

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN
ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.**

A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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DECLARATION

STUDENTS DECLARATION:

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university for examination.

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Signed..........

Date.....15/11/2012.....

SUPERVISORS DECLARATION:

This project has been submitted for examination purposes with my approval as the University supervisor.

Signed..........

Date..15th November 2012.....

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family for their constant encouragement and for being patient enough to see me go through my academic struggle thus realizing my long cherished dream.

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The completion of this research project would have been impossible without the material and moral support from various people. It is my obligation therefore to extend my gratitude to them. First of all I thank the almighty God for giving me good health, and guiding me through the entire course.

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ABSTRACT

Majority of the public universities in Kenya, draw their students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds thus they are rich in diversity. However, the peace and tranquility at most of the university and other public institutions of higher learning has been elusive because of the social cohesion related problems. There is great need for enhancing social cohesion in the Kenyan universities to avert this situation. PR is a key strategy that the public institution management would benefit from to achieve social cohesion among its diverse population. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The target population were the students and staff of the University of Nairobi. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample. The study sample consisted of 120 students and twenty key informants. The primary data collection instrument was a questionnaire.

From the findings, the study concluded that the PR strategies adopted by the university to create social cohesion were not effective. The most significant PR strategies used to create social cohesion were; campus-wide presentations seminars, resource centers and campus informational fairs on social cohesion respectively. The university management was not fully committed to enhancing social cohesion. The university management only applied the use of PR during crisis. The study recommends that the university management should review the policies and strategies on the implementation of PR programmes and incorporate them as an integral part of the university policies. The study recommends that the university management should address the bottlenecks hindering the implementation of PR programmes by adopting a hybrid approach of PR strategies and tools to revitalize PR function on social cohesion. The study also recommends that the university management should offer continuous training to the staff on use of PR in enhancing social cohesion to keep them up-to date with modern PR skills. At the same time advocacy forums should be enhanced on social cohesion in the university to encourage interaction and conversations on topics concerned with diversity and difference, such as political and social views, racism and discrimination, women's rights, and national politics.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

PR - Public Relations

UoN - University of Nairobi

NCIC -National Cohesion and Integration

RTCEA- Royal Technical College of East Africa

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Social cohesion involves building shared values among communities, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community (Judith Maxwell, 1996: 12). Social cohesion has also been defined as the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding polarization. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means. Regardless the possible conflicting intentions with macro-cohesion, social cohesion is also an important determinant of the quality of life, where a community with a high level of cohesion is characterized by voluntary, high in intimacy, and reciprocal services tends to be health-promoting. It also can generate social capital through number of mechanisms and can easily get support from community members (Bruhn, 2009:14).

On the other hand public relations refer to the building of good relations with the company's various public by obtaining favorable publicity (Lages and Simkin, 2003:54), building up a good corporate image and handling or heading off unfavorable rumors. The initial stage of public relations was publicity, which simply meant an activity or by planting news about it in media. According to Lages and Simkin (2003:54) public relations; often referred to as PR gains an organization or individual exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment. Public relations activities and policies are used to create public interest in a person, idea, product, institution, or business establishment. As Skinner (1994:16) adds, public relations serves the public interest, develops mutual understanding between organizations and their publics, contributes to informed debates about issues in society, and facilitates a dialogue between organizations and their publics. By its nature, public relations is devoted to serving particular interests by presenting them to the public in the

most favorable light (Broom and Smith, 1987:34) .Thus, the goal of the public relations consultant is to create, through the organization of news and advertising, an advantageous image for his client, be it a business corporation, cultural institution, or private or public individual; towards this end, the making of favorable public opinion ,many research techniques and communications media are used.

Public relations should be seen as a management function in any organization. An effective communication, or public relations plan for an organization is developed to communicate to an audience (whether internal or external publics) in such a way that the message coincides with organizational goals and seeks to benefit mutual interests whenever possible (Miller,1989:76). Practitioners in excellent PR departments have learned ethical and effective principles of public relations. Some have gained this knowledge from experience, self-study, or professional development courses.

According to Wilcox (2002:89), public relations is defined as the management function that identifies ,establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationship between an organizational and various publics on whom its success or failure depends. The management function is also emphasized in managing public understanding of communication between an organization and the various publics. It should foster open communications and mutual understanding with the idea that an organization also changes its attitudes and behavior in the process (Carty,1992:122). PR is that function of management charged with responsibility for effective communication to various stakeholders. However, it has to be supported by the other functions as well. Admittedly, PR also has other functions (Cutlip, 2000:43). Lobbying, issues management, crisis communications media relations, sponsorship, internal PR and marketing PR all come to mind. The whole approach to public relations must change as Skinner (1994:3) argues, in order to more accurately reflect the needs of various communities. In communication terms, this means placing greater importance and reliance on recipients' needs throughout the communication process. This emphasis supports the view that public relations is essentially a communication phenomenon rooted in the understanding of social issues.

The world today needs more information, but there has to be sensitive communicators and facilitators who can explain the goals and methods of organizations, individuals, groups and government in a socially responsible manner (Skinner 1994:6.) Equally, such experts in communication and public opinion must provide their employers with information about what others are thinking, their attitudes and their perceptions, "to guide them in setting their policies wisely for the common good" (Wilcox et al. 1992:4).

Therefore, public relations officers must be well educated about the people, issues and challenges in the organization for them to be able to advocate and discuss on issues that unite than those that divide the people in the organization. The deficiency of such knowledge basically explains why today even arguments on general issues of governance are easily and stoutly localized into ethnic or religious prisms. "Matters are simplistically ethicized or religion zed to the detriment of the collective good. It is therefore imperative for individual public relations officers' to have improved knowledge of the organization to lead the initiative. Thus it is important that organization invest in programmes and policies that advance cohesion and integration like the supporting of community town halls, field visits/excursions, and diversity in employment. The organization should be able to deal with grievances arising from the inter-ethnic relations, negative ethnicity in order to promote a lasting cohesion, eliminate ethnic discrimination, hate speech and promote harmonious relations between different ethnic communities (Cutlip, 2000:56). Reflecting the divisive politics in developing countries, the education governance system is highly fragmented along ethno-national lines, making the development of social cohesion a considerable challenge (Cutlip, 2000:56).

In Kenyan, Public and private institutions have been targeted for the role they play in social cohesion. The education of young people should deliberately inculcate positive values on ethnic and race relations because the opinions formed by young people will often be those that they will carry with them throughout their lives into the world. Under the National Cohesion and Integration Policy, public and private institutions are compelled to promote and ensure integration, cohesion and peaceful co-existence.

National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) has proposed a list of items to help foster ethnic, racial, cultural and religious diversity in Kenya with fears that the country may slide to violence like 2007/2008 if the regulations are not observed in all realms (NCIC: 2012:14). This means that institutions of higher learning have a role to play in ensuring that social cohesion is maintained in public and private universities. Social cohesion helps to create a sense of belonging, trust and security, and support aspirations to improve living conditions. Social cohesion also helps to determine the quality of institutions, which in turn impacts on the policies that are devised and how they are implemented. With the increased diversity in higher institutions of learning, social cohesion is vital to enhance conducive learning environment, equity in access to resources and development of institutions and individual learners.

1.1.1 University of Nairobi

The University of Nairobi has formed the largest University in Kenya comprising of six constituent colleges and a large number of employees (University calendar, 2009). Its mission is to provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge (University Service charter, 2011). Its managers at all levels oversee staff, students and other resources to ensure that the University formulates goals and objectives that allow the organization attain results which support its mission statement. The UON is heterogeneous nature in composition of the students and the management. It is the largest university in terms of student enrollment composing of students drawn from varied parts of the country thus they bear different culture, values, beliefs, social and economic background. For people of such diverse backgrounds, social cohesion is inevitable to ensure that the university remains efficient in fulfilling its mandate.

Its history can be traced as far as 1947 when the British colonial government mooted the idea of establishing a technical and commercial institute in Nairobi. Two years later, the

idea had grown to encompass the other two East African countries-Tanzania and Uganda who had also recognized the need for a College to provide higher technical training for their people. In September 1951, the colonial government formally granted a royal charter to the Royal Technical College of East Africa. With grants from the colonial development and welfare funds, the foundation stone was laid by the then Governor, Sir Philip Mitchele in April 1952 (varsity focus souvenir, 1997). The RTCEA opened its doors to its first intake in April 1955. Soon after the need for expert advice on the pattern of higher education in East Africa was identified and in 1958, a working party under the chairmanship of Sir John Lockwood was appointed amongst others, the working party recommended the transformation of the RTCEA in to the second international university college in East Africa.

The East African governments accepted these recommendations and on 25th June 1961 by an act of the East African High Commission, the RTCEA was transformed in to the second University College in East Africa, under the name Royal College Nairobi on 20th May 1964. The Royal College Nairobi was renamed the University College of Nairobi. On attainment of this status, the institution was admitted to a special relation with the University of London in February 1961(UoN calendar 2010). The University College of Nairobi was dissolved with effect from 1st July 1970, and three East African countries set up their own national universities. This development saw the birth of the UoN through an act of parliament. The university was formally inaugurated by the then Chancellor, his Excellency the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta who then was the president of the republic of Kenya in 1970.

Since then the university has experienced rapid expansion in terms of facilities, student's intakes and staffing compliment. This has overburdened the linear management structure. Through an act of parliament in 1983, the UoN was restructured in to six colleges (varsity focus, 1979) as follows: College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS), College of Architecture and Engineering (CAE), College of Education and External Studies (CEES), College of

Health Sciences (CHS) and College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). With the rapid expansion of the university, the communication is critical to create a smooth operation between the various colleges for the university to achieve the world class status. Thus it is critical to examine the effects of public relations in enhancing social cohesion in the University of Nairobi.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social cohesion is currently perceived by many as being at risk. The European Committee for Social Cohesion (2004:4) gives some potential threats to social cohesion like changing employment patterns, doubts about the sustainability of social security systems, social and crime problems that make people feel less secure in their daily lives, growing multiculturalism that threaten traditional identities and inadequate access to new information and communication technologies. Such problems are also being experienced in higher institutions of learning therefore demeaning cohesion among learners in the education environment.

The use of public relations is one of the most important aspects of organizational communications, for it does not only enhance the internal relations and communications of the company or an organization, but it also develops and disseminates the information or knowledge system to all the members in the organization. It has been reported that public relations is a management function, which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interest of an organization followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance, or the process of aligning the perceptions of targeted audiences or publics with the current realities and reasonable prospects of another entity.

Given the difficulty of establishing effective public relations, there are significant benefits of the program to today's management. Through PR being an integral part of strategic management, management programs meet communication objectives, reduces

costs of regulation, pressure, and litigation, while social cohesion among the members of the organization is enhanced (Grunig, Grunig, & Ehling, 1992:43).

The main objective of PR is to communicate to people the image that a certain organization is trying to establish. Once PR is successful, the objective of communication earlier set by the firm is then met. Costs of regulation, pressure and litigation decreases because through an effective and truthful PR, the organization would have no need to hide anything from the public, thus the transparency and the absence of doubts created by secrecy and ambiguity. The message or the image that the organization sends to the public must be consistent with what is happening within the organization. Therefore through positive PR, social cohesion should be high among members of the organization. This is owing to the fact that the members are the ambassadors of the organization to the outside world. Austin & Pinkleton (2001:11) claims that research-based public relations practices enable managers to solve complex problems within their firms, set and achieve or exceed goals and objectives, track the opinions and beliefs of key publics, and employ program strategies with confidence they will have the intended results.

Majority of the public universities in Kenya, draw their students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds thus they are rich in diversity. However, the peace and tranquility at most of the university and other public institutions of higher learning has been elusive mainly because the social cohesion related problems. The situation has been aggravated by the political polarization among the students and the staff, owing to heightened political driven ethnicity in the country (Mushanga, 2008:112). Thus there is urgent need for enhancing social cohesion in the Kenyan universities to avert this situation and foster the conducive environment for learning. Public relations is also used to create and maintain corporate identity in an organization. Public universities encompass students and staffs from diverse backgrounds who need to learn from and appreciate others .Therefore these institutions can be targeted as central places where public relations communications programmes that support social cohesion can be used because the same publics go out reaching the world in diverse ways. Hence, public relations is a key

strategy that the public institution management would benefit from to achieve social cohesion among its diverse population.

It is against this background that the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in organizations should be studied for strategic decision making with regard to enhancing social cohesion. Public relations is concerned essentially with communicating only what has happened and responding to events which affect but has little or no responsibility for influencing policies which may change the perceptions of an organization (Skinner 1994:28).

From the researcher's experience there has not been much discussion in the public domain on the subject in the Kenyan public institutions in scholarly circles. No known study has been done on the role of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public organizations in Kenya. This study was set to bridge this gap in knowledge by investigating the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, by conducting a case study of University of Nairobi.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, a case study of University Of Nairobi

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i. To determine the use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities.
- ii. To identify public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

- iii. To examine the impact of public relations on social cohesion
- iv. To identify appropriate public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion.

1.4 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions;

- i. How is public relations used in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities?
- ii. What are the public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities?
- iii. What is the impact of public relations on social cohesion?
- iv. What are the appropriate public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion?

1.5 Significance of the study

To the management of universities, the findings of this study would provide valuable insight into how public relations could be used to create and enhance social cohesion in the institutions. The study will also provide an opportunity for the university management to re-evaluate its public relations functions in relation to social cohesion.

To Other Organizations: The results may be useful to other organizations who are in the process of developing and implementing public relations functions as part of strategic management and therefore put in place appropriate measures to ensure social cohesion.

The study findings may support the Government of Kenya (GoK), Commission for Higher Education (CHE) and NCIC in the designing of effective programmes to create the immediate and longer-term needs with regard to social cohesion in higher institutions of learning.

This study will contribute valuable information on the impact of PR in enhancing social cohesion. The study would increase the body of knowledge on solving the challenges facing implementation of PR towards enhancing social cohesion and therefore it will be a useful point of reference for further studies to other scholars.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was confined to the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities. The study explored the use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities, the public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities, the impact of public relations on social cohesion and the public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion. University of Nairobi was the geographical scope of the study and therefore the results might not be generalized to other institutions. The research findings might not be generalizable and not applicable to other institutions in Kenya owing to the fact that different universities in the country have different institution related characteristics. The study may also face difficulties in mobilizing students to participate in the study. The study will be further affected by the fact that it might not control the attitude of the respondents while responding to data collection.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms;

Integration refers to any process that brings individuals and diverse communities together and encourages them to belong to a common culture and identity. Integration is enabled by many entities including the Constitution, the national language, national symbols, educational institutions, national curriculum, the politics of ethnic and racial inclusion, road and rail networks, telecommunications, and media. In a well-integrated nation, people from various ethnic and racial communities coexist peacefully and pursue common national social, political, and economic goals.

Cohesion refers to the processes in which people celebrate their ethnic and racial diversity that leads them to unite and collaborate in building and maintaining a common culture that is based on shared values, equity, tolerance, and principles entrenched in a well-integrated society.

Diversity refers to the co-existence of persons from different ethnic, racial or religious communities that have different cultures, values and beliefs in one nation or county or city or town. It is recognizing and appreciating the range of individual unique characteristics in terms of age ,gender identity, culture , education ,sexual orientation, language spoken, religious beliefs, ethnicity, geographical background, disability(mental, learning or physical), economic background, political orientation among other ideologies.

Ethnic and Racial Tolerance refers to the beliefs and practices that promote respect for all individuals in society regardless of their ethnic, racial, religious, cultural or national affiliation or origin.

Public Universities –This are higher education institutions established through institutional Acts of Parliament.

Social Cohesion- This is where a society has a common vision and a sense of belonging for all. The people's diversity from different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued by having similar life opportunities that are developed in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured to cover the concept of public relations, the use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities. The chapter also focuses on the public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities. The impact of public relations on social cohesion has also been explored. In addition, the chapter identified the appropriate public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion. The chapter also gives the theoretical and conceptual frameworks on which the study is based.

2.1.1 The Concept of Public Relations

Generally, public relations (PR) play many responsibilities in building the image and reputation of an organization. According to (Hsu, Shyu and Tzeng, 2005:12), it provides the opportunity for the organization to successfully monitor, interact, and react with other key groups within the organizational environment. Thus, it is defined as: "...the communication and action on the part of an organization that supports the development and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and the groups with which it is interdependent" (Grunig 2002:54).

Further, it is a "management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Hill, 2000:23). PR can be seen as a function motivated by desires to understand or control the environment and to gain understanding from those in the environment, or alternatively, motivated by desires for mutual understanding (Grunig, 2002:32). Also, PR is not merely making a good impression, but more closely about fashioning and projecting credible renditions of reality itself. The services, policies, practices and products of an organization may be excellent, but unless the public

understands these, and recognizes them for what they are, they will be neither used nor appreciated (Skinner 1994:26).

Basically, the reality that public relations credibly render is the reputation of the company. Almost all PR practitioners agree that reputation is one of the keys for organizational success. It should be maintained because once it is tarnished; it could be very difficult to regain (Grunig 1992), though regaining reputation is one of the PR man's job. (Gray, 1998:23) stated: "A company's reputation affects its ability to sell products and services, to attract investors, to hire talented staff, and to exert influence in government circles" . Organizational reputation reflects employee attitudes and beliefs, customer perception, vendors and business partners as well as the community at large (Dozier and Lauzen, 2000). The PR man's job is to publicize all those attributes and traits to the public and to the target people or organization. Many companies have gained enough positive reputation because of effective PR.

For instance, Pepsi-Cola is respected for its moral and ethical values established all over the world. The corporate as well as the social responsibilities of the company contributed to their eventual popularity. Those facts about them do not just go out to the public with just mere benchmarking results. Rather, they are carefully publicized by public relation tactics (i.e. disseminated to broadsheets, tabloids, televised press conferences, etc.) That is why PR is closely related with corporate branding and governance. The management does the cultivation of the corporate brand, and then PR distributes the improvement and handles issues that are harmful to the company's image and reputation (Gray, 1998:67).

Corporate brand refers to the overall characteristic of the organization, which provides: marks denoting ownership; image-building devices; symbols associated with key values; means by which to construct individual identities; and a conduit by which pleasurable experiences may be consumed (Cutlip, 2006:54). It communicates the brand's values, afford a means of differentiation from their competitors, and enhance the esteem and loyalty in which the organization is held by its stakeholder groups (Sriramesh & Verčič,

2001:89). Thus, marketing and sales strategies are dependent to the strengths or weaknesses of the corporate brands. If the positive values of the corporate brand are successfully publicized by the PR staff, then marketing strategies and sales strategies can use that good publicity to the corporation's advantage.

For instance, the advertisements of the Pepsi-Cola may include information regarding their reputation as a company that helps maintain a healthy environment for everyone. Because this is the company's way of showing responsibility to the community, the elements related to those traits are likely to be shown in advertisements. However, this type of relationship between reputation and marketing and sales strategies is not widely researched. In fact, even the general public relations field is not widely researched (Sallot, Lyon, Acosta-Alzuru and Jones, 2003:45). Accordingly, lack of budget time are the two most given reasons.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study bases itself on Social theory, functionalism theory and two step flow theory.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura (2002:12) suggests that both internal and external factors are equally important in understanding social learning. He goes further to state that personal factors, such as beliefs, expectations, attitudes and knowledge (cognitive) and environmental factors such as resources, consequences of actions, physical setting and behavioral factors (individual actions, choices and verbal statements) influence learning and motivation. He adds that social learning occurs when both cognitive factors and behavioral factors are in place while the environment is equally important. This means that understanding the social environment in the university is vital in forging cohesion.

Bandura argues that in social situations we learn a great deal through imitation. In behaviorist theory, learning often appears to be a gradual process in which organisms

must act to learn based on their environment. The repetition of that behavior is then based on the type of reinforcement one receives (positive vs. negative). Bandura however, argues that in social situations people often learn much more rapidly simply by observing the behaviors of others. (Bandura, 1977). In higher institutions, students from diverse backgrounds join the university and mix with others therefore they tend to learn and to appreciate each other.

Retention processes in social learning theory happens when a repetition of a given message occurs. The frequency of exposure to a given message or modeled example might increase the likelihood that the message will be attended to and retained (Mastro and Atkin 2002). The reader has had the message for a longer time to internalize and actually model the action or the information. In universities some students gradually change their behaviour due to change in environment or exposure to new experiences which they adopt.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. Most students have their first experience with diverse groups in campus and as a result they learn from each other. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. People can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people which is known as observational learning (or modeling).

Bandura noted that external, environmental reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment. This emphasis on internal thoughts reflects on students and staffs perception, attitude and awareness on social cohesion issues.

The social learning theory will be used to assess how personal factors, environment and behavioral factors influence social cohesion in higher learning institutions. Students learn

by imitating or observing others. Social learning theory has been referred to as 'eclectic theory' as it combines three of the most important human communicative processes: behavior, external/environment forces and individual differences. Due to observing a particular behaviour and being exposed to an environment that reinforces the same behavior, the chances that one would perform the same behavior is high. This means that students change from their traditional adaptation once they join university where they meet with new peers. Social learning theory is relevant to many of the crucial cultural issues but it doesn't predict what the learner will regard as positive. Through this study, the researcher aims to find out the general status of social cohesion in public universities.

2.2.2 Functionalism Theory

This theory by Durkheim stresses the interdependence of the patterns and institutions of a society and their interaction in maintaining cultural and social unity. Functionalism theory maintains that all of the institutions, beliefs, and morals of a society are interrelated as a whole, and so the method of explaining the existence of any one item is to discover the law which governs the coexistence of all phenomena. This means that to understand social cohesion in institutions one has to consider the social background of students and staffs in terms of beliefs, morals, religion gender, attitudes and environment. Students and staffs in universities have cultural and social differences which need to be appreciated because they contribute to their learning and the perception they have on social cohesion.

Émile Durkheim, views society as a kind of "organism" that carries with it certain "needs" of the society and individual that must be fulfilled (Merton 1957, McQuail 2010 pg. 98). The students will vary in terms of language, culture, gender, religion among other ideologies and the university should identify the needs associated with these ideologies. Functionalism theory in educational systems helps individuals to socialize into norms and values. Educational systems provide a vital role in allocating individuals into a class based society through meritocratic principles. Also in religion it plays a

functional and positive role in society which integrates people and provides support and guidance. Functionalism theory recognizes the structural nature of society. It demonstrates the links between major social institutions e.g. education, religion and the economy. Institutions enroll students from these diverse societies that contribute to the learning environment.

Functionalism theory view society as an ongoing system of linked working parts or subsystems, each making an essential contribution to continuity and order ie each part of society is interpreted in terms of how it contributes to the stability of the whole society (Merton 1957, McQuail 2010 pg. 98). For example, the government, or state, provides education to the people who later get jobs so that they can raise and support themselves. In the process, these people become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity

Denis McQuail (1969) says that communication is a process which increases commonality through interaction, interchange and sharing of ideas through signs or sounds. The main functions of communication in society are surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of the society in responding into its environment and the transmission of the cultural heritage. Entertainment is the fourth function which may be the part of transmitted culture but provides individual reward; relaxation and reduction of tension making it easy for people to cope with real-life problems and for societies to avoid break-down Mobilization is added as the fifth item designed to reflect the widespread campaign for societal objectives in the sphere of economic development, war, politics work and sometimes religion (Mendelsohn1966, McQuail 2010 pg 98 & 99). Communication takes place through different ways in an institution which is a major role of public relations and by using various techniques students and staffs can learn from diversity. Also institutions can influence and support various ideologies as it strives to meet the educational demands by providing a conducive learning environment.

2.2.3 Two Step Flow Theory

This theory by Lazarsfeld and Katz concerns how an individual receives information and passes it along to others. It indicates that messages from media first reach opinion leaders, who then collect, diffuse, filter, and promote the flow of information, pass on what they read or hear to associates or followers who look to them as influential (Severin & Tankard 1992 pg.193). Opinion leaders are found at all levels but an opinion leader in one area is unlikely to be an opinion leader in another, unrelated area. (Ibid pg 195). The theory suggests that communication from the mass media first reaches "opinion leaders" who filter the information they gather to their followers, with whom they are influential. Previous theories assumed that media directly reached the target of the information.

Heyneman P .et al (2002/3, pg 56 & 57) says that in our society, opinion leaders are many but with the rise of current inter-ethnic, interreligious and public health crisis, universities are being called upon to use their resources to address social problems. These problems compel education leaders to better understand how university might elevate its ability to bridge social divide and promote social cohesion (Ibid 2002/3 pg 56 & 57). Higher education leaders need to be serious about communicating for defending a broader social role for the institution .Societies that lack social cohesion are vulnerable to conflict because they do not have the compliance mechanisms necessary for the assertion of social control as well as the reinforcing channels of socialization necessary for the formation of shared values (Ibid 2003 pg 58).

Griswold S. notes that the two step theory asserts that personal influence seems more important in decision making than media. Again, influential individuals seem constrained in their opinion leading to particular topics, non-overlapping among the individuals. The opinion leaders seem evenly distributed among the social, economical, and educational levels within their community, but very similar in these areas to those with whom they had influence.(Ibid)

A major explanation for information flow is that the opinion leaders do not replace media, but rather guide discussions of media. They are not to be regarded as replacing the role of interpersonal networks but, in fact, as reemphasizing the role of the group and interpersonal contacts. (Ibid).

Lazarsfeld and his associates detailed five characteristics of personal contact that give their theory more validity:

Non-purposiveness/casualness- One must have a reason for tuning into a political speech on television, but political conversations can just "pop-up". In this situation, the people are less likely to have their defenses up in preparation; they are more likely open to the conversation.

- i. **Flexibility to counter resistance:** In a conversation, there is always opportunity to counter any resistance. This is not so in media, a one sided form of communication.
- ii. **Trust:** Personal contact carries more trust than media. As people interact, they are better able through observation of body language and vocal cues to judge the honesty of the person in the discussion. Newspaper and radio do not offer these cues.
- iii. **Persuasion without conviction:** The formal media is forced to persuade or change opinions. In personal communication, sometimes friendly insistence can cause action without affecting any comprehension of the issues.

The two-step flow of information theory presumes that there are many information channels with different messages that may distract and confuse the targets. With such kind of information that humans are flooded with daily, then someone might prefer to turn to a peer for help in evaluating the message.

2.3 The use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities

Crises and conflict are often seen to be caused by a failure to communicate, for it is also the age where the recognition of the individual as a unique being is easily forgotten under the operational imperatives of increased complexity and interdependence. It appears that mankind has the sophisticated tools and the accumulated knowledge but is unable to harness them for effective conflict resolution, negotiation and compromise between people of diverse interests and backgrounds. This then means that more than ever before the world needs not just more information, but sensitive communicators and facilitators who can explain the goals and methods of organisations, individuals, groups and government in a socially responsible manner. Equally, such experts in communication and public opinion must provide their employers with information about what others are thinking, their attitudes and their perceptions, and to guide them in setting their policies wisely for the common good (Wilcox et al. 1992:4).

Public relations serves the public interest, develops mutual understanding between organisations and their publics, contributes to informed debates about issues in society, and facilitates a dialogue between organisations and their publics. As society becomes more complex and interdependent, there is need for sophistication in communication techniques. It is for this reason that public relations today is considered an intrinsic part of corporate management (Wilcox et al., 1991:442).

Public relations have a crucial role to play in any organization that intends to achieve goals, vision and mission through cohesion. Public universities have in the recent past been associated with strikes by both students and lecturers over varying issues.(Rosemary Muchiri 2010 unpublished). This disrupts learning and sometimes universities are forced to close after such incidents (Ibid).Public relations is vital in managing such crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among the publics.

Toth (2009) says that Public relations professionals rarely receive diversity education in preparation to enter the public relations field. However, public relations can promote awareness and understanding of diversity issues within institutions (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002:32). Practitioners can develop expertise or competencies to build relationships with diverse social groups (Swanson, 2005). These competencies include knowledge of a diverse world; personal attributes to work in a diverse world; and skills to communicate and interact successfully with diverse groups (Tilford Research Group, 2004:56).

Kitchen 2010 notes that, the role of public relations can be seen as one that helps to develop and maintain mutual dependent relationships between an institution and its environment or various publics because public relations personnel interact with the institution's environment, gather, select and relate information to the decision makers. Public relations professionals (Cutlip M.Scott etal1998:34) says , should help an organization to meet the new challenges that result from radical changes by facilitating communication among diverse people.

Public relations contribute to the formulation of institutional strategies in order to win acceptance and support the organization (Kitchen, 2010:34).These efforts are part of an organizations purposive and managed behavior to achieve goals. The organization should however continue to adapt their goals and relationships to accommodate the ever changing pressures from their dynamic settings.

As Laura C. & Jennifer R. (2001:12) Posits, Public relations is a function institutions cannot afford to ignore. For institutions to give out their message, they must make a coordinated, concerted effort to counteract other sources of information people receive that may be untrue or unfair and provide people with the services and information they desire. In the sense of attracting community support and drawing in more publics, public relations not only transmit information, but also listen and respond to the expectations and concerns of all citizens: the public demands more accountability and more participation, and parents have more school choices than in the past. Public relations

employ techniques in order to persuade target groups (Kendal 1996; Matera & Artigue 2000:77). These techniques are like media coverage ,preparing press releases, writing speeches ,writing and designing brochures, providing video news releases, staging special events, preparing annual reports ,media relations among others.

2.3.1 Benefits of Social Cohesion to students

Campus communities that are more ethnically diverse tend to create more richly varied educational experiences that enhance students' learning and better prepare them for participation in a democratic society (Bowman 2010:98). In universities there is a mix of diverse groups to share these experiences in solidarity.

Bickel (1998:90) argues that the belief of exposing students to a wider range of opinions improves the quality of those students'. They learn to listen and appreciate other peoples' opinions and ideas hence augmenting their knowledge. Antonio (2001:78) adds that when students interact with students other than their closest friends, these students are more likely to engage in conversations on topics concerned with diversity and difference, such as political and social views, racism and discrimination, women's rights, and national politics.

Chang 2003 draws from information-processing models of social judgment to argue that besides developing more accurate knowledge, students also learn to think more deeply, actively, and critically when they confront their biases and change erroneous information. Chang adds that this helps to improve relations and promotes other educational goals that are widely shared and valued by the higher education community. Public relations can be involved in organizing activities that improve relations and promotes educational goals like discussions, debates and competitions.

As Ambrose, A. S. et al (2004:45) indicates, Students who graduate from a university with a diverse population are better prepared for the social, cultural and technical demands of the workplace, and are better able to participate as citizens of local, national

and international communities. The educational benefits associated with exposure to different experiences, viewpoints, and opinions have also been linked to psychological factors (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Gurin et al., 2004:78). Institutions of higher education are more influential when they offer students a social and intellectual atmosphere that is distinctively different from that with which they are familiar. Those students who interact with diverse others develop higher levels of critical thinking and active thinking skills (Gurin et al., 2002; Ambrose A. et al 2004:78) and demonstrate greater engagement and motivation (Ibid) .In addition, students on diverse campuses generally experience enhanced classroom discussions (Orfield and Whitley, 1999:89) and develop a greater ability to understand diverse perspectives (Gurin, 1999; Gurin et al., 2002; Gurin et al., 2004:90).

Ethnic diversity, Ambrose, A. S. et al 2004 notes can create a rich social environment that subsequently can be used as an educational tool to promote all students' learning and development. Diversity can promote creativity and improve decision-making because it enhances knowledge, information, perspective, skills and abilities. These ideal conditions include the ability to manage the possible dysfunctional aspects of heterogeneity in groups e.g., in-group/out-group effects, stereotyping, and less frequent communication (Ibid).

Beyond bringing students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds together, campuses should provide stimulating courses covering historical, cultural, and social bases of diversity and community, and must create additional opportunities for students to interact across racial and other social differences. (Brunner 2005:45). Gurin 1999; Antonio 2001a, 2001b, 2004a found that interaction with close friends of a different race or ethnicity is a powerful way in which students accrue the educational benefits of diversity—benefits ranging from enhanced self-confidence, motivation, and educational aspirations to greater cultural awareness and commitment to racial equity.

Ambrose et al (2004:56) notes that on ethical grounds, the alarming level of national violence and intergroup conflict makes universities to provide the first experience of living and learning in a diverse community. The university is uniquely positioned to promote contact among diverse groups under conditions that has shown to reduce intergroup hostility, stereotyping and distrust (Amir, 1976; Cook, 1984; Pettigrew, 1991, 1998). By promoting equal status interactions that provide opportunities for group members to know each other as individuals, encouraging a common goal or identity among a diverse student body, and providing support for group equality from authorities.

2.4 Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

There are many public relations strategies which are applicable to deal with specific issues in many public organizations. Some of them include implementing seminars to educate members on individual issues, maintaining a resource center of programming materials on topics such as AIDS, alcohol, and social cohesion, making the resources available to campus organizations, promoting the position statements of interfraternal organizations, conducting campus-wide presentations on timely subjects and participating in campus informational fairs (Robinson, et al., 2000:78).

The internet has changed the way communities behave. No longer bound to place, community has become embedded in social networks grounded in a mix of online and offline interaction (Wellman, Quan Haase, Witte & Hampton, 2001:78). The telephone, the adoption of which is most often set as a parallel to that of the Internet, has been shown to reinforce preexisting social, political, and cultural patterns (Fischer, 1992; Dutton, 1996; Winner, 1977:101). While technologies that permit communication are diverse, including both landline telephones and those of the mobile variety, pagers, and the like, those enabled by the increasingly common use of the web backbone, namely the Internet, instant messaging, chat, email, and so forth are of interest here.

All content found online interacts with the user in two distinct ways: by imparting information, or by permitting dynamic communication. The web is both a powerful and

continuously changing research and educational tool (e.g. research on businesses, organizations, government, etc.) and it provides methods of connecting to others using the Internet (e.g. IM, email, chat, etc.). It has great potential to empower by presenting previously unconsidered ideas and granting access to, for example, resources, and other types of capital essential to a society's social fabric that had previously been out of reach. The Internet provides lowered costs of engagement, access to a variety of activities, and it has the capacity to improve those engagements. If increased communication among individuals' works to benefit their social cohesion, then the Internet provides a forum for a "myriad of different configurations of communication (Morris & Ogan, 1996, p. 42). Internet users have been shown to have wider social networks than non-users (Raney, 2000; Robinson, et al., 2000:12).

Research on email interactions has shown that the use of email sustains levels of social capital in its users, keeping them connected and allowing for continued contact and maintenance of relationships, indicating no change in their levels of trust before and after their use of the technology (Pew, 1999; Uslaner, 2000:44). Email does not allow for the creation of new networks however and thus cannot contribute to the social capital and connectedness of an individual, even though it does sustain strong tie relationships well (Granovetter, 1973; Pew, 1999).

Harwood and Lay (2001:55) in their research with online discussion groups wondered whether the depth of the interactions that occur online can really ever replicate the strong-tie relationships that offline interactions bring, or if all that is going on is the bridging of weak-ties between individuals (Granovetter, 1973; Wuthnow, 1994; Wasserman, 1999). Wellman, Quan Haase, Witte, and Hampton (2001) share a similar concern when they consider if the Internet increases, decreases or supplements social capital. Their findings show that when people engage online in asocial activities, its "immersiveness can turn people away from community, organizational and political involvement, and domestic life. By contrast, when people use the Internet to communicate and coordinate with

friends, relatives, and organizations near and far then it is a tool for building and maintaining social capital” (p451).

2.5 The impact of public relations on social cohesion

Public relations today is emerging from its cocoon of lack of importance because there is new consciousness that the prosperity and survival of an organization depends on the feelings of many different people. (Rosemary Muchiri 2010:12). Public relations has evolved from a little known and unappreciated field to one which many organizations today feel determines their existence (Ibid). Hurtado and colleagues (1998, 1999), says that climate is not limited to perceptions and attitudes (what they term the “psychological climate”), but also includes the institution’s structure and history as well as people’s interactions across differences. Also university climate is shaped by both external and internal forces Milem, Chang, Antonio (2005:89).

Pate A. (2012:67) says that for there to be national cohesion and integration, cohesion must be fully understood at the various levels starting from individual, organizational levels through the local government up to the state level. Toth (2009:87) notes that Public relations professionals rarely receive diversity education in preparation to enter the public relations field. However, public relations can promote awareness and understanding of diversity issues within institutions (Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002:78). Based on this assumption the researcher aims to find out how public relations officers promote awareness and understanding to forge social cohesion in universities.

The public Relations Officers (PROs) must be well educated about the people, issues and challenges in the country for them to be able to advocate and discuss more on issues that unite than those that divide people. There is need for public Relations Practitioners to have sufficient understanding of the people in terms of geography, history, sociological and anthropological set ups. Public relations can be helpful in analyzing the publics and their needs. Universities also need to provide stimulating courses that cover historical, cultural and social bases of diversity and give opportunities to students to interact across

racial and social differences. Being in an environment committed to diversity contributes to students' development in different activities. (Milem, Chang & Antonio 2005:90)

Pate A. (2012) adds that deficiency of such knowledge basically explains why that today even arguments on general issues of governance are easily and stoutly localized into ethnic or religious prisms. . Allen, (1995:78); Henderson, (1992) says that with changes in demographics, it is inevitable that different cultural norms and values will emerge and potentially cause tension.

It is therefore imperative for individual PROs to have improved knowledge of the country to lead the initiative. Organizations should also be encouraged to invest in programmes and policies that advance cohesion and integration like the supporting of field visits/excursions, diversity in employment etc. (Pate 2012:99). The focus of concern therefore is on how public relations is involved in forging social cohesion within public higher institutions of learning that on the surface has considerable racial and social homogeneity, but reveals many social fractures. Public relations play a vital role in creating understanding and good relations among students and staffs.

Social cohesion demonstrates the ability to integrate people from different ethnic backgrounds so that they can relate together in terms of where they live, their education, employment, and social/recreation spheres. Social cohesion is seen as a long term issue to be considered by all agencies. Through public relations, universities can address social cohesion issues related to their area by developing strategic programmes of action. For example the need for universities to reorganize their corporate structures to incorporate social cohesion issues, reorganize the management to focus more extensively on social cohesion where internally issues around ethnicity and equality are much more centre stage. Also having a much broader training programme for all the staffs, management development courses where social cohesion is a central element and organizing a whole variety of other activities and, having overview of scrutiny like through committees.”

Institutional diversity, Marquez (2005:88) says, improves an institution's revenues and image because it decreases absences, turnover, complaints and litigation, and increases productivity. Some administrators and faculty members do not recognize diversity and they consider it a threat. Therefore a proactive approach by institutions is needed to acknowledge diversity and create a positive environment that respect different backgrounds hence forging social cohesion.

Institutions that truly value diversity link it to their goals and integrate diversity throughout the institution and its communications, thereby building positive images and strong relationships with publics (Vallario, 2006:45). Universities as organizations therefore, need public relations efforts that centrally locate social cohesion as part of the institution's mission. These efforts will increase the acceptance of diversity on campus and reduce prejudicial attitudes and actions on the part of students, faculty, and staff thus building social cohesion.

The institution's commitment to social cohesion needs to be highly visible and unambiguous. This study aims to find out whether public relations has a place in forging social cohesion in public universities .Social cohesion builds meaningful relationships with students and staffs creating a positive institutional learning environment .Trough public relations ,campus culture can be shaped that welcomes, values and supports faculty and students of various ethnicities, religions, languages, gender ,demographics, disability ,colours and perspectives, creating an environment in which men and women can freely pursue their talents and careers in a climate that nurtures their full potential (Robinson, et al., 2000:13). †

2.6 Public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion

The need for thoughtful, effective communication in the workplace is paramount. Seldom does an employee work in absolute isolation, instead, workers interact with consumers, peers, and management on a daily basis; this makes interpersonal communication an essential skill for today's employees. Today's employers look for quality skills in

interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving, not just the ability to complete job duties (Un ange passé, 2007). Consequently in the absence of effective communication, organizational goals will succumb to individualistic and personal goals (Magnus, 2009:67). Effective interpersonal communication skills are essential to social cohesion, and to the building and maintenance of all relationships. Poor communication skills can cause irrevocable damage to social cohesion; affecting productivity, satisfaction, performance, morale, trust, respect, self-confidence, and even physical health (Un ange passé, 2008:99).

In any organization, the success of achieving its goals depends largely on the manager's communication ability and skills (Magnus, 2009:101). In an era of apparent constant change and “erosion of corporate loyalty” PR in communication for managers are vital to promoting employee attachment to the organization (Brunette and Farr-Wharton, 2004). However, researchers have paid little attention to the PR communication skills that managers need to enhance their subordinates' commitment to the organization (Bambacas and Patrickson, 2008:89).

Interpersonal communication skills are ability to respond to staff's needs positively, fostering a non-discriminatory work environment where staff can develop to their full personal potentials, and delegating authority (Avkiran, 2000:56). A leader should know the skills in group leadership and that includes the need to accomplish the common task, how to discourage group frustration, disharmony, mutual criticism and eventual lack of social cohesion. The leader should maintain a cohesive social unity through group high morale and team spirit which is achieved through public relation communication skills. Leader PR communication consists of layered, expanding skills from core strategy development and effective writing and speaking to the use of these skills in more complex organizational situations. As the manager's perspective and control expand, he or she will need to improve the core PR communication skills to become effective in the large, more complex organizational situations (Barrett, 2006:67). There are various PR communication tools that can be used in achieving social cohesion.

2.6.1 Printed and Graphic communication

a) Fliers

Fliers represent the simplest and easiest form of information tools used in public relations. They are unfolded sheets posted on bulletin boards, delivered by mail or distributed by hand. They present a single message rather than a series of separate message units, are time specific and address a particular event. They serve as awareness objectives through information. Fliers can be made effective by enhancing their visual appeal. The flyers and posters are relatively inexpensive and effective public relations tools. When using them one should determine how many flyers or posters are needed when planning locations and distribution will help to further contain costs. Flyers are adaptable to innovative distribution methods (Laird, 2005:44).

Eye-catching colors identifying logos, and a large headline or teaser near the top of the flyer or poster will attract attention. Using the logo of the institution being promoted on flyers and posters is a good strategy for establishing the organization identity with upbeat, well-designed, and informative public relations pieces (McQuail, 2010:89).

b) Brochures

This is a multi-page publication or in other words, more than one page of printed matter. Depending on their size and purpose for which they are developed, they are called leaflets, folders or pamphlets. All these publications are called brochures. They are a folded sheet of information, which can be read like a book and provides information which is relevant over a longer period of time (Milem, 2005:56).

c) Print advertisement

Even though print advertising can be expensive, sometimes it pays to advertise. Because print advertising is purchased, the timing, placement, and content of the ad are guaranteed. A public relations strategy using paid advertisements can be carefully

planned to work as part of a long-term plan that has a cumulative effect over the course of an academic year. This kind of approach can be especially useful when trying to educate the public about the broad scope of issues like social cohesion. When designing a print advertisement, one should keep the message brief and clear, identify the target audience and write the ad accordingly. When addressing the community, stress that the university students are responsible citizens who provide community service and maintain their property (Laird, 2005:99).

d) Press Release

A press release is the most important form of written communication used by public relations professional to announce something to the media. It is mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the media. The news media (newspapers, magazines, television, and radio) represent an opportunity to publicize and promote an awareness of positive issues like social cohesion. For instance, news releases to campus newspapers are an important way to educate collegians about the broader activities of the university. The best way to identify the "media contact" is to call local newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations directly and ask for names of reporters who would be interested in the story (Laird, 2005:44).

News is the presentation of timely facts that are of interest and importance to readers. It must be factual, not the author's opinion. The use of concrete examples, details, and figures will give the material credibility. The facts of a news release should always be organized in an inverted order, with the who, what, where, when, why, and how listed in order of importance. The opening words must catch the reader or viewer's attention with the most important and interesting angle of the story (Laird, 2005:44).

2.6.2 Outdoor Media

They include huge boards displaying messages on a particular information. This is what is called a hoarding. Many of the hoardings are electronically operated (electronic hoarding) to make them attractive and catch the attention of the viewers. This is an example of an outdoor medium which is a popular tool used in public relations. Another

outdoor media is the poster media whose emphasis is on the visual messages or what is visible to the audience. The poster message carries a strong illustration with a meaningful headline. This form of communication is used to remind the audience about a certain product or idea (Milem, 2008:56).

2.6.3 Broadcast Media

Broadcast media include media such as radio and television. The message is usually accompanied with music through this medium. The characteristic feature here is the sound which creates an impact on the listeners. Radio advertisements which combine music and messages is a typical example used for public relations creating a huge impact on viewers. Reality music and dance shows, cricket matches which are sponsored by business organizations are examples of television being used to attract public attention to a particular product. They offer scope for including movement and sound, making it a very appealing tool for communication (Milem, 2008:57).

2.6.4 Other media

a) Websites

The internet web is the most commonly used form of media for public relations. The internet web has enabled quick access to information and services. The internet is thus rapidly changing the way in which organisations provide services to their public. The information in a website is presented in an easy and understandable format. Web pages are designed with catchy illustrations to make them attractive and thereby grab the attention of the public (Milem, 2008:57).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The dependent variable in this study was social cohesion. This social cohesion in organization is influenced by several factors that constituted the independent variables. Based on the literature review, the factors likely to influence social cohesion included PR

communication tools, PR strategies and top management support for PR implementation. The intervening variables, which according to Kothari (2004:113) are independent variables that are not related to the purpose of the study but can have an effect on the dependent variable, was gender. The intervening variable was controlled through randomization to ensure that it did not influence the dependent variable.

Independent variable

Intervening variable

Dependent variable

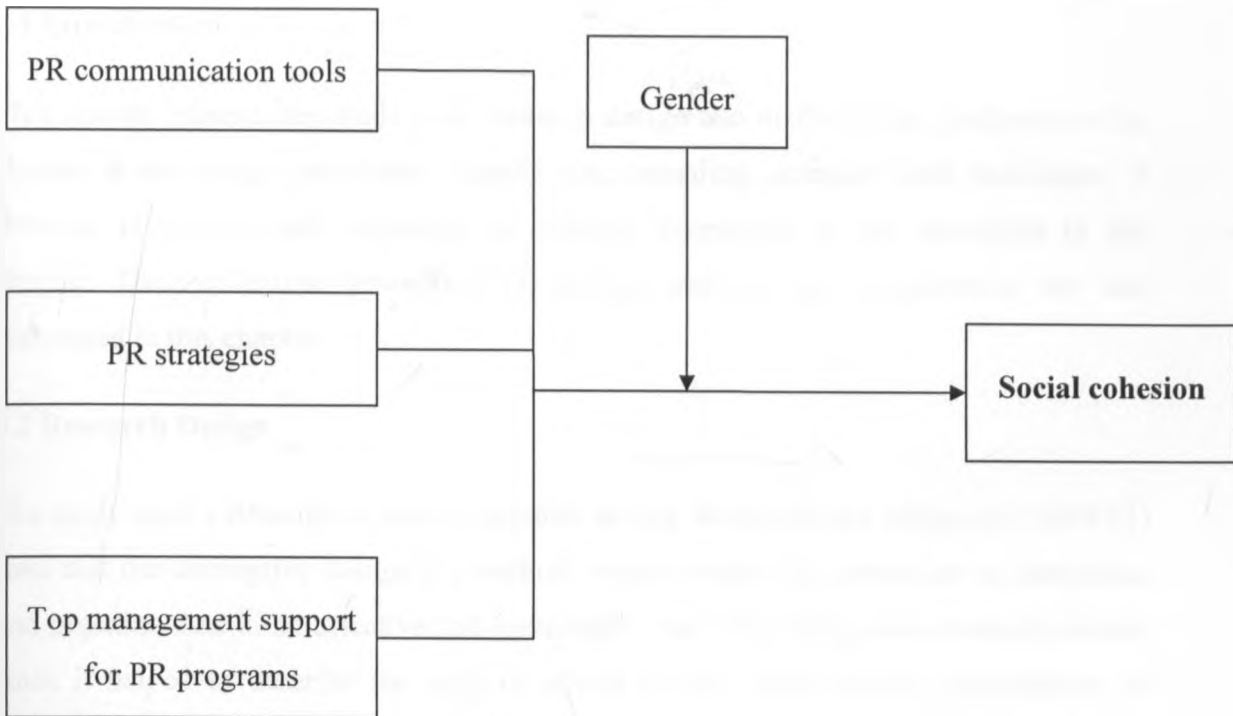


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework on the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study area, research design and methodology. Included in this chapter is also target population, sample size, sampling procedure and techniques. A research instrument and validation of research instrument is also explained in this chapter. Data collection procedure, processing, analysis and presentation are also elaborated in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey research design. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2008:11) state that the descriptive design is a method, which enables the researcher to summarize and organize data in an effective and meaningful way. The design was deemed suitable since it helped to describe the state of affairs as they exist without manipulation of variables which is the aim of the study (Kothari, 2004:67).

3.3 Location of the Study

This study was conducted at the University of Nairobi (UON) which is a Kenyan public university situated in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. The University has six colleges established under it. The colleges are located within and around the city and these are: College of Education and External Studies located at Kikuyu campus and Kenya Science campus, College of Architecture and Engineering located at main campus, College of Biological and Physical Sciences located at Chiromo campus, College of Health Sciences located at Kenyatta National Hospital, College of Veterinary Sciences located at Upper Kabete campus and the college of Humanities and Social Sciences located at main campus. The UoN has a heterogeneous nature in composition of the population of the students and staff. It is the largest university in terms of student enrollment composing of students drawn from varied parts of the country thus they bear different culture, values, believes, social and economic background. This researcher believes that the varied

composition of regular students targeted would bring with them diverse perspective and option concerning social cohesion.

3.4 Target Population

According to Kothari (2004:68), a population is a well defined set of people, services, elements, events, group of things or households that are being investigated. Mugenda, (2008), explain that the target population should have some observable characteristics, to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study. This definition assumes that the population is not homogeneous. The study area's (University of Nairobi) general population stands at 25,187 students. The target population of this study consisted of the 25,187 students in the University of Nairobi and Key informants from the staff employed in various departments of the institution.

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

According to mangal (2006), it is neither visible nor practical to approach each and every elements to be studied in a population. Therefore stratified random sampling procedure was used to select the sample. This was because the technique produces estimates of overall population parameters with great precision (Shuttleworth, 2009). Sudman (1976) suggests that a minimum of 100 elements is needed for each major group and for each minor subgroup, a sample of 20 to 50 elements is necessary. The study grouped the population into 6 strata based on the number of schools at the University of the Nairobi which include: College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS), College of Architecture and Engineering (CAE), College of Education and External Studies (CEES), College of Health Sciences (CHS) and College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS). From each stratum the study used simple random sampling to proportionately select 20 students to participate in the study. The study focused on a sample of 120 students from the six schools in the university. Each of the selected students was administered with a questionnaire. The

selection of the students was deemed suitable for this research owing to the expansiveness of the university population.

The key informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques. In this method, the researcher purposively targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study (Denscombe, 2008:78). Twenty key informants were sampled from the various departments in the university.

3.6 Instrumentation

The primary data collection instruments were used during the study which were questionnaires. The reason for choosing questionnaire as the data collection instruments is primarily due to their practicability, applicability to the research problem and the size of the population. It is also cost effective (Denscombe, 2008:79). A self-administered questionnaire with both open and closed ended questions was developed and administered to obtain information from the 120 respondents and 20 key informants. The key informants will be drawn from the various departments of the university.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure; the accuracy, soundness and effectiveness with which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Kothari, 2004:90) or the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomena under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008:34). The research instrument was availed to the lecturers in the school of Journalism and mass communication, and peers who established its content and construct validity to ensure that the items are adequately representative of the subject area to be studied.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Nsubuga, 2000:23). The researcher carried out a pilot study among a sample of 15 students from the university. The pilot study was conducted among the students that would not participate in the main study. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient which is a measure of internal coefficient. A reliability of at least 0.70 at $p=0.05$ significance level of confidence would be accepted. Adjustments would be made accordingly in case a low co-efficient would be obtained in order to improve on the instrument.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire for the students and the key informants. According to Kothari (2004), self-report questionnaires are popular particularly in cases of big enquiry. The respondents were given time (10-30 minutes) to complete the questionnaire and then the researcher collected the completed questionnaires. The researcher obtained approval from University to conduct the study. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and offered guidance to the respondents on the way to fill in the questionnaire before administering the questionnaire. For those respondents with difficulties in reading and filling in, the researcher interviewed them to gather and fill in the information in the questionnaire. The questionnaire for both students and staffs was divided into four (4) parts; Section A: demographic Information, Section B: Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities, Section C i): Use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities, Section C ii): Public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion, Section D: The impact of public relations on social cohesion

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the whole process which starts immediately after data collection and ends at the point of interpretation and processing data (Kothari, 2004:67). The researcher based the analysis on the data collected. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used; whereby frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations, generated from the various data categories were computed and shown in different graphs, tables and figures. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics (Kothari, 2004:67).

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data that was found on an investigation into the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, a case study of University Of Nairobi. The research was conducted on sample size of 120 students and 20 members of staff out of which 100 students and 20 members of staff completed and returned the questionnaires duly filled in making a response rate of 83.3% for the students and 100% for the members of staff. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) stated that a response rate of 50% and above is a good for statistical reporting. The study made use of frequencies (absolute and relative) on single response questions. On multiple response questions, the study used Likert scale in collecting and analyzing the data whereby a scale of 5 points were used in computing the means and standard deviations. These were then presented in tables, graphs and charts as appropriate with explanations being given in prose.

4.2 Demographic Information

The study initially sought to inquire information on various aspects of respondents' background, i.e. the respondent's gender, age, and academic background. This information aimed at testing the appropriateness of the respondent in answering the questions regarding the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities.

4.2.1 Respondents' distribution by gender

The study sought to establish the respondent's gender distribution. The findings are as stipulated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Respondents' distribution by gender

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Male	56	56%	61	61%
Female	44	44%	39	39%
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, 56% of the students were male while 44% were females. This depicts that there was gender disparity in the recruitment of students at the higher education. On the university staff, 61% were males while 39% were female. This depicts that there is gender disparity in the recruitment of staff at the university.

4.2.2 Respondents' distribution by Age

The study also sought to establish the age distribution of the respondents as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Respondents' distribution by Age

	F	%
Less than 18 years	11	11
18-20 years	36	36
21-25 years	44	44
26-30 years	9	9
Total	100	100

According to the findings, 44% of the students were aged 21-25 years, 36% were aged 18-20 years while 11% were aged less than 18 years. This depicts that the students were youthful and energetic and that they had a great potential to excel in their academics. Therefore planning to invest more on social cohesiveness at this youthful age can be a better way of enhancing cohesion in society in future.

4.2.3 Staff distribution by Age

The study also sought to establish the age distribution of the respondents as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Staff distribution by Age

	F	%
25 years and below	0	0
26-30 years	4	4
31-35 years	17	17
35-40 years	47	47
45-50 years	23	23
Over 50 years	9	9
Total	100	100

According to the findings, 47% were 35 – 40 years, 23% were 45 – 50 years while 17% were aged 31 – 35 years. This depicts that the staff had an accumulated knowledge gained owing to their advanced age to give credible information on social cohesion in the university and how it is promoted.

4.2.4 Staff experience based on number of years working at the institution

The study also sought to establish the highest level education attained by the respondents.

Table 4.4 Experience based on number of years working at the institution

	F	%
Less than 5 years	10	10
5-10 years	45	45
11-15 years	33	33
16-20 years	12	12
Total	100	100

Table 4.4 indicates that most of the staff (45%) had been working at the institution for 5-10 years, 33% for 11-15 years while 12% had worked at the university for 16-20 Years. This indicates that that the majority of the staff had worked for long to give high quality information on the impact of PR on social cohesion. It also depicts that they were well experienced in their job owing to their many years of experience while working in the university.

4.2.5 Staff highest level of education

The study also sought to establish the highest level education attained by the respondents.

Table 4.5 Staff Highest level of education

	F	%
Diploma	18	18
Degree	43	43
Masters	33	33
PhD	6	6
Total	100	100

Table 4.5 indicates that most of the university staff (43%) had attained degrees, 33% had master degree while 18% were diploma holders. This illustrates that majority of the respondents from had attained high education background to understand the concept of

public relations and use the skills they had to effectively carry out their mandate. This also means that the university has potential staffs to be trained and involved in social cohesion matters due to the educational background.

4.3 Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

4.3.1 Adoption PR strategies to create social cohesion

The research sought to establish whether the university has adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion.

Table 4.6 Adoption PR strategies to create social cohesion

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	44	44	67	67
No	56	56	33	33
Total	100	100	20	100

Table 4.6 shows that most of the students (56%) posited that the university had not yet adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion while 44% indicated that the university had adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion. On the contrary, the majority of the staff members (67%) attested that the university had adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion. This depicts that the PR department had not been very influential in promoting matters of social cohesion especially among the students.

4.3.2 Efficiency of PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion

The respondents were supposed to indicate whether the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion were effective.

Table 4.7 Efficiency of PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	67	67	44	44
No	33	33	56	56
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, 67% of the students posited that the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion were not effective while only 33% attested that they were effective. On the other hand 56% of the staff members also attested that the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion were not effective. Only 44% of the staff pointed that the PR strategies to create social cohesion were effective. The findings further depicts that the PR function of the university has not been effective in enhancing social cohesion. This could be attributed to lack of top management support to the PR functions. The PR function did not receive adequate budgetary allocation to be fully functional. It could also be due to lack of qualified personnel to spearhead the PR function in seeking social cohesion.

4.3.4 Rating the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion

The respondents were further supposed to indicate the extent to which the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective.

Table 4.8 Rating the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
To no extent	11	11	11	11
Low extent	21	21	42	42
Moderate extent	40	40	33	33
Great extent	22	22	11	11
Very great extent	5	5	0	0
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, 40% of the students posited that the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a moderate extent, 22% to a great extent while 21% indicated that PR strategies were effective to a low extent. Meanwhile 42% of the staff attested that the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a low extent, 33% to a moderately extent while 14% of the staff indicated that PR strategies were effective to a no extent at all. This depicts that the university lagged behind in seeking effective PR strategies that can promote social cohesion due to failure by the management to support the PR function in the university or failure to fully make it an integral part of its communication function. Thus the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a moderate extent.

4.3 Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

The study sought to establish the public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities. The respondents were meant to indicate the extent to which each one of the strategies is applicable in the university. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5- To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

	Students		staff	
	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev
Implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues	4.2500	0.87988	4.1250	0.65991
Maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion	4.1563	0.76662	4.2188	0.87009
Promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion	4.0001	0.98374	4.0120	0.88574
Conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff	4.5625	0.61892	4.4063	0.61484
Participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion	3.4317	0.61818	3.9687	0.53788

From the findings, the majority of the students posited that the most significant public relations strategies used to create social cohesion were; conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff (M=4.5625), implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues (M=4.2500), maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion (M=4.1563), promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion (M=4.0001) and participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion (M=3.4317) respectively.

The majority of the staff attested that the most significant public relations strategies used to create social cohesion were; conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff (M=4.4063), maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion (M=4.2188),

implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues (M=4.1250), promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion (M=4.0120) and participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion (M=3.9687) respectively.

4.4 The use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities

Attendance of forums on social cohesion at the university

The research sought to establish whether the respondents had ever attended a forum on social cohesion at the university.

Table 4.10 Attendance of forums on social cohesion at the university

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	48	48	55	55
No	52	52	45	45
Total	100	100	20	100

Figure 4.10 shows that the majority of students (52%) attested that they had had never attended a forum on social cohesion at the university. Only 48% of the students, attested that they had had attended a forum on social cohesion at the university. The majority of the staff members (55%) indicated that they had had attended a forum on social cohesion at the university while 45% had never attended. This illustrates that the university was not fully committed to enhancing social cohesion as reflected by the lack of organizing advocacy forums on social cohesion at the university.

4.4.1 Relaying information to encourage peaceful coexistence

The study sought to establish whether in times of crises the university management relayed information to its fraternity to encourage peaceful coexistence.

Table 4.11 Relaying information to encourage peaceful coexistence

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	45	45	67	67
No	55	55	33	33
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, majority of the students (55%) and staff (67%) attested that in times of crises the university management relayed information to its fraternity to encourage peaceful coexistence. This depicts that the university management only applied the use of PR during the times of crisis in the institution that is the reactive mode of PR to manage the crisis or to bring about cohesion. However the management never seemed to recognize the role of PR in achieving social cohesion where it can be made an integral part of management and communication function owing to the inefficiency in the implementation of PR.

4.4.2 Effectiveness of PR in promoting peaceful coexistence

The study sought to establish whether the PR used by the university been effective in promoting peaceful coexistence.

Table 4.12 Effectiveness of PR in promoting peaceful coexistence

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	43	43%	11	55%
No	57	57%	9	45%
Total	100	100	20	100

According to the results, the majority of the students (57%) indicated that the PR used by the university was not effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. Only 43% of the students were of the opinion that the PR used by the university was effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. On the contrary, majority of the staff (55%) indicated that the PR used by the university was effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. Only 45% of the staff were of the opinion that the PR used by the university was not effective in promoting peaceful coexistence.

4.4.3 Effectiveness of PR in promoting peaceful coexistence

The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which the use of PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university.

Table 4.13 Effectiveness of PR in promoting peaceful coexistence

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
To no extent	9	9	17	17
Low extent	25	25	39	39
Moderate extent	38	38	37	37
Great extent	20	20	7	7
Very great extent	7	7	0	0
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, most of the students (38%) posited that PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university to a moderate extent, 25% to low extent while 20% indicated that the PR has been effective to a great extent. Most of the staff (39%) indicated that the PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university to a low extent, 37% to a moderate extent and 17% to a no extent. This means that the university needs to reinforce public relations mechanisms that foster social cohesion for peaceful co-existence

4.4.4 Statements on use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion

The study sought to establish the use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5-To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Statements on use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion

	Students		staff	
	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev
The management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university	3.8437	0.67725	3.4063	.79755
Through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background	3.9375	0.84003	4.0313	1.06208
Social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics	3.7812	0.90641	3.1562	0.98732
There is a functional public relations department in the university	3.6875	0.85901	4.4688	0.50701
Public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics	4.3438	0.54532	4.6250	0.49187
Through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders	4.2500	0.50800	4.3125	0.64446

According to the results, the majority of the students attested that the most significant use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities included that; public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics (M=4.3438),

through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders (M=4.2500), through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background (M=3.9375), the management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university (M=3.8437), social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics (M=3.7812) and that there is a functional public relations department in the university (M=3.6875) respectively.

In addition, the majority of the staff members attested that the most significant use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities included that; public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics (M=4.6250), there is a functional public relations department in the university (M=4.4688), through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders (M=4.3125), through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background (M=4.0313), the management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university (M=3.4063), and that social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics (M=3.1562) respectively.

4.5 Public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion

Public relations communication tools

The respondents were further required to indicate the most utilized PR communication tools by the university management to promote social cohesion.

Table 4.15 Public relations communication tools

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Broadcast media	8	8	9	9
Websites	9	9	12	12
Outdoor media	18	18	14	14
Printed and graphic	65	65	66	66
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, the students attested that the most utilized PR communication tools by the university management to promote social cohesion were printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements) (66%), outdoor Media (posters, bill boards) (14%), websites (12%) and broadcast Media (TV, Radio) (8%) respectively. On the hand the university staff attested that the most utilized PR communication tools were printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements) (65%), outdoor Media (posters, bill boards) (18%), websites (9%) and broadcast Media (TV, Radio) (8%) respectively. This illustrates that the university adopted a hybrid approach in the implementation of PR towards enhancing social cohesion as it used printed and graphic communication, outdoor Media, websites and broadcast Media to communicate social cohesion messages. However the extent to which the tools are used need to be enhanced.

4.5.1 Influence of communication on social cohesion

The study sought to establish whether communication influences social cohesion in the university.

Table 4.16 Influence of communication on social cohesion

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	58	58%	12	62%
No	42	42%	8	38%
Total	100	100	20	100

From the findings, majority of the students (58%) attested that communication influences social cohesion in the university. Only 42% of the students attested that communication never influence social cohesion in the university. The majority of the university staff (62%) posited that communication influences social cohesion in the university while 38% disagreed that communication influences social cohesion in the university.

4.5.2 Statements on use of PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion

The study sought to establish the extent to which the university uses various PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5-To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 Statements on use of PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion

	Students		Staff	
	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev
Printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements)	4.5625	1.92432	4.3241	0.5467
Outdoor Media (posters, bill boards)	4.0968	.30054	4.0006	0.5471
Websites	3.9688	.73985	3.5218	0.2145
Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)	4.0088	1.72256	4.0001	1.4215

Table 4.17 shows that majority of the students posited that the most significant PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion included; printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements) (M=4.5625), outdoor Media (posters, bill boards) (M=4.0968), broadcast Media (TV, Radio) (M=4.0088) and websites (M=3.9688) respectively. The majority of the university staff argued that the most significant PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion included; Printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements) (M=4.3241), outdoor Media (posters, bill boards) (M=4.0006), broadcast Media (TV, Radio) (M=4.0001) and websites (M=3.5218) respectively.

4.6 The impact of public relations on social cohesion

Impact of public relations on the peaceful co-existence

The study inquired on whether the public relations have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution.

Table 4.18 Impact of public relations on the peaceful co-existence

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
Yes	43	43	56	56
No	57	57	44	44
Total	100	100	20	100

Table 4.18 shows that 57% of the students were of the opinion that public relations do not have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution. Only 43% of the students posited that PR has an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution. The majority of the staff (56%) indicated that PR has an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution while 44% said that PR do not have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution. From the findings, it can deduced that the university had not accrued the numerous benefits from using PR to bring about social cohesion and the impact of PR on social cohesion was minimal. This could be attributed to the fact that the management did not support the PR fully support the PR initiative on social cohesion matters initiative at the university.

4.6.1 Extent to which PR impact on social cohesion

The respondents were required by the study to indicate the extent to which PR impact on social cohesion.

Table 4.19 Extent to which PR impact on social cohesion

	Students		Staff	
	F	%	F	%
To no extent	23	23%	1	2%
Low extent	45	45%	2	14%
Moderately extent	22	22%	9	46%
Great extent	10	10%	6	33%
Very great extent	0	0	2	5%
Total	100	100	20	100

Table 4.19 shows that 45%% of the students indicated that PR impacted on social cohesion in the university to a low extent, 23% to no extent while 22% posited that PR impacted on social cohesion in the university to a moderately extent. On their part,46% of the university staff indicated that PR impacted on social cohesion in the university to a moderately extent, 33% to a great extent while 14% posited that PR impacted on social cohesion in the university to a low extent.

4.6.2 Statements on the impact of public relations on social cohesion

The study sought to establish the impact of public relations on social cohesion. The responses were rated on a five point Likert scale indicating to what extent respondents agree to the statements, where: 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great extent and 5-To a very great extent. The mean and standard deviations were generated from SPSS and are as illustrated in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20 Statements on the impact of public relations on social cohesion

	Students		staff	
	Mean	Std dev	Mean	Std dev
PR increase positive interaction among the students	3.4375	0.71561	3.4215	0.65461
PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body	3.8438	0.80760	3.3278	0.75431
PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis	4.4063	0.61484	4.2062	0.312476
PR has helped the university maintain good corporate image	4.1875	1.11984	4.0025	0.9325

Table 4.20 shows that according to the majority of the students, the most significant impacts of public relations on social cohesion were that; PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis (M=4.4063), PR has helped the university maintain good corporate image (M=4.1875), PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body (M=3.8438) and PR increase positive interaction among the students (M=3.4375) respectively.

On the other hand, the majority of the staff posited that the most significant impacts of public relations on social cohesion were that; PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis (M=4.2062), PR has helped the university maintain good corporate image (M=4.0025), PR increase positive interaction among the students (M=3.4215) and that PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body (M=3.3278) respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study in line with investigation on the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, a case study of University Of Nairobi.

5.2 Summary

The researcher from the findings established that according to majority of the students the university had not yet adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion. On the contrary, the majority of the staff members attested that the university had adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion. This depicts that the PR department had not been very influential in promoting matters of social cohesion despite being operational thus the students were not aware of its roles.

Also the students' respondents posited that the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion were not effective. Similar attestation was given by the staff members that the PR strategies the university had adopted to create social cohesion were not effective. The findings further depicts that the PR function of the university has not been effective in enhancing social cohesion. This could be attributed to lack of top management support to the PR functions like failure to receive adequate budgetary allocation for its activities. The PR function did not receive adequate budgetary allocation to be fully functional. It could also be due to lack of qualified personnel to spearhead the PR function in seeking social cohesion.

The research findings established from most of the students indicate that the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a moderate extent while most of the staff attested that they were effective to a low and moderate extent. This depicts that the university lagged behind in seeking social cohesion due to failure by the management to

support the PR function in the university as an integral part. Thus the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a moderate extent.

According to the students' respondents the most significant public relations strategies used to create social cohesion were; conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff, implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues, maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion, promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion and participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion respectively. The majority of the staff attested that the most significant public relations strategies used to create social cohesion were; conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff, maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion, implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues, promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion and participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion respectively.

The study found out that that the majority of students had had never attended a forum on social cohesion at the university. However, the majority of the staff members had had attended a forum on social cohesion at the university. This illustrates that the university was not fully committed to enhancing social cohesion as reflected by the lack of organizing advocacy forums on social cohesion at the university especially among the students.

From the findings ,it was noted in times of crises the university management relayed information to its fraternity to encourage peaceful coexistence. This depicts that the university management only applied the use of PR during the times of crisis in the institution to bring about cohesion which is a reactive mode of using PR to manage crisis. However the management never seemed to recognize the role of PR as a proactive mode by making it an integral part of its management and communication function in achieving

social cohesion owing to the inefficiency in the implementation of PR programmes. The study established that according to the majority of the students the PR used by the university was not effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. On the contrary, majority of the staff indicated that the PR used by the university was effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. The study established that PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university to a moderate extent as attested by most of the students, while most of the staff indicated that the PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university to a low extent.

According to the majority of the students, the most significant use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities included; public relations is used managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics, through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders, through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background, the management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university, social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics and that there is a functional public relations department in the university respectively.

The researcher established from the study according to the majority of the staff members the most significant use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities included that; public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics, there is a functional public relations department in the university, through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders, through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background, the management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university, and that social

cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics respectively

The study established that the most utilized PR communication tools by the university management to promote social cohesion were printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements) and outdoor Media (posters, bill boards) respectively. This illustrates that the university adopted a hybrid approach in the implementation of PR towards enhancing social cohesion as it used printed and graphic communication, outdoor Media, websites and broadcast Media to communicate social cohesion messages.

The study established that the majority of the students were of the opinion that public relations do not have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution while the majority of the staff indicated that PR has an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution. From the findings, it can deduced that the university had not accrued the numerous benefits from using PR to bring about social cohesion and the impact of PR on social cohesion was minimal. This could be attributed to the fact that the management did not support the PR initiative at the university.

The study established that the most significant ways that public relations impacts on social cohesion were that; PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis, PR has helped the university maintain good corporate image, PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body and PR increase positive interaction among the students respectively

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that according to majority of the students the university had not yet adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion. On the contrary, the majority of the staff members attested that the university had adopted PR strategies to create social cohesion.

This depicts that the PR department had not been very influential in promoting matters of social cohesion despite being operational thus the students were not aware of its presence.

The research concluded that students posited that the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion were not effective. On the other hand the staff members also attested that the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion were not effective. The findings further depicts that the PR function of the university has not been effective in enhancing social cohesion. This could be attributed to lack of top management support to the PR functions. The PR function did not receive adequate budgetary allocation to be fully functional. It could also be due to lack of qualified personnel to spearhead the PR function in seeking social cohesion.

The researchers also concluded that from most of the students the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a moderate extent. Meanwhile most of the staff attested that the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a low extent and to a moderate extent. This depicts that the university lagged behind in seeking social cohesion due to failure by the management to support the PR function in the university. Thus the PR strategies adopted to create social cohesion were effective to a moderate extent.

The study concluded that according to the students the most significant public relations strategies used to create social cohesion were; conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff, implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues, maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion, promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion and participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion respectively. The majority of the staff attested that the most significant public relations strategies used to create social cohesion were; conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff, maintaining a resource center of programming

materials on social cohesion, implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues, promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion and participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion respectively.

The researcher concluded that that the majority of students had had never attended a forum on social cohesion at the university. However, the majority of the staff members had had attended a forum on social cohesion at the university. This illustrates that the university was not fully committed to enhancing social cohesion as reflected by the lack of organizing advocacy forums on social cohesion at the university.

The research concluded that in times of crises the university management relayed information to its fraternity to encourage peaceful coexistence. This depicts that the university management only applied the use of PR during the times of crisis in the institution to bring about cohesion. However the management never seemed to recognize the role of PR in achieving social cohesion owing to the inefficiency in the implementation of PR. The study established that according to the majority of the students the PR used by the university was not effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. On the contrary, majority of the staff indicated that the PR used by the university was effective in promoting peaceful coexistence. The study established that PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university to a moderate extent as attested by most of the students, while most of the staff indicated that the PR has been effective in enhancing social cohesion in the university to a low extent.

The study concluded that according the majority of the students the most significant use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities included that; public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics, through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders, through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background, the

management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university, social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organizations and its publics and that there is a functional public relations department in the university respectively.

The research concluded that according to the majority of the staff members the most significant use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities included that; public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics, there is a functional public relations department in the university, through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders, through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background, the management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university, and that social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics respectively

The study concluded that the most utilized PR communication tools by the university management to promote social cohesion were printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements) and outdoor Media (posters, bill boards) respectively. This illustrates that the university adopted a hybrid approach in the implementation of PR towards enhancing social cohesion as it used printed and graphic communication, outdoor Media, websites and broadcast Media to communicate social cohesion messages.

The researcher concluded that the majority of the students were of the opinion that public relations do not have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution while the majority of the staff indicated that PR has an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at the institution. From the findings, it can deduced that the university had not accrued the numerous benefits from using PR to bring about social

cohesion and the impact of PR on social cohesion was minimal. This could be attributed to the fact that the management did not support the PR initiative at the university.

The study concluded that the most significant ways that public relations impacts on social cohesion were that; PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis, PR has helped the university maintain good corporate image, PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body and PR increase positive interaction among the students respectively.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the university management should review the policies and strategies guiding the implementation of PR programmes to incorporate them as an integral part of the management and communication function in order to enhance its impact on social cohesion in the university.

The study also recommends that the university management should address the bottlenecks hindering the implementation of PR programmes by adopting a hybrid approach of PR strategies and tools to revitalize PR function on social cohesion.

The researcher also recommends that the university management should offer continuous training to the staff on use of PR in enhancing social cohesion to keep them up-to date with skills that will assist them promote social cohesion. At the same time advocacy forums should be enhanced on social cohesion in the university to encourage interaction and conversations on topics concerned with diversity and difference, such as political and social views, racism and discrimination, women's rights, and national politics as noted by Antonio (2001).

The university should strive to achieve a corporate social cohesion through use of enhanced PR programmes therefore boosting the image of the institution.

5.5 Suggestions for further studies

Since this study was an investigation into the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, a case study of University Of Nairobi, the study recommends that;

- i. Similar study should be done in other public universities for comparison purposes and to allow for generalization of findings on the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Introduction Letter

University of Nairobi,
P.O Box 30197,
Nairobi.
Date.....

Dear Sir/Madam/Student,

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCCION

I am a student at University of Nairobi taking a Master of Arts in Communication Studies. As a requirement for the fulfillment of the Masters degree, I intend to carry out research on “AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI”.

Kindly spare some of your time to complete the questionnaire attached herein. The information given will be handled with utmost confidentiality and will be used purely for academic for academic.

Yours faithfully

Serah Wambui Njuguna

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY

Introduction

I am a final year student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies. I am currently undertaking a research project on an investigation into the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, a case study of University of Nairobi. I would be grateful if you could spare some time from your busy schedule and complete this questionnaire for me.

Instructions:

(Please read the instructions given and answer the questions as appropriately as possible).

It is advisable that you read carefully and correctly fill in each section as provided.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender Male () Female ()

2. What is your age bracket?

25years and below () 26 - 30 years () 31 – 35 years () 35 – 40 years ()

45 – 50 years () Over 50 years ()

3. How many years have you worked for this organization? (Tick () where appropriate).

a) Less than 5 Years [] b) 5-10 Years []

c) 11-15 Years [] d) 16-20 Years []

4. What is your highest level of education?

Diploma () Degree () Masters ()

Any other (specify) _____

Section B: Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

5. Has the university adopted public relations strategies to create social cohesion in public universities?

Yes [] No []

6. Are the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion effective?

Yes [] No []

7. Is yes, to what extent are the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion effective?

a) To no extent [] b) Low extent [] c) Moderately extent []

d) Great extent [] e) Very great extent []

8. The following are statements related to public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities. To what extent is each one of them applicable in the university? Use a scale where 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great and 5-To a very great extent

	1	2	3	4	5
Implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues					

Maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion					
Promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion					
Conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff					
Participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion					

Section C: To determine the use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities

9. Have you ever attended a forum on social cohesion at the university?

Yes No

10. During times of crises in the university, does the university management relay information to its fraternity to encourage peaceful coexistence?

Yes No

11. Has the PR used by the university been effective in promoting peaceful coexistence?

Yes No

12. To what extent is the use of PR in enhancing social cohesion in the university?

a) To no extent b) Low extent' c) Moderately extent

d) Great extent [] e) Very great extent []

13. What are the three areas most criticized by the students in the university?

.....

14. What are the students' most important expectations regarding their association with the university?.....

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Tick one. Where; 1(Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5(Strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
The management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university					
Through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background					
Social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics					
There is a functional public relations department in the university					
Public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics					
Through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders					

16. In which other ways is the public relations sector in the university involved in to bring social cohesion in the university?

.....

.....

.....

Section C: Public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion

17. Which are the most utilized PR communication tools by the university management to promote social cohesion?

Printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements)

Outdoor Media (posters, bill boards)

Websites

Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)

18. Do you think communication influences employee social cohesion in the university?

No [] Yes []

19. Indicate the extent to which the university uses these PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion? Use the appropriate letter. 5 strongly agree, 4 Agree, 3 Moderate, 2 Disagree, 1 strongly disagree.

	5	4	3	2	1
Printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers					

and, brochures, advertisements)					
Outdoor Media (posters, bill boards)					
Websites					
Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)					

Section D The impact of public relations on social cohesion

20. Do the public relations have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at your institution? Yes () No ()

21. To what extent does PR impact of public relations on social cohesion?

- a) To no extent [] b) Low extent [] c) Moderately extent
d) Great extent [] e) Very great extent []

22. The following statements relate to the impact of public relations on social cohesion. To what extent do you they apply to your organization? Use a scale where 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great and 5-To a very great extent

	5	4	3	2	1
PR increase positive interaction among the students					
PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body					
PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis					
PR has helped the university maintain good corporate					

23. In which other ways has the PR been used in the university to promote social cohesion?

.....
.....

Thank you for your time and participation

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDENTS

Introduction

I am a final year student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies. I am currently undertaking a research project on an investigation into the impact of public relations in achieving social cohesion in public universities, a case study of University of Nairobi. I would be grateful if you could spare some time from your busy schedule and complete this questionnaire for me.

Instructions: *(Please read the instructions given and answer the questions as appropriately as possible).* It is advisable that you read carefully and correctly fill in each section as provided.

Section A: Demographic Information (Tick (☐) where appropriate).

1. What is your gender Male () Female ()

2. What is your age bracket?

Less than 18 years [] 18-20 years [] 21-25 years [] 26 - 30 years ()

3. How many years have you been in this university?

a) Less than 1 year [] 1-2 years 3-4 years [] b) 5Years []

Section B: Public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities

4. Has the university adopted public relations strategies to create social cohesion in public universities?

Yes [] No []

5. Are the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion effective?

Yes [] No []

6. Is yes, to what extent are the PR strategies the university has adopted to create social cohesion effective?

- a) To no extent [] b) Low extent [] c) Moderately extent []
 d) Great extent [] e) Very great extent []

7. The following are statements related to public relations strategies used to create social cohesion in public universities. To what extent is each one of them applicable in the university? Use a scale where 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great and 5-To a very great extent

	1	2	3	4	5
Implementing seminars to educate students and staff on social cohesion issues					
Maintaining a resource center of programming materials on social cohesion					
Promoting the position statements of the organizations on social cohesion					
Conducting campus-wide presentations on the value of social cohesion towards peaceful coexistence of students and staff					
Participating in campus informational fairs on social cohesion					

Section C: To determine the use of public relations in creating awareness on social cohesion in public universities

8. Have you ever attended a forum on social cohesion at the university?

Yes [] No []

9. During times of crises in the university, does the university management relay information to its fraternity to encourage peaceful coexistence?

Yes [] No []

10. Has the PR used by the university been effective in promoting peaceful coexistence?

Yes [] No []

11. To what extent is the use of PR in enhancing social cohesion in the university?

a) To no extent [] b) Low extent [] c) Moderately extent []

d) Great extent [] e) Very great extent []

12. What are the three areas most criticized by the students in the university?

.....
.....

13. What are the students' most important expectations regarding their association with the university?.....

.....
.....

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Tick one. Where; 1(Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), 5(Strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
The management is now focusing on students co-existence in the university					
Through various campaigns the university management conducts to create peaceful co-existence of students from diverse background					
Social cohesion is adopted in this organization to promote dialogue between organisations and its publics					
There is a functional public relations department in the university					
Public relations is vital in managing crisis and regaining public confidence and trust of the institution including fostering cohesion among its publics					
Through PR the university management educates its members on important policy issues and helps to integrate all the stakeholders					

15. In which other ways is the public relations sector in the university involved in to bring social cohesion in the university?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Section C: Public relations communication tools in achieving social cohesion

16. Which are the most utilized PR communication tools by the university management to promote social cohesion?

Printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements)

Outdoor Media (posters, bill boards)

Websites

Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)

17. Do you think communication influences employee social cohesion in the university?

No [] Yes []

18. Indicate the extent to which the university uses these PR communication tools in achieving social cohesion? Use the appropriate letter. 5 strongly agree, 4 Agree, 3 Moderate, 2 Disagree, 1 strongly disagree.

	5	4	3	2	1
Printed and graphic communication (press release, flyers and, brochures, advertisements)					
Outdoor Media (posters, bill boards)					
Websites					
Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)					

Section D The impact of public relations on social cohesion

19. Do the public relations have an impact on the peaceful co-existence of persons at your institution? Yes () No ()

20. To what extent does PR impact of public relations on social cohesion?

a) To no extent [] b) Low extent [] c) Moderately extent

d) Great extent [] e) Very great extent []

21. The following statements relate to the impact of public relations on social cohesion. To what extent do you they apply to your organization? Use a scale where 1- To a very low extent, 2- To a low extent, 3- To a moderate extent, 4- To a great and 5-To a very great extent

	5	4	3	2	1
PR increase positive interaction among the students					
PR has improved rapport between university management and the student body					
PR help in reducing tension in times of crisis					
PR has helped the university maintain good corporate image					

22. In which other ways has the PR been used in the university to promote social cohesion?

.....

Thank you for your time and participation