

University of Nairobi School of Journalism

**Public Relations: A Critical Study of the Kenyan
Practice**

Post Graduate Research Project

By

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Degree of Masters of Arts in Communications Studies

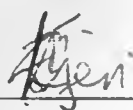
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November, 2008



I declare that this project entitled **Public Relations- A Critical Study of the Kenyan Practice** is my original work and has not been submitted, either wholly or partially, to any other University or examining Body for the award of any Degree.


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This is to certify that this is a bonafide project work undertaken independently by Luvonga Katingi Elizabeth Njeri, under my guidance and supervision.

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Dedication

First of all I would like to dedicate this project to the Lord God Almighty, the King, Eternal Immortal, and Invisible God for enabling me to finish this course... indeed it was a long journey that began way back in 2005. I commit this achievement and all its blessings to the Almighty who directs our paths.

"Glory to God in the Highest" (Luke 2:14) Holy Bible, NIV

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I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my mother Pauline whose determination to soar high has beaten all odds; mummy you are my model. Secondly to my husband Caleb whose support keeps me growing beautiful everyday, Thank You Sweet, and to my new born daughter Bianca who has melted my heart, Bi may God empower us to enable you reach the highest echelons of knowledge and wisdom to His Glory.

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Abstract

This paper is a presentation of a research done to assess the state of Public relations practice in Kenya. It has covered in detail relevant and pertinent aspects of Public relations in Kenya and the west taking comparisons and contrasts to guide recommendations.

Public Relations is a vital tool in the pursuit of achieving its declared aims, objectives and goals. Public Relations strategies knit together relationships between organizations and their publics for the achievement of corporate objectives.

Organizational objectives differ. Businesses aim at achieving profitability and growth, caring for the interest of shareholders and stakeholders, establishment of good reputation and management stature, attainment of industry leadership, ensuring employee welfare and satisfaction, attaining balance between domestic and foreign business interests and rendering quality to the society and for the common good.

Governments for instance have responsibility for all. They are concerned with ensuring good governance, the greatest good for all, provision of social infrastructures- water, roads, education, health, shelter, agriculture, food, justice, etc; good project reputation for the country and protection of life and property and general well-being.

This research has touched on all these areas and brought out key issues that need to be addressed so as to make Public relations more effective. The statistical data produced from opinion polls has been used to portray the severity of the issues addressed.

At the end of the report an analysis of the data has been presented to reiterate these facts. Towards the end are recommendations that are ideal in restoring the glory of PR in Kenya. This information will not only be useful in Kenya but in the many developing countries that share in some of these challenges.

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Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
PR	Public Relations
PRSK	Public Relations society of Kenya
ICCO	International Communication Consultancies Organization
USA	United States of America
CIM	Chartered Institute of Marketing
MSK	Marketing Society of Kenya
AKI	Association of Kenya Insurers
UN	United Nations
GA	Global Alliance for Public Relations And Communication Management

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the history of Public relations as it evolved since the 20th century. It also looks at Kenya's PR evolution and the impact of Public relations in organizations.

Organizations, like people, must communicate with other organizations and their target publics because they do not exist alone. They must communicate in order to coordinate their behavior with people who affect and are affected by them. (Grunig, 2002). And hence the importance of Public relations.

Public relations began when the modern mass media were being established. Media relations continue to be an important part of public relations practice. The initial focus was on newspapers and the print media but since the middle of the 20th century television has become very important.

Currently, the main focus is on TV followed by the general and economic dailies. The new factor is the Internet. There are said to be 800, 000 home pages on the World Wide Web (www) and this number will increase rapidly. It will be very difficult for one page to be selected and read but the Internet should have a future as a two – way communication tool.

The practice of public relations has changed dramatically during the past half century. Perhaps nobody explains this better than Harold Burson, the founding chairman of Burson – Marsteller, the world's largest public relations professionals.

Burson tells a story about how public relations has changed during the four of five decades he has worked in this business by discussing the various goals he has been hired to help organizations accomplish .

When he began a career in public relations, close to fifty years ago Burson says he was hired to help organizations answer the question “How should we say it?” Companies already had made the decision regarding what they would say, and sought public relations counsel regarding how best to express this decision.

Several years later, Burson’s professional services were in demand as companies needed professional services. Although they had made their decisions regarding action before asking for public relations assistance, they wanted public relations help in deciding what to say and how to say it. It was not long before these same companies and organizations realized public relations expertise could help answer additional questions. That was when, according to Burson, public relations people were hired to answer the question “How should we do it?” Although the decision had been made regarding what action would-be taken, organizations wanted the public relations function to assist them in decision making and communicating these decisions to the publics.

Today, Burson says his consultancy is being hired to participate directly in the client’s decision – making, or, as he puts it, to help answer the question. “What should we do?” When a company’s public relations function deals only with the question, “How should we say it?” that organization is involved with the most simplistic form of one – way public relations. This as earlier mentioned is called publicity or press agent. However, when an organization’s public relations officers help the company decide “What should we do?” via two – way communications it has advanced to the highest possible theoretical level of public relations practice.

1.2 Evolution of Public Relations in Kenya

One of the major forces in the transition of Public relations in Kenya is the “Changes in the political, social and economic spheres that have been witnessed for the last one and half decades since 1992. The 1992 political transition also resulted in a social and economic transition (PR Arena, 2002). The openness in the society brought with it economic challenges

that contributed to the growth of Public relations in Kenya. With the citizens' freedom of expression enhanced, they became freer to engage leaders. The leaders saw the need to enhance their accountability and credibility in front of the citizens.

The transition from one party to multiparty state in Kenya in 1992 marked a remarkable turning point in the PR profession. The freedom brought a new wave of democracy that gave citizens confidence to demand rights bestowed to them like accountability from their leaders in both the private and public sector. PR being largely about dialogue, establishing and maintaining two-way communication and stakeholder management, it became the adviser and counselor of these organizations.

It is during this period that PR in Kenya began to acquire sharper skills. As CEOs started to recognize their role, it began to move up the ladder in the organizations. PR practitioners were no longer "purveyors of suitcases and briefcases" for their bosses (PR Arena- 2001).

1.3 The State of Public Relations in Kenya

PR in Kenya has had to transit from the comfort zones of the 1970s and early 1980s to the more unpredictable and challenging terrain of having to keep the image and reputation of the organization bright in the midst of socio-economic uncertainties (PR Arena, 2001). In the 21st century, the greatest fear of any CEO is the rise in the power and voice of the shareholders who are becoming increasingly critical and inquisitive of the activities of organizations as they strive to protect their interest. (Heath, 2001).

The Kenyan society since 1992 has been characterized by a more aggressive consumer culture, a huge and fairly influential civil society, a more open society and a rather aggressive populace. The government realized this trend and had to embrace the idea by investing in public relations for internal and external relations. PR practitioners now have to mind about professionalism as they strive to be more creative in order to effectively respond to the new challenges facing them (PR Arena, 2002).

Of all the changes that have happened in Kenya, the most significant one has been on **education and skills** (PR Arena 2002). There are now better trained Public Relations practitioners, though still not many. Prior to the year 2000, University of Nairobi's School of Journalism, Daystar University and a few commercial colleges were the only institutions training in mass Public Relations. Colleges like United States International University, Kenya Institute of Management and Kenyatta University have since started training students on Public Relations. Most organizations now employ university graduates who have taken up PR in their studies.

Despite this encouragement, Public Relations is yet to be fully recognized and appreciated as a key aspect of organizational management. The umbrella body of public relations practitioners in Kenya (PRSK) is now seeking to position public relations in such a way that it will be seen as a growth area and a way forward for those seeking to move on in their careers in the organization and beyond (PR Arena, 2001).

PRSK has also been conducting training for its members and organizing public education seminars to promote its work and the profession. It is also in the process of setting up practical PR courses for those already in the field as well as involve Kenyan institutions of higher learning in developing curricula for diploma and degree programs.

1.4 Definitions of Public Relations

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Wole Adamolekun and Tayo Ekundayo, in their book "Interactive Public Relations" give definitions of Public relations as follow:

Public relations has many definitions that attempt to look at it from diverse perspectives. The following definitions are basic to the practice of public relations and they are self-explanatory. The definition by the International Institute of Public Relations, London and the update at the 1978 World Forum in Public Relations at Mexico City are good enough as basis for understanding the profession.

They also mention a second category of definition which is termed as **third party endorsement**. These are statements that are not couched like definitions but can be regarded as functional

explanation of the capabilities and limitations of public relations. They are credited to renowned chief executives of multinational corporations that are reputed to be friends of the profession.

The third category definitions deal with the practitioners and whole idea of what really this profession is about. Who are practitioners and what qualifies them to lay claim to being professionals? What constitutes professionalism?

Some Definitions:

1. Public Relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. (*International Institute of Public Relations, London*)
2. Public Relations practice 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 public interest. (*Frank W. Wylie (PRSA) AND Sam Black (IPRA) First World Forum in Public Relations, Mexico City, August 1978.*)

According to Seitel P. Fraser in his book the Practice of Public Relations, the publics can either be:

- a) Primary, Secondary and Marginal: For instance Central Bank of Kenya would be a primary public for a bank awaiting regulatory ruling, whereas the general public and legislators would be secondary.
- b) Traditional and future: These include employees and current customers, students and potential customers who ideally are future customers.
- c) Proponents, Opponents and Uncommitted: For supporters, communications that reinforce beliefs may be in order. For skeptics and uncommitted, strong persuasive communications is called for.

Third Party Endorsements

1. I look to our public relations department to be the eyes, ears and voice of the company in its relationships with the various segments of society that make up the general public
- *Beach Goff P., Chairman, Chrysler Corporation*

2. The duties of a public relations practitioner whether he belongs to the staff of a firm or is an independent consultant, are to devise and submit to the firms or organizations employing his services, the means of establishing and maintaining good relations, based on mutual confidence, with the public and keeping it informed of their achievements and more generally, of all matters relating to their operations. These duties may also be extended to include the relations of firms with their own staff. The public relations practitioner is responsible for implementing the recommended policy and for measuring results.

-French Government Public Relations Decree

3. The managements of institutions need to understand the attitudes and values of their publics in order to achieve institutional goals. The goals themselves are shaped by the external environment. The Public Relations practitioner acts as a counselor management, and as a mediator, helping to translate private aims into reasonable, publicly acceptable policy and action.

-Public Relations Society of America

Public Relations as a Social Science

As public relations has emerged and grown from publicity to decision – making it has developed into an applied social science discipline. When practiced as a social science, public relations use communication to exchange meanings between organizations and their various publics. As Carl Botan has said, “Public relations are applied communication that can be studied using theoretic and research tools from the communication discipline.”

Central to the development of public relations as both a profession and a serious academic discipline is the development of a body of theoretical knowledge that differentiates public relations from other occupations and academic areas. This has been a particular problem for public relations in the United States, where the academic roots of most public relations programs are located in schools and departments of journalism.

This problem also has global implications. For example, throughout much of Europe many universities – based public relations programs are housed in social science or communication departments. Perhaps this is one reason why organizational scholars view public relations much more as a profession. When public relations is viewed in tandem with journalism, audiences frequently equate public relations with only one – way communications such as publicity and press agency – the business of getting something into a newspaper , or on a television or getting something into a newspaper , or radio broadcast.

Obviously there is much more to public relations than publicity or media relations. Granted, media relations is an important part of public relations just like, for example, dispensing pharmaceutical products can be an important aspect in the field of medicine. While many will suggest all public relations people need to make certain they spend several years working as journalists, few would say it is essential that medical doctors should have prior experience working in drug stores.

Although public relations is a social science every person working in public relations is not necessarily a social scientist. An important distinction exists between viewing public relations as an applied social science and viewing those who work in the public relations field as applied social scientists. Only those public relations professionals who make use of the orgies in their daily work could be assumed to be social scientists. Those who do not use theories are not social scientists, because an applied social scientist is one who applies theory and, hopefully, uses insight to expand and, when necessary, modify or correct the theory. In this way, applied social scientists become part of what has become the theory development process.

The Practitioner and Profession Defined

To complete the chains of definitions, it may just be well to look at actors and their profession in terms of how they are perceived:

- (1) The public relations practitioner is the special pleader who seeks to create public acceptance for a particular idea or community
- (2) The public relations practitioner is an applied social scientist, who advises a principal, client or employer on attitudes and actions to be taken toward the publics on whom viability and fulfillment of the principal goals depend.
- (3) Peter F. Jeff, a Michigan practitioner was quoted in "Seitel Fraser's "The Practice of Public Relations" defining a PR practitioner as :
" a bridge builder, not a drum beater – building long term relationships between a company or organization and its publics based on two way communication (i.e. listening and speaking). A public relations professional serves as an interpreter, helping the company adapt and adjust to the political, social and economic climate... and assisting the public in more fully understanding the company".

Public Relations as a practice is founded on professionalism, research and evaluation, counseling, strategic planning, organizational communication and public interest (ethics). I will briefly expound on the mentioned foundations:

- **Professionalism**

-Public Relations is backed by law with aims, objectives, functions and a code of ethics.

-PR is an art and social science.

-PR has procedure for licensure and accreditation

-PR provides for continuous learning and knowledge search to guarantee a place atop the corporate ladder

- **Research and Evaluation**

-RACE in public relations is Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation and they guide implementation of PR

-PR is based on understanding of an organization's past, present and future

-Research preceded programs, evaluation comes at the end

- **Strategic Planning**

-PR helps formulate policies for employees, shareholders, e.t.c and develop excellent products for them

-PR manages issues and crisis

PR is about planning and having a competitive edge in the industry

- **Organizational Communication**

-Messages to all audiences must be consistent, understandable and meaningful to both internal and external audience

-The communicator must be open, patient and practical treat messages politely, cautiously, expeditiously

- **Counseling**

-The practitioner advises on ways and means of achieving set corporate goals, good citizenship, employee relations, and government liaison and business ethics

-The practitioner must have all the information about the publics' perception of the organization

- **Public Interest**

-The practitioner must interact with the community by working with grassroots organizations and opinion leaders

-In times of crisis, the practitioner must treat people with utmost regard

-Practitioner must be accountable and transparent and lead by example

In Kenya, the practice of Public Relations has evolved over the last two decades with a gradual increase of practitioners and PR agencies comprised of the consulting aspect of the profession. The list of PR Officers/Corporate Affairs Managers/Liaison Officers/ PR consultancies and so on has increased tremendously as organizations are increasingly realizing the need for developing and maintaining mutually beneficial relations with their inside and outside environments. Some organizations have suffered greatly for lacking this.

With this promising future of this profession, there are challenges the industry has been facing and it is only prudent that they are looked at in detail and recommendations sought with the aim of ensuring that this practice completely utilizes its potential without any set backs. These challenges shall be given a detailed outlook later on in this paper.

1.5 Importance of Public Relations

Public relations research indicates that many public relations professionals continue to be involved in helping people answer the questions. "How should I say it?" Usually, it is publicity tasks – writing, editing, etc – that are performed by what the literature refers to as "communication technicians." Of equal importance are "communication managers" who function as decision – makers, problem solvers and communication facilitators.

At the highest level of the public relations profession “communication executives” counsel CEOs and other executives regarding potential public opinion and relations consequences of corporate decision – making activity.

Communication technicians usually practice one – way communication but communication managers and communication executives usually are involved in two – way communication pressing at least some feedback, often considerable dialogue, from the audiences being communicated within its infancy, public relations scholarship was more likely to be based upon performance theory , as in the early editions of the American writing textbook of Cutlip and Centre where we were introduced to the four – step process – research , planning , action and evaluation . However, the field has evolved into a management discipline based upon social – psychotically theories of knowledge and action.

The role of Public relations as a management function is to help companies cultivate strong, positive relationships with their most important publics (Seitel, 1987). Public relations helps maintain and establish mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics. PR also enables management to be informed of any problems, public opinion or issues. Public relations define and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest.

Public relations also helps the management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change; serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Grunig,2001).

The functions of public relations can, therefore, be seen from the perspective of organizational counseling, reputation building, media relations, social responsibility and information processing. The following are some specific functions of public relations in organizations:

- (i) Participate actively in generating ideas, formulating policies, programs execution, program evaluation and impact studies. Advising the management on public relations implications of its policies and the effects of its products/services internally and externally
- (ii) Informing the publics about an organization's aims, objectives, philosophy, policies and goals as well as the products and services rendered in order that the understanding and cooperation of their various publics might be secured
- (iii) Spearheading feeling public opinion about an organization's products or services amongst its publics
- (iv) Helping staff within various departments with matters pertaining dealing with the publics
- (v) Organizing in-house talks, roundtable discussions, etc between staff and management thereby encouraging communication in organizations
- (vi) Publishing newsletters, bulletins, annual reports, spot publication on achievements, conference proceedings and other designated publications that would positively project image of the organization
- (vii) Arrange press conferences, events coverage, open days, press monitoring, press relations, press monitoring and facility visits for the media
- (viii) Advise the organization on viable and socially relevant projects to be embarked on the corporate social responsibility campaign
- (ix) Clear all publications, news stories and information concerning particular departments before sending them to the press
- (x) Maintain an information bank on every aspect of the organization's operation that should be adequately stored and retrieved within the shortest time possible when needed

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 The Study Problem

In Kenya, the growth of Public Relations has been gradual. Many organizations are increasingly appreciating the need for Public Relations and are therefore setting up PR units. To manage them they either employ PR practitioners or outsource PR, meaning that they get consultants to handle their PR needs.

With this growth have risen challenges in the industry. Inadequate recognition by organization's top management of PR being a management function, the increase of quacks posing as PR practitioners, unfair competition, the world becoming a global village, lack of adequate education for the practitioners, lack of a Public Relations bill in parliament to govern the profession are just but a few examples of what the industry is facing.

The future of proactive Public Relations lies in the industry's ability to counter these challenges for the benefit of the industry. Otherwise all there will be is the same old "fire fighting" / reactive Public relations as opposed to the needed proactive Public relations. In Public relations, people present, represent and interpret facts in a particular way with a view to achieving a given objective. This art of influencing, seducing and convincing has been practiced throughout history.

At individual level, men and women have always sought to protect their self-interest, trying to gain love, win support, acquire power or make profit. National states, governments, organizations, corporations, interest groups have done the same. Religion, politics and commerce always depended on the acceptance and the goodwill of their specific target groups. Even churches are coming up with ways of ensuring that they have solid relationships with their congregations.

A perfect example is Jesus is Alive Ministries that run a zero percent interest Sacco that serves the interests of its congregation. There is no child who will miss to go to school due to lack of school fees in that congregation. Once the parents are lent money for such obligations, they

are shown ways they can generate revenue to pay back the lent money. Further more, the church runs a fleet of buses that provides free transport to church on Sundays and subsidized fares to members of the congregation. Who would not be a member of that church?

There is no doubt Public Relations has an admirable future in Kenya owed to the fact that there are diverse areas in need of PR. These include: health, government, military, corporate, non governmental organizations, churches, institutions, conferences, and the list is endless. An organization like the Public Relations Society of Kenya which is the industry's professional body is lobbying day and night to ensure that the PR bill is passed in parliament. This will ensure that it will have a better and stronger say in many ways in protecting the interests of the members in matters pertaining to their profession.

2.2 Statement of the Problem

This study intends to critically assess the practice and state of Public relations in Kenya, its challenges and come up with recommendations that can be used to restore Public relations practice to its right place. The future of proactive Public relations lies in the industry's ability to deal with the challenges they are facing now.

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There is a problem with the way Public relations is currently positioned in organizations in Kenya today. There is also some level of confusion of what Public Relations is and its role in organizational management. One of the identity challenges facing Public relations is in regard to how it defines its relationship with marketing (Heath, 2001). In Kenya, quite a number of organizations position Public relations as a sub department of marketing and or advertising. As a matter of fact, many PR practitioners are regarded as technicians rather than managers in planning and decision making levels

A Counselor's Academy survey (2005) showed that Public relations is still an undefined black hole to many businesses. In other words, many organizations that have PR departments in Kenya are misusing the function by making it an extension of other departments or filling PR's top management with managers from other fields.

There are still other challenges in the industry like quacks masquerading as PR practitioners and actually carrying out PR tasks like events management. There is such a flooded industry of quack event managers that it makes events management as a business prospect loose meaning. According to Heath 2001, events management is a tactical function.

So it needs someone who understands that fact. It is highly unlikely for a quack to implement this function bearing this fact in mind. So the effect becomes an event organized with a high likelihood of not having achieved its objectives.

Whether PR practitioners play a major role in the guidance of organizations depends on the extent to which they are involved in organizational strategic planning. If practitioners are not in planning sessions, then they typically serve more of technician roles. They often find themselves in more reactive proactive stances in regard to what they can do to assist their organizations to be successful (Heath, 2001).

This is because as earlier noted; the role of PR is still misunderstood. The practitioner is seen as someone who reacts when a crisis arises, or there is need to correct some wrong which may tarnish the image of the organization. There is need for the practitioners to correct such misconceptions which may be a reason why the departments are kept at bay in management issues.

The central argument in this study is that there is a better way of positioning Public relations in Kenya, both physically and functionally, to make it more relevant in organizational management. The scope of PR extends beyond the traditional functions of press agency. The PR function within an organization should include the broad strategic positioning of an organization within its total environment (Winner, 1987) and in strategic communication planning and management of the organization.

Our contention is that public relations in an organization must retain its own identity while still working closely with other aspects of the organizational system. Public relations is a distinctive management function, which works more effectively when it is in touch with top management and it should be treated as such if organizations are to achieve their set objectives. There is therefore need to reposition PR in corporate organizations if its relevance and full potential is to be realized.

2.3 Objectives of Study

This research intends to:

- Examine the challenges facing the Public relations industry in Kenya
- Analyze how organizations solve major challenges Public Relations in Kenya
- Critically assess how Public Relations concepts are implemented in Kenya

2.4 Justification

There have been debates in the recent years on whether public relations is actually being practiced as it should in Kenya. A number of conferences have been held to discuss the same. Are professionals satisfied with the way PR in Kenya is being treated? The issue of policy and PR has been largely mentioned. There seems to be more in theory than in practice.

As stated in the limitations, there is little that has been written on the state of PR practice in Kenya in comparison to other African countries like Nigeria and South Africa. There are few institutions that train in PR autonomously like Daystar University (degree and masters level), Kenyatta University (diploma level), bringing out the need for more and intense training in PR. The trained practitioners are few compared to the opportunities and off course this being Kenya, a lot of people are in careers they did not train for so it is very common to find someone not trained in PR occupying a key PR office.

It is high time; organizations in Kenya realize that the world has become a global village. I will later mention how the fact that the G8 countries have provided funds in Africa towards

attaining the vision 2030 initiative requires Africa's image managers to play the role of accounting for these funds. The donor communities expect uttermost accountability and transparency of how these funds are being implemented. Companies and other organizations are in the spotlight of public jurisdiction.

Employees, shareholders, community and other stakeholders have their varying reasonable and unreasonable expectations of their organization. In a country where PR is largely treated as an extension of other organizational departments, this study will attempt to show that PR is an invaluable autonomous management function that an organization can no longer overlook or take for granted.

As PR is being accepted as an integral aspect of organizational operations in other parts of the world and has continued to grow in the 21st century, Kenya needs to speed up its transition to make organizations realize and appreciate its worth in their success. This research, which seeks to re-position PR to be a key management function, will contribute in the advancement of PR in Kenya. Many researchers have however observed that practitioners should understand their own roles, not simply in terms of managerial/ technical levels or organizational position but also in a much broader context in terms of the power of the occupational role in the society.

This study proposes that PR practitioners should challenge their status quo in the organization to help the organization move on positively and progressively as it re-asserts its relevance in the success or failure of the organization. The study foregrounds the usefulness of Public relations in achieving an organization's objectives. Ideally, almost every organization has a PR department. When we watch television, we watch documentaries of how company products and companies/organizations co-exist with the community under the corporate social responsibility principle.

Students of communication studies can use this research as a source of reference material in their studies. Public relations practitioners can also benefit from this research in their bid to understand this issue more and come up with proactive ways of administering their skills.

This information can also be a source of reference in libraries on issues related to communication, liaison, public relations and the use of a variety of media channels. Decision makers can also benefit from this information in their bid to understand the cause for, effects and impacts of PR campaigns on behavior and attitude change. This study can also be used as a gauge for benchmarking Public Relations in Kenya. In other words, information attained from this study can be utilized by the industry in their various operations.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Theorizing communication is very common human activity, and the study of communication has a long distinguished history. Noted Stanford University professor Steven H Chafee has said people will not live effective lives if they do not “formulate, and act upon general suppositions about why people say what they say, or how what they say affects other people.” Theory organizes and refines our ideas. One cannot effectively conduct research without some understanding of theory, and good theory development requires verification through additional research.

For more than twenty – five centuries, some of these theories have played an important role in human knowledge. Along the way, interpretation of these theories has taken many paths and split in many directions, but the major goal always has been to understand the process by which humans begin to share ideas and influence each other.

The study of and theories related to, how organizations interface with their internal and external environments span several scholarly domains. In the process, we find a variety of models and theories all tied together by the commonness and importance of communication. These theories and models include, but are not limited to, systems theory, boundary – spanning, issues management, gender research, socio – political theories, organizational effectiveness, stakeholder relationships, balance theory, social judgment, and theories about strategic management.

With greater appreciation and more knowledge about the intellectual base of public relations, we will be able to move the field forward as a strategic, two – way, senior – level, corporate communications function that is absolutely necessary for any organization’s survival. However,

if this progress does not take place, public relations become nothing much more than one – way publicity or press gentry.

Simply knowing and understanding intellectual aspects of public relations theory might not be enough. The effective and strategic public relations professionals in the future will be those who are able to interpret theoretical perspectives in ways that yield dynamic real – world, practical success stories. The theories are hereby listed in detail. Their applicability in Kenyan Public Relations will also be examined.

1. Communication theory

Most communication research and much of the theory development in public relations have evolved out of the study of ancient rhetoric. Rhetoric was the major focus of communication study throughout most of the world until the 19th Century. Within the past century a new breed of communications scholars has developed. They have sought to discover what effect the message has on the audience and the method used by the speaker. While most of the early rhetoricians focused their research on analysis of a speaker’s intent, oration and environment, much of the research conducted in the past fifty years has been receiver-oriented rather than speaker-oriented.

Studies about theories considered important to public relations effectiveness today date back thousands of years. Communication, as a subject of inquiry, probably is as old as civilization itself. The ancient Greeks and Romans were noted for studying rhetoric and its impact. Communication effectiveness in those days was grounded in a high degree of oral skills and most of the communication theories developed then focused on techniques for influencing others. Throughout most of the Greek empire, citizens were not allowed to hire lawyers to argue for them. Consequently, they had to develop public speaking skills to plead their case before the several hundred jurors called upon to judge them.

Aristotle generally is considered the foremost theorist in the history of the study of communication from a rhetorical perspective. His work *Rhetoric*, written about 330 BC, is considered by many to be the most influential work on the topic and consists mainly about concerns for the speaker, the audience, and the speech itself. To Aristotle, the means of persuasion were primarily *ethos* (the nature of the source), *pathos* (the emotions of the audience), and *logos* (the nature of the message presented by the source).

The application of this theory in Kenya is mostly found in campaigns that seek to promote behavior change. The messages are usually intended to instill fear, reality of possibility of harm, anxiety, etc or whichever emotions can dissuade audiences from adapting to a lifestyle that is seen as likely to harm them e.g. cigarette smoking as likely to cause tuberculosis, lung cancer and in the long run death, lack of use of safety belts while in vehicles likely to cause injuries when accidents happen, immoral lifestyle likely to increase the chances of contracting HIV/AIDS. Examples of such campaigns are those run by Nacada (anti drugs, cigarettes and alcohol) and National AIDS Control Council.

2. Social-scientific communication theory

This study of classical rhetoric gave way to what is called modern rhetoric that opened the door for the development and study of social-scientific theory. A number of contemporary trends that went on to change communications in general and public relations in particular grew out of this period including Social-psychological theories, especially those designed to study the attitude change process. These theories application would still apply as in the previously mentioned theory in Kenyan Public Relations the only difference being that it is more advanced to include research.

3. Carl Hovland's work at Yale University that attempted to understand variables affecting persuasion. He came up with the **Yale Attitude Change Model** that shows how a persuasive message can generate several different responses. After a message has been delivered,

receivers might experience changes in their perceptions, emotions, or behaviors. They may also change their opinions and attitudes

4. **Claude Shannon's development of Information Theory** that divided study of the communication process into source, encoder, message, channel, decoder and destination.

5. **Kurt Lewin's work on Group Dynamics** that has been extremely effective in the development of Alcoholics Anonymous and a number of significant fund – raising campaigns. Through this research we have come to understand that groups frequently serve to anchor attitudes and make them hard to change. Knowledge of the groups people belong to or identify with often can help us predict a person's behavior.

In Kenyan Public Relations, this theory has been largely applicable in political campaigns mostly during presidential and parliamentary elections. Voting patterns have been largely influenced by opinion leaders who ideally have immense control over masses. Ideally campaigns that involve persuasion have been known to involve opinion leaders so that they can influence masses towards adopting a proposed school of thought.

6. **Harold Lasswell** worked on identifying the various elements of the communication process and his deliberations about the role of communication in society. This research has led to many studies regarding the nature of audiences, the nature of communication experiences, and the nature of the communicator.

7. **Charles Osgood's** research on the measurement of meaning stressed the psycholinguistic and social natures of the communication process and noted that "senders" and "receivers" both play important roles in communication

8. **Abraham Maslow's** studies that led to development of his "Hierarchy of Needs," identified human needs at five levels: physiological, safety, social, ego and self – actualization.

9. **Leon Festinger's** work on dissonance theory assumes a need for consistent knowledge. This theory, like all consistency models, is based on the notion that phenomena are ordered (or consistent) and can be predicted. These theories are important to public relations because they provide ways to predict the effect or future outcomes of communication messages.

10. **Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld** in the area of personal influence research introduced the concept of opinion leaders, and the suggestion that communication involves more than one step as messages go from senders to receivers. In the mid – 1940s , through research conducted by Katz and Lazarsfeld , communication scholars discovered personal influence has the potential to be more frequent , more effective , and have a greater impact on an individual's decision making than any of the mass media .

This theory suggests that in the decision – making process, different media play different roles. Some media inform about or announce the existence of something, while others legislate or make acceptable a given course of action. It also claims opinion leaders play an extremely significant role in information dissemination. One part of personal influence theory is two – step flow theory that suggests ideas move from the sender, through the mass media, to opinion leaders, and from there along to the mass audience. The application of this theory has been mentioned earlier on. However it is worthwhile mentioning that information involving personal influence applies during persuasion exercises.

11. **Elizabeth Noell – Neumann's** development of the **Spiral of Silence Model** explicitly links the mass communication and interpersonal communication, processes. Mass communication is seen as forging opinion climates, which in turn influence human willingness to engage in interpersonal communication about some topic. The application this model would have in Kenyan PR is the media's agenda setting role whereby ideally the media influences people's thought patterns by giving them information to ponder over and decide on which action to take on that regard. This model and the one following after are sort of similar.

12. And, the work of a number of scholars – most notably **Donald Shaw and Max McCombs** – on the topic of **agenda setting**, a theory suggesting that news media content has an influence on the public perception of important issues. This theory claims that the mass media do not decide for people what to think but catalyze what people are to think about.

13. Diffusion of innovations

The “two – step flow” model has evolved into a “multi step flow” model in diffusion research, the study of the social process of how innovations – new ideas, practices, etc. – become known and are spread throughout a social system. The two – step flow model is concerned with how people receive information and share it with others; the diffusion process concentrates on the final stage of the adoption or rejection of an innovation.

- The best know scholar in diffusion research is **Everett Rogers** who has categorized the components of an innovation that affect their rate of adoption as follows:

Relative advantage: the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes.

Compatibility: the degree to which an innovation is perceived as it begins consistency with the existing values, past experienced and needs of potential adopters.

Complexity: The degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use.

Trainability: the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis.

Operability: the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others.

Roger’s research also suggests that innovations that are perceived by receivers as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, friability, operability, and less complexity will be adopted more rapidly than other innovations.

Additionally, Rogers says the innovation decision process is a mental process that consists of these five stages: knowledge; persuasion; decision; implementation, and confirmation.

A perfect example of this theory's application to Kenyan PR is the current Zain's 'Vuka' Campaign that is persuading none 'Zain' mobile telephony users to migrate from their networks to Zain's new and affordable tariff. The 'Vuka' campaign is gradually diffusing into peoples' minds and they are as well gradually migrating to 'Vuka' tariff.

Other Communication and Social Psychological theories

14. Stimulus – Response Theory: Based on research showing that learning can take place through association and repetition. It suggests that people can control their responses and that we can anticipate the outcome of certain responses. Repetition is usually to lay an emphasis on the message. It gets absorbed in peoples' minds with emphasis.

15. Selective Attention Theory: Claims that people are attracted to the parts of a message that agree with their existing attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or behaviors, and will not pay attention to the parts of a message that are contrary to these views. And that is why designers of campaigns have learnt to apply the right language and package their information in a manner that the audience may not reject the message on the grounds of the above mentioned reasons.

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16. Social Learning Theory: Suggests that people are neither driven by inner forces nor conquered by environmental stimuli. Instead, psychological functioning is explained in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction of personal and environmental determinants.

17. Cognitive Consistency Theory: Says that people try to organize their world in ways, which appear meaningful and sensible. Offers suggestions regarding how individuals deal with discrepant or inconsistent information, which sometimes is presented with the purpose of bringing about attitude change.

18. Inference Theory: Applies to situations where we observe a choice. When we see someone making a choice we are likely to see this information to make attributions. For example, if you

know someone gave money to a charity rather than spending a night on the town, we might decide the person's internal motive is concern for others

19. Uses and Gratification Theory: Examines how people use the mass media and the rewards they receive through this use. This research has provided several ways of classifying audience needs and gratifications. For example, some gratifications are "immediate" while others are "deferred." Also looks at the needs media provide to people - cognitive needs, personal needs, social integrative needs, tension release needs, and act.

20. Congruity Theory: Deals specifically with attitudes people hold toward sources of information and the objects of the source's assertions. This theory makes predictions about the direction and the degree of attitude change.

21. Source – Credibility Theory: Suggests that the credibility of a source can have considerable impact on bringing about attitude, opinion and behavior change.

22. Inculcation Theory: Provides a balance to many other theories dealing with attitude change. Deals with making people resistant to persuasive communication messages.

23. Public relations theory: A careful review of public relations text books and academic journals indicates that public relations still looks to other related disciplines for its theory base. These disciplines include communication studies, mass communication, psychology, sociology, and to some extent business, commerce, economics and management studies.

However, within the past two decades we have witnessed the development of a number of theories exclusive to the field of public relations. The largest number of these has been development by James Grunig of the University of Maryland. His three best known contributions to the science of public relations probably are **Situational Theory**, the **Four Models** via which Grunig claims public relations is practiced, and **Excellence Theory**.

24. Situational theory was developed by Grunig in an attempt to identify publics arising around what he calls situational issues. Grunig argues most communications research concerns markets for products rather than public themselves. Situational theory suggests publics create themselves when people organize to deal with an organization's consequences on them. And, Grunig points out these publics become optimal targets for communication campaigns. In this situational model, Grunig has identified four specific kinds of publics:

- **All –Issue Publics:** Publics that are active on all of these issues.
- **Apathetic Publics:** Publics inattentive to all of the issues.
- **Single – Issue Publics:** Publics active on one or a small subset of the issues that concerns only a small part of the population. (Example; controversy over sale of infant formula in third – world countries).
- **Hot – issue Publics:** Publics active only on a single issue that involves nearly everyone in the population and has received extensive media coverage. (Examples: gasoline shortages, drunken driving, toxic waste disposal).

25. Grunig's four models of public relations were developed in concert with Todd Hunt of Rutgers University and reflect the changes in the public relations business as many corporations have moved from communication strategies based on one – way communication and have become more open and receptive to two – way communication.

Of course , Grunig's work on viewing public relations as interactive and two – way communication echoed the earlier work of Edward Bernays who , in his famous book *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, suggested that effective public relations needed to be two sided with a company's objectives and goals always predicated on a coincidence of public and private interest.

The Grunig – Hunt four models of public relations are:

- **Publicity or press agent**

Public Information

Two – Way Asymmetrical Communication

Two- Way Symmetrical Communication

The first two models – press agent and public information – are one – way models of public relations and describe communication programs that are not based on research and strategic planning. Two – way asymmetrical communication represent a more sophisticated approach that uses research to develop messages that are most likely to persuade strategic publics to behave as the organization wants.

Grunig's research suggests the most effective manner of public relations is practiced through what he calls the two – way symmetrical model. Public relations here is based upon the strategic use of research and uses communication to manage conflict and improve understanding with strategic publics. In language, the two – way symmetrical model says it is better to speak and listen than to speak only. And, it is better to negotiate with publics than to try and force change upon them.

26. Grunig's Excellence Theory grew out of a multi – year research study directed by Professor Grunig and funded by the International Association of Business Communicators. This work combines findings and recommendations plus the theoretical contributions of Grunig and several other scholars into a theory that provided guidelines suggesting how organizations can participate in "excellent" public relations by building long – term relationships with strategic publics .

27. Grunig and Todd Hunt also have introduced **Domino Model of Public Relations Effects**. This model implies strong causal linkage between public relations messages and knowledge attitudes and behavior. According to this model, public relations messages can create knowledge – level change. This, in turn, can lead to attitude and behavior, or opinion, change. Grunig and Hunt carefully selected the domino metaphor to describe this model. They say it is

important that time gaps between each component of the model – the message, knowledge, attitude and behavior – not be too far apart.

While most public relations scholars today acknowledge Grunig in developing exclusive theories for public relations, the many contributions of Glen Broom and David Dozier also merit close attention. In particular, Broom and Dozier are noted for studying various levels of implementation and impact criteria for public relations programs, developing a “Co orientation Model” that examines goals and impact of communication programs between organizations and public relations.

When examining how public relations campaign ideas are disseminated, Brown and Dozier conceptualized ten different levels where they potential impact of communication could be measured. These range from counting the number of messages sent or activities executed (lower level dissemination criteria) to impact as complex as social and cultural change (higher level impact criteria). The higher the criterion level, the more difficult Broom and Dozier say it is for that criterion to be achieved.

28. Broom and Dozier’s **coorientation model** suggests different types of relationships, or co orientation states, exist between organizations and their publics. The first of these represents differences in the level of agreement between how an organization and its publics both view a common issue. The other co orientations states are concerned with accuracy and perceived agreement are worthwhile objectives for public relations programs.

Public relations role research began with the conceptualization of these four roles Public relations questions. Public relations play a major role in helping an organization’s management decide what to do. This role leads to passive management involvement.

Communication Facilitator: A “go – between” facilitating communication between management and publics. Public relations practitioners are interpreters and communication links.

Problem – Solving Process Facilitator: Practitioners help management systematically think through public relations and corporate communications problems to solutions. The public relations function works closely with management to solve problems in a step – by – step manner.

All these theories are applicable and utilized in the Kenyan Public relations practice.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Research Methodology

The selection of the sample was purposeful, based on the typology of the organization. These organizations were clustered into categories of corporate, non profit making, government, parastatals, finance, institutions and public relations consultancies.

Data was collected through distributing questionnaires and conducting in depth interviews from PR practitioners working in PR consultancies and PR practitioners working in organizations. The in depth interviewees were key knowledgeable practitioners in the PR fraternity. Data was also collected from resource materials.

The questionnaires were (1) fact-quiz questions such as those found on a multichoice test, where the subjects select the correct answers from a list of alternatives and (2) opinion items, either in a multiple choice style or expressing varying opinions. Some of the opinion items were highly related to the factual information and were quite specific. Other items dealt with broader and more general issues less tied to the facts. The questionnaires also included several history items like education, age and so on those were used to draw comparisons and contrasts in the population.

The first section of questionnaires was aimed at getting the practitioner's individual perspective of issues regarding the profession. The second section was targeting the organizational aspect of the profession. The interviews were to get a deeper understanding of these issues through probing some key industry experts. The evaluation made use of procedures like sampling, pretesting and measurement. For the comparative analysis between Kenyan PR practice and the West which was represented by the United States of America, the research made use of secondary data. This was data derived from books, internet, electronic media and so on.

4.2 Description of the Population

The sample population comprised of fifty professionals from the above mentioned sectors of the industry. However the sample size reduced owed to the fact that a number of those questionnaires were spoilt. Despite this fact, this research was able to fetch very resourceful information because of the detailed format the questionnaires and interview schedules were drafted.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

This entailed collecting qualitative and quantitative data. Data was collected using survey method, key informant interviews and document reviews. For the experimental group, a questionnaire addressing the specific objectives, research questions and hypothesis of the study was administered to all the targeted population.

It integrated, open ended and close ended questions with a variety of alternative answers for the individuals to make choices. Structured open ended questionnaires, where the respondent was free to write responses in his/her own words, with space provided indicating the answers were fully used. This was backed by contingency or follow up and some matrix questions to simplify the respondent task.

The questionnaires were pre-tested for modification before final activity. An interview guide with both unstructured and structured questions was also used following an interview schedule with an already identified team of practitioners in the organizations. The recording facilities were used to help collect an unconscious selection of data, which allowed for play backs while analyzing the data.

Other means of collecting data were obtained through observation during the document analysis process. The second means of collecting data, the in depth interview was aimed at selected knowledgeable practitioners of the fraternity.

4.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study was carried out between July and November 2008. The limitations faced in undertaking it were due to:

- Time constraint due to the location of relevant material and subsequent analysis
- Limited research resources in form of literature on Public Relations practice in Kenya
- Budgetary constraint.

CHAPTER FIVE

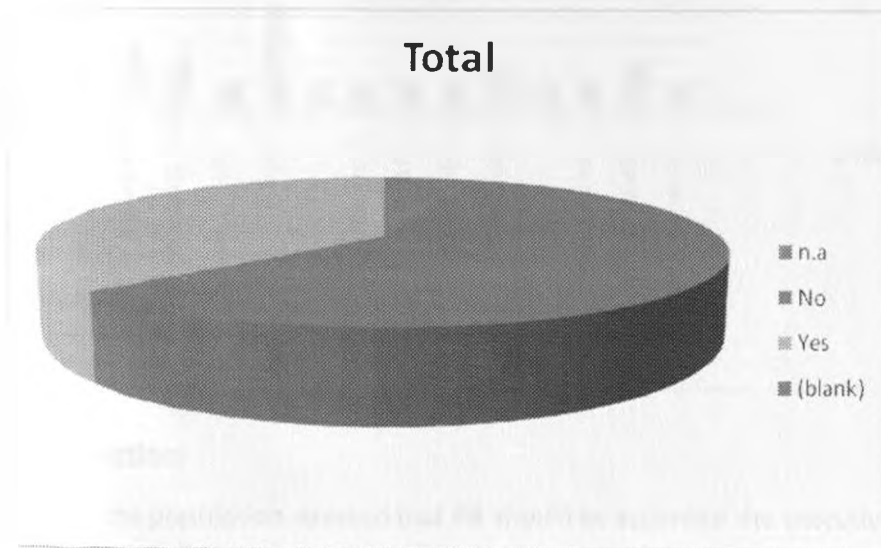
I. Findings: Kenyan PR Practice Survey

5.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter contains data obtained from this research entitled "Public Relations- A critical Study of the Kenyan practice". 29% of the population was from the Finance sector, incorporating banks and investment vehicles. Educational institutions comprised of 4%, Public Relations consultancies comprised of 20% of the population, parastatals comprised of 8% of the population, Small enterprises comprised of 8%, print media firms 8%, electronic media firms 8% and corporate organizations comprised of 16% of the population.

1. Recognition of PR Profession as a Top management function

a) Do PR Practitioners directly report to the CEO?

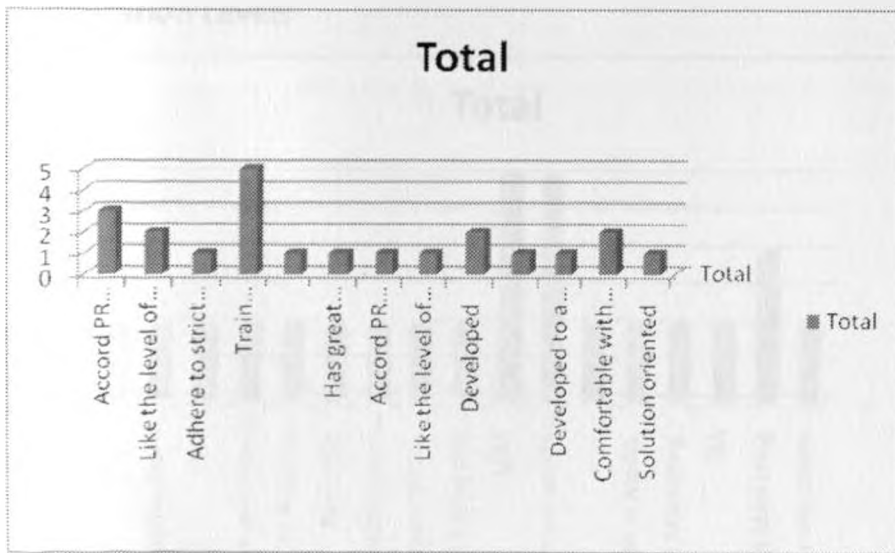


Observation

Regarding reporting directly to the CEO, 58% of the practitioners interviewed said that they did not report to the CEO directly. Many of them report to operation managers, corporate affairs directors, line managers, marketing managers and so on. 37% of the practitioners reported directly to the CEO. They were mostly from small to medium sized Organizations. Out of the remaining 5%, there were those who reported to the CEO when they needed to consult on special projects. The rest did not answer the question. This indicates that there is dire need for PR to gain recognition and respect from top management.

b) Opinions regarding the state of PR in Kenya

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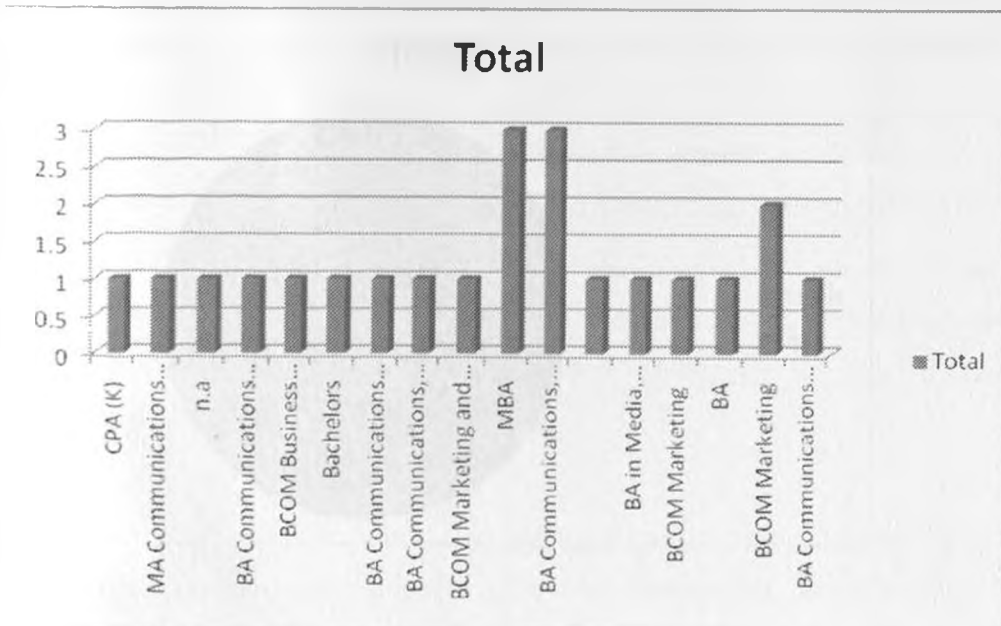
Observation

20% of the population stressed that PR should be accorded the executive privilege of being in top management. They admitted that PR was not getting executive privilege of sitting with top management and influencing their decisions. When interviewed on this issue, 25% of the interviewees strongly believed that this fact is owed PR practitioners not having empowered

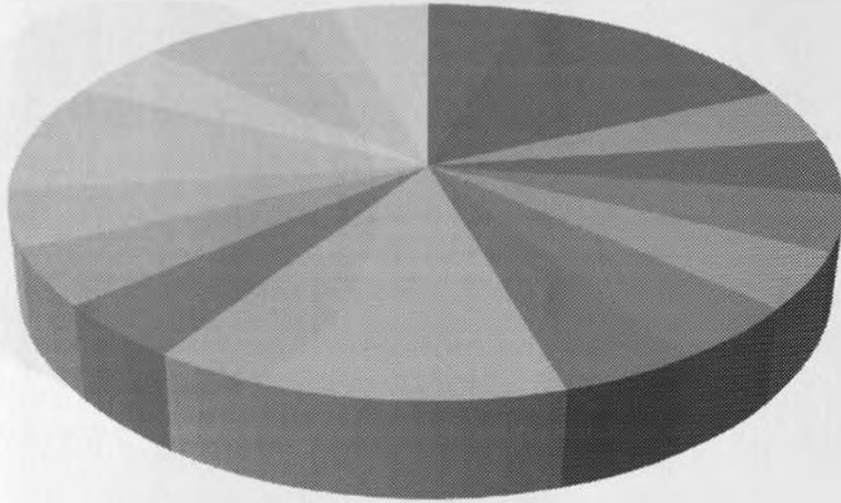
themselves to sit in such executive positions like other professions do like engineers, architects and so on. 14% of the population said that they would like PR to be in the level of South Africa and America. 23% of the population stressed the need for training practitioners in both the individual and corporate levels. 30% of the population said that they were satisfied with the developing trend of the profession. 5% of the population said that they would like to see PR developed to a level of importance like finance. 5% were more concerned with issues of ethics which they felt needed to be adhered to more. The remaining 3% said that they wanted to see PR being solution oriented and giving their clients value for their money.

Ideally, PR practitioners are not allowed to play a major role in organizational strategic planning. Most of them serve technician roles and find themselves in more reactive than proactive roles.

2. Education Levels

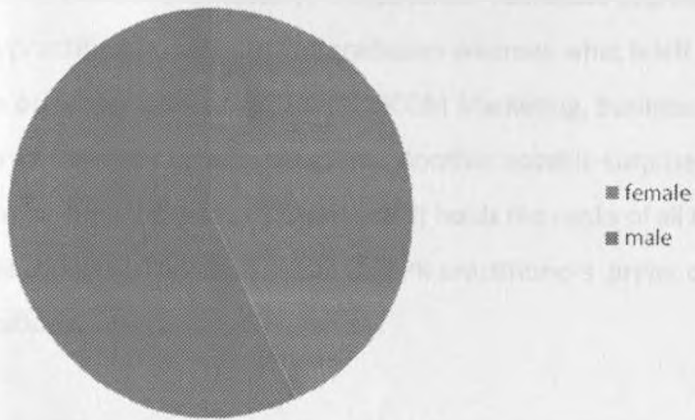


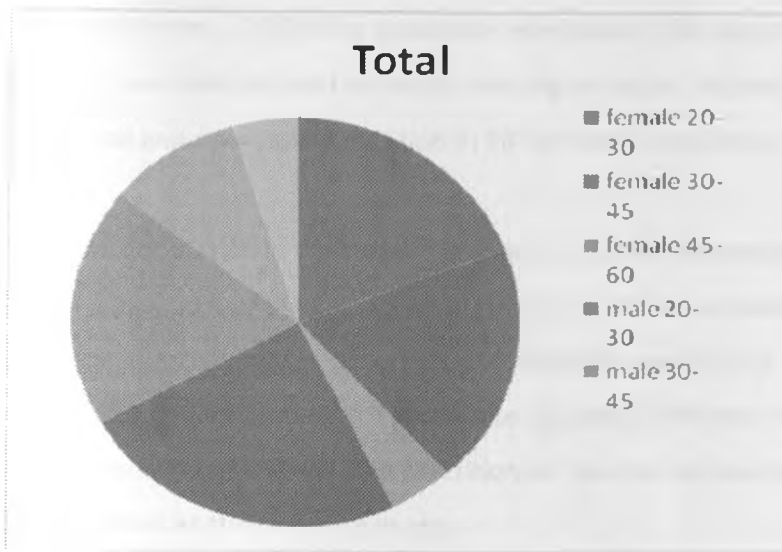
Count of elaborate educ. Level



3.Age and Sex Ratios in the Industry

Total





Observations

29% of the PR practitioners' population had Bachelors Degrees in Communications. Another 14% of the population had Masters in Business Administration (MBA) degrees or were pursuing. BCom Marketing follows with a 14% share in the industry. Unspecified "Bachelors degrees a 10% score. 5% of this population has practitioners who are not graduates whereas what is left (28%) is comprised of graduates from other disciplines like CPA (K), BCOM Marketing, Business Administration and Human Resources who all share in the remaining 20%. Another notable surprise is that MA Communications doesn't seem to be among the top as expected. It holds the ranks of all the other foreign disciplines encroaching this industry. This could mean that PR practitioners prefer other alternative courses to MA Communications.

Some of these non PR professionals in these disciplines are in top management positions in Public relations. Some junior employees have clearly mentioned that this usually affects their performance most of who now end up becoming PR technicians. Looking at it in the long run, it ends up costing the organization unnecessary expenses because in many cases such bosses will outsource for PR services because they have to maintain an image of "knowing PR" among their juniors who in many cases are more skilled than them. Of uttermost importance is the dire need for on the job training of

these practitioners. 90% of the population emphasized the need for the professional body organizing for individual and corporate training for them. Indeed, there were wide variations in professional and vocational education in PR and communications.

57% of the population in the industry comprises of men. Women take up the remaining 43%. Regarding age, 24% of the population is comprised of men between ages 20 and 30. 19% of the population is between ages 30 and 45, 10% between ages 35 and 50. Ages 45-60 take up the remaining 5%. As for women, 19% comprises of ages 20-30 and 30-45 making 38%. The remaining 5% comprises of ages 45-60. The practitioners seem to be taking up more managerial responsibilities as they advance in age.

4.Obstacles faced by PR Practitioners while in their line of duty

Observation

Many practitioners claimed that majority of clients in the industry does not appreciate nor completely understand the importance of Public relations in their organizations. However the importance of PR is gradually being appreciated and the role of public relations in the scheme of things. They reiterated that many clients mistake PR for media practice and advertising. In the government related organizations, 50% of this population lacked motivation for work owing to the bureaucracy and protocol that usually slows down implementation of strategies.

Another obstacle worth noting is the limitation in budgetary allocations in the PR department. Almost all the practitioners from all sectors were quick to bring this issue up. They claimed it hampered efficient implementation of strategies. Some of the practitioners were quick to conclude that this was probably because the top management undermined potential and importance of the department in comparison to others departments. One respondent in the interviews schedule insisted that the PR practitioners mostly never justify their contribution in the bottom line and that is why the top management does not take them seriously.

Another obstacle brought up by practitioners was on conflicting priorities between PR practitioners and journalists who were supposed to write articles for them on behalf of their clients. Apparently, according to journalists, some of these articles lacked objectivity so were not worth being published. According to the practitioner, publishing them was of immense importance because their clients have paid for this and they are therefore obliged to give their clients value for their money.

Another rather interesting obstacle the practitioners admitted to be facing was their obligation to defend the image of an organization that had a totally tarnished image. In many cases they were forced to earn their living out of lies because they had to portray an image that is not there. This gives room for deception and affects the practitioners' conscience. It also portrays an obvious lack of adherence to ethics which should be ideally adhered to by the industry and its players.

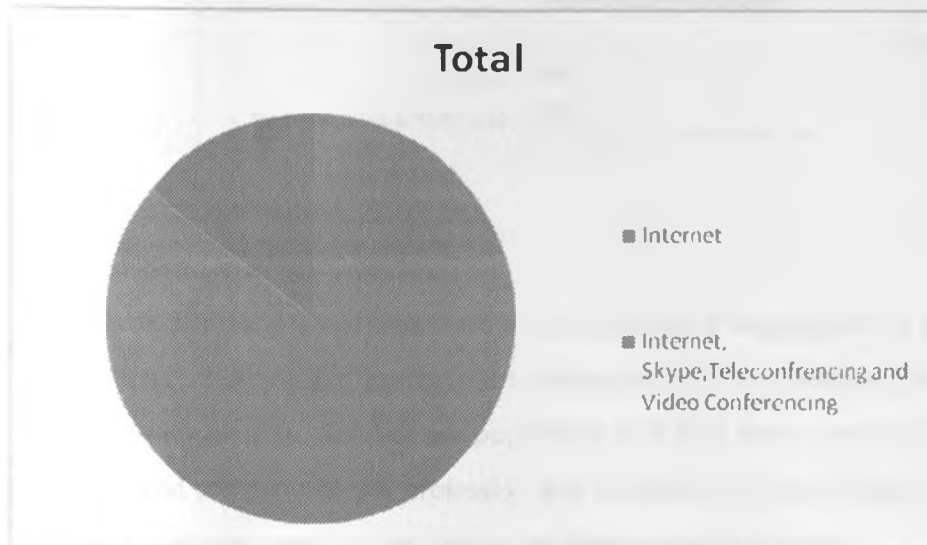
Apparently, this is a common occurrence that no one wants to address or change. It shaming to Manage public relations on a foundation of deception and yet PR is about transparency even though the company involved may not be favorable among its publics. Lack of support from fellow team players was an obstacle mentioned by a number of the practitioners. One practitioner who works for a non governmental organization was quick to mention how difficult it is for her to draft news letters because the program managers never give her information about the programs they are involved in, which really slows her work down.

Although not common from many respondents, some practitioners complained about the issue of unstructured salary scales in their areas of employment. They claimed that many times junior practitioners or their colleagues earned much more than some senior ones practitioners. This resulted to lack of motivation to perform and rivalries in the work place. Of importance is the issue of unfair competition that 10% of the population was complaining about. They claimed that some practitioners especially from consulting firms were complaining about.

They claimed that the industry has quite a number of quacks who end up winning pitches over them; their competitive edge being undercutting strategy. So they end up giving the client a raw deal as they

are incompetent. A very small percentage of the population was confident that there are now new parameters of evaluating PR. The rest claimed that there were none and that is why PR practitioners failed to justify their contribution when pitching for jobs or negotiating budgets.

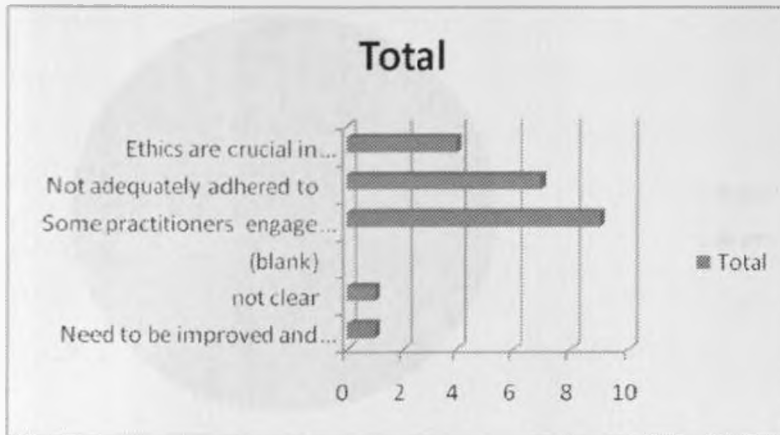
5.Exposure to Technology



Observation

On the use of technology, 85% of the practitioners admitted to using internet as the most advanced technology in their practice. Only 15% used internet, Skype, teleconferencing and video conferencing. What these findings indicate is that the PR practitioner may not be at par with the technological advances which may very well apply to his/her responsibilities at work. This slows down work.

6. Adherence to Ethics



Observation

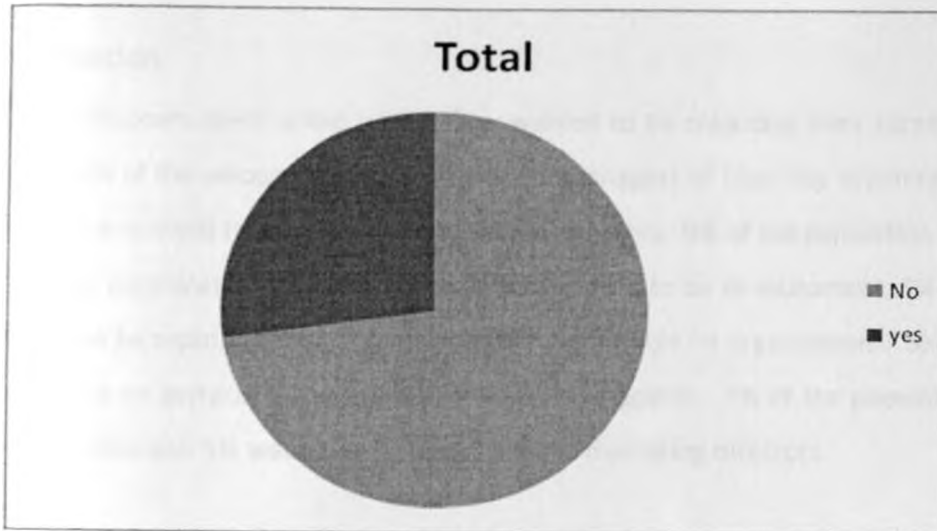
41% of the practitioners said that there are occurrences of engagement in unethical conduct in the industry. 32% of the practitioners reiterated this fact claiming that ethics were not adequately adhered to. 18% of the population said that ethics are crucial in ensuring that credibility and integrity of the profession are maintained. 5% said that ethics needed to be expounded and improved and rest had an indifferent approach to this.

Quite a number of practitioners have been known to have acts of misconduct but unfortunately they get away with these acts. As earlier mentioned, some PR practitioners have an obligation to lie about the organization so as to earn a living. This out rightly demeans the practice of public relations which is supposed to be founded on truth.

About ethics, one of the respondents in the interviews schedule who is also an official in the PR professional body said:

“ PRSK has not been empowered yet to deal with such cases. PRSK has no legal backing to do so nor has the PR Bill been passed in parliament owed to the fact that parliament has a lot of agenda this time round”.

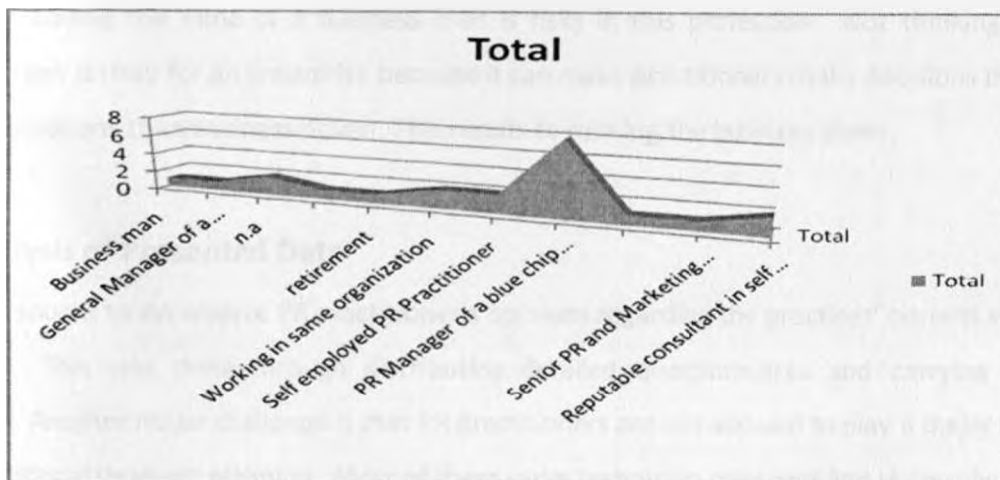
7. Membership in the Professional Body



Observation

Regarding membership in the professional body, the research indicated that only 27% of the PR Practitioners were members. The rest, 73% were members of other bodies like Chartered Institute of Marketing, Marketing Society of Kenya and Association of Kenya Insurers. With such a weak representation, the likelihood of having a strong professional body with strong back up is yet to be desired.

8. How focused are the Practitioners?



Observation

The practitioners were asked where they wanted to be regarding their careers five years from now. 36% of the population wanted to be PR managers of blue chip organizations. 23% of the population wanted to be self employed PR practitioners. 9% of the population wanted to work in the same organization. 5% of the population wanted to be in retirement. 5% of the population wanted to be reputable PR consultants running reputable PR organizations. 5% of the population wanted to be general managers of PR/Advertising agents. 5% of the population wanted to be businessmen and 5% wanted to be senior PR and marketing directors.

According to these statistics, most of the practitioners prefer to be employed than to be self employed. This brings out the fact that there are not many entrepreneurs in this industry as there are in other disciplines like marketing, law, architecture, engineering, accounting and so on. I stand to be corrected but I believe that an entrepreneur for an employee would perform better than someone who does not have such skills. This is because, such a person will treat the enterprise as a business, and actually at the back of his/her mind his/her business; not just a profession.

Coming from this mind set always yields results more than an employee who is seen as only as a tactician. There is always motivation when someone runs an organization as though it is their own. Not having the mind of a business man is risky in this profession. Not thinking like a business man is risky for an enterprise because it can make practitioners make decisions that are more of emotions than business driven. This results to running the business down.

5.2 Analysis of Presented Data

The study sought to do analyze PR practitioner's opinions regarding the practices' current state in Kenya. This was done through distributing detailed questionnaires and carrying out interviews. Another major challenge is that PR practitioners are not allowed to play a major role in organizational strategic planning. Most of them serve technician roles and find themselves in more reactive than proactive roles. They may have to report to the marketing manager.

The PR practice today is also facing competition from other professions. PR is getting competition from management consultants, lawyers, accountants, quack event managers, who are eager to portray PR practitioners as tacticians. With the world having become a global village technological advances are quite sophisticated. Sometimes the PR practitioner may not be at par with the technological advances which may very well apply to his/her responsibilities at work. This slows down work.

Another challenge in this industry is inadequate budgetary allocation for the PR department owed to the fact that top management undermine potential and importance of the department in comparison to others. Encroachment is another challenge inhibiting growth of this industry. This is ideally putting non PR professionals in top management positions in Public relations. This usually affects the performance of the junior employees most of whom now end up becoming PR technicians.

From our interview and research with PR practitioners in Nairobi, we found wide variations in professional and vocational education in PR and communications. In Tanzania for instance, more universities now offer a PR qualification while some other countries offer Mass Communication with the option to specialize in PR option at a certain level of their programs.

The Kenyan Government and some corporations are gradually appreciating the role of public relations in the scheme of things. However there are some that are yet to do so. At best the PR profession is mistaken for media practice, advertising, marketing, sales and any other thing you can think of. Worse still in some minds, especially government, the PR officer is no better than protocol officers who arrange parties for the boss.

As PR cannot yet be measured, or if it can, the parameters are yet to be clear to every practitioner, we are yet to fully inculcate the practice of evaluation as a vital aspect of our services which should be carried out at set intervals or the end of any communications campaign to determine the level of success and effect it had on the stakeholders.

Most global public relations consultancies have yet to show sufficient interest in doing business on the African continent. This is in contrast to what obtains with the advertising networks. While the Republic of South Africa may boast of a number of global affiliations with local consultancies, the same cannot be said of other parts of Africa. Perhaps the case may only be slightly better in Kenya and Nigeria.

Recent reports by the International Communications Consultancies Organization (ICCO) have shown that international assignments will generate new Revenues in 2007. It shows further that almost all the participating countries predicted that the level of fees generated from international projects will increase in 2007; the average predicted increase was a very healthy twenty five percent. This year alone has seen the relaunch and launch of Zain and Orange mobile telephony companies.

When events like these happen, they boost the economy as they contract numerous service providers. In a year where businesses were struggling owed to the post election violence, this was such a boost to the economy. Most practitioners in Africa are more concerned about the professional aspect rather than the business aspect. This mind set has made us take decisions that are more of emotions than business driven. Little wonder that a lot of our consultancies have failed to thrive the way we desire.

PR practitioners usually experience strong resistance from their in-house counterparts who see them as threats to their jobs especially in small and medium scale organizations. This is largely as a result of most Public Relations firms in Africa's reactive approach as against being proactive. According to reports this is also a global issue; the growth of in-house departments has emerged for the first time as check on growth. There is very keen competition for the few 'juicy' public relations accounts that exist. Once taken, there supposedly is not much left for the rest. It is believed that certain geographic region such as Asia (China, Hong Kong, Singapore), Middle East (Dubai) Central and Eastern Europe would become global PR Hubs.

In most markets, the infrastructure to set up a leading public relations practice is lacking or the resources to obtain them are. In effect, this has produced a large number of quack public relations consultants. Some of them would charge too cheap to affect pricing of PR fees in general as their charges would actually cause the client to set pricing standards. Ideally the market has a habit of going with the cheapest bidder despite the fact that this supplier may be bidding to offer cheap services. It is very sad that a number of clients do not look at what the package entails and would give contracts based on relationships with the supplier more than proven ability to deliver services professionally.

More often than not public relations practitioners especially consultants, have failed to position themselves in vantage positions to take full advantage of changes in the economy. Most of the time, they are more reactive than proactive. Public relations has sometimes played a role in leading the opinions and attitudes of the targeted audience in a certain direction by selective information. In the survey, public relations consultants were asked if they ever encountered a case where their client's best interests clashed with the public interest and if so, how they had dealt with it.

Of 20 consultant's, 13 responded that they had experienced such a problem. With regard to how they had dealt with it, many replied that they had put strategies in place to harmonize both interests, made the client change their policy or declined the project. "We explained the ultimate result, asked them if they wanted to be in business in five years time and how they want to be perceived. If necessary, we resign the account."(Australia)

Training in PR still poses some challenges. It is in form of units and taught as units, not full courses. The structure is western oriented as well and many definitions of 'PR' are American or ideally foreign. Public Relations and Media work hand in hand for publicity purposes. Publicity ideally is unpaid for however it has become a norm to "silently" pay journalists to have stories or pictures published in the dailies or run on television or radio.

II. Findings: Kenya Public Relations Practice in comparison to PR Practice in the West- a case of United States of America

This chapter covers detailed comparisons of PR practice in Kenya and in the West. To begin with we shall look at the evolution of Public relations practice in the United States of America. More emphasis will be placed on the U.S.A to represent the West although there will be some mentionings of other European countries.

Public Relations in America is less than 100 years old and ideally much younger than other disciplines. This means that the field is still evolving and its status improving daily. The intellectuals entering today are by and large superior in intellect, training and even experience to their counterparts decades ago.

Looking at the Kenyan scenario, of course PR is much younger and still evolving; with more intellectuals entering the industry. Training in PR is increasing in institutions however most resources are from the west. One also profound truth in the Kenyan industry is the fact that there are "Gurus" who have immense hands on experience and very little if any academic knowledge of public relations.

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Some of them have been in the industry for long and own successful PR firms and are one of the major employers of graduates. Their experience has proven to be very resourceful to their employees and the forums they hold speaking engagements. I would compare them to the old midwives who are known to have vast knowledge and skill in child bearing procedures. This experience they got not from school as most of them never got the opportunity to study but from carrying out these procedures on many expectant women over time.

Seitel P. Fraser in his book "The practice of Public Relations" lists four trends related to the evolution of Public relations in America:

1. The growth of big institutions: He says that big institutions have over time replaced the small shops, local banks, colleges that used to be there. As they have grown larger or been replaced, the PR profession has evolved to interpret them to the publics they serve.
2. The increasing incidence of change, conflict and confrontation in society: This has led to the evolution of rights like human rights, consumerism, down sizing, lay offs and so on which have contributed materially to the need and existence for more and better communications.
3. Thirdly, the awareness of people everywhere to include developments like invention of the printing press, print and electronic media, cable, satellite, video technology, portable cameras, word processors and all the other communications technologies that have helped fragment audiences and create Marshall McLuhan's "global village".
4. Finally and quite important is the outbreak of democracy in Latin America, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and South Africa has heightened the power of public opinion. People who have been oppressed in the past are now winning audiences and being heard. As at now, the United States of America is jubilating over the just elected 44th President Barack Obama. He is the first black president to be elected in the history of the United States of America. In his campaigns he has had to aggressively and successfully persuade white citizens to put down differences like race and look at the bigger picture of developing America.

The American public relations experience dates back to the founding of the republic, influencing public opinion, managing communications and persuading individuals at the highest levels were at the core of the American Revolution. The colonists tried to persuade King George III that they should be accorded the same rights as Englishmen. "Taxation without representation is tyranny!" became their slogan to encourage fellow countrymen to join the campaign.

King George refused to bulge and as a result they resorted to distributing to each other anti-British pamphlets, poems which were aimed at persuading the people to revolt. This communication is attributed to PR practitioners like Thomas Paine and Samuel Adams.

The constitution's creation also owed much to public relations evolution in the United States of America. Federalists who supported the constitution fought hard with the ant federalists who opposed it. This battle was waged in newspaper articles, pamphlets and other organs of persuasion in an attempt to influence public opinion. Political leaders remembered in advocating ratification of the constitution were Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay who banded together under pseudonym "Publius", to writer letters to leading newspapers.

After ratification the constitutional debate continued, particularly over the document's apparent failure to protect individual's liberties against government encroachment. Hailed as the father of the constitution, Madison framed the Bill of Rights in 1791, which ultimately became the first ten amendments to the constitution.

First of those amendments safeguarded among other things the practice of public relations. "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press or of the rights of the people peaceably as to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." That is how freedom of expression came in and ideally that is how the practice of public relations was ratified.

Come 1800 and what took hold was press gentry. Amos Kendall and Phineas T. Barnum are remembered at this stage. The then president of 1829 Andrew Jackson selected Kendall a writer and editor living in Kentucky to perform every Whitehouse PR task. This included writing speeches, state papers, messages, press releases and basic opinion polls. He is also known to have started the administration's own newspaper known as the "Globe". He was successful in his task.

P.T. Barnum on the contrary did not leave a good name in the industry owed to the fact that he used publicity to make money. Allegories like "The public be fooled" are associated with him. Nevertheless, he was a master publicist. He had the wit to draw crowds through his creativity and strategic approach. For instance, as he owned a circus, he gave his star performers short names like "Tom Thumb", the "Midget", so that they could easily fit into the headlines of narrow newspaper columns. He could also orchestrate bizarre and hilarious scenarios (like legally marrying a thin man and a fat woman) to draw free newspaper exposure. Some PR practitioners still practice these techniques.

Moving on, the industrial revolution that was characterized by growth of massive factories, and growth of transport, communications facilities and big businesses. These business moguls included oil magnets like John D. Rockefeller, steel impresarios such as Henry Clay Frick, bankers such as J.P Morgan and railroad owners such as Willian Vanderbilt. These entrepreneurs unfortunately were more concerned with making profits than their fellow citizen's welfare. One apparent case was when Mr. Vanderbilt closed the New York Central Railroad. When questioned about it, he said "The public be damned".

What resulted was immense criticism of these moguls from journalists. Scandalous stories of these firms ran from newspapers to magazines. The government also added legislation on these enterprises limiting their operations. The negative publicity was too much leading to pursuit of ways these businesses would salvage their lost images. They tried advertising which made things even worse. They paid press agents, publicity people and so on to represent the positions of these firms. Often, these hired people painted over the real problems and didn't quite represent their clients' views.

Another method had to be sought to get the public to positively influence public opinion. This opened the curtains for the father of modern public relations "Ivy Lee" to come in to the picture. He was a former Wall Street reporter who plunged into publicity in 1903. He believed in transparency even if it meant admitting that the company had done a mistake. In 1914, John

D. Rockefeller Jr. hired Lee to help change the image that had previously been tainted and give them a positive public hearing.

It was quite a task as he tried to feature this family in real –life situations such as playing golf, attending church and celebrating birthdays. It worked and to date they have been known as one of the nation’s outstanding sources of philanthropic support. As he became famous in salvaging images, he was approached by a German dye company serve as an adviser to the parent company. Unfortunately he got to find out later that this company was an agent of Adolf Hitler’s policies. To the members of congress investigating un-American activities, this portrayed him as a traitor.

However he is still recognized as the individual who brought professionalism, honesty and order to public relations from the questionable pursuit it was before. One very notable issue about PR growth in the U.S.A is the fact that its importance was and is still being recognized in the government. Come 1952, after the 2nd world war PR practitioners’ number really grew during the peace that followed.

This helped improve the image of the then President Harry Truman who had been known to have a combative attitude. There was a union wage dispute that resulted to him announcing that the government would take over the steel plants. This led to a series of PR campaigns – the likes of which had never been seen outside the government.

Other notable PR practitioners include William Wolf Smith, John W. Hill (founder of Hill and Knowlton, Inc., in 1927), Carl Byoir, Earl Newsom, Pendleton Dudley, Harold Burson and Edward Bernays. Other agencies known to have been formed were the “Publicity Bureau” (1900), Burson- Marsteller and Shandwick.

As a matter of fact, in the early 1990s, the consultancy business saw the emergence of international super agencies. Hill and Knowlton, Burson-Marsteller and Shandwick all boasted

worldwide networks with thousands of employees linked to serve clients with communications services throughout the world. In the Kenyan scenario, many local Public relations agencies have gotten affiliations with such international agencies. When international companies come to launch in Kenya, they will always choose an agency that their parent company has been using. In this case, these international affiliations' importance comes in handy.

In the United States alone, public relations is a multi-billion dollar business practiced by nearly 200,000 professionals, according to the U.S Bureau of Statistics. In a study that involved chief executive officers from United States, Canada and United Kingdom, communications in general and the practice of public relations was highly valued.

In Kenya, public relations is not one of the highest paying jobs nor is it such a business. Owed to the fact that many times it happens to be a sub responsibility of marketing. It is not commonly practiced and CEOs have just started appreciating the value of communications and public relations.

In the United States of America, PR has been recognized and accepted as a management function. It is also an organizational function whereby the practitioner reports to the CEO. In Kenya, some organizations treat pr as a marketing function, others a human resources function, others don't even recognize it as a management function. A small percentage is appreciating PR as a top management function.

In the USA, over 200 colleges and universities offer public relations sequence or degree program. Many more offer public relations courses. In the vast majority of college journalism programs public relations sequences rank first or second after enrollment. In Kenya, the institutions training in Public relations (degrees and diplomas) are less than 30 in total. PR is also taught as units; some basic and some advanced. There is no degree exclusively for Public relations. It is either journalism or communications with a bias in public relations.

By the end of the century, PR is predicted to experience phenomenon growth, accounting for as many as 1 million jobs. This prediction is the same in Kenya only that the numbers involved are not as high as in the United States of America. The U.S government has 9,000 communications workers employed by the United States Information Agency alone. Another 1,000 communications specialists work in the Department of Defense. The 20 largest public relations agencies generate more than \$ 1 billion in fee income annually.

In the Kenyan scenario, the Kenyan government has less than 3,000 communications workers employed in all its ministries including the Department of Defense. There is a Government spokesman though. The public relations agencies in Kenya do not generate as much revenue as the advertising agencies.

The PR field strength stems from its roots: " a democratic society where people have freedom to debate and to make decisions in the community, market place, work place, home and the voting booth. As earlier mentioned and later on being reiterated, Kenya's democracy is still developing. Kenyans have not reached the level of assertively standing up and confronting leaders to be accountable for this reason, Kenya's PR has still some more stages to go through. One notable point in the development of Kenya's democracy is the how PR importance is gradually been felt in the Government ministries.

Kenya's parliamentary sessions now require members of parliament to give accounts of how they are running their ministries. They are also often questioned on the conducts of suppliers offering the different ministries services. Suppliers who are found to give poor services or whose credibility is questionable are nowadays subjected to scrutiny in the parliament by other members of parliament. These proceedings are also run on local television stations. Whether decisions are implemented for instance cancelling contracts of incompetent suppliers is still not clear.

As much as democracy has increased lately, there is still the inability in Kenyans to hold the government and corporate institutions accountable for their actions. For a myriad of reasons, in most parts of Africa, governments and corporations literally get away with murder. Generally Kenyans / Africans are not extremely vocal about their rights and this has not promoted the need for improved communication across the continent when it comes to critical issues affecting welfare.

In the United States of America, Presidential campaigns make very great use of public relations. A perfect example is the former President Clinton who won the elections by using 1990s PR techniques of town meetings, satellite press conferences considered the communications function so important that in the first seven months of his administration, he replaced his longest adviser with a Republican- who also was skilled public relations professional.

Studying the ongoing Obama/Mc Cain presidential campaigns, we see a lot of diplomacy in how they address each other. Mudslinging and bad mouthing each other is not so prevalent. However, there have been initial attempts to taint the image of a rival campaigner so that they lose public goodwill. This we saw when President elect Barack Obama's Democrat rival Ms. Hillary Clinton circulated pictures associating her rival to the Muslim faith to the American local dailies. The United States of America has for ages had strained relations with the Arab world so a president professing the Muslim faith would definitely be unfavorable among the citizens. Nonetheless, he still won the elections; not only defeating his Democrat rival Ms Hillary but the Republican one Senator McCain to become the 44th President of the United States of America.

In Kenya, political campaigns use Public relations to an extent however bad mouthing each other is a prevalent trait. Violence, vote stealing, rigging, vote buying from prospective voters to lessen chances of winning from the opponents side are also other ways of reacting to defeat, competing or expression of displeasure with regards to losing political seats. Kenya should borrow a leaf from USA's way of handling such issues.

Kenya included faces the challenges of various negative perceptions caused by incessant civil strife, poverty, disease, sit-tight ruler ship and corruption. There are barriers to African unity and democracy, some of which have been identified based on observations from reports by NEPAD to include:

- (1) Lack of infrastructure
- (2) Lack of access to funds
- (3) Language barriers
- (4) The issue of differential economics

USA's political campaigns involve children who turn up for the rallies with their parents. The candidates also involve their spouses and children in the campaigns and ensure that these they accompany the candidates to all the rallies. In my opinion, this portrays a picture of a candidate who regards highly family values. Research has proven that such people turn out to be leaders who identify with their publics in many important aspects. The United States of America's political leaders have since time in memorial been known to have a positive attitude to public opinion. Those who tried not to like the Late President Nixon had to admit at some point that this was the worst mistake he ever did. It is wise of the founding fathers and other prominent leaders of America to have known how to apply Public relations as they rose in power and recognition. Theodore Roosevelt helped bring this about with his "Square Deal". Woodrow Wilson helped with his "New Freedom", Franklin Delano Roosevelt with his "New Deal" and Barack Obama with his "Change we can" campaign. And this tradition was continued as time went on. (Seitel P. Fraser, The Practice of Public Relations, 43, 47).

Kenya's politicians rarely actively involve their spouses and children in their campaigns. For some reason they prefer to keep their family lives out of the political life as much as possible. Maybe that is why most of these politicians don't quite identify with people's needs. They are known to tyrants who care less about public opinion. Many times we have seen them making decisions which call for immense criticism from the public but unfortunately it falls on deaf

ears. The United States of America's 1920s notion of "The public be damned" seems to still largely apply here.

Most of the PR practitioners in the United States of America were initially journalists including Ivy Lee, the father of PR. The case is also similar in Kenya, having quite a number of PR practitioners having come from a journalism background. PR and media have a strong and important relationship. Because PR must generate publicity. And publicity as we know it is unpaid for coverage. The United States of America seems to have it as it ought to be whereby publicity is for free as it ought to be.

It is unfortunate that in Kenya, PR practitioners mostly pay journalists to have their stories or footage ran on the mass media. This culture of brown envelopes has firmly established itself over a long period of time. It is sad that Kenya is on the top fifteen lists of the most corrupt countries in the world. But it is even sadder to see that corruption is also in the midst of the fourth estate that ideally is meant to unearth such scandals in the name of promoting justice in the nation. What an irony this is. Ethically speaking, PR practitioners must be the standard bearers of corporate ethical initiatives.

When it comes to awarding of contracts for consultancy services in Public relations, ideally consultants do presentations amidst other competitors and the best pitches have high chances of winning of course with proven record of successful past experience. The tendering process is usually transparent with the Public Relations Society of America leading in the effort to foster a strong sense of ethics among its membership.

In recent years, the PRSA code has been tested on a variety of issues, ranging from non competition agreements with the employees of a public relations firm, to the protection of public relations campaign proposals to prospective clients, to paying employees and consultants' finder's fees to obtain new accounts. On testing the code, the foundation concluded that the code with its enforcement provisions is effective with members strongly adhering to the ethical code.

On the contrary, the Kenyan scenario awarding of contracts is based more on relationships than on winning pitches and proven successful past record which in this case comes second. Unfortunately, this criteria of awarding tenders poses two threats; one the likelihood of awarding unskilled inexperienced "practitioners" who end up disappointing their client by doing a shoddy job and secondly single sourcing a supplier thereby giving competition these suppliers unfair advantage over competition. Despite this, there are organizations which believe in fairness and awarding contracts to suppliers who deserve. This is encouraging.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

The data collected are indicative that most of the respondents strongly felt that the potential of Public relations practice in Kenya is yet to be fully explored. Despite this fact, they all agreed that the industry was developing gradually and had a lot of potential to be explored.

However, the professional body PRSK needs to come out strongly in the areas of training, empowerment and regulation of matters pertaining the industry. It is therefore believed that if public relations in Kenya is to remain deeply wedded to a thriving and highly competitive communications business, public relations should evolve into a mix of tactical excellence and strategic thinking—more like management consultants.

This research has shown that Public Relations is becoming indispensable to all organization's viability. The ability of individuals and organizations to communicate has never been more critical. Off course the future will come with changes like mergers, acquisitions, take overs, down sizing and so on. The challenge then for all who practice public relations in the years ahead is to seize the tremendous opportunities that accompany the emerging issues of the day.

In addition, as management becomes more aware of the role of public relations, its performance and expectations of the practice become higher. Thus the standards to which professionals will also increase. And lastly, it is worthwhile mentioning some key areas that will guide proactive public relations:

1. Need for tailored approaches
2. Development of new media (creative ways like talking billboards)

3. Increased specialization
4. Results orientation/evaluation of PR results
5. Creativity/innovativeness
6. Decreased sexism-women will be as many as men in the industry
7. Increased globalization
8. Technology advancement

6.2 Recommendations

1. Public Relations consultancies must be highly knowledgeable and multi-skilled to stay ahead of their environment and Clients.
2. PR practitioners must fully understand the dynamics of their businesses with the initial aim of adding value but the ultimate goal of making profit.
3. PR practitioners must improve the level of stakeholders' appreciation and respectability. They must seek recognition at all levels of interaction as people with skill.
4. Think big! Think out of the box, cut out the small picture, as you do not need it.
5. PR practitioners must engage global practices through training, alignment and affiliations.
6. There is the need to build truly African Public Relations Consultancy networks.
7. There is also the need to start building competencies in areas of specializations i.e. Aviation PR, Tourism PR, Health PR, Financial PR, Sports PR, Government PR, Corporate Social Responsibility etc.
8. Skill must be recognized. Putting a successful senior public relations officer in charge is important as opposed to giving people who know nothing about Public relations PR responsibilities.
9. Making PR academics practical by tailoring the faculty and teaching experience to the subject matter: using the Harvard case method for an organizational management issue or taking

students away for an out – of – class experience when the subject was an intimate look at crisis communications.

10. It is also key to maintain a constant focus – strategic, broad, top – level, rather than skills and implementation.

11. The PR team should be able to bring in CEOs and others in top management to share their perspective of the business and to offer personal insights.

12. Continuous professional development is important for every practitioner. Bring in the top experts in their field (public relations leaders, consultants in specialist fields, university professors.) and let them share their knowledge and expertise to sharpen skill.

13. Importance of global standards: In the Mid 1990s, several large Japanese companies suffered huge losses due to their failure to globalize. They all attempted handle problems according to Japanese rules rather than by obeying the standards or rules of the host countries. This shows that one has to obey the global standard rather than the rules of one's own country if one is to globalize. Up to now, standards of large countries, especially those of Anglo – Saxon origin, tended to become global standards without modification. In future, we have to develop new standards, which will also suit emerging countries.

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What are the global standards? The ISO series on environmental issues is a new standard just developed. However such standards have not been established in all fields. Public relations practitioners should try to establish global standards in the field of public relations, for example a standard for the disclosure of information. (See also the Code of Athens and IPRA Gold Paper No 8, Ethical Dilemmas in Public Relations.)

14. Direction of Information in Public Relations: Public relations has sometimes played a role in leading the opinions and attitudes of the targeted audience in a certain direction by selective information. In the survey, public relations consultants were asked if they ever encountered a case where their client's best interests clashed with the public interest and if so, how they had dealt with it. As PR is based on truth, let it be so even if it may cost the consultancy that account. A good name is better protected than repaired.

15. UN Charter on Public relations practice: All member countries of the UN have agreed to abide by its Charter, which reaffirms its commitment to the needs, human rights and dignity of the human person. Public relations professionals in these countries therefore have a responsibility to observe the principles set out in the UN Charter. Given the nature of their work, public relations professionals can help to meet the intellectual, moral, economic and social needs of their fellow countrymen and citizens of the world.

Public relations professionals can help to meet the intellectual, moral, economic and social needs of their fellow countrymen and citizens of the world. Public relations professionals can and must promote the concept nationally and internationally that sound ethics and socially responsible policies are important factors in achieving sustainable economic growth for governments and corporations alike. Public relations professionals also can and must facilitate ethical business practices and relationships. In particular, public relations practitioners should endeavor to establish communication patterns and channels, which foster the full, and free flow of information at all times.

16. Other International PR bodies: The use of public relations techniques enables practitioners to influence large audiences. The exercise of those techniques by practitioners must therefore be regulated by a rigorous code or professional ethics. These include:

1. The International Code of Ethics (1968) for public relations practitioners should be publicized widely, observed by practitioners should be publicized widely, observed by practitioners at all times, and vigorously enforced by professional bodies both nationally and internationally.

The maintenance of a register of the competent is fundamental to the regulation of a profession. National and international public relations bodies should therefore cooperate in the compilation, maintenance and publication of a register of public relations executives who subscribe to the national and / or international codes of ethics for the profession.

A database should be established to collect and analyze current standards in the practice of public relations by multinational corporations. Benchmarks for sound professional practice should be developed by public relations practitioners operating globally and standards of excellence in the current practice of public relations by multinational corporations should be disseminated widely throughout the corporate world. Public relations practitioners need to belong to their own professional associations like other professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, accountants, etc.

This need has to be satisfied at various levels – local, national, continental and international. In the case of public relations and communication, the professionals can find an international home in organizations such as the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA), International Public Relations Association (IPRA), the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and our very own Public Relations Society of Kenya.

17. Education, training and development: Academic and vocational qualifications for public relations practitioners working globally and aspiring entrants to the profession internationally should be developed as matter urgency.

18. Professional development opportunities for public relations professional should be developed world – wide, monitored, evaluated and promoted.

19. Education and research projects should be designed globally to raise the level of public awareness and understanding of the theoretical basis and academic rigor of the public relations discipline.

20. Materials should be published and seminars and conferences should be organized to assist CEOs of international corporations to develop a better understanding about what effective public relations can do for their organization when it is practiced as a rigorous and strategic

management. PR Practitioners in this role report directly to an organization's chief executive officer, or chief operating officer and the public relations function clearly and emphatically is involved in all of the organization's decision – making . Noted public relations executive John Budd has addressed this situation most eloquently saying , “ who” public relations reports to is not as important as “ how” public relations to that person is. Budd has shared concern about corporate communications functions that appear to be placed high in organizational hierarchy but, in reality are not. Budd also cites example of situations when the reverse of this is true.

Dozier and Larissa Grunge have studied how public relations functions within organizations. They advice that public relations should be consolidated in a single department rather than distributed as a technical support function across several departments They also recommend the senior manager of the public relations function should be part of the “dominant coalition” – their term for those who make organizational decisions.

21. Resources: Public relations professionals and associations should develop sources to implement these recommendations with all possible speed.

22. PR practitioners should stop bribing journalists to have their pictures or stories played on television, dailies or radios.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Section A: Questionnaire with a practitioner's individual perspective

Kindly take some time to answer the following questions as accurately and objectively as you can. The findings of this study will be used to undertake a research on the "State of the Public Relations practice in Kenya". This exercise is purely for academic purposes, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the attainment of a Masters of Arts Degree in Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi's School of Journalism.

This data and the subsequent information generated will also be useful in appreciating the contribution of the participants as well as in designing recommendations that will shape Public Relations (PR) practice in Kenya. Please answer those that apply to your area of expertise i.e. the agency you work in or the organization.

Please tick where appropriate and what applies.

1. Sex m f
2. Age 20-30 30-45 45-60
3. Please give details pertaining the level of formal education

4. Please list other areas of professional training

5. In your own definition from your own experience, please define Public relations

6. Please state place of work
7. What is the nature of your business?
8. Please list down some of the challenges you go through while on duty
9. How many accounts does the organization service?
10. How many accounts does a client service manager and account manager service?
11. Which projects have you been involved in the last three months
12. Are the models and theories that explain PR useful to your practice?
13. What professional obstacles do you face in your line of duty?
14. What is your opinion about ethics in Public relations?
15. How long have you worked in this organization?
16. Where do you see yourself five years from now?
17. What is your take on the state of Public Relations in Kenya?

18. Are you a member of Public Relations Society of Kenya?

19. Are you a member of any other professional body for PR practitioners? If so which one?

a) CIM b) MSK c) IPRA

20. Where would you like to see Public Relations be in Kenya?

21. What aspects of technology apply most to you?

a) Internet b) Skype c) Teleconferencing and video conferencing d) all

22. How often do you read newspapers?

(i) Everyday

(ii) Once a week

(iii) Rarely

(iv) Never

(v) Other (specify)

23. How do you access the newspaper?

(i) Internet

(ii) U-tube

(iii) Office circulation

(iv) Buy from vendors

24. How often do you listen to the radio?

(i) Everyday

(ii) Once a week

(iii) Rarely

(iv) Never

(v) Other (specify)

20. How often do you watch television?

(i) Everyday

(ii) Once a week

(iii) Rarely

(iv) Never

(v) Other (specify)

21. Which is your favorite channel and why?

22. Which content applies the most in your area of practice?

(i) Entertainment

(ii) Sports

(iii) Education

(iv) Health

(v) Development

(vi) Other (please specify)

25. In your own words, what should be done about rectifying the challenges affecting PR practice in Kenya?

26. Do you report to the CEO directly? Please elaborate

27. Please state place of work

Section B: Questionnaire with an Organizational Perspective

1. How does Public relations fit in your organizational structure?
2. Does this arrangement enable you operate efficiently?
3. What factors motivated your organization to start a Public relations department?
4. How big is your Public relations department in terms on numbers?
5. Is the budget set aside for the PR activities adequate?
6. Does your department have any synergies with
 1. Government
 2. Community
 3. Students?
7. Are there opportunities for upward mobility?

Appendix 2: In-depth interview

Date of Interview.....

Taking Notes.....

The findings will be used to undertake a research on the Status of the Public Relations practice in Kenya. This exercise is purely academic, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the attaining of a Masters of Arts Degree in Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi's School of Journalism.

This information will also be useful in appreciating the contribution of the participants as well as in designing recommendations that will shape PR practice in Kenya.

1. What is your take on the state of Public relations in Kenya?
2. Are you doing anything that you believe is playing a pivotal role in improving the state of Public relations in Kenya? If so what? If not why?
3. Which projects have you been involved with in the last 3 months?
4. What professional obstacles do you face in your line of duty?
5. What is your opinion about ethics in Public relations?
6. Are there opportunities for upward mobility in this career?
7. What are the emerging trends you foresee in Public relations over the next 20 years?

8. Do you believe that Public relations will ever attain the same stature as profession like accounting?
9. What parts of the profession do you see as becoming limited in available opportunities?
10. What parts of the field do you see as growth areas in the next century?
11. What is the most significant problem that confronts the field?
12. What is the most significant threat that confronts the field?
13. What pleases you about current PR practice?
14. How would you compare the caliber of today's PR practitioner with that of the past?

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