [   ]   training [   ]   meeting [   ]

Collecting public opinion [   ]   preparing special events [   ]

Specify others --

21. Public relations clearly identifiable from other disciplines like advertising and journalism.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

22. Public relations managerial roles are clearly known from technical roles.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

23. The public relations office of Wachemo University is well organized in trained (skilled) related human power.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

24. Public relations officers have enough experience on public relations works.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

25. Public relations officers are perceived as meeting facilitators.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

26. Public relations officers perceived as only documenters.

Strongly disagree [   ]   Disagree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Agree [   ]   Strongly agree   [   ]

27. Public relations officers perceived as propaganda and manipulation of peoples' mind.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

 Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

28. The public relations office of Wachemo University has enough budget/finance to achieve objectives.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

29. The public relations office of Wachemo University is well organized with logistics (equipments).

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

30. The public relations office of Wachemo University is well structured.

Strongly agree [   ]   Agree [   ]   Neutral [   ]

Disagree [   ]   Strongly disagree [   ]

Thank you for your active participation!!

Appendix 2: Interview Guideline

1. Define public relations within the context of your organization (university)?
2. What are the major roles of public relations practitioners in your organization?
3. What are the extents of managerial roles of public relations?
4. Is PR office actively participating in managerial activities?
   If YES, what are the major contributions?
   If NO, why didn't participate?
5. How do you perceive public relations officers?
6. What are the major challenges that PR practitioners faces to achieve managerial functions?

Thank you for your agreement to participate in this interview!!