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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

**A STUDY ON PUBLIC RELATIONS MOTIVES FOR USING
INTERNET**

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted anywhere for any academic purposes.

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This Research project has been submitted with my approval on behalf of School of Journalism, University of Nairobi.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved husband Eng. Charles Ooko, daughter Maureen Akinyi and son Brian Odhiambo. This work could not have been completed without their love and support.

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ABSTRACT

The use of communication technology is ubiquitous in the contemporary business world. The Internet has changed the way organisations do business. Consequently the change has impacted on the role of PR practitioners in the organisation.

This study presents the findings of a survey that attempted to determine what motivates PR practitioners to use the Internet. The survey was administered among PR practitioners who are registered members of Public Society of Kenya (PRSK). The study revealed that there are many factors motivating the use of Internet by the practitioners. These are information gathering, e-mail services, web events and global reach. The findings show that the practitioners are frequently using e-mail services to communicate to both internal and external publics. Information gathering emerged as the most used feature. It provides the practitioners with adequate information on business and social issues.

The study suggests that the Internet has become the most effective and efficient communication medium for the PR professionals. It has changed and opened new opportunities for the practitioners resulting in increased productivity at work place.

Through use of e-mails services the practitioners are able to instantaneously send and receive message globally. They are also able to gather a large amount of information to learn more about PR practices and benchmark their practices globally. Other Internet tools which are frequently used by the Practitioners include web, publishing and online discussions.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned benefits, the survey results indicate that the Practitioners also encounter problems when using the Internet. The study shows that the Internet is not a liable medium for transmitting confidential information. This means confidential information disseminated through the Internet can easily be

accessed by unauthorised people. The study also shows that PR practitioners are unable to fully utilize all the functions provided by the Internet because they lack proper Internet skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.10	Background	11
1.20	The internet media	12
1.30	Statement of problem.....	14
1.40	Objectives of Study.....	15
1.50	Scope of Study.....	15
1.60	Limitations and Assumptions of the study.....	16
1.70	Theoretical Framework	17
2.0	LITERATURE REVIEW	20
2.10	Introduction	20
2.10	Motivations and Uses of Internet.....	20
2.30	Uses & Gratification Theory.....	23
2.3.1	Uses & Gratifications approach to Internet media.....	25
2.40	Revolution of Internet in the Communication Industry.....	28
2.4.1	Services Offered by the Internet.....	31
2.50	Public Relations and the Internet Use	33
2.5.1	Globalisation of PR practices through Internet use	35
2.5.2	Benefits of Internet to PR practices	37
2.5.3	Challenges of Internet to PR practices	40
3.0	RESEARCH METHOD	42
3.10	Research design.....	42
3.20	Population of study.....	42
3.30	Sample and Sampling Design	42
3.40	Data Collection methods.....	43
3.50	Data Analysis and presentation.....	45
4.0	DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	46
4.10	Research Findings	46
5.0	SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	60
5.10	Summary.....	60
5.20	Conclusion and Recommendations.....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY		65

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES AND ANNEXTURES

Tables

Table 1: A breakdown of the sample of the respondents.....43

Table 2: Age distribution of the respondents..... 46

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by work experience.....47

Table 4: PR department activities..... 49

Table 5: Motives for using Internet by PR practitioners 50

Table 6: Frequency of Internet use by PR practitioners.....51

Table 7: Uses of Internet by PR Practitioners.....51

Table 8: Objectives of using Internet to communicate PR activities... ..52

Table 9: Internet tools regularly used by PR practitioners.....53

Table10: Motives for Internet use54

Table 11: Challenges faced by PR practitioners when using Interne.....56

Table 12: Overall rating of Internet channel for PR communication..... 56

Table 13: Respondents level of agreement.....57

Figures

Figure 1: Illustration on Choice and Use of medium..... 19

Figure 2: Illustration of Advanced Research Projects Agency Network.....29

Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by gender... .. 45

Figure 4: Education level of the respondents..... 46

Figure 5: PRSK Membership..... 48

Figure 6: Uses of Internet to communicate PR Activities50

Figure 7: Primary target audiences for Internet communication.....54

Figure 8: Challenges faced when using Internet.....55

Annextures

Annexure 1: Distribution of Organizations represented by industry base.....67

Annexure2: Job Titles..... 68

Annexure3: Influence of PR activities by Internet.....69

Appendices

5.10 Letter to respondents.....70

5.20 Questionnaire.....71

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARCC	African Regional Center for Computing
ARPANET	Advanced Research Projects Agency
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BC	Before Christ
COTU	Central Organization of Trade Union
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
DOD	Department of Defense
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
FAPRA	Federation of African Public Relations Association
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMP	Interface Message Processor
IP	Internet Protocol
IPR	Institute of Public Relations
IPRA	Institute of Public Relations Association
ISO	International Standards Organization
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
M.SC	Master of Science
NARC	National Alliance of Rainbow Coalition
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NMG	Nation Media Group
PR	Public Relations
PRIA	Public Relations Institute of Australia
PRII	Public Relations Institute of Ireland
PRISA	Public Relations Institute of South Africa
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
PRSK	Public Relations Society of Kenya
SA	South Africa
SoJ	School of Journalism
TV	Television
UoN	University of Nairobi
UG	Uses and Gratification
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VAT	Value Added Tax
VPN	Virtual Private Network
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
WWW	World Wide Web
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
ZIPR	Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations

1.0 CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

1.10 Background of the Study

Public Relations (PR) popularly known as PR is a form communication used by organisations to disseminate information about its products, services and overall image to its customers, employees, stakeholders and the general public.

As organisations, seek ways to increase profits by way of marketing many have turned to the field of PR as a way of reaching the target audience. Of central importance when designing communication programmes PR practitioners must consider the most convenient and cost effective medium to reach the audience in terms frequency, reach, circulation, capacity and speed. This is crucial in performing PR work whose basic objective is reaching diverse audience using various communication vehicles. Murphy & Dee (1992) posit that PR practitioners are the mediator between the organisation and its publics which is achieved through effective communication. Thus the choice of medium in which to effectively and efficiently reach the target audience is of great important to the PR practitioners.

Traditionally PR practitioners use media such as press releases, events, newspapers, magazines, radio and television to articulate organisation's business objectives. However, the revolution of the Internet in the mass media game has changed the way the PR practitioners communicate to the target audience. Studies on Internet use show that the medium has become the world's largest distributor of information. Its basic functions, sending and receiving messages are probably as old as humanity but its global reach and virtually instantaneous delivery of message

is a new feature that lacks in other communication channels like newspapers, radio and television.

Gurus in the communication field argue that due to its ability to search and retrieve large quantity of information quickly and in the most convenient way, the Internet has become a major medium of communication in the business world and the society as a whole. It has become the most important resource of information for business entrepreneurs, professionals, politicians, government and the society.

1.20 The Internet Medium

The Internet is defined as a worldwide publicly accessible network of interconnected computers that transmit data using the standard Internet Protocol (IP). Wikipedia.org. (2007) defines Internet has a "network of networks" that consists of millions of smaller domestic, academic, business and government networks, which together carry various information and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer, interlinked web pages and other documents of the world wide web.

Anderson et al (1995) in 1995 predicted that the Internet would change the lives of average citizens as much as did the telephone in the early part of the 20th century and television in the 1950s and 1960s. Schement & Forbes (1999) comparing Internet to other media of communication argues that the Internet has diffused rapidly. Its trajectory is similar to those of television and radio which reached more than 50% of households within a few years of commercialization. Other users, analysts and policy makers who concur with these views include the prominent Internet development specialists Randy Bush who asserts that the Internet is inherently good because it has improved the quality of human life. The Nigerian journalist Babafemi Ojuda is quoted saying "I owe my professional survival to the Internet". During a crackdown on the media the Nigerian government sized

telephone lines of the weekly paper *the news* where Ojuda is the Managing Director and forced the editors to go underground. "I hooked my laptop to the telephones of my friends and got in touch with our reporters on line" Lusaga (1997)

Studies show that globally Internet is being used as the primary media for social and business communication. The Internet communication has positively impacted on the organisation decision making processes and is mostly being used for business operations globally. The interactive dynamics of the Internet and its speed are incomparable to any other medium of communication. The organisations have recognized the need to communicate via Internet not only for cutting communication costs but also for other applications such as the increased accessibility of information, the reduction in delivery time and the ability to make fully informed business decisions. Today many activities can take place through the Internet including resource mobilisation, information gathering, advertising, selling and buying are possible through the Internet. Suppliers and consumers are able to compare prices and transact business worldwide using the Internet.

The Internet became available in Kenya in the early 1990s. Just like in many other African states Internet development in Kenya was primarily lead by people returning from overseas, western ex-patriots and NGO personnel. According to a report by the African Internet and Telecom Summit Banjul, the Gambia (2000), in 1992 e-mail was available and full Internet connectivity was inaugurated by the African Regional Center for Computing (ARCC) in October 1995. According to the report there are approximately 30,000 to 50,000 Internet users in Kenya with an estimated monthly growth of 300 each month. The main users of Internet are business organisations, multinational corporations, international organisations and NGOs making more than 50% of all subscribers while the government and education institutions make less than 5%.

The use of Internet in Kenya is on the steep rise. For example the Ministry of Trade and other stakeholders are at the forefront championing for the use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) in Kenya.

1.30 Statement of the Problem

Since the Internet boom in mid 90s, many surveys on the use of Internet have been undertaken. The surveys have provided the academicians, corporate planners, policy makers and the public with basic information about the characteristics of both the users and nonusers of the Internet. In fact most surveys on Internet uses have been devoted to describe who the Internet users are and very little has been done on what motives people to use the medium. An example of projects investing the users and the demographics are Gvu WWW User surveys available at http://www.gvu.gatch.edu/user_surveys. These surveys only help us to understand the rapid adoption of Internet as a medium of communication. UCLA Center for communication policy (2000, 2001) and United States Internet Council (2002) have also zeroed on collecting data on Internet users as opposed to motives and uses of the medium.

While understanding the users of Internet gives us more insight to describe demographics of the users, the studies have failed to show the motives for using the Internet. The Internet has become a major channel for business communication worldwide. Professionals in all sectors of the economy are using Internet for business transactions. Knowing how many people use the Internet is important but knowing what motivates them to use the medium is critically important to predicting the future impact of the Internet in the business organisations in order develop uses for the medium that match user needs.

There is a general feeling that the use of Internet has positively changed practices of public relations and created new opportunities as well. However the the kind of

information provided on motives for using Internet by Public Relations practitioners is limited and this limitation impedes development of deeper understanding on motives and uses of Internet by the PR practitioners. Knowing what motivates them to use the medium and how they use it will assist in developing uses for the medium that match their specific needs. Thus the purpose of this study is to establish Public Relations motives for using Internet and how they use.

1.40 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish the following:-

- (i) What motivates PR practitioners to use Internet
- (ii) How they use the Internet
- (iii) Explore challenges and benefits for using the medium

1.50 Significance of the Study

Technological changes are fundamental for development of modern society. As President Bill Clinton stated in the President's letter announcing public access email (1993) "part of our commitment to change is to keep the White House in step with today's changing technology. As we move ahead into the 21st century, we must have a government that can show the way and lead by example. Today, we are pleased to announce that for the first time in history; the White House will be connected to you via electronic mail. Electronic mail will bring the presidency and its administration closer and make it more accessible to the people. "Electronic mail breaks the barriers of time and space, factors that are important for PR professionals. The PR practitioners do not have to wait for weeks or even months to receive feedback from clients or to gather information. Anyone connected to the Internet has a powerful access. The study will have the following benefits to the stakeholders.

1.5.1 PR Practitioners- the study will provide adequate information on motives and uses of Internet by PR practitioners.

1.5.2 Management - They will understand better the benefits and challenges of incorporating the technology into the business practices.

1.5.3 Policy Makers - The study will add to a body of knowledge for PR practices, provide guidelines for professional development and a framework to review the existing regulations and procedures pertaining to PR practices.

1.5.4 Researchers and Education Institutions – The study will increase the body of knowledge in the field of public relations.

1.60 Scope of the Study

The study will focus on public relations motives for using Internet. The researcher will carry out an exploratory survey in Nairobi and the target group will be Public Relations practitioners who are registered members of Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK).

1.70 Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

1.7.1 Limitations

Time is of great essence as it dictates the sample size being studied and the time when the result findings will be analysed and distributed. The researcher is a full time employee and this may necessitate delay in the whole process. "Call backs" problems is another foreseen problem whereby an interviewee is not available at an agreed time will necessitate the researcher to reschedule the interview to a more convenient time for the interviewee promoting more allocation of time.

Availability of money is another problem because of issues such as purchase of stationery, printing and typing services, which have to be outsourced.

1.7.2 Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions are statements or ideas that are acceptable as true and they serve as the foundation of which a study is based. Turney & Robb (1971) posit that assumptions are written to review what the research and others theorize to be true in the study to be conducted. More so they are written to indicate those factors affecting the study that are necessarily unalterable. To guide this study the following assumptions are put into consideration:

- (i) There are various factors that motivate public relations practitioners to use Internet.
- (ii) PR practitioners do use Internet
- (iii) Internet is one of the key PR media
- (iv) It is assumed that all the respondents will give true and reliable information in the study questions.
- (v) It is also assumed that all respondents will be available during the field study and they will answer the research questions to the best of their knowledge and without biasness.

1.80 Theoretical Framework

There is not doubt that the Internet has significantly become a primary medium for PR communications. Soncheol (1998) posits that computer mediated communications (CMC) have increased our information and interactive capabilities in unimaginable ways. Papcharissi & Rubbin (2000) contends that there is a greater need for knowledge to understand the elements influencing people's motives and uses of the Internet.

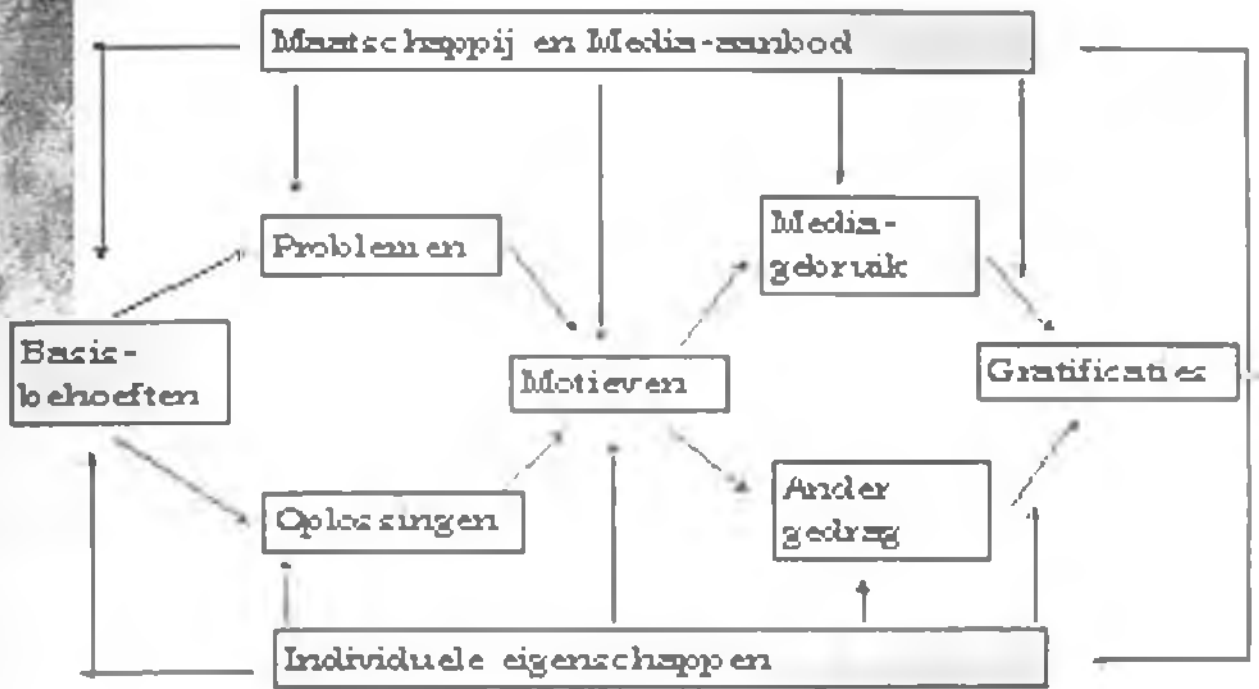
Scholars in the communication field argue that no other media has incorporated more communication methods and global considerations than the Internet. In this respect, when choosing media for PR communication one must take into consideration functions of each medium in order to make the right media choice. Firstly, one must consider the audiences' need for information and stimulation Krcmar & Greene (1999). Secondly the channel capacity, its effectiveness and efficiency are important factors when choosing a medium Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch (1974).

History has shown that the Internet media has created new gratifications and motivations. The (U&G) theory, originated in the 1970s as a reaction to traditional mass media communication research emphasising the sender and receiver of the message. The theory stresses on active audience. It attempts to explain the motives and functions of the media for individuals, groups and society in general. There are three objectives when developing uses and gratifications theory; firstly to explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs. "What do people do with the media, secondly to discover underlying motives for individuals' media use and thirdly to identify the positive and the negative consequences of individual media use. Central to the U&G theory lays the assumption that audience members actively seek out mass media to satisfy individual needs. Thus, Uses and Gratifications theory forms the basis of this study.

The following is a diagrammatical illustration depicting how a medium is used more when the existing motives to use leads to more satisfaction

Model 1: A medium will be used more when the existing motives to use the leads to more satisfaction. (Rosengren 1974)

(Rosengren 1974)



Source: Rosengren (1974)

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

As the adoption of Internet technology continues to increase in commerce, business, education, public institutions and home spaces researchers are recognising the importance of understanding the motives and uses of the media.

The motives and the ways in which the Internet is used is attracting attention and scholars are beginning to questions the motives and uses of Internet professionals. For instance there is there is relatively little work done focusing on motives and uses of the Internet by Public Relations practitioners Seitel'e (2001). There is tangible evidence that once a new user explores the Internet, their uses for the Internet typically increase and PR practitioners are not exceptional. Users expect to have certain needs met when using Internet and most often those needs must be satisfied.

Today it is difficult to imagine communication that is not mediated through the Internet because the medium allows almost unlimited methods of information retrieval and distribution. This phenomenon has created a new source of study for research in a variety of fields like Public Relations, Marketing and Education. Therefore, understanding what motivates PR practitioners to use Internet, why they choose to use the medium instead another and how they use it is critically important to predicting the future impact of the Internet in PR practices. This is important because it will assist to develop uses of Internet that match the needs of the practitioners.

2.10 Motivations and Uses of Internet

Theorists Eisenberg and Monge (1983); MchLaughlin, Osborne& Smith (1995); Rice (1989); Schmitz and Fulk (1991) argue that identifying the various needs involved

is essential to understanding why a person chooses a particular medium. This view is supported by Rubin, Pearce & Barbato (1988) by saying that understanding the individuals' motives and uses of the media is essential in making appropriate choice of medium. Barbato (1988) suggested six (6) motives for individual's need to communicate. These are pleasure, affection, inclusion, escapism, relaxation and control. Flaherty, Pearce and Rubin (1998) reported that individuals use computers to satisfy three major needs, interpersonal needs (inclusion affection relaxation and control); traditional needs associated with media (social interaction, passing time, information, habits, entertainment) and new media needs (time shifting, meeting other individuals). The views offered by the scholars show that PR practitioners use Internet to satisfy particular needs.

Papacharishi and Rubin (2000) identified three (3) other factors that they believe influence Internet use; Contextual age (as opposed to using the limitations of chronological age); unwillingness to communicate (the tendency to avoid verbal communications due to factors including low self-esteem, introversion and apprehension) and media perceptions (the lack of social presence on the Internet information benefits, interpersonal benefits). Ferguson & Parse (2000) studied the world wide web as an alternative to television viewing. The study revealed five principles factors concerning web motivations. These are entertainment, passing time relaxation and social information.

Weaver (1991) in his research Exploring Links between Personality and Media Preferences found three personality groups displaying substantial relations to media preferences. Individuals displaying 'high neuroticism' (anxious, emotional, socially isolated) showed strong preferences for news and information programs, drama and general films such as Mary Poppins and Wizard of Oz. This group also had a tendency to avoid light comedy and adventure. Individuals displaying high

psychoticism' (impulsive, nonconforming, unemphathetic) characteristics showed strong preferences for violent programming, tragedy and drama.

Previous research implies that Internet use is affected by social and demographic characteristics toward the Internet, Social supports and so on Atkin et al (1998). Since Internet usage is said to be an aspect of the digital divide consumers who have used conventional forms of media for information gathering in the past are more willing to adopt the Internet. Rogers (1995) assert that the compatibility between innovations and existing social norms or patterns of behaviour influence the use of Internet. Studies based on the media substitution hypothesis Atkin el al (1998); Felfres, et al (1995); Lin (2001), suggest that introduction of a new medium will change the way consumers view existing media. The audience is likely to abandon the old medium and replace it with a new one when the latter is regarded as more functionally desirable than the former Lin (1994). In essence people will consume more of what they are given more options based on the media supplement hypothesis Atkin et al (1996); Kang & Atkin (1999). This is predicated on whether the Internet is "functionally similar" to those already in use Atkin (1993). In support of this view Reagan et al (1995) argues that this may be a function of compatibility with existing products. From PR perspective use of Internet by the practitioners is based on the needs of their audience which implies that the Internet tools are most appropriate to meet the special needs for each target audience.

The strength and uniqueness of Internet as a communication tool is said to be its many functions. The functions include information gathering, e-mail services, newsgroups, chat groups, web forums all which provide opportunities for people to share ideas. According to the NUA Internet surveys (1997) the information function of the Internet is perceived as the most important. The report shows that 43 percent of time spent accessing the Internet is used for getting information

while 34 percent is for sending or receiving e-mail. Chilton research states that 78.4% respondents to a telephone survey found that information access is important compared to 57.6 percent who rated e-mail as important. The revelations by these studies prove that Internet is primarily information based rather than visual driven environment. Thus understanding this reality has fundamental implications for PR practitioners in order to develop successful Internet application in their activities.

2.30 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The approach seeks to understand psychological motives individuals have to seek different media channels to gratify their needs. Communication studies in the 1940s. Herzog, 1940, 1944; Lazarsfeld & Stanton, (1949) were aimed at establishing reasons for viewers who watch different programmes such as the soap operas, quizzes and also read daily newspaper. Lazarsfeld & Stanton (1944); Herzog (1944); Warner & Henry (1948) They found out that instead of consuming media messages passively, the audiences sought gratifications actively. Radio soap operas were found to satisfy listeners with advice, support or emotional release Herzog (1944) and the newspaper was found to be an important channel to readers interested in the same topics of discussions and belonging to the same social class Berelson (1949).

This approach which was later developed into Uses and Gratifications theory focuses on psychological factors – individual needs, interests, attitudes and values that should help shape audiences' media selections Lowery & DeFleur (1995). The theory seeks to answer the question what motives people use a particular media and what do they use it for? MacQuail (1983).

There is a notion that audience members know media content and which media they can use to meet their special needs. Uses and Gratification theory strives to identify audience need gratifications and link them with media choices. It suggests

that media users seek out a channel that best fulfils the needs of user and they have alternative choices to satisfy their needs. The theory puts emphasises on motives and the self perceived needs of audience members.

Other uses and gratifications research studies include relaxation and motives for listening to music on radio Suchman (1942); gratifications sought by women in listening to daytime serials on radio Herzog (1944); reasons for reading newspapers Berelson (1954); needs and functions motivating people to listen to radio Mendelsohn (1964); planning to watch and involvement with soap-operas Lemish (1985) Rubins & Pers (1987) motivation factors for television viewing Greenberg (1974); Motives for using telephone O'Keefee & sulanowski (1954) and for using cellular phone Leugn & Wei (2000) and motives for using Internet Papacharissi & Rubin (2000)

The uses and gratifications research studies have revealed different motives for using different media. The study of Weiss (1969) developed four motivations of media usage, time filling, relaxation or diversion and social and person needs. Furni-Lamude & Anderson (1992) in their study of rerun and first run viewing discovered that viewing reruns is more related to nostalgia and pure enjoyment than viewing first run programs. In a cell phone study by Leung & Wei (2000) mobility, immediacy and instrumentality were found to be the strongest instrumental motives in predicting the use of cellular phones flowed by intrinsic factors such as affection or sociability . Papacharissi and Rubbin (2000) identified five motives for using the Internet that is information seeking, entertainment, interpersonal utility, passive time and convenience.

In a nutshell the theory of Uses & Gratifications provides a framework to study new media such as Internet Newhagen & Rafaeli (1996). As the individuals attempt to gratify television needs through simply switching on the set and clicking

the remote control, the two way nature of Internet such as email, newsgroups, bulletin boards and chat rooms requires audience members to be active users. Similarly Internet users actively search for information by clicking or using the search engines suggesting that Internet users are goal directed and that users are aware of the needs they are attempting to satisfy Lin & Jeffrey (1998). Blumler & Katz (1974) states that the U&G theory differs from other communication theories in that it regards audiences as active media and users as opposed to passive receivers of information. This is contrary to traditional media effects theories which focus on "what media does to people" and assume audiences are homogeneous. Uses and gratification theory is more concerned with "what people do with the media". Katz (1959).

According to Katz (1974) Uses and Gratification theory suggests that media compete with other information sources for audiences' need satisfaction. As traditional mass media and new media strive to provide people with more information Uses and Gratifications theory is considered as one of the most appropriate approaches for investigating why audience choose a particular media channel. LaRose et al (2001). Severin & Tankard (1997) talks about audiences' choice of media by assessing their reasons for using a particular media as opposed to another as well as gratifications derived from the media based on individual social and psychological requirements. From a broader perspective the theory provides a framework for understanding the processes by which media participants seek information selectively in commensurate with their needs and interests. Katz et al (1974). Therefore audience members incorporate the content to suit their needs. Lowery & DeFleur (1983).

2.3.1 Uses And Gratifications Approach To Internet Media

The uses and gratifications theory has been used to provide a theoretical framework in the initial stages of new medium of communication. These include

newspapers, radio and television and now the internet, which has now revolutionised the communication sector.

Ruggiero (2000) contends that the Uses and Gratifications theory is widely used and is best suited for the study of Internet use, because the Internet users are actively engaged communication participants compared to other traditional media. Katz et al (1974) under several surveys and they have shown that Internet users have very little trouble verbalising their needs when using the Internet. Eghtmay & McCord (1997). Northey (1999) Ryan (1995). Katz et al (1974) argues that available media choice compete to satisfy individual needs.

The theory provides a strong challenge to the prevailing passive audience theories of mass communication effects that were dominant Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch (1974); Palmgreen (1984). Uses and gratification approaches have as their premise an audience that makes active choices rather than just being passive consumers of predetermined diet of communication services. The theory also suggests that people consciously choose the medium that could satisfy their needs and that audiences are able to recognize their reasons for making media choices Katz et al (1974). Further Katz et al (1974) Tyan (1995) assert that Internet offers democratic communication to anonymous participants in virtual communities such as chat rooms. Ryan (1995) says users are motivated to speak more freely on the Internet than they would in real life or when using the traditional media such as television or radio. And that with the availability of the Internet the minority group can actively participate in the communication process.

As a result of several research studies that have been undertaken on media use the Internet presents all elements of communication channel. Its distinct characteristics have additional dimensions in terms of Uses and Gratifications approach. Studies show that the information gathering function motives more

people to use the Internet more than any other function James et al (1995), Eighmey and McCord (1998) in a study to investigate audience reactions to websites identified personal involvement and continuing relationships as new motivations for Internet use. The interactivity feature of Internet is also said to contribute immensely to the use of Internet. Schumann & Thronson (1999) calls attention to the interactivity feature of Internet through discussion groups, e-mails, direct ordering and links to more information. Other reasons why people are motivated to use Internet as a channel of communication include anonymity. According to McKenna et al (2000) people use the security of online anonymity to develop friendships and gratify their social needs. Foo & Koivisto (2004) notes that those who play multiplayer and computer games the anonymity reduces their self-awareness and motivates their behaviour in game playing. Other studies suggest that Internet offer democratic communication to anonymous participants in virtual communities such as chat rooms. Ryan (1995) argues that anonymity motivates users to speak more freely on the Internet than they would in real life. Without fear of discrimination minority groups can also air their views and participate in the communication process so long as the technology is available Brana (2001).

Rafeali (1986) in a study to establish why students use computer bulletin board found that users seldom skip informative messages which indicates strong interest in messages of this type. Maddox (1998) suggests that the most important reason why people use the Internet is to get various kinds of information. Lin (2001) on her study to examine services adoption found that online services are perceived to be major channel of information, and therefore the audiences who need to gather more information are the mostly like to adopt online services. Lin (2001). Johnson and Kaye (1998) argue that people use Internet as an alternative to television viewing. Ferguson & Perse (2000) found four main gratifications for Internet use namely entertainment, passing time, relaxation and social information.

As much as the theory holds a significant status in the communications research it has also received criticisms both on its theory and methodology used. Critics of the theory argue that uses and gratifications theory focus on the fact relied heavily on self reports Katz (1987). McQuail (1994) posit that the theory has not been very successful in predicting or explaining media choice and use.

2.40 Revolution of Internet in the Communication Industry

More change has taken place in the past 30 years than in the whole of the history of humanity. Technological changes have indisputably led to faster and more efficient communication.

Onuga (1998) posit that communication touches every sphere of our lives and everything that we do throughout the day involves communication in one form or another – at work place, home, politics, commerce, education, sport, entertainment and the business world as a whole. Mayer (2003) affirms that we are getting to the point of information overload. We have the Television and radio stations that transmit information immediately, newspapers, journals, trade magazines, newsletters, books, direct mail, specialist publications and the Internet.

Internet has become an essential communication tool for organisations of all types and sizes. Its increasing adoption by both business organisations and consumers to transact business is fast growing and all organisations must have an effective internet presence in order to grow business and carve market niche in dynamic business environment. Michael Porter is quoted saying “the key question is not whether to deploy Internet technology – companies have no choice if they want to stay competitive but how to deploy it” Mayer (2003);

The Internet is defined as a world-wide computer network linking thousands of computer networks through a mixture of private, public data and telephone lines.

Its components of networks are individually run by government agencies, universities, commercial and voluntary organisations. Onunga (1998); Heath (2001). The growth of www has been very rapid with the appearance of Mosaic and later Netscape, graphic browsers that allow for point and click network accessible information. According to Onunga (1998) anyone can browse, roam, make contributions, as well as transfer of multimedia including sound and video.

In 1969 the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the United States Department of Defence (DOD) built the first network known as ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network). The internet was born of the need to develop a reliable communication network that was literally able to withstand a nuclear attack. Krol & Klopfenstein (1996). The first four sites that were connected together to form ARPANET were the University of California at Los Angeles, Stanford Research Institute, The University of California at Santa Barbara, and the University of Utah.

Figure 3: Illustration of Network Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) Onuga (1998)



The four-research site had computer centres doing network research. Each site had an interface message processor (IMP) computer connected to the network. The original speed of the links between the four computers was 56,000 bits per

second. The network was highly successful and by 1971 15 sites had been connected. More than a decade after the portals of World Wide Web (WWW) opened to the public we are now witnessing the emergence of Internet as a powerful communication tool in the business world. Onunga (1998). There is growing evidence that new technology is enhancing and to some degree changing PR roles. Davids (1994) argues that the nature of communicating with various stakeholders including media, employees and customers is changing because of the Internet. Bovet (1995) contends that although many journalist still prefer to receive information via traditional channels, recent studies show that more than a third of journalists prefer to receive information via email. The Internet is facilitating nearly every imaginable form of communication including professional development, business transactions, the ability to do research and source of information.

Jeffery (2006) is quoted saying that the Internet has become source of communication, information and entertainment since when the web become available. The Clinton administration and many others have embraced the capability of the Internet in revolutionizing the way in which individuals and organisations communicate with the indicative of the notions of utopian "global village" McLuhan's (1964). Others view revolution negatively reflecting fears of loss of privacy, loss of autonomy and estrangement from community. Mumford's (1979).

Bickerton (2000) argues that traditional communication media generally involves a "one-to-many" model. For example a company produces one message that is send to many consumers. The consumers see the messages then make a decision wether to take it or not. For example television viewers see the messages during advertising breaks only and there is no opportunity for the consumer to immediately give feedback or interact with the consumer. On the contrary, the internet is interactive and provides a two-way communication. Bickerton (2000) gives an example of a potential consumer will access the Internet click at an advertisement

banner and find out more about the product or service suggesting that consumers are able to choose information they want to access at their own convenient time. According to Heath (2001) people watching a television or listening to a radio or reading a newspaper cannot flick a button to find out more. Therefore emergence of Internet in the communication industry has greatly enhanced the way PR practitioners communicate to their target audience. The practitioners use e-mail to contact and keep in touch with the relevant publics. They use the newsgroup forums to exchange ideas and have gads of information and the ability to choose what information is on website. The search engines help the practitioners to catalogue word on the website and give directions, which list web sites and their pages.

2.40 Services offered by Internet

The Internet provides a speedy, inexpensive and convenient means of communication. It allows greater flexibility in working hours and location especially with the spread of unmetered high-speed connections and web applications. The internet was born of the need to develop a reliable communication network that was literally able to withstand a nuclear attack. Onunga (1998)

2.4.1 Speed

Internet communication is instantaneous. The speed at which an e-mail is sent largely dependents on the slowest link, which is determined, by the speed of the modem.

2.4.2 Cost Effective

The internet costs are minimal and this gives it a milestone over other mass communication vehicles such as radio, television, telephone etc.

2.4.3 Convenient

The users connect to other users through computers and information is stored easily. This encourages the new ways of working from home, collaboration and information sharing in many industries.

A PR specialists working away from the offices on a business trip or holiday using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection can access to all working files and data including e-mail and other applications.

2.4.4 Information Sharing

A computer file can be e-mailed to customers, colleagues and friends as an attachment. It can also be uploaded to a website or FTP server for easy download by other people interested in the same information.

2.4.5 Voice Telephony (VoIP)

VoIP stands for Voice over Internet Protocol that underlies all internet communication. The VoIP is maturing into a viable alternative to traditional telephones. One of the benefits is that is actual voice and it is cost effective because sometimes it is free.

2.10 Public Relations Practices

Scholars around the world have formulated many PR definitions. Wilcox et al (1922) reports that a pioneer PR educator compiled about 500 definitions from different sources. This view is supported by Hutton (1999) who says that a reveal of PR history shows how the field evolved in terms of definitions and metaphors. Hutton (1999) argues that the PR has evolved through history from the 'public fooled' to 'the public be damned' to the public be manipulated' to 'the public be informed' to the 'public be involved or accommodated'. Kendall (1992) states that the maturity of PR practice is determined by the maturity of the definition accepted. The availability of many definitions is a true reflection to the sophistication in the

duty of the function to the society as a whole. According to Kendall (1992) this range of perception is evident today as well as throughout the history of the PR profession.

Other theorists who have defined PR include Jenkins (1998) public relation is about creating understanding through knowledge and often involves effective change. Jenkins (1998) argues that public relations is a form of communication which applies to every sort of organisation, either in the public or private sector, and it is much bigger than marketing or advertising and existed long before they did. Grunig and Hunt (1984) introduced the four models to explain how PR has developed through history. The models also reflect the different ways in which the PR is still practised today. Bernays (1995) defines PR as an attempt by information, persuasion and adjustment to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or institution. The function of PR is to help organisations adjust and adapt to their environment by monitoring public opinions, social change and cultural shifts. Cutlip et al (1994).

2.50 Public Relations and the Internet Use

The internet revolution has brought many benefits, opportunities and challenges in the field of PR.

According to Flake (1995), majority of the organisations, both the public and private around the world are moving into using Internet. The Internet is said to break the barriers of time and space factors that are paramount in achieving Public Relations objectives of imparting information. Today the PR practitioners do not have to take several days, weeks or months to communicate to their various audiences and those connected to the Internet have powerful access of information.

The transformation of digital technology has far-reaching implications for the practice of public relations. Holtz (1996) argues that two fundamental models of communication have been altered by the ability to communicate and access information via computer. Traditional PR specialists are hired to facilitate in the delivery of organisation's messages. This communication takes either one-way or two way communication. For example sending out brochures or through direct mail), two way communication such as negotiating with an activist coalition such as KNUT or COTU or multi-directional communication (e.g. a charity organisation such as National Aids Control Council encouraging other organisation to support a worth causal). All these communication models involve a communication gatekeeper on the contrary anyone with Internet can access and distribute information as often as possible directly to the receiver with no gatekeepers involved.

According to Geimann (2001) the Internet has accelerated the evolution of PR and created all day news and information for consumers. This view is reinforced by Wilson (1996) by pointing out that the emergence of desktop computers followed by the advent of instantaneous global communications have profoundly affected the practice of PR. The two forces have converged to create a revolution in PR interaction based on digital telecommunication, which calls for the specialists to learn new skills. Hirigojen (2000) argues that advanced telecommunication which instantly disseminates news and information around the globe means that audiences today are multinational and even global. In this respect, Seitel (2001) suggests that while the new media will increasingly capture public attention in the most creative ways PR professional will have to equally be creative to keep up with the new media and harness them for persuasive purposes.

Communication gurus have cited several benefits accruing from internet media to PR professional. Heath (2001) argues that Internet offers increased contact with

publics, opportunities for interactive communication and immediate feedback, ease of collecting information about competitors, opportunities for global media coverage, the means to narrowcast information to reporters, opinion leaders, consumers etc. Merscham & Skinner (2001) note that Internet provides opportunity for instant delivery of news, including text and video, sound, graphics, photographs to reports by means of media kits and online media rooms, e-mail interviews and chat rooms to facilitate discussions, online promotions, ease of archiving documents for ease of reference and ease of updating documents, communication with employees by means of intranets, including online newsletters, questionnaires etc. Schenkein (2001) contends that communication to external audience is achieved through extranets, the opportunity for teleconference, the ability to respond instantly to emerging issues and market changes, providing easy access to copies of speeches, publications, new product information, contact names and numbers etc. The ability to track and trace transactions and build portfolios of customers, the ability to use website during time of crisis to deal with onslaught of customers and media if facilitated by the Internet use. Saite'l (2001).

2.5.1 Globalisations of PR Practices

PR practice has become global through establishment of networks. Vallum (1999) argues that global communication budgets are changing with the growing share going to PR at the expense of advertising. None multinational clients can benefit from increased access to experience in other parts of the world. There are opportunities to network with multinational clients in pursuit of future business spin offs, access to PR support in other parts of the world when embarking upon export, foreign investment or fund raising initiatives and exposure to global standards of performance and delivery. Vallum (1999).

Black (2000) suggests that PR across the border can be organised by employing networks operating on an informal basis. Since PR practitioners department or

consulting firms possibly have all the necessary skills required to operate effectively in all markets, the use of global network becomes essential in launching programmes across the borders. Another option is to include the services of global networks of independent consultancies. Haywood (1991). Black (2000) also argues in favour of global partnership to achieve public relations goals.

Marsham and Skinner (1999) posit the Internet, intranet and extranet as networks affecting the nature of PR work. For instance, the internet website is regarded as the public face that presents the world, an intranet is a structure for internal communication allowing for the formation of employee networks. Extranet is used for business to business communication facilitating communication between an organisation and its various stakeholders on a more specialist manner than the Internet. Verwey (2000).

The new media is also very useful in promoting dialogue between PR professionals, which suggests that networking between practitioners is beneficial during times of transformation. White & Maru (1995) argue that if globalization of communication strategy is a reality then globalisation of communication strategy and programmes cannot be left behind. Eisenbergh and Goodall (1997) suggest in turn that success on global business requires global communication skills in order to communicate in ways that transcend time and space. Leichsering (1998) assert that globalisation necessitates that PR professional follow an integrated global communication strategies. Corporations must have extremely flexible and fast way in which to communicate and react. Resonating communication should be multicultural and integrated.

The Internet provides the practitioners with a variety of tools to disseminate information globally. Internet is a major application for media relations making more and more reporters to receive press releases by e-mail. eReleases

<http://www.ereleases.com/> is a one of the online services used to write and distribute press releases and PR Newswire <http://www.prnewswire.com> is best known for press release networks. There is a rapid increase of websites, internet mailing lists and "e-magazines" devoted to improving the practices of public relations practitioners. There are a variety of resources available for the practitioners to improve their own education, knowledge, development and professional networking. List serve or e-mail mailing list is the most popular form of PR professional development and networking. For example, the Public Relations Society of America's website offers discussion groups through some of its professional interest sections accessible through PRSA's site at <http://prsa.org>. The association and non-profit has a listserve called *associationserve* for professional practising in those areas. <http://groups.yahoo.com> is a popular mailing list for small agency owners. The groups' introductory ad says, "We are a group of small shop PR/Marketing/Advertising agency owners looking for the best water cooler to park in front of and share business experience. The Ragan Communications offers several newsletters of interest to PR professional, including the Ragan Report, Media Relations Report and Web Content Report. Newsletter and subscription is through <http://www.ragan.com>. There also exist several websites with resources to help the practitioners develop their career. These include Public Relations Society of America website at <http://www.prsa.org/>

2.5.2 Benefits of Internet to PR Practice

Besides the fact that the internet has revolutionized the PR communication, it has also brought about new challenges to PR practices. The new technology has made organisations more open to scrutiny by customers. According to Eisenbery & Goodall (1997) dissatisfied customers can use internet to tell the whole world about a bad experience with a company's product or service. This is to say that online sabotage is a major threat to PR information of ethical terrorism or "antisites" Geimann (2001) contends that this is a practice of critics building

website to stage attack on an organisation's practices. Damaging messages can be spread globally instantly using internet resulting to organisations or individual harassment. Ha & Pratt (2000). For example in February 2007 recently there was an e-mail circulating with damaging information about the Nation Media Group (NMG) employees alleging sex scandals at workplace. www.nationmediagroup.wordpress.com.

According to Heath (2000) the adoption of new technologies in PR is as a result of unparalleled growth in six interested areas that is the number of media outlets available, the size of organisations using PR and the variety of new technologies is applicable to the industry. Katzman notes that the increasing number of video outlets has created a need for more and more programming which PR practitioners are eager to supply.

In terms of speed transmission the new technology have redefined the idea of "in time" delivery of time. This is evident by the fact that newspapers have begun offering information on line. Thomsen (1995) calls this model "hyper speed process" that forces the PR practitioners to stay ahead of other news consumers by conducting "pro search". He contends that "most online services event those that update the database every 24 hours still only achieve what has happened. The new focus of issues tracking and issues management for these practitioners is to "capture" the "news" before it may actually be published in the mainstream daily or trade press.

Johnson (1997) internet enables PR practitioners to do more work in less time. Productivity is enhanced by tools such as e-mail to clients, employees, customers and other relevant stakeholders, electronic calendars and databases. The speed of transmission and increased timelessness of messages are constant pluses to the Internet technology. A study on the Internet continued impact in 1998 revealed

that public relations agencies are seeking internet as an important tool for increasing productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. Dern (1997) argues that the information overload is a serious probe. He says, "Anyone who has come near the internet is probably too aware that we are drowning in data. We are reaching our threshold of how much total news we can consume or even be aware of."

PR Practitioners can research their own industry or company finding out more about the competitor, look into potential clients and generally find information on almost any topic imaginable. According to Lescher (1995) e-mail is one of the most widely used service on the internet that offers viable option for collecting data from many target populations. Chisholm (1995) argues that e-mail survey is "more important, more interesting, more enjoyable and more relaxing than paper based surveys. Oppermann (1995) supports this view by saying that email surveys make a good alternative to traditional phone surveys that due to misuses, often are less representative and more expensive.

Notable advantages of e-mail survey according to Oppermann (1995) include immediate return of undeliverables. Researchers no longer have to wait for a week to determine which surveys were undelivered which is an important feature especially when targeting a large population high response rate. Oppermann (1995) examined a number of studies that compared traditional mail surveys to e-mail surveys. The e-mail response rates were found to be superior to those of traditional mail survey. The respond speed of e-mail is much quicker than that of traditional mail survey. Costs of e-mail survey are very economical because the need for postage, phone and manual data entry is eliminated. Unlike the traditional mail surveys the costs of e-mail survey are not proportional to the number of respondents. Thus more respondents can be included in surveys, yielding more complete data Chisholm (1995). Interview bias is eliminated because e-mail surveys are self-administered.

2.5.3 Challenges of Internet to PR Practices

Besides the fact that the internet has revolutionized the PR communication, it has also brought about new challenges to PR practices. The new technology has made organisations more open to scrutiny by customers. According to Eisenbery & Goodall (1997) dissatisfied customers can use internet to tell the whole world about a bad experience with a company's product or service. This is to say that online sabotage is a major threat to PR information. Geimann (2001) contend that this is a practice of critics building website to stage attack on an organisation's practices. Damaging messages can be spread globally instantly using Internet resulting to organisations or individuals lose of credibility. Ha & Pratt (2000). For example in February 2007 recently there was an e-mail circulating with damaging information about the Nation Media Group (NMG) employees alleging sex scandals at workplace. www.nationmediagroup.wordpress.com.

According to Wakelield (2000) PR practitioners should be skilled not only in communication but also in global economics, politics, mediation and cultural anthropology. Grupp (2000) supports this view saying that the task of managing and protecting the online image of an organisation belong to PR specialists but not Information Communication Technology (ICT) staff or marketing department. This implies that PR practitioners should be trained as e-communicators. Fogelman (2001) suggests that PR practitioners must keep up with technological changes and possess the latest knowledge skills and ideas in this area including knowledge of software products such as *Vocus PR*, which is used to build and manage campaigns. Practitioners need the necessary technical competencies to facilitate media coverage via the internet. They need to know how to compile e-media releases, graphics, file attachments and links to website and how to establish an online media room complete with current media releases, fact sheets, contact information and continuous updates. Schenkaen (2001); Lissauer (2000) points out that practitioners need to know how to provide information in the format required by an online newsroom. They must know how to deliver information in

downloadable and multimedia form including streaming video and audio, corporate logos and graphics, power point slides presenting financial spreadsheets and photography. Lisauer (2000).

PR professional should also be aware of other additional responsibilities with regard to internet. Ha and Pratt (2000) says that practitioners neglect to regularly update websites to mention when the information was lastly updated the issue of privacy of visitors and also fail to include interactive devices and some form of survey and feedback section on the organisation website. Johnson (1997) asserts that initially PR practice began using computers for word processing, budgeting and media database management but later the scope expounded to include programme evaluation and communication with colleagues. Today the PR has entered the "wave" of technological change in the field.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Research Methods

This chapter deals with the research methods that will be used to meet the objectives of the study.

3.10 Research Design

The research design used was survey. Cooper and Emory (1995) contend that surveying is widely used in business research. Carefully designed pilot questionnaires were used combined with face to face and telephone interview. Graham (1996).

3.20 Population of study

The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) has a total of three hundred and fifty (350) registered practitioners. The members are mainly drawn from Government ministries, Development Partners, Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Consulting firms, public and private sectors. The study focused only on Public Relations Practitioners who are registered members with PRSK because their professional practices are guided by the PRSK code of conduct a body that regulates PR practices in Kenya.

The study was geographically being limited to Nairobi city because majority public relations practitioners are working in Nairobi. Other information required for the purpose of this study was conveniently, easily accessed and obtained from Public Relations Society of Kenya offices whose offices are based in Nairobi.

3.30 Sample and Sampling Design

The sample size consisted of a population of 96 PR practitioners registered with PRSK who were selected randomly and interviewed. This is in line with Wayne

(1996) rule of the thumb that to be representative a sample ought to have a minimum of 30 units. Responses received from the participants who are registered members of PRSK were taken to be a representative of sample population.

Table 1: A breakdown of the sample of the respondents

No.	Classification of Sample Population	No.
1	Government Ministries	35
2	Public sector	19
3	Private sector	30
4	Development partners	6
5	Other	6
	Total	96

3.1.5 Data Collection Methods

A questionnaire was used as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire had both open ended and closed questions. The close-ended questions were constructed based on information the researcher gathered from the members of population under study and literatures collected in the process of preparing for the study. The open-ended questions were made to allow the respondents to express their views freely.

Data collection was conducted in three different methods. Firstly a questionnaire was administered either on drop and pick basis or the researcher completed the questionnaire as she interviewed the respondents. Secondly a questionnaire was sent out via e-mail to the respondents, requesting feedback through the same channel. And finally the researcher attended a workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which was organised by PRSK targeting PR practitioners. She took advantage of the forum to have the questionnaires filled and this proved to be

the most effective method of data collection because all administered questionnaires were completed and returned.

A total of 120 PR practitioners were approached to participate in the study in order to reach the target sample size of 105. However in the feedback received there were ninety-six (96) usable questionnaires. Nine (9) questionnaires were not used because the respondents were not members of PRSK and fifteen (15) questionnaires were not returned.

3.1.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analysed using Spss statistical analysis software. Visual representation such as frequency tables, bar and pie charts were used to present research findings.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

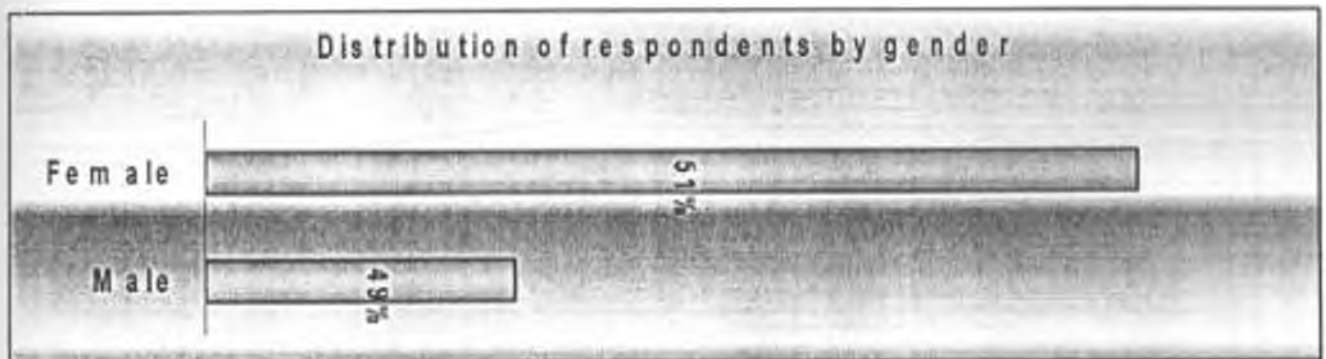
The researcher collected data on issues relating to this study using questionnaire. The data was analysed using Spss statistical analysis software. Visual representation such as frequency tables, bar charts, and pier charts were used to present the summary statistics.

4.10 Research Findings

Gender

There was a very even distribution between male and female PR practitioners. (male 49% and female 51%). The ratio in gender is so close, an indication that the profession has become very competitive field in the Kenyan job market.

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by Gender



Age

The respondents were asked to state their age. In an attempt to make results more interpretable the ages were grouped into four age categories. As you can see from table 4.0 below PR practitioners aged 31-40 representing 54% formed the majority of the respondents. Only 28% fall in the first category of 21-30 years and

18% in age group 41-50. None of the respondents falls in the category of 50 and above years old.

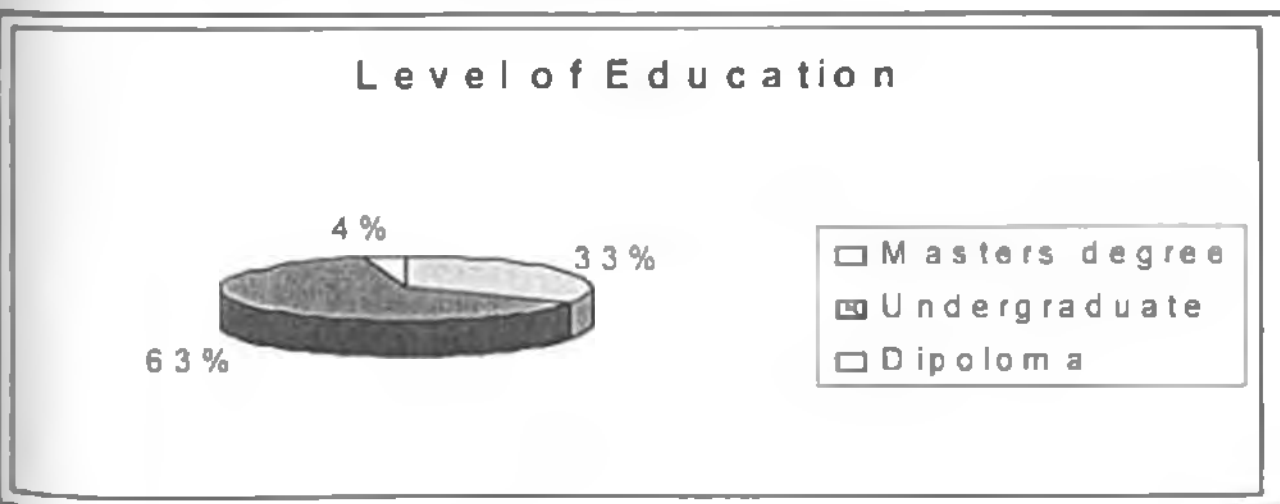
Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
21-30 years	28	28
31-40	51	54
41-50	17	18
Above 50	0	0
Total	96	100%

Education

The respondents were asked to state their highest level of education. The majority (63%) of respondents have attained university education, 33% postgraduate and 4% diploma. Arguably it can be said that the respondents who participated in this study are well educated people with sound PR qualifications. See figure 4.3 below.

Figure 5: Education level of the respondents



Industry

The respondents were given an opportunity to indicate industry in which their organization operates in order to help the researcher in interpreting certain aspects more clearly. 36% of the respondents work for the government, 32% private sector, 20% public sector, development and other represent 6% respectively. (See annexure 1)

Work Experience

46% of PR practitioners indicated that they have worked for a period of between 0-5 years (24%) 5-10 years; (15%) 10-15 years; (15%) 15-20 years. None of the respondents indicated having worked for more than 20 years. These data indicate that there is a rapid growth in the field PR practices in Kenya than it was the case 20 years ago. It also means that the majority of PR professionals are young people. See table 4.1 below.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Work Experience

<i>Years worked</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0-5	44	46%
5-10	25	24%
10-15	16	15%
15-20	11	15%
<i>Total</i>	96	100%

Job Title

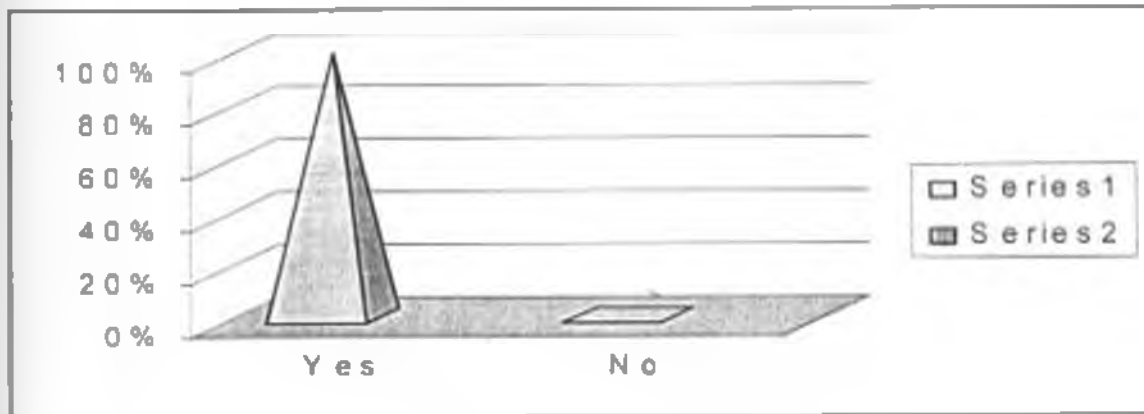
Given the range of employers, qualifications and experience PR practitioners are given varying job titles although they perform similar tasks. The researcher in an attempt to find out the title(s) mostly used by the practitioners asked the

respondents to give the title they are identified with at their work place. The findings show that the majority (33%) of respondents hold Public Relations Managers job title, 20% Communications Affairs Manager, 14% Communications Manager and the minority 4% Marketing Manager. The minority percentage of 4% in the marketing is a clearly indication of the fact that marketing and public relations are two distinct professions requiring different skills. See annexure 2.

Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) Membership

As earlier indicated in the study, the sample was drawn from PR practitioners who are registered members of PRSK. In order to be sure that all respondents are registered members of PRSK, respondents were asked to indicate if they are registered members of PRSK or not. The study analyses are based on 96 questionnaires whose respondents are registered members of PRSK those who did not meet this requirement their questionnaires were rejected.

Figure 6: PRSK Membership



The following questions (nos. 9 to 22) were specifically constructed to explore motives and uses of Internet by PR practitioners

Activities Carried Out By PR Departments

Regarding activities carried out by the PR department a larger fraction of respondents 86% indicate that they undertake Publicity campaigns, Coordinating & Managing corporate events 84%, Publications 84%, Crisis/Reputation management 82%, corporate communication 74%, Press Release 57%, community relations 28% and other activities 27%. See table 4.2 below.

The findings confirm that organisations carried out similar PR activities. This shows that the practitioners are driven by similar motives when deciding on which media to use to carryout PR activities.

Table 4: PR department Activities

	Number	Percentage
Corporate communication	71	74
Media Relations	37	39
Publicity Campaigns	83	86
Crisis /Reputation Management	79	82
Coordinating & Managing Corporate events	81	84
Producing Publications	81	84
Corporate Social Responsibility	26	27
Press Release	55	57
Community Relations	27	28
Other	26	27

Uses of Internet for PR activities

83 out of 96 (86%) of the respondents said that they use Internet less than 13 out of 96 (14%) said no as indicated in figure 4.3 below. From this perspective it can

be concluded that majority of PR practitioners have integrated Internet use in all their activities.

Figure 7: Uses of Internet for PR activities

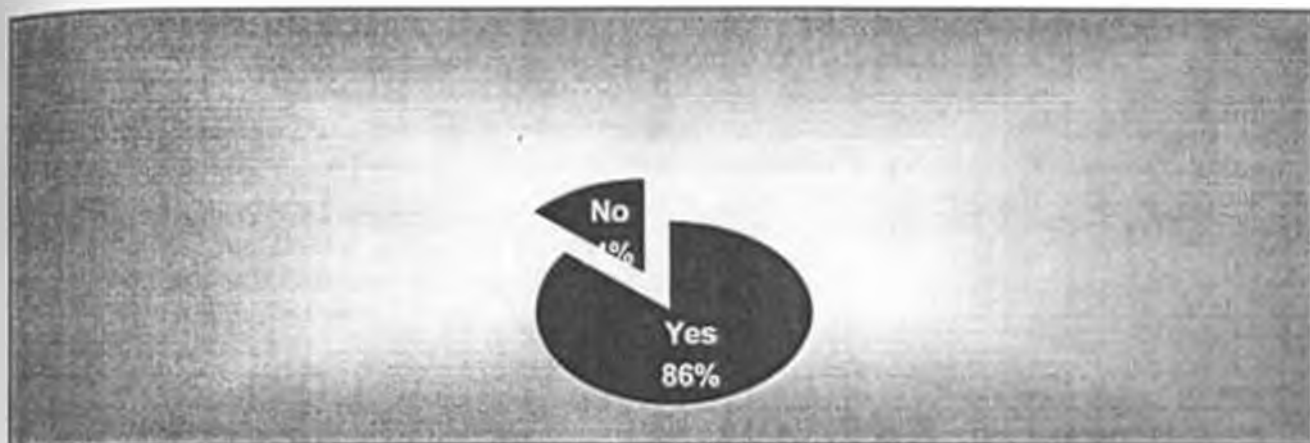


Table 5: Motives for Using Internet

	Number	Percentage
Increased productivity, effectiveness & Efficiency	81	84
High speed of information transmission	83	86
Increased timelessness of messages	71	74
Low communication costs	90	94

The study strongly revealed that the PR practitioners are seeing the Internet as an important tool for low communication costs 94%, high speed of information transmission 86%, increased productivity, effectiveness and efficiency 84% and increased timelessness of messages 74%.

The high percentage above 70 percent is evidence that information, low communication costs, high speed of information transmission, increased productivity, efficiency and timelessness of messages are key factors that motivate PR practitioners to use Internet.

Frequency of Internet usage

Majority (82%) use Internet on a daily basis, 8% thrice, 6% once and 3% twice. Suggesting that PR practitioners are heavy consumers of the Internet media. See table 4.4 below.

Table 6: Frequency of Internet usage

	Number	Percentage
Once	6	6
Twice	3	3
Thrice	8	8
Daily	79	82

Influence of PR activities by the Internet

When asked if the Internet has influenced PR activities, 95% of the respondents said yes with a minority of 5% saying no. See annexure 3.

Table 7: Uses of Internet

	Number	Percentage
Low communication costs	87	91
Using Internet to reach wide target audience	91	95
Increased productivity and efficiency	88	92
Information gathering	87	91
High speed of information transmission	90	94
Using News groups to web cast corporate published discussions and other activities	62	54

There was a lot of response to this question on uses of Internet by PR practitioners. 95% said they use Internet to reach diverse target audience. 92% said that Internet enables them to do more work in less time using productivity enhanced tools such as e-mails to clients, employees and other publics. Low communication costs and information gathering scored 91% respectively. While 54% said they use Internet facilities such as news groups to web cast corporate published discussion and other activities.

Main objectives for Internet Media

The majority of the respondents (88%) said that they use internet to create awareness of products and service, 78% global reach, 73% increase sales volume, 70%, crisis management, 69% enhance and maintain reputation while a minority 10% represent other uses as depicted on table 4.6 below.

From this perspective it is clear that PR practitioners are using Internet to articulate most of their activities. The high rate at which they are using Internet is a clear indication that the Internet media has positively revolutionised the PR practices. Arguably it can be said that the Internet has become a major medium for PR activities as compared to other traditional media of PR practices.

Table 8: Main objective of using Internet

	Number	Percentage
Enhance & Maintain Reputation	66	69
Create awareness of products & services	85	88
Crisis Management	68	70
Increase sales volume	70	73
Global reach	75	78
Other	10	9.6

Internet tools regularly used to communicate PR initiatives

Traditionally the tools of Internet communications are e-mail services, online discussions, information gathering, newsgroups, web-based events, publishing and social networking.

In order to measure the rate at which the PR practitioners are using Internet media to achieve PR objectives, respondents were asked to identify Internet tools that they use regularly to communicate PR initiatives. 100% of the respondents said they use E-mail services, 91% information gathering, 45% news groups, 34% publishing, 22% Web based events, 20% social networking while online discussion and other initiatives take 16% and 7% respectively. See table 9 below.

Table 9: Internet tools regularly used by PR practitioners

	Number	Percentage
E-mail services	96	100
Information gathering	87	91
News groups	43	45
Web based events	21	22
Publishing	33	34
Social networking	19	20
Online discussions	15	16
Other	7	7

Primary target Audience for Internet communication

Targeted media along with a consistent messages tailored to each target audience are what it takes to make communication more effective today. The catch word is "careful targeting". The respondents were asked indicate primary target audience

for their Internet use. 94% of respondents said that they use Internet to communicate to the customers, 91% employees, 77% Investors, Governments and Other represent 54% respectively. See figure 8 below.

Figure 8: Primary target audiences for Internet use

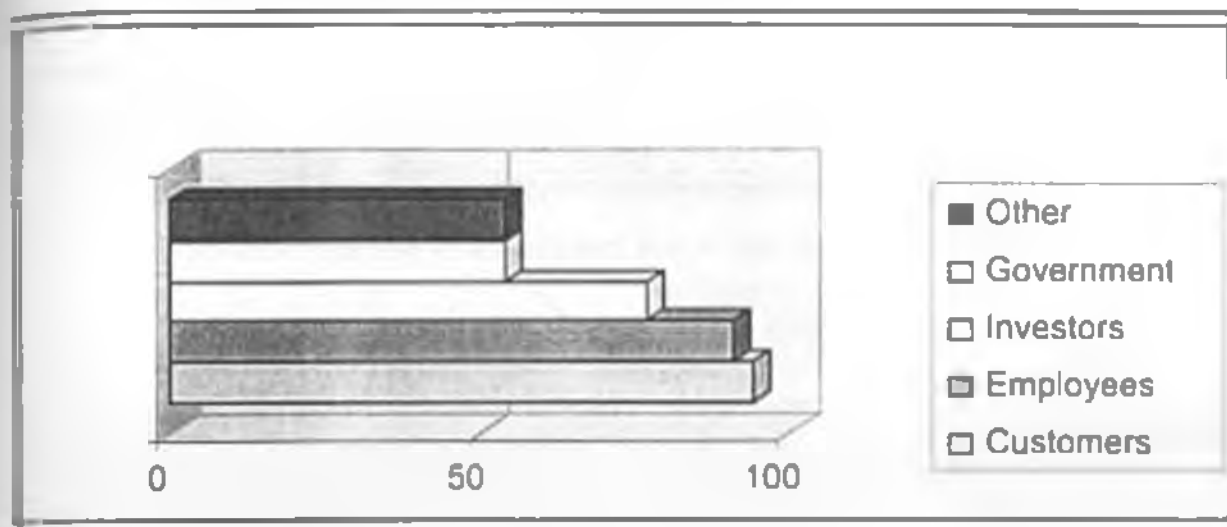


Table 10: Motives for Internet usage

	Number	Percentage
Media reliability and convenience	66	69
Low communication costs	85	88
Fast and quick way to gather information	90	94
Media richness	79	82
Two way communication channel	70	73

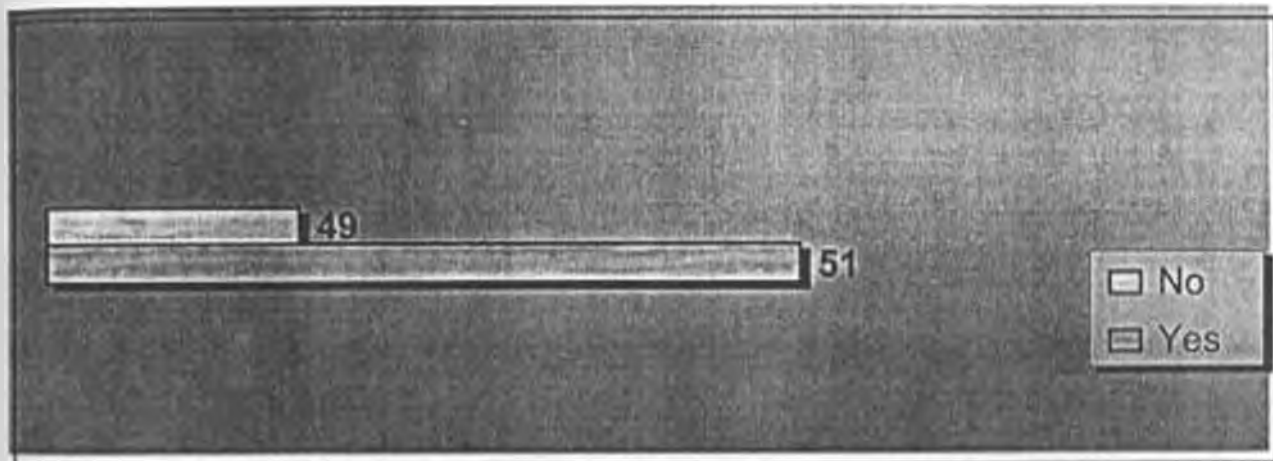
94% of the respondents indicated that they were using Internet because of fast and quick way to gather information; 88% for because of low communication

costs: 82% media richness; 73% two way communication and 69% media reliability and convenience.

Challenges for using Internet

The issues of having challenges when using Internet seems to be at a balance with 51% of respondents saying they have challenges for using Internet while 49% said they did not have any challenges. The discrepancy on the challenges faced by practitioners when using Internet may be explained by the fact that most of PR practitioners lack the necessary skills to use Internet necessitating proper training in order to ensure optimize use of all Internet tools. See figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Challenges for using Internet



Specific challenges mentioned by the respondents include 73% lack of privacy, 69% low downloading speed, 54% most Internet tools not user friendly and 29% limited facilities. See table 11 below.

Table 11: Challenges faced by PR practitioners when using Internet

	Number	Percentage
Low downloading speed	66	69
Tools not user friendly	52	54
Limited facilities	28	29
Lack of privacy	70	73

Overall Rating of Internet Channel for PR communication

To have a clear understanding of how practitioners perceive Internet media communication, the respondents were asked to give an overall rating of Internet media for PR communication. Most of the respondents (55%) said the channel was excellent, 41% good, 2% said it was neither good nor poor. None of the respondents rated the channel as poor. See table 13 below.

Table 13: Overall rating of Internet channel for PR communication.

	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	53	55
Good	41	43
Neither good nor poor	2	2
Poor	0	0
Total	96	100

SECTION B: respondents' opinion regarding use of Internet

A total of 14 statements were used in this section of the questionnaire (section B, questions 1-14). These statements focused on uses, benefits and challenges for using Internet. Table 4.12 summaries the results in terms of percentages of the 14 statements as depicted below.

Table 14: Respondents' Level of Agreement

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT REGARDING INTERNET MEDIUM FOR PR COMMUNICATION	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
PR practitioners get adequate information from the Internet	29%	59%	10%	1%
Information disseminated through Internet is highly private and cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons	7%	15%	56%	22%
Anonymity is guaranteed when communicating through Internet	6%	33%	52%	10%
Information disseminated through Internet is highly confidential	3%	15%	66%	16%
Internet facilitates better, faster and less expensive communication to Internal and External publics	45%	45%	8%	2%
Internet is the most effective media to communicate PR activities compared to other traditional media	10%	35%	44%	10%
PR practitioners use Internet to reach diverse audiences in the most effective and convenient way.	25%	56%	16%	3%
Internet provides adequate information to PR practitioners than any other media of communication	19%	52%	29%	0%
Internet technology has more pitfalls in credibility management	20%	46%	29%	5%
Internet has positively revolutionised the way PR practitioners communicate	38%	52%	8%	0%
Internet has negatively revolutionised the way PR practitioners communicate	2%	9%	68%	20%
Internet enables PR practitioners build reputation with stakeholders in the most effective and convenient manner	27%	69%	4%	0%
PR practitioners use Internet to develop and maintain social networks	39%	58%	3%	0%
PR practitioners monitor competition, retrieve information and facilitate communication in the most convenient way using Internet.	36%	61%	3%	0%

- **Information Gathering:** Most (59%) practitioners agreed that through Internet they gather adequate information as opposed to the minority (1%). Further the majority (44%) of the respondents said that Internet is the most effective media to communicate PR activities compared to other traditional media.
- **Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality:** The majority (56%) disagreed with the statement that information disseminated through Internet is highly private and cannot be accessed by unauthorised person as opposed to a minority of 7% strongly agreed with the statement. This is an indication that privacy is not guaranteed when using Internet media. This view is supported by the finding that majority (52%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that anonymity is guaranteed when communicating through the Internet. More so majority (66%) of the respondents said that information disseminated through Internet is not highly confidential.
- **Media reach and frequency:** 56% of the respondents said that they used Internet to reach diverse audiences in the most effective and convenient way as opposed to a minority (3%) who disagreed with the statement.
- **Enhancing reputation:** Good work relations with the relevant stakeholder have positive effects on business performance. PR practitioners are better placed than any one else to enhance positive corporate image and this is achieved through effective communication. From the study results it is apparent that the Internet is not a good media for reputation management. 46% of the respondents said that the Internet has more pitfalls in credibility management with only a 5% of the respondents affirming to the statement. Unfortunately the finding is contradicted by the majority (69%) respondents who said that Internet enables PR practitioners to build reputation with stakeholders in the most effective and convenient manner.

- **Market competition:** Majority (61%) of the respondents said that PR practitioners use Internet to monitor competition retrieve business information and facilitate communication in the most convenient way.
- **Revolution of PR practices by Internet media:** The survey findings reflect that Internet has positively revolutionised PR practitioners' practices as large as a proportion of respondents (62%) supported the statement that Internet has positively revolutionised PR practices as compared to the minority (5%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. Furthermore the finding is supported by the results revealed later in the study that 65% of respondents disagreed with the statement that Internet has negatively revolutionised PR communications strategy.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE

5.10 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.10 Summary

The aim of this study was to understand the motives for Public Relations using Internet. The study revealed that there are many factors motivating use of Internet by the PR practitioners. Information gathering, low costs communication, email services were among the common reasons for using Internet. While features such as newsgroups, web events, online discussion appear to be underutilized.

Overall the findings indicate that PR practitioners are using Internet more than any other media and that the Internet has positively revolutionized the PR practices. A summary of the motives and uses of internet by the PR practitioners as outlined below:-

5.1.1 Motives of Using Internet.

The study results indicate that there are a number of factors motivating use of Internet by PR practitioners including high speed in communication, interactivity function, information gathering, low communication costs, more target audience etc. Information gathering, high speed of communication and low communication costs appeared to be the dominant and consistent motives for Internet use by the practitioners. Media relations, newsgroup discussion and enhancing credibility were weak motives

The survey revealed that PR departments carryout similar activities and that the practitioners have similar motives for Internet using to achieve business objectives.

The main activities undertaken by PR function include publicity campaigns, coordinating and managing events, producing publications, managing crisis and reputation, corporate communication and community relations. The study findings show that Internet facilitates the practitioners to do more work in less time due to the high speed of information transmission. The increased timeliness of messages has increased the practitioners' productivity, effectiveness and efficiency at work place. The practitioners can access information as soon as it is posted and provide feedback using e-mail services. Use of e-mails services has lowered communication costs and the practitioners are able to keep touch with the customers at the clip of a mouse.

5.1.2 Internet uses

To measure the rate of Internet use the respondents were asked to state if they are using Internet and to specify the number of times in a week they use Internet. The results indicate that 95% of the respondents use Internet and 88% alluded to the fact that they use Internet on a daily basis.

The study revealed that the practitioners mostly use Internet to create awareness of products and service, global reach (reach diverse clients), increase sales volume, crisis management and maintaining reputation. This reflects that there are a variety of Internet uses that satisfy the practitioners' needs. With the use of email services, search engines, newsgroups, interactive function and other tools, more power is placed in the hands of practitioners to process and present information to customers, employees, investors and other publics on time and in the most efficient manner. In addition the ability to access to archival data, allows practitioners to comb through data in ways that were inconceivable before the Internet.

The study revealed that practitioners are using Internet to channel messages that are designed to influence consumer demands more quickly and to receive feedback through the same channel. It suggests that the Internet has transformed mass communication from a sender-based model to a receiver-based model a transformation which has important implications for PR communication initiatives. Another important aspect of PR is to enhance positive corporate image hence the Internet provides a mechanism to facilitate communication interchange and enable stakeholders' discussion in ways that were impossible twenty years ago.

5.1.4 Challenges of using Internet

Although the Internet provides an expanded horizon for the PR field, the practitioners are faced with many challenges when incorporating this media into practices. The study revealed the practitioners perceive the internet as unreliable medium for PR communication. This finding suggests that the practitioners have experienced problems such as information sabotages, privacy and copyright issues associated with free flow of information.

Other challenges that the study revealed include low user skills, slow download of information, limited facilities and lack of monitoring of content. Although the practitioners are well educated and well trained in the field of PR, the study shows that the practitioners are not fully utilizing most of the Internet tools as it should have been the case a challenge which is attributed to lack of proper skills on Internet use.

5.20 Conclusion

Today PR practitioners have come to appreciate the need to use the latest communication technologies in order to be competitive in the 21st century. The practitioners are using the Internet for information gathering, e-mails services, newsgroup, online services etc. As the president of the United States, Bill Clinton, mentioned during an Endorsement of technology, "technology is reshaping our world at an astounding speed WHPR (1995)". Internet has revolutionized PR practices.

Scholars Perse & Coutright (1993) argue that perceptions of the media's ability to gratify needs are influenced by attributes of the media, specially the content and mode of transmission. Indeed this study has revealed that Internet can satisfy different needs of PR practitioners. The Internet has various functions such as chat rooms, email services, discussion forums, web events, listservs etc, which do not compete functionally with traditional media like television. Especially the major uses of Internet such as information gathering and downloading information do not compete functionally with act of passive watching television.

The study suggests that the aforementioned functions of the Internet largely gratify information needs for the practitioners and consequently this motivates their use of the Internet. The Internet represents the latest in communication technology and provides an immediacy and global awareness that have not been available through other channels. The practitioners are able to have interactions not only in other parts of the country but around the world. Thus the practitioners can learn and gather more information that impact on their practices globally. They can access, relevant discussions hosted by the Internet and use these discussions to share experiences and ideas with other professionals in the world.

5.30 Recommendations

In generally the Internet media is able to satisfy a variety of needs for PR practitioners and indeed this has motivated their use of Internet. In this regard it is therefore recommended that public relations practitioners and scholars work together to help guide the future of the Internet in ways that are beneficial to the PR professions, clients and to the greater society. There is need for the PR professionals to learn more ways in which to use the different tools and resources provided by the Internet in order to be competitive in their practices.

The study gives room for further research to be undertaken to unearth other issues pertaining to the motives and uses of Internet by PR practitioners now and in the future.

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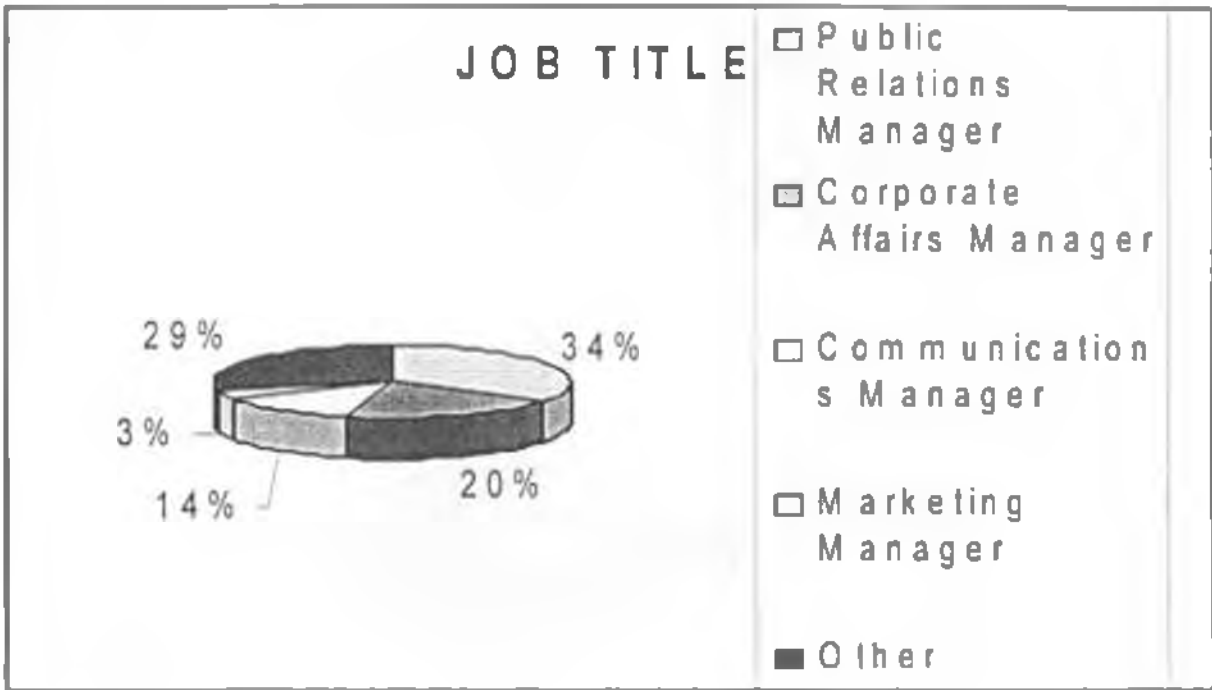
<http://www.youngmedia.org.au/publications> - Mind over Media

[Wikipedia encyclopedia.com](http://Wikipedia.encyclopedia.com)

Annexure 1: Distribution of organisations represented by industry base

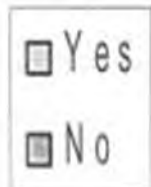
	Frequency	Percentage
Government	35	36
Public Sector	19	20
Private Sector	30	32
Development Partners	6	6
Other	6	6
TOTAL	96	100

Annexure 2: Job Titles



Annexure 3: Influence of PR activities by Internet

HOW INTERNET HAS INFLUENCED PR ACTIVITIES



June 27th 2007

Dear Respondent,

RESEARCH PROJECT

The undersigned is a Master of Arts student pursuing Communication Studies at the University of Nairobi. As a partial fulfillment of the award of the above degree I am undertaking a study on public relations motives and uses of Internet.

For this purpose you are kindly requested to fill in the attached questionnaire which is designed to gather information pertaining to the subject matter. Your response will be treated in the strict confidence and in no circumstance your name or that of your organization will be mentioned in the report. Further confidentiality will be ensured through the necessary coding of the survey findings.

Your support in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

ANNEOOKO

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Gender (tick where applicable)

Male ()

Female ()

2. Age

Below 20 yrs ()

21-30 years ()

31-40 years ()

41-50 years ()

Over 51 year ()

3. Level of Education

Elementary ()

High School ()

College Certificate ()

Diploma ()

Degree ()

Masters ()

PhD ()

4. Name of your organisation _____

5. Which industry is your organisation?

Government ()

Public sector ()

Private sector ()

Manufacturing ()

Development partners ()

Other specify _____

6. How long have you been with the Organisation?

0-5 years ()

5-10 ()

10-15 ()

15-20 ()

Above 20 ()

7. What is your job title?
Public Relations Manager ()
Corporate Affairs Manager ()
Communications Manager ()
Marketing Manager ()
Other Specify _____

8. Are you a registered member of Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK)?
Yes ()
No ()

9. What activities are carried out by your PR department? (Select all that apply)
Corporate Communication ()
Media relations ()
Publicity campaigns ()
Crisis /Reputation Management ()
Coordinating & Managing Corporate events ()
Producing publications ()
Press release ()
Corporate Social Responsibility ()
Community Relations ()
Other (please specify) _____

10. Do you use Internet to communicate your PR activities?
Yes ()
No ()

11. Give reasons to support your answer

12. How frequently do you use Internet? Specify number of times in a week

13. In your opinion has the Internet influenced PR activities?
Yes ()

14. If yes to (13) above in what ways has the Internet influenced PR activities

15. What are your main objectives for communicating PR activities using the Internet media?

Enhance and maintain reputation ()

Create awareness of products and services ()

Crisis Management ()

Increase sales volume ()

Global reach ()

Other specify _____

16. What Internet tools do you use regularly to communicate your PR initiatives? (select all that apply)

E-mail (receiving and sending messages) ()

Information gathering ()

News groups ()

Web-based events ()

Publishing ()

Social networking ()

Online discussion forums ()

Other (specify) ()

17. Who are the primary target audience for your Internet audiences? (please select your 3 top audiences).

Customers ()

Employees ()

Investors ()

Government ()

Other (specify) _____

18. Please give reasons why you use Internet for your chosen audiences.

19. As a PR practitioner do you have any challenges when using Internet?

Yes ()

No ()

20. If yes to (19) above please state the challenges you encounter

21. In your opinion why do PR professionals use Internet? (select all that apply)

Speed ()

More targeted audience ()

New media ()

Cost effective ()

Gather more information ()

Credibility/trust ()

Media relations ()

Reputation Management ()

Other specify _____

22. Overall how do you rate Internet as a channel of PR communications compared to other media such as radio, television, Newspapers, Magazines, Billboards etc.)

Excellent ()

Good ()

Neither good nor poor ()

Poor ()

B. Please state your level of agreement with the following statements

1. PR practitioners get adequate information from the Internet

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

2. The information disseminated through the Internet is highly private and cannot be accessed by unauthorised person(s)

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

3. Anonymity is guaranteed when communicating through the Internet
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | () |
| Agree | () |
| Disagree | () |
| Strongly disagree | () |
4. Information disseminated through the Internet is highly confidential
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | () |
| Agree | () |
| Disagree | () |
| Strongly disagree | () |
5. Internet facilitates better, faster and less expensive communication both to internal and external publics
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | () |
| Agree | () |
| Disagree | () |
| Strongly disagree | () |
6. Internet is the most effective media to communicate PR activities compared to other traditional media of PR such as television, Radio, Newspapers etc
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | () |
| Agree | () |
| Disagree | () |
| Strongly disagree | () |
7. PR practitioners use Internet to reach diverse audiences in the most effective and convenient way.
- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | () |
| Agree | () |
| Disagree | () |
| Strongly disagree | () |
8. Internet provides adequate information to PR practitioners than any other media of communication.
- | | |
|----------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | () |
| Agree | () |
| Disagree | () |

Strongly disagree ()

9. The Internet technology has more pitfalls in credibility management.

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

10. The Internet has positively revolutionised the way PR practitioners communicate

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

11. The Internet has negatively revolutionised the way PR practitioners communicate

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

12. The Internet enables PR practitioners build reputation with stakeholders in the most effective and convenient manner.

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

13. PR practitioners use Internet to develop and maintain social networks.

strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()

14. Using Internet PR practitioners can monitor competition, quickly retrieved information and facilitate communication to employees and customers in the most convenient way.

Strongly agree ()

Agree ()

Disagree ()

Strongly disagree ()