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Factors that affect public relations practice: in the case of Tigray Education Bureau

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Abstract. Public relations practice is a profitable interpretation of an organization's new and continuous relationship with stakeholders, including customers, by managing all communication relationships with the organization that creates the reputation and protects its reputation [5]. The researcher has employed mixed research methods. Mixed approaches are far more compressive than attacking a problem one point of view and allow a different type of data to be accessed from disciplinary boundaries. Employing a purposive sampling method, a total of 7 PR officers of the Tigray region education Bureau and the Public relations Manager of the respective Bureau have been selected. An interview and questionnaires have been employed to gather data. After the researcher has collected the relevant data using the mixed research methods it has been analyzed. The data which was gathered using a quantitative research method has been analyzed and interpreted in a table and report in percentage with sufficient explanation for each table result and percentages using SPSS data analyzing software. In addition, the gathered data using a qualitative research design was analyzed in the reporting method with elaboration.

Keywords. Public Relations, Communication Tool, Media Relations, Effective Public Relations

Introduction

Public Relations are practiced worldwide - especially in developing markets and developing countries [1]. The idea of public relations has come as long as people try to persuade others to do something, not to do or continue to do something. But public relations became an official profession in the United States roughly between the late 1800s and the early 1900s [2]. Public relations techniques were used in the 1800s to encourage Americans to settle in the West. Railroad companies that have opened new roads in America have used ex-journalists to create leaflets and pamphlets that describe broad opportunities across the American border. And many believe that railroad companies are the first to use the term "public relations" [3]. "Public relations practice is defined as the management function that aims to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public in which it sees success or failure [4].

Public relations practice is the art and science of analyzing trends; their consequences advise organization leaders and implement planned action programs that serve both the organization and the public good (News and Haynes, 2005).

Public relations practice is a profitable interpretation of an organization's new and continuous relationship with stakeholders, including customers, by managing all communication relationships with the organization that creates the reputation and protects its reputation [5].

Public relations practice is defined as the management function that aims to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public in which it is successful or unsuccessful [6].

Supporting effective public relations may not always be appropriate for Public Relations officers. Due to the lack of an official Public Relations and Communication Training at Mekelle University in Ethiopia, except for the 2015 graduate student. Many of the practitioners working on the file are suspected to be through experience graduating from Languages, Journalism and Communication, Marketing, and other related courses. Therefore, it is suspected that most PR officers may not be a well-trained and good practitioner.

With this in mind, the researcher decided to examine the situations affecting the Public Relations practice under the following categories; First, the method applied on the ground, the crotch relationship either fit what the theories claim, the second, to determine if there is a bad background from the community or practitioner regarding the government policy for both the profession and the public relations profession. The researcher aimed to examine the factors that affect the PR application in the Tigray District Education Bureau, as there is no research on this.

1. Role of Public Relations

Public relations is basically the art and science of establishing relationships between an organization and is a key audience [7]; Public relations play an important role in helping business industries build strong relationships with core customers [4]. Moreover, the public relations icons are values that control and evaluate the attitudes of society and maintain mutual understanding between an institution and its vital customers [8].

Public relations play an important role in improving the communication channel and creating new ways of creating a two-way follow-up of information and understanding communication [6].

2. Function of Public Relations

Public relations is a general term that can include many other “relationships” with different audiences, strategies, and tactics [9]. For example, Employee relations are a function of public relations, which includes responding to employees' concerns and informing and motivating staff. Some of the tactics used for employee relations may include new employee training [10], employee reward programs and recognition, newly hired press releases, and newsletters such as a few [11].

Another “relationships” - Community relationships - is the function of planning and participating actively with [12]and within a community for the benefit of the community and organization [5]. Tactics in this category include community events, volunteer events, and joint sponsorship opportunities with other community organizations [13].

Community relationships can also include fundraising and development activities. Government relations is the function of establishing relationships with government officials and agencies on issues affecting the hospital and its audience [3]. Hill climbing events, letter-writing campaigns, and op-ed placements in the newspaper are often part of government relations [14].

Finally, media relations that are considered synonymous with public relations are the function of working with the media to convey the news [3]. Media relations can actively seek out a positive promotion for a newsworthy topic in the organization or respond to a news query about a positive or negative story of interest for the media and its readers or viewers [15].

3. Factors that affect the effectiveness of Public Relations practice

The effectiveness of the public relations office can be affected by several factors. Insufficient budget to participate [11]. Public relations office, insufficient public relations professional and the environment in which the public relations practitioner operates [16], the size of the folk culture, the activities of the absence of professionals specializing in public relations [6]. Public relations face challenges that seem unimaginable when the practitioner opened the store 100 years ago. The pool maker can harm public trust. Working on the base plate can also damage professional reliability [17]. Defending unpopular customers also poses an additional challenge when publicity professionals are waiting for information that might explain their reasons [18]. On the contrary, the political unrest or conflict relations counseling specialist faces a lack of confidence in the individual and teaching [11]. This makes it difficult to establish industrial relations and companies to allow the profile and do not want to raise the profile of their work when public relations are accepted to maintain a professional arrangement for the global industry [19]

4. Methodology

The researcher used mixed research methods. Mixed approaches are far more compressive than attacking a single perspective on a problem and allow access to different types of data from discipline boundaries. Since these approaches help collect and interpret relevant information from the population in the sample, this project can help solve the research question.

The researcher used a purposeful sampling technique to deliberately select seven PR practitioners from seven practitioners, as all Public Relations officers were eligible for the study. Besides, two teachers each primary school and high school such as; Hatsey Yohannes, Hawolty, Adihaki, Ayider, Adiha, and Kaleb Academy were determined from the total number of schools and teachers using the lottery method.

The research has been analyzed after collecting relevant data using mixed research methods. Data collected using a quantitative research method was analyzed and interpreted in a table and reported with sufficient explanation in percentage using SPSS data analysis software for each table result and percentage. Besides, the data collected by using a qualitative research design were analyzed by detailed reporting method.

5. Findings and data analysis

5.1 Interview Conducted With The Respective Bureau PR Manager

5.1.1 Year of Experience

The PR manager of the Tigray Region Education Bureau was asked about his year of work experience. And based on the response The PR manager has 5-10 years of experience. Thus, having experience in a sort of job is always helpful in coping up with the situations of respective organizations' tasks and could make anyone effective.

Difficulties in professional performance and how it has been solved

That's is common to have routine problems in daily tasks. Thus, the PR manager and director of the Tigray Region Education bureau were asked during the conducted interview what challenges or difficulties they are facing in their profession. Based on their response the PR officer have a lack of source on PR theory, communication theory, communication tools, and other relevant information for PR in order to update themselves with the latest findings. However, the PR officers of the Tigray Region Education bureau have tried to resolve those through; handling some course training recall from the government communication bureau and DWOT which is helpful in creating awareness based on their claim.

Thus, we can have concluded from this finding that the Tigray Region Education bureau PR officers are not participating in crash courses to update themselves and are not able to find some sort of book resource.

External and internal factors

The PR manager and director of the Tigray Region Education bureau were also asked what external and internal threats are affecting their job. Based on their response; seen from the aspect of external factors, unplanned meeting call, information seeking by other sectors while the PR officers are handling other tasks, in the efficiency of media coverage in terms of creating awareness on education, especially Tigray Television, and most importantly DWET journalists have lack to give more coverage on education.

Seen from the internal factor, in every sector, there is back warded perception about PR officer, due to this the managers are not willing to give efficient information about what is going on currently in the bureau since they are not part of TOP-Management. We have a lack of structure especially in schools there is no spoke person who can feed us with their role modeled findings. Thus, from this finding, we can have concluded that the Tigray Region Education bureau PR officers have lacked good media relationships thus cannot get efficiency coverage. From the above both aspects we can have concluded that the PR officers are not part of the top management that is why they cannot have an impact on changing the bad perception.

5.1.2 Succession Of Targeted Goal And Support From The Management Staff

In an effort to assess the success of the PR officer in reaching their targeted goal and interview were conducted with PR manager and director of Tigray Region Education bureau. And based on their response the PR officers have tried to succeed their goal but there is no yet successful goal. However, the management staff has tried to support them somehow in financial and giving some training for succession their goal.

Thus, from the above finding, we can have concluded that the PR officers of the Tigray Region Education bureau are not able to succeed in their targeted goal, and as there is a lack of structure and cooperatively work for effectiveness in reaching the bureau targeted goal as managerial staff.

How helpful were being managerial staff in interpreting the communication strategy

In an effort to assess the communication strategy of the Tigray Region Education bureau the PR officers were asked how helpful the managerial staff were in interpreting the communication strategy, especially as PR officers. Based on the PR manager and director of the Tigray Region Education bureau response; the respective bureau doesn't have any strategic communication plan. The PR officers just used to draft and implement it themselves based on the situation.

Thus, from the above finding, we can have concluded that the Tigray Region Education bureau PR officers have lacked to have strategically communication which could guide them on how they have to make communication.

5.1.3 The PR Officer's Relation with Top Management

Realizing the perception of top-management towards the PR profession is helpful in creating a smooth relationship with the internal community. Thus, the PR officers were asked what looks like the perception of the Top-management towards the PR profession and what staff do they help them.

Based on their response, the top-management have a negative perception towards the PR, but they use to help them in fulfilling what has lacked by the PR officers and suggesting what they have missed performing.

Thus, from the above result, managerial staff having a bad perception towards PR is one challenge or threat for PR to don't do their job effectively.

5.1.4 Are You Part Of Top-Management?

Being part of top-management is always helpful in making communication strategies and decisions. Thus, the PR manager of Tigray Region Education Bureaus was asked about his status in the top management.

Based on their response, the PR manager of the Tigray Region Education Bureau is not part of the top management. Nevertheless, the PR manager used to participate in quarter annually meeting and decision making with the top- managerial staff. But yet they cannot make a decision.

As a result, we can have concluded that the PR officer is not part of the top management. Thus, the PR manager cannot make decision especially financial things they need to accelerate their plan.

5.2 Questionnaire distributed to teachers

5.2.1 Demographic Distribution

Table 1. Demographic Distribution

What Is Your Sex	Alternative	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Male	5	41.7 %
	Female	7	58.3%
	Total	12	100%
Education Level	Alternative	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Diploma	4	33.3%
	BA/BSS Degree	6	50%
	Master	2	16.7%
	Total	12	100%
The cycle of Respondents Teaching Level	Alternative	Frequency	Percent (%)
	First Cycle (1-4 Grade)	4	33.3%
	Second Cycle (5-8 Grade)	2	16.7%
	Third Cycle (9-10 Garde)	3	25%
	Fourth Cycle (11-12 Grade)	3	25%
	Total	12	100%

Source filed survey 2020

According to Table 1, 58.33% of the respondents are female and 41.7% are categorized under the sex distribution of males. In addition, 33.3% of the teachers have earned their diploma and 50% of the respondents have also earned their BA/BS Degree. And the very few numbers of teachers have earned their master's. The great number of (33.3%) the teachers are categorized under the elementary level which is handling the two-cycle (i.e. first cycle and second cycle)

and both third and fourth cycle have 25% each. And very few numbers of the respondents are found in the category of the second cycle with 16.7%.

From the above finding, we can have concluded that most of the teachers have earned their BA/BSS degree while most of the diploma holders are founded in the first cycle the degree and master are found in the high school and preparatory.

5.2.2 Formed Relationship Among Pr Officer, Teachers, And The Respective Bureau

Table; 2 Formed Relationship Among PR officer, Teachers, and the respective Bureau

Relationship Among Teachers and PR Office Of Tigray Region Education Bureau	Alternative	Frequency	Percent
	Very Good	6	50%
	Good	3	25%
	Not Bad	3	25%
	Bad	-	-
	Total	12	100%
Relationship Among Teachers and Tigray Region Education Bureau	Very Good	3	25%
	Good	6	50%
	Not Bad	3	25%
	Bad	-	-
	Total	12	100%

Source filed survey 2020

According to the above table, we can see that 50% of the teachers have agreed as they have a very good relationship with the PR officer of the Tigray Region Education Bureau. In addition, 25% of the respondents also agreed as they have a good relationship with the PR officers of the Tigray Region Education Bureau. Whereas, the rest 25% have rated their relationship as not bad. Furthermore, as the aspect seen in the above table 25% have agreed as they have a Very good relationship with Tigray Region Education Bureau whereas most respondents have agreed as it was good (50%). And they have stated their reason as; Tigray Region Education Bureau is helping them with materials, updating them using a supervision system, and encouraging them by highlighting the effective way of the teaching process. The Rest 25% of the respondents have claimed as their relationship with Tigray Region Education Bureau is not-bad. Thus, seen from the above aspect we can have concluded that Tigray Region Education Bureau PR officer has a good relationship with the teachers and a significant number of the respondents have claimed as they have a good or very good relationship with Tigray Region Education Bureau.

5.2.3 Formed Communication and Communication Tools

5.2.3.1 Formed Communication

Table. 3 Does PR officer communicate with all your wants

		Frequency	Percent
Does PR officer communicate with all your wants	Yes	7	58.3
	No	5	41.7
	Total	12	100.0

Source filed survey 2020

From the above table, we can have concluded that the PR officer of the Tigray Region Education Bureau is playing a vital role in having communication with the teacher's goal, as the 58.3%

have agreed. They have also stated their reason for agreeing as, as the PR officer delivers that they have lack stationery materials such as computer, printer to the Tigray Region Education Bureau, announcing the respective bureau if they have lack financial in terms to the teaching and learning process. Whereas, 41.7% of the teachers have disagreed that the PR officer hasn't communicated with all that they want. And they have stated their reason, as PR officer doesn't visit the school and asked what problems are affecting them, doesn't fulfill the commodity of the school and never responds to their questions.

Based on the above finding we can have concluded that the PR officer is having good communication with the teachers, but yet the PR officer has failed to reach and visit all the schools.

5.2.3.2 Communication Tools

Table. 4 Communication tools Employed by the PR officer to communicate with the teachers

		Frequency	Percent
Communication tools Employed by the PR officer to communicate with the teachers	Face-to-face	4	33.3
	Digital Means (Email, SMS, Social Media and so on	4	33.3
	Print Media	2	16.7
	Phone call	2	16.7
	Total	12	100.0

Source filed survey 2020

According to the above table, the PR officer of Tigray Region Education Bureau is communicating with the teachers of the four-cycle (33.3) Digital means of communication, and they have agreed that they have got a good opportunity in discussing all their wants and desires, and have admired that the PR officer has a good approach. And Teachers from the first and second cycles have claimed that they have a face to face communication (33.3%). And an Insignificant number of the respondents have conducted the PR officer through a newsletter and phone calls. And some of them have stated that neither they had a good opportunity nor a challenge at all.

5.2.4 PR Officer Effectiveness

Table, 5 Rate the effectiveness of PR officer of Tigray Region Education Bureau

		Frequency	Percent
Rate the effectiveness of PR officer	Excellent	3	25.0
	Very good	5	41.7
	Satisfactory	2	16.7
	Unsatisfactory	2	16.7
	Total	12	100.0

Source filed survey 2020

According to the above table, 25% of the teachers have rated the effectiveness of the PR officer as excellent in terms of the PR communication method, and 41.7% of the respondents are also have rated very good, and they have stated their reason as they get good hospitality and good

listening and answering from the PR officer. And 16.7% of the respondents have found is satisfactory the effectiveness of the Public Relations Officer.

Whereas, the rest 16.7% of the respondents have explained as they were not satisfactory while having communication with the PR and their main reason is that, PR officer has lack to get to the ground and check out what is going on beyond having call contact and reading and deciding only based on report system, it lacks in personal communication.

5.3 Questionnaire distributed to pr officers of Tigray Region Education Bureau

5.3.1 Demographic Distribution

Table 6. Demographic Distribution

What is your sex	Alternatives	Frequency	Percent
	Male	4	57.1
	Female	3	42.9
	Total	7	100
Education level	BA/BSS	3	42.9
	MA	2	28.6
	PhD	2	28.6
	Total	7	100
Specialization Filed	Journalism	2	28.6
	Language and Literature	3	42.9
	Marketing	1	14.3
	Teaching	1	14.3
	Total	7	100

Source filed survey 2020

5.3.2 Training On Public Relations

Table 7. Employee training

Have you attended Training related to Public Relations	Alternatives	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	7	100
	No	-	-
	Total	7	100
The Extent to which the Employees were Trained	To a very great extent	2	28.6
	To a great extent	3	42.9
	To an average extent	2	28.6
	Total	7	100

Source filed survey 2020

The researcher tried to determine whether the participants had received training on skills related to Public Relations. And based on the respondent's response All of the Public Relations officers of the respective bureau have had to attend a crash course regarding the functions and skills of public relations. The respondents were asked to what extent they believe they have had attended training, and 71% of the respondents believed that they have attended crash courses to great

extent, and the 28.6% believes the crash course was to a very great extent while the rest 28.6% thinks the training was an average extent.

5.3.3 Whether Organizational Policies Affect Public Relations

Table 8. Organizational Policies

Whether Policies Affect Public Relations	Organizational Alternatives	Frequency	Percent
Clear Guidance	Yes	7	100
	No	-	-
	Total	7	100
Communication strategies	Very great extent	2	28.6
	Great extent	3	42.9
	Moderate extent	2	28.6
	Total	7	100
Top Management	Very great extent	2	28.6
	Great extent	4	57.1
	Moderate extent	1	14.3
	Total	7	100

Source filed survey 2020

The above indication shows that the Communication strategies have 42.9% Great extent, clear guidance has got a 42.9% of great extent rates, while Top-management has the highest impact on policies with 57.1% of rating to great extent. The findings of this study reveal that organizational policies should be developed under efficient estimation to improve public relations.

5.3.4 Factors Affecting Their day to day activity at the office

Table 9. Factors Affecting PR Practice

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Government	2	28.6
	Financial	3	42.9
	Manpower	2	28.6
	Total	7	100.0

Source filed survey 2020

Seen from the aspects of an external factor, 28.6% of the PR officers have agreed that they have a lack of manpower who can accelerate the daily plan of the PR. And 28.6% of the respondents have claimed that the government system has been affecting their day to day activity to not cop up with what Public Relations filed is intended for. In addition, the rest 42.9% of the respondents have claimed that there is a scarcity of Budget.

Conclusion

After the researcher have analyzed the distributed questioner and interview, the following findings were captured;

Tigray Region Education bureau PR officers are not participating in a crash course to update themselves and are not able to find some sort of book resource. Tigray Region Education bureau PR officers have lacked good media relationships thus cannot get efficiency coverage. From the above both aspects we can have concluded that the PR officers are not part of the top management that is why they cannot have an impact on changing the bad perception. PR officers of the Tigray Region Education bureau are not able to succeed in their targeted goal and as there is a lack of structured and cooperatively work for effectiveness in reaching the bureau targeted goal as managerial staff the PR officer is not part of the top management. Thus, they cannot make decision especially financial things they need to accelerate their plan. PR officer was helpful for the success of the strategical plans of the Tigray Region Education Bureau.

Tigray Region Education Bureau PR officer has a good relationship with the teachers and a significant number of the respondents have claimed as they have a good or very good relationship with the Tigray Region Education Bureau. Having a good relationship with the internal community is always an outstanding way of achieving the entire organization's goals. Even if there are some schools that PR officer has failed to have smooth communication with, most of the rest school believes as the communications in between have been effective.

All the Public Relations officers of the respective Bureau have attended a crash course which could help them update themselves with the latest findings and build their skill and knowledge related to the filed. And a significant number of the participants believe that the training was to their great extent. Furthermore, Financial scarcity and some policies of the government and lack of manpower have influenced their day-to-day activities in not reaching their targeted goal as planned.

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