

Research Article

Assessing the Practice of Public Relations Practitioners on Image Building Practice: Ethiopia, Hawassa City Administration Municipality in Focus

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Abstract—The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the image-building strategies used by PR practitioners with a focus on Ethiopia's Hawassa City Administration Municipality (HCAM). The following goals served as its guidelines: to examine the function of public relations practitioners and learn about their difficulties when constructing an image. A review of literature from different sources was done. The study combined quantitative and qualitative approaches with a descriptive research methodology. 121 respondents were chosen as a sample size from a total of 221 populations. 116 out of the 121 respondents responded, yielding a 96% return rate out of 100%. Purposive sampling was utilized in the study for the qualitative approach and stratified sample techniques for the quantitative approach. Instruments like surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and thematic analysis of documents were used to gather data. The results showed that PR professionals had no discernible impact on image-building techniques. The study also discovered that there was insufficient practice for the facilitators of problem-solving and experienced prescribers. However, positions in media relations and as communication technicians are useful. The institution has primarily built up a high challenge. With the exception of a few areas, PR practitioners' image-building techniques were generally ineffective and failed to meet the claimed goals. The study suggested that more investigation be conducted into the image-building practices in both government and non-governmental organizations.

Keywords—Public relations, PRs practice, PRs practitioners, Image-building practice, Relationship, Administration

1. Introduction

Public relations, according to the British Institute of Public Relations, are "the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish mutual understanding between an organization and its public [21].

Image-building is a long-term process of influencing the surroundings—creating and influencing personal and media images, in a direction that supports the objectives, visual style, and overall brand image of an organization, product, or personality [17]. The term "image building" refers to people's overall perceptions of an organization and is for the purpose of defining loosely organized knowledge and ideas that people have about an organization [17].

As practitioners, a group of professionals called the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) led a global movement to modernize the phrase "public relations." The following definition was produced as a result of a public survey, and crowdsourcing exercise led by PRSA: Public relations, according to [22], are a "strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics."

PR is now a worldwide profession that is practiced in many locations using various methods [16].

Regionally, the achievements of public relations in Africa can be learned from the work of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) and Public Relations of South Africa (PRSA) in the field of African public relations. Nigerian public relations interpreters are honored worldwide and have been playing prominent roles in the Federation of African Public Relations Interpreters (FAPRA), which hosted the 1st Commonwealth Public Relations Conference, which brought together transnational experts to communicate on the topic "The World in Transition" [9].

Ethiopia is credited for giving rise to modern PRs in the 1960s, according to [26]. In truth, the nation's contemporary public relations practices originated with the formation of the Ministry of PRs in the 1940s. It was replaced in the 1950s by the Ministry of Information and Tourism after serving under the Pen Ministry.

As a result, all PR activities are carried out in a conventional manner. According to a study, "Ethiopia is at risk in light of the nature and status of PRs in Africa." [24].

This study examines PR practitioners' methods for image-building practice and learning from the Hawassa City Administration Municipality, aiming to improve the institutional image.

1.1. Profile of the Organization

Following its relocation from Hawella Tulla to Hawassa in 1960, the office of the vice district governorate became the Municipality of Hawassa City Administration Office. A municipality was established in 1962. The municipality has a number of public sectors, including the mayor's office. Some of these are more relevant to the study area and include the government communication affairs department, the departments of culture, tourism, and sports, public service and human resources, social affairs, and cooperative works. In these situations, there is a public relations practitioner in every organization, and because there aren't enough professionals to handle PR operations, they are handled in an unprofessional manner. Consequently, the researcher has chosen the Hawassa City organization as one of the Administration Municipality.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

A lot of studies have been carried out on since the 1990s public relations practices and the ways in which the public and an organization might benefit from them [23].

Public relations practitioners must address organizational communication if an organization does not deserve an excellent image [15]. A well-earned and carefully cultivated positive image and identity may be in danger due to poor management of its reputation [25].

Studies have revealed some of the following PR misconceptions, according to [7]: Even institutional leaders erroneously believe that good public relations are all about protocol or the appropriate way to conduct official events; plus goodwill. Since no one is an island by himself, every person and every organization needs the help of others in order to fulfill any objective or vision.

Public relations and media work are the most misguided professions in Ethiopia, claims [18]. In the majority of the world's developing nations, public relations are still an emerging field. The spread of the discipline has been hampered as a result. He also points out that, when assessed objectively from a scientific perspective, PR is still at a low level.

The study's issue is that public relations as a practice is a single topic, making it dependent on other factors. The discipline of public relations may naturally die in this organization unless practitioners respond to the wake-up call (low awareness of PR practitioners and what it stands for on image building); it is a known fact that the majority of PR practitioners have backgrounds in other academic disciplines. Additionally, employers in the municipality think that anyone may learn the necessary skills to work in public relations. Because of their narrow view of the industry, they do not think it is necessary to manage their image development with

both an internal public relations specialist and a consultant. If they do, it would be a bastardization of the profession to just hire them as errand officers.

The aforementioned challenge of the study inspires the researcher to bridge the gap by assessing PRs Practitioners' image-building practices in the HCAM.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the practice of PRs practitioners' image-building practices.

The specific objectives of this study would be;

1. To analyze the role of PRs practitioners' on image-building practice of the HCAM.
2. To find out the challenges that affect PR practitioners' on image building practice in the HCAM.

1.4. Significance of the Study

In the end, the researcher believes that this study will be significant in the reasons that are mentioned below. For the purpose of educating the internal public, public relations are a crucial discipline. It provides a foundational understanding of the importance of public relations in maintaining social contacts with the general public to improve the organization's reputation. It will also provide as a springboard for those scholars who wish to pursue the subject further. The results of the study, according to the researcher, should provide practitioners of public relations with a deeper understanding of public relations and corporate image building work.

2. Related Work

2.1. The History of PRs in Ethiopia

Public relations, as we know it now has very recently become a practice in Ethiopia. However, this is true of the majority of countries; PRs are among the oldest phenomena in Ethiopian civilization because it first appeared in some form in ancient Ethiopia. It would be challenging to separate the persuasion effort that drives the majority of public relations actions from those with the government. Though the exact beginning of contemporary PRs in Ethiopia cannot be determined, it is thought that it may have happened around the 1960s [26].

Public relations at government agencies were made possible by the Ministry of Pen's founding in the 1940s. The Ministry of Pen [19] had a division for information and propaganda at the time. The years after World War II and the defeat of the fascist Italian invading force gave rise to the need for centrally controlled media entities, including radio, television, and news agencies. Consequently, the Ministry of Pen was established to supervise these media establishments; it was eventually superseded by the Ministry of Information and Tourism in the 1950s. The Ministry of Information was formed in the 1960s. The media organizations were still run under the newly emergent offices, while the ministerial offices were being replaced one by one [19].

2.2. The Role of PRs Practitioners

2.2.1. The Communication Technician

The technician carries out the public communications actions voted upon by the dominant coalition. The communication, and journalism abilities necessary for communication

programs are provided by this position. The duties of this role do not entail taking part in research or decision-making processes. As mentioned in [11; 14] fundamentally connected this position to institutions that practice the press a gentry and public information.

2.2.2. The Communication Facilitator

Between the organization and its audiences, the communication facilitator act as intermediaries, interpreters, and mediators. This function encourages engagement in order to keep channels of communication open and dissolve interpersonal barriers. According to [5], these practitioners carry out boundary-spanning roles to give the information necessary for organizations and publics to make decisions that are in their mutual interests. As mentioned in [11; 14] connect this position to the two-way symmetrical and public information models of practice.

2.2.3. The Expert Prescriber

The authority on PR issues and fixes is described as the expert prescriber. It is expected of this person, who is thought to be the most suited to handle PR issues, to assume full responsibility for identifying the issue, creating a program, and putting it into action [5]. This role leads to passive management engagement in the resolution of issues. The practitioner, who is in charge of the programs' outcomes but is cut off from the enterprise's core operations and has minimal influence over crucial components, plays a reactive role [5].

2.2.4. Problem-Solving Facilitator

The facilitator of the problem-solving process takes on the position of a problem-solving facilitator, assisting management in methodically evaluating issues in order to identify and address these issues. As a member of the strategic planning team, this job collaborates with management and converts PR thinking into management thinking [2].

2.3. Public Relations Practitioners

2.3.1. What Do PR Practitioners Do?

Consequently, their entire set of duties is focused on achieving that goal. Some of the public relations duties include:

- Building relationships is mostly about networking with other groups, including social services, organizations, and coworkers of customers.
- Media monitoring: In order to seize chances that could help the company, PR professionals need to maintain a careful eye on all media platforms, including blogs, social media, newspapers, and broadcasts.
- The PR practitioner is in charge of writing and editing internal magazines, speeches, articles, and yearly reports. They also prepare professional documentation.
- PR practitioners are responsible for organizing activities that promote public relations, including press tours, exhibitions, and press conferences [27].

2.4. Misconceptions of Public Relations

[7] Has identified some of these misconceptions including:

1. Courtesy: While some people believe that good manners, politeness, and respect for others make up public relations, these traits by themselves do not.
2. Protocol: Even institutional leaders mistakenly think that perfect protocol, or the correct way to perform official events, is what makes for good public relations.
3. Goodwill: Because no one is an island by itself, every person or organization needs the assistance of others in order to accomplish any objective or vision.
4. Fine Appearance: Many individuals and organizations believe that public relations are synonymous with having a good look, an appealing face, or a flashy front. Due to this, some individuals and organizations uphold a rigid clothing code or policy.
5. Free Gifts: - Many business executives, both in Ethiopia and elsewhere, believe that by giving away free annual presents like Christian hampers and Sallah rams, they may portray their companies as helpful and benevolent.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

2.5.1. Systems Theory

[5] Suggested an open system theory of public relations (PR), which recognizes the significance of the public and its behaviors. Closed systems do not adjust to their external conditions, but open systems consider their surroundings and change their business practices accordingly. It is recommended by Cutlip and his coworkers that PR sees itself as a component of an open system. Given that social surroundings change periodically, this theory explains why environmental scanning (SWOT analysis) is crucial for public relations researchers.

2.5.2. Excellence Theory

A crucial and defining assertion regarding what constitutes effective public relations is the excellence theory of PR. The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation supported a research of best practices in communication management that led to the development of excellence theory, a general theory of PRs [14].

This idea appears to place a strong emphasis on two-way, symmetrical communication as the cornerstone of effective public relations.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Description of the Study Area

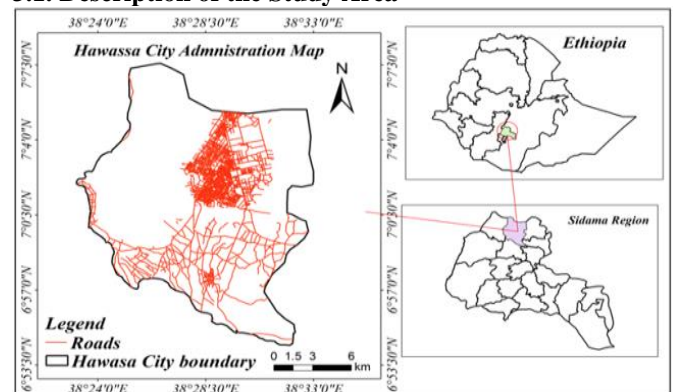


Figure 2: Hawassa City Administration Map

Located on the banks of Lake Awassa in the Great Rift Valley, Hawassa City, also written Awassa or Awasa, was originally known as Adare. It is situated 130 km east of Sodo, 75 km north of Dilla, and 273 km south of Addis Ababa via Bishoftu. The town is the capital of the Sidama Region. Its latitude is 7°30'N and its longitude is 38°28'E. The name comes from a Sidamic phrase meaning "wide body of water". The Municipality of the Hawassa City Administration office is located in Hawassa City, in the Sidama area.

3.2. Research Design

In order to analyze the research problem and ascertain the image-building practices of public relations practitioners, this study employed a descriptive research design. To identify and characterize the characteristics of the variables in a situation, a descriptive research was conducted and contend that understanding the how, who, and what of the subject is the goal of the descriptive investigation [4].

3.3. Research Methods

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It has used the techniques for conducting research, such as quantitative questionnaires, qualitatively In-depth are administered to the municipality of the workers and a total of 121 questionnaires are distributed to the participants' interviews, FGDs, and Document reviews.

According to [6], the phrase "research approach" encompasses the full research process, from envisioning a problem through writing the narrative, and not only the techniques used for data collecting, analysis, and report writing.

3.4. Population of the Study

There are many sectors were found in the Municipality, the following sectors were Government Communication Affairs Department, Culture Tourism and Sports Department, Public Service and Human Resource Department, Social Affairs Department, and Cooperative Works Office were selected for the study because the PRs practitioners were found in this listed departments.

The target population is the 221 workers found in the five selected sectors in the municipality of HCA offices including the GCA Department that group to which the researcher ideally would like to generalize the results.

A population is a set of potential participants to whom a researcher hopes to generalize the study's anticipated findings [13].

3.5. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The researcher used the probability of sampling method to select a small portion of the respondents to refer the sample size. The researcher adopted the Probability sampling method. From the probability sampling method, the researcher has used a stratified sampling technique where subjects are selected because of to select small number respondents from the total population. [13] Described the sampling methods process in research to answer the research questions: The entire set of cases from which the researcher sample is drawn is called the population.

Table 1: Sampling Technique with in strata

Category	Total population	Sample size
1. Administration office GCA department and all sectors PR practitioners	38	All 38 was selected
2. Administration offices of five sectors managers and staff members	183	83
3. Total	221	121

3.6. Data Gathering tools

3.6.1. Questionnaire

There are closed-ended questions on the questionnaire, which will be arranged in a form and given to the responders. On a five-point Likert scale, the respondents would be asked to rate how much they agreed with the following statements. First, highly agree; second, agree; third, fairly agree; fourth, disagree; and fifth, strongly disagree. The researcher would create twenty-seven (27) closed-ended questionnaire items in order to triangulate the study's findings.

3.6.2. In-depth Interview`

The rationale behind using an in-depth interview method is to ensure that the researcher obtains personal perspectives on a certain subject. Furthermore, conducting in-depth interviews is a great method to get in-depth details about delicate subjects and intricate issues pertaining to people's habits, perspectives, and beliefs that can be investigated [8].

3.6.3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

For each distinct goal, the researcher employed FGD discussion. Group interviewing, or focus group discussion (FGD) as it is commonly known, is fundamentally a qualitative research methodology. Based on organized, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews, it provides qualitative researchers with the chance to conduct systematic interviews with several respondents [1].

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis

3.7.1. Descriptive Statistical Data Analysis Techniques and Thematic Data Analysis Techniques:

Were used to analyze the quantitative data. In this study, the themes that emerge from the data analysis serve as reflections on the research topics.

The open-ended, In-depth interview portion's qualitative data would be analyzed utilizing thematic analysis techniques.

First, the questionnaires were given out in a closed-ended format of Statistical tabulation and descriptive percentages.

Table 2: Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha

No	Measurement	Number of scale item	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient
1	Role of PRs practitioners on image building	16 (A=5 items, B=4 items, C=3 items, & D=4 items)	a=0.938 (A=0.773, B=0.761, C=0.734, and D=0.858)
2	Challenges of PRs practitioners on image building	11	a=0.811
Reliability of all items		27	a=0.932

Source: Field Survey of data, 2015 E.C

3.8. Reliability and Validity

[20] States; Reliability and validity are central issues in all measurements.

3.8.1. Test of the Reliability

Cronbach, L. J. states that data is considered credible if the Cronbach's Alpha test score is greater than 0.70. The results of this study's reliability tests are shown in the table below. Thus, the researcher guarantees the validity of the data depending on the outcome.

4. Result and Discussion

The study's analysis and conclusions are presented in this chapter. Regarding this, this chapter's two (2) primary goals are the function of PR practitioners and their obstacles in the practice of image-building. Analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, and SPSS version 26.0 was utilized to produce the final product. On the other hand, words, theories, books, studies, and reports are used to provide qualitative data. In-depth interviews are included in the data, FGD questions are referenced, and respondent names are kept private with codes.

For example, Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 are represented by I1 and I2, respectively. The interviewee is simply represented by the numbers, and the letter "I" stands for the term interviewee. Two groups of the administrative Municipality office (FGD 1A and FGD 2B) drafted and discussed the FGD questions.

4.1. Results

❖ Response Rate

Table 3: Response rate

	Distributed questionnaires	Percentage (%)
Returned	116	96
Distorted	5	4
Total	121	100

Source: Field of Data, 2015

❖ Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Profile of Respondents

A. Sex Distribution of the Respondents

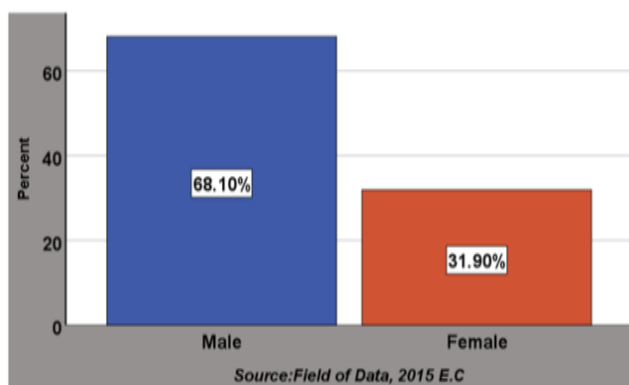


Figure 3: Sex of the Respondents

The distribution of the male and female respondents selected for questionnaires as public relations practitioners where covered by male 79 (68.1%) and 37 (31.9%) females. The data analyzed indicated that the number of males is dominates or much greater than the number of females.

B. Educational Background/Field of Study of the Respondents

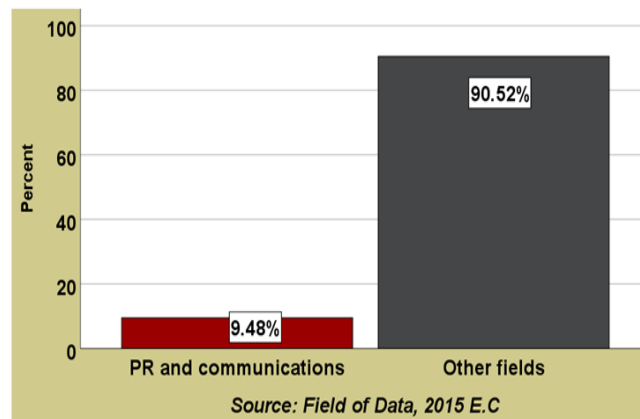


Figure 4: Educational background of the Respondents

The above figure shows that most of the PR practitioners come from other fields of the study which means 90.52% from other fields of the study but only 9.48% comes from PR and Communications this shows unprofessionalism for PR studies.

C. Work Experience of the Respondents

Work Experience

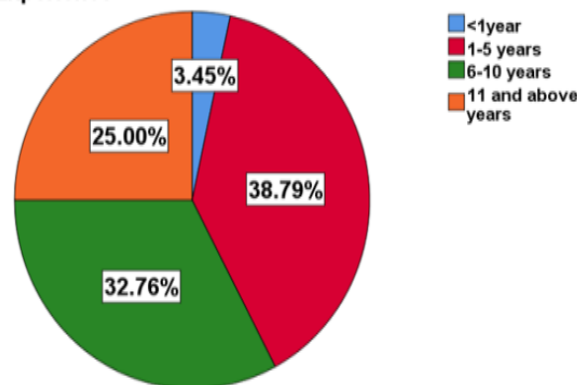


Figure 5: Work Experience

Chart 2 shows the work experience of the participants, based on field data about 4 (3.45%) of the participants have less than or < 1 year of work experience, the next about 45 (38.79%) have 1-5 years of work experience, the other about 38 (32.76%) have 6-10 year work experience and the last is 29 (25.00%) have 11 and above year work experience respectively

4.3. The Role of PRs Practitioners on Image-building Practice

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of role of PRs practitioners on image-building practice

How is the role of PRs practitioners on Image-building practice of the HCAM?					
Description of item		Scale			Mean Value
The Roles of PRs Practitioners on Image-building practice (Cronbach's Alpha =0.938)		Agree strongly/slightly	Neutral	Disagree strongly/slightly	
		%	%	%	
A	Communication Technician Role a=0.773				
1	The practitioners are responsible to prepare the technical skill of writing materials.	66.4%	16.4%	17.3%	2.17
2	The practitioners are to produce communication tactics of news releases.	48.3%	34.5%	17.2%	2.38
3	The practitioners are to produce media placement programs	53.4%	27.6%	18.9%	2.40
4	The practitioners are techniques to designs the brochures banners	73.3%	8.6%	18.1%	2.02
5	The practitioners are techniques to organizing press conferences.	44.8%	30.2%	25.0%	2.58
Summary of Mean Score					2.31
B	Communication Facilitator/media relations Role (a=0.761)				
1	The practitioners are knowledgeable with media to communicate the public's issue.	56.1%	30.2%	14.7%	2.26
2	The practitioners are innovate PRs practice with media relations	71.6%	14.7%	13.8%	2.05
3	The practitioners are expected to demonstrate leadership in new approaches with media relations	62.9%	23.3%	13.8%	2.15
4	The practitioners are boundary spanner who listens to brokers' information between publics.	69.0%	13.8%	17.3%	2.06
Summary of Mean Score					2.13
C	Expert Prescriber/Managerial Role (a=0.734)				
1	The practitioners are act as the authority on PRs problems professionally.	38.8%	13.8%	47.5%	3.33
2	The practitioners are responsible to describing the order of solutions.	35.3%	19.0%	45.7%	3.17
3	The practitioners are handling consultation function/participation by senior management effectively.	30.2%	17.2%	52.6%	3.41
Summary of Mean Score					3.30
D	Communication Liaison/Problem Solving Facilitator Role (a=0.858)				
1	The practitioners are assumed as problem solver in your office.	34.5%	17.2%	48.3%	3.20
2	The practitioners are assumed as decision makers in your office	32.8%	13.8%	53.4%	3.29
3	The practitioners' are assumed as planners in your office.	32.7%	31.0%	36.2%	2.87
4	The practitioners are makes communication policy decisions and oversees their implementation.	42.3%	12.9%	44.8%	2.92
Summary of Mean score of item					3.10

As shown table 6, the questions were asked on the role of PRs practitioners on Image-building practice in HCAM are described, as shown above in Table 6A. The questions were communication technician role posed to the PRs practitioners in the workplace who were responsible for enhancing the image-building practice. As shown in Table 6, the majority of the respondents agreed on the practitioners are techniques to design the brochures and banners (73.3%), with mean value of 2.02. As followed by a larger proportion of respondents, the practitioners are also responsible for preparing the technical skill of writing materials (66.4%), with a mean value of 2.17. The summary/overall mean score with 2.31 of these items defines the roles of PRs practitioners as having a significant communication technician's role on image-building practice and constructing image of an institution.

Similarly, as shown in Table 6B, the questions were asked about the communication facilitator/media relations role, and the majority of the respondents were agreed on The practitioners are innovators in PR practice with media relations (71.6%) with mean value of 2.05, followed by those who are boundary spanner who listens to brokers' information between organizations and the public (69.0% with mean value of 2.06). The overall mean score with 2.13 of the items that practiced proportionally described the communication facilitator/media relations role of PRs practitioners on image-building practice.

As shown in Table 6C, Expert prescriber/managerial role of the PRs practitioners on image building practice, the findings implies that a larger proportion of respondents were disagreed that the practitioners are handling consultation function or participation by senior management effectively 52.6% with mean value of 3.41, the practitioners are acting as the authority on PRs problems professionally enough 47.5% with mean value of 3.33, and the practitioners are responsible to describing the order of solutions practically 45.7% with mean value of 3.17. This shows failures of managerial role of PRs Practitioners on image building practice. The summaries of mean score were with 3.30 for the items that expert prescriber/managerial role on image building practice is not significantly practiced in the institution.

Finally, as shown in Table 6D, the problem-solving facilitator role on image-building practice is shows that most of the respondents were disagreed on the following items: practitioners are assumed to be decision makers in your office 53.4% with mean value of 3.29, the practitioners are assumed to be problem solver in the offices (48.3% with mean value of 3.20), the practitioners make policy decisions and oversees their implementation (44.8% with mean value 2.92), and the practitioners' are assumed to be planners in your office (36.2% with mean value of 2.87). The summaries of mean score were with 3.10 for the items, indicating that problem solving facilitator role on image building practice is not significant as the results indicated.

- ❖ The roles of PR practitioners on image-building practice components were largely significant on communication technician role (mean value of 2.31) and Communication facilitator/media relations role (mean value of 2.13). On the other hand, were not significant practice on expert prescriber/managerial role (mean value 3.30) and problem solving facilitator role (mean value of 3.10). Cronbach's Alpha determined that an item value greater than 0.7 was dependable. For these items, the Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.938$. This is to say that the items must be accurate in measuring the research variable.
- ❖ Key informants supposed that, PR practitioners have a special role in promoting an institution's image-building practices to both the internal and external public. Of course, the ability to communicate effectively plays a key

part in changing attitudes, and the institution starts using instructional public relations. In fact, we abstained from the decision-making process involving upper management regarding the use of public relations as a problem solver and a reflective role in analyzing and interpreting the internal and external context to develop an institution's reputation and image and win over the public

- ❖ The both FGD 1A and FGD 2B group members agreed on as that the communication technician role and communication facilitator/ media relations role are dominantly practiced by the PRs practitioners on image-building practice. On the other hand, an expert prescriber role/managerial role and problem solving facilitator role are not effectively practicing the by the PRs practitioners' on image building practice.

4.4. Challenges of PRs Practitioners on Image Building Practice

Table 5: Descriptive statistics analysis of Challenges of PR practitioners' image-building

What are the challenges that affect practice PRs practitioners' on image building practice of the HCAM?					
Description of item		Scale			Mean Value
Challenges of PRs Practitioners on Image-building practice (Cronbach's Alpha= 0.811)		Agree strongly/slightly	Neutral	Disagree strongly/slightly	
		%	%	%	
1.	The PRs practitioners are seen as a goodwill in the office	67.2%	19.0%	13.8%	2.04
2.	The PRs practitioners' as considered a protocol.	60.7%	13.8%	15.5%	1.94
3.	PRs employees are NOT professionally assigned on image-building practice.	78.4%	9.5%	12.1%	1.73
4.	There is less attention is given to PRs Practitioners in your office.	56.1%	18.1%	25.9%	2.19
5.	Lack of skilled human power to practice Public relations	64.7%	12.9%	22.4%	2.06
6.	Passive attitude towards the office (belittling) especially from the top leaders	69.0%	11.2%	19.8%	1.95
7.	There is Lack of logistics to practice public relations	47.4%	26.7%	25.9%	2.37
8.	Absence of professional leadership with PRs in the office	56.1%	26.7%	17.2%	2.14
9.	Structure of the office (personnel) problem for PRs	75.0%	9.5%	15.5%	1.92
10.	Absence of adequacy capacity building trainings in your office	58.6%	25.9%	15.5%	2.14
11.	The PRs practitioners are seen as a Courtesy/politeness	50.9%	21.6%	27.6%	2.45
Summary of Mean score of items					2.10

The answers to the challenges facing PRs practitioners on image-building practice in HCAM are displayed in Table 7 above. The question was posed to investigate whether the challenges facing PRs practitioners. Similarly, the majority of the respondents were agreed on the asked questions on PR: employees are NOT professionally assigned on image-building practice (78.4%, with a mean value of 1.73), followed by those Structure of the office (personnel) problem for public relations: 75.0% with a mean value of 2.45, passive attitude towards the office (belittling), especially from the top leaders: 69.0% with a mean value of 1.95, and the least once, lack of logistics to practice public relations: 47.4% with mean value of 2.37. The respondents are overwhelmingly in favor of all the challenges listed above for PR practitioners' image-building practices, as determined by the large proportion of respondents; these have weakens the positive image.

- The overall mean value of these items that describing the Challenges of PRs Practitioners' on image-building Practice was with mean value of 2.10. This indicates that there were challenges are found highly in the municipality, as indicated by the respondents' answers, because the mean score were indicate that 2.10 is close to

1, which implies that there are more respondents who agreed. Cronbach's Alpha indicates that an item with a value greater than 0.7 is dependable. For these items, Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.811$. This means that the items used to assess the variable under research must be accurate.

- According to key informants, Public relations practices are essential for the organization. However, the Organization had to deal with issues such as a shortage of qualified human resources, misunderstandings in the public eye, and flaws in management and organizational leadership. In a similar vein, Informants claimed that there are numerous difficulties when I strategically analyze public relations practices, including a lack of professional knowledge and understanding, a lack of attention paid to public relations, the assignment of the director and practitioners without a profession, and a lack of trained labor.
- The both groups were agreed on 'the major issue with communication work is that it relies too much on talking, offering, and tossing information rather than investigating what the recipient wants. A symmetric

communication does not exist. Nobody is concerned about the public interest. The discussion clearly states that the communication effort, regardless of the actions of PRs and outcomes anticipated at the time, could not become fruitful without working based on true research on the ground' (FGD 1A & FGD 2B, April 2015 E.C)

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. Quantitative Discussion

To achieve the objective set, the researcher prepared for first objective role of PRs practitioners (16) items, and the second objective was challenges of PR practitioners on image-building practice (11) items, so a total of 27 items were answered, which comprises two objectives variable was used to investigate the practice of PR practitioners image-building practice in their offices. The measuring items were adopted from other studies and proved reliable.

The first objectives were role of PRs of practitioners on image-building practice. Primarily, practitioners are used on two role components that were largely significant: the communication technician role (mean value of 2.31) and Communication facilitator/media relations role (mean value of 2.13). On the other hand, there was no significant practice in expert prescriber/managerial role (mean value 3.30) or problem solving facilitator role (mean value of 3.10).

The second objective was to examine how the challenges of PRs practitioners on image building practices affect the image of the municipality. The overall mean value of these items describing the Challenges of Public Relations Practitioners' on image-building Practice was 2.10. This indicates that challenges are found highly in the municipality, as indicated by the respondents' answers, and the mean score indicates that 2.10 is close to 1, which implies that there are more respondents who agreed having challenges.

4.5.2. Thematic/Qualitative Discussion

A qualitative research method was used to collect, analyze, and interpret data thematically. Key informants, including PR practitioners, communication directors, and workers, were interviewed. Two Focus Group Discussion Groups (FGD 1A and FGD 2B) were also practiced. A conceptual framework was used to guide the study. Based on the scholar's point of view or literature, two (2) main objectives were identified for the study. Major findings were found.

The first question found was about the role of PR practitioners' on image building practice, Different informants are marked by the control of all aspects of the communication technician role and communication facilitator/media relations role process in public relations practices. To some extent, the role of PR is influenced by awareness creation through various speakers. However, People feel secure while looking for strategies role rather than feel safe though a watchdog role needs to be respected. Moreover, the Municipality had the communication technician role/communication facilitator to coherent relations with other departments because most of the departments didn't fit within role of PRs in their office.

When the investigator compares the results with those of other researchers, The analysis portion of PR practitioners' roles in image-building is viewed in connection with The Two-Way Symmetrical model, which is the model that Hunt and Grunig, the authors of the (1989) Public relations professionals try their hardest under this approach to help both sides comprehend each other's viewpoints. The objective here is to reach a mutual understanding that benefits both parties, if on a deeper and more meaningful level.

Most significantly, most people view the position of public relations communication technician as the start of professionalism [14]. The communication strategies used in news releases, press conferences, newsletters, design brochures, and media placements are frequently under the practitioners' control [3]. In carrying out this job, practitioners, according to [14], typically do not define problems or come up with answers; instead, they base their strategies on the technical proficiency of writing.

Findings from the second question indicated that factors impacting PR efforts include a shortage of skilled personnel and practitioners, a submissive attitude toward the workplace (belittling), particularly from upper management, educational background influences, they see the PR practitioners as protocol, and less attention to professionalization & administration weakens PRs practices. And also, defamations, rumors, misleading information/falsification of propaganda, etc. are affecting the image of an institution. This study reveals a decrease in public cooperativeness due to poor image-building processes by practitioners.

The researcher compares this finding of challenges faced by PR practitioners on image building practice with other researches. The fact that the government has acknowledged the necessity of public relations (PRs) and continues to do so is one of the most important aspects of PRs' expansion in the United States of America, as evidenced by the citations [21] and [3]. Nonetheless, PR professionals are primarily perceived as carrying out charitable endeavors in Africa and other poor nations. This is a result of PR practitioners' lack of expertise and professional experience in image creation. Furthermore, as demonstrated by [10] findings that corroborate the results, the majority of practitioners acknowledged with confidence that they have difficulties when it comes to performing PR. The practitioners listed the following as the main challenges: a lack of qualified human resources (professionals); a lack of professional leadership; a passive attitude toward the office (belittling), particularly from top leaders; a lack of sufficient capacity building trainings; the personnel-filled office structure; a lack of logistics; and a lack of skilled human power.

5. Conclusion and Future Scope

5.1. Conclusion

The study aimed to assess the practice of public relations practitioners' image-building practice. This study makes an effort to analyze the role of PRs practitioners, and finally find

out the challenges that PRs practitioners face in building their image in the study area.

The study reveals that, concerning the selected sectors/offices, even though PR practitioners practice PRs to promote internal and external public roles.

Furthermore, the result shows role of PRs practitioners' effectiveness in communications technician role and communication facilitator/media relations role but expert prescriber role and problem solving facilitator role are not effective in building institution's image. Additionally, there are a number of issues that undermine the professionalism of PR practitioners (since these professionals are not appointed with a background in PR), a lack of educational training in PR, and what they perceive to be goodwill and protocol, all of which have an impact on their capacity to practice PR effectively.

In summary, the departments of public relations, government communications, public service, culture, tourism, and sports, as well as the cooperative work office, failed to assign specific responsibilities for matching the appropriate PR practitioner practice to the appropriate profession. Additionally, the public relations office failed to provide top management bodies with the necessary training to effectively practice the profession. Furthermore, public relations practitioners lacked the independence to appropriately represent their profession and foster understanding between the public and organizations due to the restrained behavior of upper management. This indicates that in order to improve the institution's reputation, PR professionals will need to work hard and effectively going forward to close the gap.

5.2. Recommendation/Future Scope

Based on the study's overall findings, the following suggestions are made to help PR practitioners improve their image-building techniques. The PR department bodies should have to take actual responsibility to appoint the right professionals in the right profession.

- ✓ In order to accomplish In order to effectively practice image creation in the PR sector, companies need to reorganize, update, and develop a strategic role while accommodating stakeholder expectations and viewpoints. This is where PR practitioners come into play.
- ✓ It is critically necessary to form a PRs group or society in order to expedite the professionalization of PRs throughout the nation via professional training.
- ✓ Municipal organizations should actively participate in cooperative, environmental, and defamation-fighting activities to enhance their image and reputation in the public's mind.
- ✓ The municipality should follow modern two-way symmetrical communication models rather than the one-way model which is the oldest one for mutual agreement between the organization and the public.
- ✓ Institutions should maintain consistency in public relations practitioners and stakeholder insight to meet the increasing demand for information and understanding, promoting inclusive and balanced management.

❖ Implication for Future Researchers:

Moreover, greater research and analysis of the PR profession in Ethiopia is required from a variety of angles, including the practice of image creation in the corporate sector, NGOs, GO, and similar organizations.

Conflict of Interest

This paper does not contain any information about conflicts of interest related to its publication. There were no commercial or financial associations that could be considered as potential conflicts; hence, this investigation has been done no conflict of interests. All results reported herewith come from an unbiased assessment/interpretation of unbiased collected data/information/evidence: no bias.

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Authors' Contributions

As the only author of this study, everything was my responsibility. It started with developing the research framework and then collecting data. This continued with statistical analyses as well as interpretation of results. In addition, a literature review was conducted besides coming up with a theoretical framework before writing the manuscript.

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