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The Contribution of Public Relations Practice to Organizational Effectiveness: A Case of Private Universities in Rwanda

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Abstract:
This study aimed to investigate the contribution of Public Relations practice on Organizational Effectiveness in private universities in Rwanda. The study focused on the current execution of public relations activities and how they enhance organizational effectiveness of private universities. The study was motivated by the researcher's observation private universities were encountering performance challenges and that the study of if and how PR practice enhances organizational effectiveness had not been researched especially in the Rwandan context and in educational institutions to be specific though most universities were setting up PR units. The research employed several objectives as to: establish the contribution of public relations communicator roles to organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda; determine the effect of public relations practice models used in enhancing organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda; and establish the influence of public relations strategic representation in organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda. In line with these objectives, three guiding questions were asked. First, what is the contribution of public relations communicator roles to organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda? Second, what is the effect of public relations practice models in enhancing organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda? Finally, how does public relations strategic representation influence organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda. The researcher based this study on two theories of public relations and three models of organizational effectiveness. First is the Excellence Theory of Grunig (1992) and second is the Systems Theory of von Bertalanffy (1968). The research was also informed by the rational, systems, and strategic constituents modals that give a measurement mechanism for Organizational Effectiveness. This study employed a quantitative approach and a descriptive survey design. Data analysis was done using computer SPSS software. The findings revealed that PR had a high positive influence on organizational effectiveness. However, the nature of practice of PR in private universities in Rwanda does not meet the excellency threshold provided by the Excellency theory and did not adequately play the role described by the systems theory. In addition, the ideal two-way symmetrical model of communication was not satisfactorily and, finally, PR was not duly constituted at the strategic level. Findings also revealed that most universities were moderately performing in terms of their effectiveness. The findings also revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between PR practice and OE. Thus, study recommends enhancement of PR practice in private universities to the Excellency standards in order to facilitate PR to have a real contribution to effectiveness of the institutions.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

This research purposed to find out the contribution of public relations practice to organizational effectiveness in private universities in Rwanda. In this chapter, the researcher explained the preliminary issues contained in this thesis. The chapter has the following components; background to the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, justification for the study, study scope, and limitations of the study.

Every organization, whether for profit or not for profit exists for a purpose and for any organization to keep existing, it has to be effective. The history of studies on organizational effectiveness (OE) dates back to authors who wrote on organization. These writers were trying to organize human labour so as to produce the highest output. At first, effectiveness was understood as efficiency and so, the classical School set out to develop universal principles to increase efficiency as a way of realizing effectiveness. Determining effectiveness based on efficiency was on the assumption that organizations had np other objective other than production of goods and services. But that was erroneous since organizations are highly multifunctional units that constantly interact with their environment (Tosun, n.d).

It is until after the Second World War that researchers departed from the efficiency view or OE and turned attention to variables that relate an organization and its environment. This gave OE a new meaning that did not however, discard the efficiency aspect but rather subjugated it as part of the broader meaning. After the Second World War, many models trying to explain what OE is and how it can be determined and achieved rapidly arose. However, the models advanced different points of view and thus the definition of OE still remained difficult to condense into one (Tosun, n.d). Oghojafor, Muo, and Aduloju (2012) reckon that Organisational effectiveness is a complex and contentious concept and that no two authorities agree on what constitutes effectiveness or on how it is measured although they all agree that it involves attention to goals, satisfaction of constituents, and relationship with the external environment. Daft (2001) defined organizational effectiveness as the degree to which an organization realizes its goals. The goals may be financial or non-financial.

While there are divergent views on what OE is, and how it can be measured, Oghojafor et. al (2012) opine that still the world is tyrannised by call for effectiveness. Workers, managers, departments and organizations are always asked to be effective and that simply means to produce some form of results. Early management thinkers believe that effectiveness is the ultimate measure of managerial and organisational performance. Barnard (1964) believes that effectiveness relates to the accomplishment of the cooperative purpose which is social and non-personal in character, insisting that organisations cannot continue to exist without effectiveness and that this effectiveness can easily be measured. Drucker was more emphatic that the society and individuals within it cannot satisfy their needs without effectiveness. In his own words:

- Only executive effectiveness can enable this society of ours to harmonise its two needs: the needs of organization to obtain from the individual, the contribution it needs and the need of the individual to have organisation serve as his tool for accomplishing his purposes" (Drucker, 1967).

To capture the construct of OE, it is pertinent to understand the nature of organizations. Different scholars have defined an organization in varied ways. An organisation is a consciously coordinated social unit, composed of two or more people that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve common goals (Robbins, 2003). Organisations can also be seen as a system of roles and stream of activities designed to accomplish shared purpose (Robey and Sales, 1994), a definition that emphasizes the importance of organisational structure and processes in pursuit of common goals. However, they are defined and whatever their peculiarities, all organisations are characterised by coordination of efforts, a common goal, division of labour and a hierarchy of authority (Schein, 1980).

A more interesting view is by Imevbore (2011) that an organisation as an open system that is set up to convert resources into products and services which are then provided to an external receiving system. He sees an organisation as being alive and stresses its need to sustain that life by responding to its internal dynamics and external realities. As a result, the organisation must be guided by its own criteria and feedback but must also be flexible enough to accept and incorporate into its system, feedback from the external environment. The understanding is that except the organisation learns to adapt to changes in the internal and external environment factors that influence performance, it would continue to lose its power of relevance and impact in the market place. Imevbore (2011) argues further that the presence of "organ" in organisation suggests the evidence of life and the need for a set of systems and processes to sustain and improve that life. An organisation must therefore be seen not just as a part of the economic system but also as an entity that must receive and give life in order to survive. In this regard, it must be proactive in its response to the internal environment and also respond to external environmental factors, for it to be seen as effective.

The view of an organization as an open system is what invokes the imperative of Public Relations (PR) in enhancing OE. According to Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Public Relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (2015). The imperative for public relations is seemingly widening in many organizations. According to Winston (2015), almost all large organizations either have a public relations department or outsource their public relations needs to a company. Public relations are seen as a vital part of maintaining the organization's image and of communicating its message to its customers, investors and the general public. A positive perception of a company or non-profit organization can increase its sales and improve its bottom line. The functions and key tasks of a public relations specialist can be varied.

Mehta and Robina (n.d) note that, public relations is practiced in many different organizational contexts, from in-house government or public affairs roles to corporate communications roles in small, medium, large, listed, and not-for-profit organizations. Through their communication planning and management, public relations practitioners build and enhance organizational reputation and build and maintain relationships that are important to the organization and its goals. Most public relations departments are responsible for monitoring and responding to changes in the external environment, including issues, expectations, relationships, and reputation, and at the same time, also contribute to maintaining effective working environments within the organization through employee communication.

Education institutions also exist and are run as organisations and too need to be effective in achieving their goals, mission, and objectives. Private universities in particular should perform optimally in order to remain afloat amidst tightening competition. Private universities in Rwanda, and world over play an important part in ensuring access to education and training for the population of any country. In Rwanda, there has been a proliferation of private universities since the end of the Genocide in 1994. Currently, there are over thirty higher learning private institutions compared to less than five in the period before the Genocide (Higher Education Council, HEC, 2015). In 2009, the government of Rwanda turned to the private sector, including universities to boost university facilities (The New Times, 2009).

Private Universities complement the efforts by the state to guarantee training for all citizens given the fact that public universities cannot absorb all numbers due to limited infrastructure. Formally, few people gained admission to public universities resulting in fewer graduate populations in the country. But the establishment of private universities in the country has helped in improving the situation by increasing the graduate population for industry and government. Moreover, private universities are economically and socially contributing to their community, its economy and their own prosperity and quality of life.

In its Higher Education Policy, the Government of Rwanda has set out its roadmap for higher education in Rwanda, specifying the contribution it is expected to make to the economy and society in view of Rwanda's Vision 2020. The challenge for higher education institutions is to develop their strategy for implementing the policy, by providing a graduate labour force with the knowledge and skills needed to drive the socio-economic development of the country, engage in relevant research and meet the needs of businesses and communities for consultancy and other services (HEC, 2009).Despite the fact that private universities in have been mandated by HEC to provide tertiary education and skills training to qualified candidates desiring to avail themselves of tertiary education for skills acquisition and training and overall personal development, they have had their share of challenges to optimally play this role.

Recent trends in a number of private universities in Rwanda have pointed to a number of challenges that derail them from recording optimum effectiveness. One, these universities are grappling with reputation issues due to sections of the public seeing them as an avenue for money making. The perception is extended to include the quality of students they enroll and also the quality of academic and administrative staff they employ. They also grapple with limited and unstable funding that sometimes has led to low and delayed salaries leading to staff shortage and high turnover. Inadequate finances have also led to inability to provide ample facilities in terms of lecture rooms, libraries and ICT labs, as well as supporting professional growth of their academic staff. Private universities have also recorded dwindling numbers in student enrolment (Nyamache, 2009)

All these inadequacies have no doubt hampered the optimal performance of private universities. These challenges can partly be confronted the embracement and right practice of Public Relations.While PR practice is a vital ingredient in OE, the PR practice in Rwanda has not yet fully established its place as an integral part of management in organizations. Many institutional executives are reported to contemplate between engaging full-time PR professionals or hiring external consultants as and when need arises (Murangwa, 2009). Again, according to Rwanda Social Security Board -RSSB (2014), the roles of practitioners have been altered remarkably with some running errands for senior managers while others receive guests, work as tea girls/boys or as drivers.

The questions that these arguments provoke for the present study are whether private universities in Rwanda recognize PR as a management function; and whether they actually incorporate PR in strategic management and acknowledge that performance of an organization can be accredited (at least in part) to the professional role and function of an effective PR unit.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Oghojafor et. al (2012) opine that the world today is tyrannized by call for effectiveness, and workers, managers, departments and organizations are always under pressure to be effective. Studies globally have documented that excellent practice of public relations can greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of an organization. In their Excellence study, L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier (2002) suggested that public relations can provide the value to an organization by identifying the strategic publics that develop because of the consequences that organizations and publics have on each other by using symmetrical communication programs to develop and maintain quality relationships with these strategic publics. In spite of this, public relations practitioners have continued to struggle to define the role and place of PR in organisations and its contribution to the organizational performance (L. Grunig et al.2002). In agreement, Hon (1997) opines that Public relations professionals have attempted to measure public relations effectiveness as they increasingly have faced the challenge of demonstrating its value to their organizations. For example, Kim (2001) described practitioners' challenge from their organizations as follows: "CEOs' demands for accountability [of public relations] have become more tenacious than ever." (p. 5) If the above submissions are from the west economies where the PR industry is arguably grown, the situation in Africa and specifically in Rwanda where PR as an industry is in its nascent stages calls for an examination. Jjuuko (2014) says PR in Rwanda is in its infancy and even some big institutions neither have PR departments nor a person in charge of public relations.

Globally, the vital roles public relations play in educational institutions has been underscored. Grillis (1997) opines that many universities have set up PR units for the purpose of enhancing communication with their publics. In concurring, Hirsh & Weber (1999) claims that universities generally look to public relations units to manage crises, boost rankings, increase donations, and carry out a variety of other tasks. However, Bruning & Ralston (2001) assert that the practice of public relations at most universities has been relegated to a single office concerned primarily with managing institutional reputation. Private universities in Rwanda are faced with performance challenges indicated by dwindling student enrollment, high staff turnover, limited cash flows among others (Nyamache, 2009). With PR practice, even in grown economies still facing an identity crisis, questions abound as to whether PR practice in a developing economy like Rwanda, and in less commercially viewed industry as education, is appreciated and given the eminence it requires to contribute to organizational effectiveness. This study therefore sought to unravel the state of PR practice in private universities in Rwanda and its contribution to organizational effectiveness of the universities.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the contribution of public relations practice to organizational effectiveness in private universities in Rwanda.

1.3.1. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To establish the effect of public relations communicator roles on organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda.
2. To determine the effect of public relations practice models on enhancing organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda.
3. To establish the effect of public relations hierarchical placement on organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda.

1.4. Research Questions

In the light of the above objectives, this study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of public relations communicator roles on organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda?
2. What is the effect of public relations practice models on organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda?
3. How does public relations hierarchical placement affect organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda?

1.5. Justification of Study

This study was significant for a number of reasons. One the entire domain of PR in Rwanda and its place in organizations was highly under researched and there was no study on PR in education context traced at all. This study would therefore fill that void. Secondly, organisations are under immense pressure to perform amidst growing competition and meager resources at their disposal. PR being a management function, this study would draw attention to strategic managers of organisations, specifically private universities and high learning institutions on a whole, on the importance of this largely ignored function in enhancing effectiveness. The findings of this study ultimately would benefit other stakeholders like Public Relations professionals and practitioners. Finally, the completion of the study would enable the researcher to be awarded his academic degree.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Geographically this study was conducted in Kigali-Rwanda focusing on 9 private universities found in Kigali City. Kigali city was chosen because it habours most of the Private universities. Private universities were picked because they are more responsive to corporate demands like PR needs necessary to compete given that they are privately funded. In the methodology, the study was predominantly quantitative with a few aspects being qualitative derived from open ended questions. Theoretically, this study dwelt on how the practice of PR contributes to organizational effectiveness without considering any intervening or moderating factors.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

In the course of the study, the researcher encountered a few obstacles. One was that the researcher did not get to survey all Vice Chancellors as many were busy and referred the researcher to other offices. This denied the researcher from getting information from the key office. Another limitation was some respondents not completing all sections of the questionnaire. This challenge was mitigated by the interviews which were conducted with key informants after the questionnaires were filled and collected so the researcher plodded further to get information that was not provided in the questionnaire. The limitations therefore were insignificant and did not affect the overall results of the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will assess the requisite literature in discussing the subject of this study by looking at the relevant scholarly work in relation to the themes and objectives. The sub- themes to be adopted will make this study highlight the influence public relations practice in decision making in three selected private universities in Rwanda. With the use of the objectives, the research will bring insights into this field to provide documentation for future action in the education sector and to practitioners.

2.2. Theoretical Review

'All who attempt to solve problems, make recommendations and predict the future, need theories, models, and as a starting point, concepts' (Skyttner, 2001). Whether it is about climate change or planning an anniversary event for an organization, public relations managers use theory to guide decisions and choices. Theory provides a model for the practice of public relations. This is study was mainly informed by two theories: The Excellency theory and The Systems theory. The study was also framed by three organizational effectiveness modals: the rational goal, the system model, and the strategic constituents model.

2.2.1. The Excellence Theory

The excellence theory is the first general theory of public relations (Lindeborg, 1994). The theory was as a result of a 15-year study of best practices in communication management (Grunig, 2000) known as the excellence study. The excellence theory is a theory of excellence and effectiveness in public relations and communication management. The theory specifies how PR makes organizations more effective, how it should be organized and managed in order for it to contribute to organizational effectiveness, and how to determine the monetary value of public relations (Grunig, 2002). The excellence theory first explains the value of PR to an organization and the society in which it operates. This value is based on the quality of relationships an organisation has with its stakeholder publics (Grunig, 2002). The theory asserts that in order for PR to make a contribution in an organisation it must be part of strategic management (Ni, 2006).

According to the theory, for an organisation to be effective it must solve the problem and satisfy the goals of both the manager and stakeholders. Organisations must identify their various publics who are affected by the decisions taken by the organization or those who want the organisation to solve a problem important to them. To identify these publics the organisation must scan the environment. This is PR's contribution to strategic management (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). Still on how organisations should behave, the theory suggests that organisations must communicate symmetrically with their publics. This facilitates the cultivation of quality, long-term relationships with them. Through symmetrical communication the organisation is likely to set and achieve goals desired by both the organisation and its publics (Grunig & Grunig, 2011).

A good relationship is essential and crucial to the survival of the organisation. Grunig and Grunig (2011) explained that this is because a good relationship reduces cost incurred in unfavorable circumstances like litigation, regulation, legislation and negative publicity. It also reduces the risk of making decisions which may have adverse effects on different stakeholders and increase the chances of the organisation producing goods or services needed by various stakeholders and therefore revenue.

In addition to explaining the value of communication to an organisation, the excellence theory provides four broad categories of the characteristics of an excellent PR function i.e. how the PR function should be organised to attain maximum value (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). These characteristics are in the broad areas of PR as a management function, roles, models and the organisation of the communication function. Each category contains several characteristics to be audited.

2.2.2. The Systems Theory

The systems theory also offers useful insights to the practice of public relations. Systems theory provides a framework through which to view organisations and their relationships with the environment. It is firmly established as one of the guiding theories for public relations theory and practice. It is used to explain how public relations helps understand and manage the relationships an organisation has with its stakeholders and publics who make up its environment. Systems theory developed from the study of biological systems. Following a similar perspective, the seminal public relations text, Effective Public Relations, introduced the concept of ecology to public relations in 1952. In the authors' view, ecology emphasized the need for organisms to adjust and adapt to changes in the environment (Cutlip, Center & Broom 2006) as, similar to ecological systems, organisations depend on their environment for support, growth, and, ultimately, survival (Morgan 1998).

Whether taking a life science or public relations perspective, the definition of a system remains the same. The public relations literature defines a system as a 'set of interacting units that endures through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to change pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states' (Cutlip, Center & Broom 2006). Organizational systems are not static but rely on a series of exchanges of inputs and outputs between environments and organizations. In organizational systems, inputs are likely to come in the form of resources to an organization. The transformation process may be affected by the degree of interaction among the different departments within the organization. Although each part is important, systems theory takes a holistic view and encourages us to look outside the organization or organizational department to see the bigger environment (Modaff, Delvine & Butler 2008). Therefore, their observations imply that Public relations is part of the adaptive and maintenance subsystems of any institution.

Early systems theory (von Bertalanffy 1968) suggested that an organization and its environment were separated by a boundary through which information and resources flowed. Spanning this boundary was seen as a critical role for public relations professionals, who would provide information to the environment about the organization and bring information about the environment back to the organisational decision makers. The practitioner monitored the boundary on an ongoing basis, with 'one foot in the organisation and one foot outside' (Grunig & Hunt 1984). The public relations management role establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships that provide inputs to the organisation; however, to secure these inputs, organisations may be required to adjust their policies or actions and adapt to their environment (Cutlip, Center & Broom 2006; Witmer 2006).

2.2.3. Organizational Effectiveness Models

Several models have been developed to capture the richness of the organizational effectiveness construct. This multiplicity can be explained by the nature of the effectiveness construct, specifically, it has unspecified boundaries, and also by the various conceptualizations of organizations that yield different models of effectiveness (Cameron 1984).

The traditional model relies on a vision of the organization as a rational set of arrangements oriented toward the achievement of goals (Goodman et al. 1977). Effectiveness is measured in terms of accomplishment of outcomes (Etzioni 1960). The focus is exclusively on the ends: achievement of goals, objectives, targets, etc.

The system model, while not neglecting the importance of the ends, emphasizes the means needed for the achievement of specific ends in terms of inputs, acquisition of resources and processes (Yuchtman and Seashore 1967). The conception of the organization is grounded in the open system approach whereby the inputs, transformation process and outputs are considered part of a whole and not independent components.

The strategic constituents model broadens the scope of the two previous models by adding the expectations of the various powerful interest groups that gravitate around the organization (Connolly, Colon and Deutch 1980). Thus, the organization is perceived as a set of internal and external constituencies that negotiate a complex set of constraints, goals and referents (Goodman et al. 1977). That is, the owners, employees, customers, suppliers, creditors, community and government represent interest groups that must be satisfied in order to ensure the effectiveness and survival of the organization.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The underpinning variables in this research are public relations practice on one hand and organizational effectiveness on the other as both independent and dependent variables respectively. The Excellency identified excellence principles of an excellent communication department, as empowerment of the public relations function, communicator roles, integrated function and relationship with other functions, and models of public relations. The work of Broom, Dozier, and their colleagues provides the foundation for much of our understanding of public relations roles. In a series of studies, they identified four primary roles as communication technician, expert prescriber, communication facilitator, and problem-solving facilitator (Broom 1982; Broom & Smith 1979; Broom & Dozier 1986; Dozier & Broom 1995).

There are many ways to measure the effectiveness of an organization. Scholars list over thirty different criteria from productivity, profits, growth, turnover, stability and cohesion. Different theoretical perspectives can account for the diversity in usage of effectiveness measurements. Rational perspectives emphasize goal attainment and focus on output variables such as quality, productivity, and efficiency. Natural system perspectives focus on the support goals of the organization such as participant satisfaction, morale, interpersonal skills among others. Open system perspectives focus on the exchanges with the environment that includes information processing, profitability, flexibility, and adaptability. Borrowing from the different models, organizational effectiveness is indicated by among others: goal attainment, organizational alignment, and relationship with key publics (Friedlander and Pickle, 1967). Based on the elaboration above, the two variables of the study can be conceptualized as below

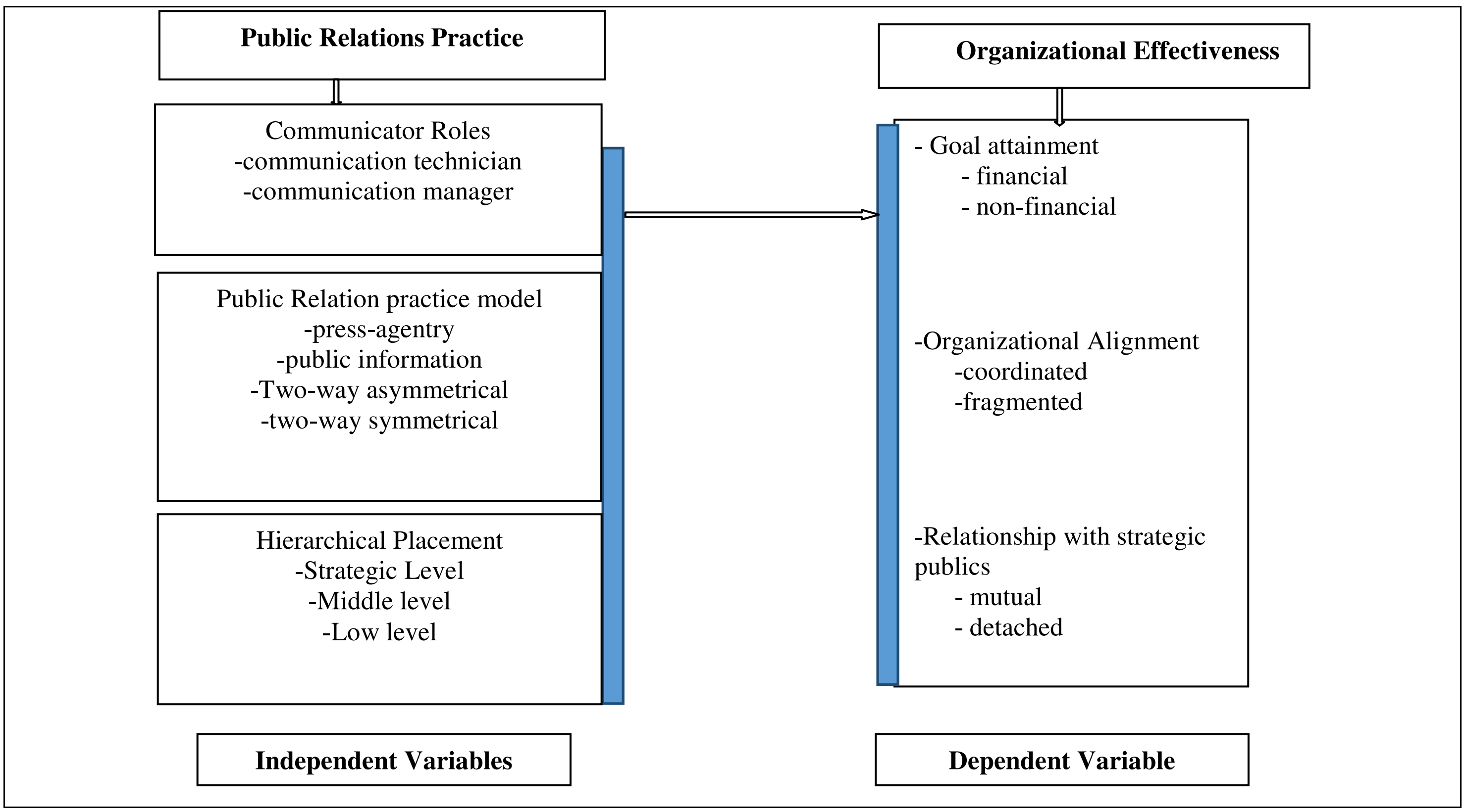

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Researcher (2016)

As indicated above, PR practice can contribute to organizational effectiveness in the areas given. If the PR communication roles are performed well, there will be effective planning, crafting and dissemination of information. If the roles are not fully enacted, then there will be a communication gap leading to ineffectiveness in an organization. The roles also enhance alignment of different units in the organization to ensure smooth coordination and thus effectiveness. Also, if the PR practice adopts a symmetrical two-way communication, relationship with crucial publics will be enhanced while the reverse is also true. Goal attainment of an organization will partly depend on the presence of PR at the strategic management level.

2.4. Review of Variables

2.4.1. Communicator Roles

The concept of roles was brought forward first by Broom & Smith (1979). In their study, they identified four roles enacted by PR practitioners: communication technician, communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator, and expert prescriber. Later, Dozier (1983) argued that the last three roles were similar and he combined them to form the communication manager role.

The communication technician is an entry level role for which the practitioner is hired primarily to write or implement activities and, as such, is not part of the decision-making process (Cutlip, Center & Broom 2006). The communication technician role focuses on the actual production and dissemination of public relations materials (Broom & Smith, 1979). Technician tasks include writing press releases, creating fliers, and updating media lists (Broom & Smith, 1979). The distinguishing characteristic of technicians is that they perform tasks that the client or dominant coalition decides are necessary (Broom & Smith, 1979; Dozier, 1992). Unlike practitioners in the other roles, this role is not involved with identifying or solving problems (Broom & Smith, 1979). While technicians may execute certain aspects of a program under this model, the success or failure of the model really lies with the client who diagnoses the problem and chooses the solution (Broom & Smith, 1979).

The communication manager role amalgamated three roles that were found to be related. Dozier (1983) research on the four original public relations roles by Broom (1979) and found that the roles of communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator, and expert prescriber were highly correlated, but the role of communication technician was not correlated with them. Because of this, Dozier simplified the roles and combined the three to become what is known as the manager role, and the technician role he found to remain separate. Managers are practitioners who are part of decision-making (Dozier, 1992). Managers also use research to inform their strategies (Dozier, 1981, 1986; Judd, 1987) and evaluate their success (Dozier, 1984).

As the name indicates, the role of the communication facilitator is to facilitate communication between an organization and its publics (Broom & Smith, 1979). Originally, "the communication process facilitator," this role acts as the "go-between" or "information mediator" (Broom & Smith, 1979). The concept of the communication facilitator stemmed from literature on the role of consultants (Broom & Smith, 1979). A primary purpose of this role is to encourage two-way dialogue between an organization and its publics (Broom & Smith, 1979). The communication facilitator plays an important role in helping organizations practice two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Two-way symmetrical communication ensures all parties have adequate information to make decisions of mutual benefit (Broom & Smith, 1979; Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The expert prescriber is a practitioner who identifies communication problems between an organization and its publics and proposes solutions to those problems (Broom & Smith, 1979). In this role, the practitioner works independently and does not seek input from organization management (Broom & Smith, 1979). The expert prescriber's relationship with their client or organization has even been compared to the relationship between a doctor and patient (Broom & Smith, 1979). In this role, the practitioner is expected to be the most knowledgeable person in the organization both about public relations and communication problems (Broom & Smith, 1979). One issue that arises with this role is that clients or organizations can become dependent on their expert prescriber due to their relatively passive role in problem solving (Argyris, 1961; Broom & Smith, 1979). Since the organization is simply doing as the practitioner prescribes rather than engaging with their publics, programs or solutions posed by the prescriber are often asymmetrical and are not typically the most successful in the long-term (Argyris, 1961; Broom & Smith, 1979).

The role of problem-solving process facilitator is similar to that of the expert prescriber in that the goal is to identify and solve problems (Broom & Smith, 1979). However, the main difference is that the problem-solving process facilitator works with organization management and collaborates to find where communication problems are and what the best solution is (Broom & Smith, 1979). For example, when doing a service with a client, it is only by involving the client in each step that the consultant can expect the project to remain relevant to clients' need and acceptable in the client system (Broom & Smith, 1979). While practicing, this model is more tedious at the time, it generally results in better long-term results for the organization (Broom & Smith, 1979; Dozier, 1992).

Whether using the original four roles, or the two-role dichotomy, no practitioner will fall into a single role at all times (Broom, 2009; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Moss, Newman, & DeSanto, 2005). However, practitioners do tend to have a dominant role they enact most often (Broom, 2009).

2.4.2. Models of Public Relations

J. Grunig's research on models of public relations revealed four ways in which public relations was practiced. Huang (1997) noted that "J. Grunig (1984) used Thayer's (1968) concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication to explain 'why some practitioners engage in informative two-way communication and others in one-way manipulative communication'" (p. 18). J. Grunig characterized synchronic communication as asymmetrical where the objective of the practitioner was to change public behavior. He characterized diachronic communication as symmetrical where the objective of the practitioner was to reach a common acceptable view to everyone involved in the communication process.

From this observation, J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) posited four models based on two variables—direction and purpose—that reflected how public relations was practiced. Direction referred to the extent the public relations model was based on one-way communication or two-way communication. One-way communication described a simple dissemination process and two-way communication recognized an exchange process. Huang (1997) observed that purpose, on the other hand:

→ …characterizes whether the model is asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communication is unbalanced; it leaves the organization the way it is and tries to change only the public. Symmetrical communication, however is balanced; it adjusts the relationship between the organization and public. (pp. 18)

First, the publicity model was based on the simple notion that any publicity was good publicity. No publics were identified, no goals were established, and no evaluation occurred. The organization sought to control its environment in this approach. Second, the public information model represented those organizational activities in which practitioners merely disseminate information. Again, little research was involved in the process. However, Huang (1997) noted that the organizational goal of this model was to adapt or cooperate with its environment. Third, the two-way asymmetrical model involved research; however, the research was performed primarily for persuasion goals for the good of the organization. Information was used by organizations to coordinate and direct campaigns to convince publics to think or behave in certain ways. The last approach was the two-way symmetrical model. The primary difference with the two-way asymmetrical approach was the recognition that information can and should flow both to and from the organization to its environment. This model suggested that organizations should be as susceptible to change as stakeholders. Consequently, this perspective is the best normative model.

Huang (1997) observed: "The two-way symmetrical communication model arouses more heated debate than any other concept in the theory of public relations" (p. 4). She noted that “the four public relations models, however, like most other models in the literature of social sciences, draw criticism regarding the problems of simplicity and generalizeability” (p. 5). Huang also noted that Leichty and Springston (1993) challenged the simplicity of this approach as being too “one size fits all” because organizations use a “combination of the four models and that the original contingency approach to the models makes them more practical” (see Huang, 1997, p. 21). Murphy (1991) argued that it was difficult to find examples of symmetrical communication.

As a strategy, however, advocates of the two-way symmetrical model argue that it possesses significant utility. Research from the IABC Excellence project support this view (J. Grunig, & L. Grunig, 2000). Before a particular public relations model is employed, professionals use a technique known as environmental scanning that helps them monitor the environment for potential issues that might result in activism.

2.4.3. Hierarchical Placement

Hierarchical placement refers to the administrative level a particular unit is placed in the organizational structure as top/strategic, middle, or low. Organizations have vertical structures, which reflect hierarchical location, and horizontal structures, which reflect the segmentation of responsibilities within a function or a department. Public relations departments operate alongside others, including marketing, human resources, legal, research and development, and operations. These departments are coordinated by a managerial system that is referred to as the dominant coalition. The dominant coalition comprises a range of representatives from the organization and in some cases, the external environment, who have the power to determine the organisation’s mission and goals (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002). Much of an organization’s structure and process is greatly affected by these key decision makers – the dominant coalition.

The empowerment of Public Relations Function involves the senior practitioners in the dominant coalition, managing communication programs strategically and building a direct reporting relationship between the public relations executive and the dominant coalition (Grunig, L. A., et. al., 2002). Grunig furthers that an organization whose public relations function adheres to the empowerment principle can easily balance its needs with that of publics. This function helps organizations to effectively manage issues and minimize crises.

Dominant coalition refers to “the group of senior managers who control the organization” (J. Grunig, 1992a, p. 5). The excellence study maintained that because the dominant coalition makes the organization’s key strategic decisions, the senior public relations practitioner should have a seat in top management meetings or at least direct reporting relationships to senior managers (J. Grunig, 1992a). Unless the public relations function is empowered by the dominant coalition and included in the strategic decision making process, it cannot enact its role as a counselor, who helps the organization to consider the issues of the organization’s strategic publics (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier, 2002).

Concurring with Grunig et al., Cutlip, Center & Broom (2006) pose that the role of public relations in strategic decision making is determined by proximity and access to management. The Excellence Study stresses the need for public relations to be part of the dominant coalition (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002). This strategic positioning brings benefits to the organisation and the public relations profession. They asserted that public relations should be placed high in the organizational hierarchy in order to participate in strategic decision-making that affects the organization’s internal and external relationships with publics. Quoting Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002) Mehta and Xavier observe that the reality in practice though is different. There is no doubt that CEOs value the public relations function however, when asked to decide what roles should be part of the dominant coalition, a major US study found that public relations managers were least likely to be members and the CEO, the chief financial officer, and the chief operating officer were most likely to be included in the dominant coalition (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier 2002).

Dozier and L. Grunig (1992) pointed out that the dominant coalition also can affect the way public relations functions are structured. By citing L. Schneider’s (aka L. Grunig, 1985) research, Dozier and L. Grunig explained that according to the power-control theorists, the dominant coalition within an organization seeks structures that optimize its self-interests in power and control. Scholars also explain that the dominant coalition’s view on public relations will affect an organization’s choice of public relations models (J. Grunig, 1992b; L. Schneider, 1985; Spicer, 1997). For instance, J. Grunig explained that an organization’s symmetrical or asymmetrical worldview would guide the selection of public relations models.

2.4.4. Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational theorist Daft (2001) defined organizational effectiveness as the degree to which an organization realizes its goals. The terms 'performance' and 'effectiveness' are used interchangeably because problems related to their definition, measurement and explanation are virtually identical (March and Sutton 1997).

Organizational effectiveness (OE) has been one of the most extensively researched issues since the early development of organizational theory (Rojas 2000).Even if today there is some agreement that (i) organizational effectiveness requires multiple criteria, (ii) it must consider both means and ends (Robbins 1983), and (iii) the choice of model and criteria should be flexible and appropriate for the context (Cameron 1986), the definition, circumscription and criteria identification of organizational effectiveness remain problematic, and no definitive theories have been put forth. Effectiveness is difficult to define because it means different things to different people depending on perspectives and frames of references. Any definition is a function of who is defining or who is evaluating effectiveness and why he or she is doing so.

Initial attempts to unravel the concept of effectiveness viewed it as the attainment of an objective or some ultimate criteria and as earlier as 1949, Thorndike has already identified productivity, net profit, mission accomplishment, and organisational growth and stability. By the time, Campbell delved into the matter in 1973, 19 indicators had emerged which included emerging terms as conflict-cohesion, internalization of organisational goals, evaluation by external entities, utilization of environment, readiness and the usual ones like productivity, efficiency, quality, profit, growth absenteeism and staff turnover. The most prominent of these 19 were overall performance, productivity, employee job satisfaction, return on investment and employee withdrawal.

Beyond this approach which Steers (1977) calls univariate, there is another approach based on relationships between key variables that affect organisational success. He reviewed 17 of these models and the most popular evaluation criteria in order of importance were adaptability/flexibility, productivity, satisfaction, resource acquisition and absence of strain. Thus, there are serious problems in defining and measuring organisational effectiveness and some of these problems stem from construct validity, criterion stability, time perspective, multiple criteria, measurement precision, generalisability, theoretical relevance and level of analyses (Steers, 1977).

Bernard (1938) defines effectiveness as the accomplishment of recognized objectives of cooperative effort and adds for emphasis that the degree of accomplishment is the degree of effectiveness. But these goals are at times difficult to define and measure, inconsistent, seen differently by different organisational members or even used as camouflage for the hidden agenda of the powerful forces within the organizational. Furthermore, Steers (1991) reminds us of the difference between operative goals (what organisations actually do) and official goals (what they claim they do) and that what matters are the operative goals. To address some of these shortcomings Zamuto (1984) adopts a stakeholder approach by defining organisational effectiveness as human judgments about the desirability of the outcomes of organisational performance from the vantage position of the varied constituencies directly and indirectly affected by the organisation. But stakeholders change over time; the preferences of stakeholders change and the society itself also changes.

As there are problems with its meaning, so also are there problems with the measures because each perspective introduces a different dimension to the meaning. Other problems with the issue of organisational effectiveness as enumerated by Ivancevich and Matteson (2002) include the criteria for its identification and the best models to guide research and practice. There is no single criterion to measure effectiveness. There is no agreement among the experts as to its meaning and indicators; some measures contradict each other, say for example, is it more rewards to shareholders or more compensation to employees? At times, the system is very complex with many wanted and unwanted by different constituents, making a unitary view of effectiveness inadequate and unrealistic (Katz and Kahn,1978). Effectiveness is also a function of the internal function, dynamics and values of any given organisation and each organisation runs its affairs in such a way it believes will lead to effectiveness.

Thus, whichever way effectiveness is defined or measured, it must take these basics into consideration and that is why it is a multi-dimensional affair. Friedlander and Pickle (1967) express this succinctly when they assert that effectiveness criteria must take into account, the profitability of the organisation, the degree to which it satisfies its members and the degree to which it is of value to the larger society. These three perspectives include system maintenance and growth, subsystem fulfillment and environment fulfillment.

Management accounting scholars also agree that OE is crucial for the organization's survival and cannot be ignored by managers that exert pressure on the performance measurement systems and implicitly expand the boundaries of the performance definition and criteria.

2.4.5. Organisational Effectiveness Models

Initially focused on the achievement of goals (goal models), the OE models gradually considered the resources and processes necessary to attain those goals (system models), the powerful constituencies gravitating around the organization (strategic-constituencies model), the values on which the evaluation of effectiveness are grounded (competing values model) and the absence of ineffectiveness factors as a source of effectiveness (ineffectiveness model).

The cumulative stance reflects the position where the various models are perceived as building blocks in a mapped domain in which the boundaries are specified. Every model adds something to the previous ones in order to increase the accuracy of the whole picture. For instance, Robbins (1983) outlines the links between the various models. The system model is defined as encompassing the ends-focus of the goal model, together with the means and environmental actors. The strategic-constituencies model, unlike the previous model, is portrayed as focusing solely on the constituencies that can threaten the survival of the organization. Lastly, the competing-values model is presented as an integrative framework of the previous models. The complementary stance mirrors the situation where each model is perceived as capturing one portion of the multiple facets of the reality along with the specific context to be applied. Cameron (1984) reflects this stance: "Effectiveness…should be treated as representing an unmapped terrain where different approaches and models add to the completeness of the map…But none of these models captures the total construct space of the total meaning of effectiveness. Whereas each is valuable in its own right because it includes distinctions absent in the others, none has enough explanatory power to supersede other approaches."

The performance measurement models evolved from a cybernetic view whereby performance measurement was based mainly on financial measures and considered a component of the planning and control cycle to a holistic view based on multiple nonfinancial measures where performance measurement acts as an independent process integrated in a broader set of activities. Performance measurement is traditionally viewed as an element of the planning and control cycle that captures performance data, enables control feedback, influences work behavior (Flamholtz, Das and Tsui 1985) and monitors strategy implementation (Simons 1990). It is mainly underpinned by a financial perspective (Johnson and Kaplan 1987). In a holistic view, performance measurement plays a key role in the development of strategic plans and evaluating the achievement of organizational objectives (Ittner and Larcker 1998a) as well as acting as a signaling and learning device (Simons 1990).

2.5. Empirical Review

2.5.1. Public Relations Practice in Rwanda

There are scanty studies on PR so far conducted in Rwanda. In one study, Jjuuko (2014) observed that PR in Rwanda was in its infancy where even some big institutions did not have PR departments public relations officers while others operated under marketing, commercial departments, human resource or legal affairs departments. She further found out that in Rwanda, most PR activities were exclusively about advertising without paying attention to strategic PR and institutional communication practices such as cooperate communications and responsibility. This she noted kept PR and communications at a rudimentary press agentry level. According to Jjuuko (2014) PR officers in some organizations were deployed as receptionists, and in some organisations they were not allowed to 'directly report' to the Managing director, and that senior managers did not value PR and therefore attached little or no attention to it. This thus debased the importance of PR in the organisations.

In other studies, on PR in Rwanda (Murangwa, 2009; RSSB, 2014) it was revealed that the roles of practitioners had altered remarkably with some running errands for senior managers while others received guests, served as tea girls/boys or were assigned as drivers.

2.5.2. The Excellency Study

While there have been, several studies done in relation to the effects of PR on OE, the most popular is the Excellence study. The study primarily sought to find out the value that PR added to organizations and how PR contributed to OE.

First, to answer the "effectiveness" question, the Excellence research team identified the four approaches to OE seen early: the goal attainment approach, the systems approach, the strategic constituencies approach, the competing values approach from organizational theory (J. Grunig and Huang, 2000). After identifying four approaches to organizational effectiveness, the Excellence research team conducted both quantitative and qualitative research across several countries and extracted factors contributing to effective public relations (i.e., the answer to the "Excellence" question).

To clarify the ways to demonstrate the value of public relations, L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) explained levels of analysis in public relations effectiveness at the program level, the functional level, the organizational level, and the societal. At the program level, individual communication programs such as media relations, community relations, or customer relations are successful when they affect the cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors of both publics and members of the organization—that is, the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral relationships among organizations and their publics. At the functional level the public relations or communication function as a whole can be audited by comparing the structure and processes of the department or departments that implement the function with the best practices of the public relations function in other organizations or with theoretical principles from scholarly research. At the organizational level, to show that public relations have value to the organization, we must be able to show that effective communication programs and functions contribute to organizational effectiveness. At the societal level, organizations have an impact beyond their own bottom line. They also affect other organizations, individuals, and publics in society. As a result, organizations cannot be said to be effective unless they also are socially responsible; and public relations can be said to have value when it contributes to the social responsibility of organizations.

L. Grunig et al.'s (2002) discussion of levels of analysis in public relations effectiveness suggests another critical point to consider. According to L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002), the program level has been the traditional focus of evaluative research in public relations. However, effective communication programs may or may not contribute to organizational effectiveness; many operate independently of the organization's mission and goals. This means that public relations effectiveness at the program level alone cannot ensure the value of public relations at the organizational level, although effectiveness at the program level is the starting point of effectiveness. Thus, for public relations to have value to organizations, public relations professionals need to consider higher levels of analysis in effectiveness—relationship management with strategic publics—than short-term outputs or outcomes at the program level.

Based on the findings of the Excellence study, Hon and J. Grunig (1999) suggested that the value of public relations is in "relationships" that an organization develops and maintains with strategic publics. This is because organizations become effective when achieving their goals; by means of quality relationships, organization can achieve goals because they choose goals valued by strategic publics (J. Grunig & Hung, 2002; L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Because of quality relationship management between an organization and its publics, effective organizations can select goals valued by publics; consequently, they can achieve their goals because publics support them (Hon & J. Grunig, 1999). And, as J. Grunig and Hung (2002) pointed out, "… ineffective organizations cannot achieve their goals, at least in part, because their publics do not support

and typically oppose management efforts to achieve what publics consider illegitimate goals" (p. 10). Thus, as J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2001) concluded, for an organization to be effective, it should behave ethically and be socially responsible, which means that an organization engages in "quality relationship management" with its publics.
Based on the findings of the literature on organizational effectiveness and conceptualization of levels of analysis in public relations effectiveness, the Excellence research team (1992) concluded: Effective organizations achieve their goals and public relations has value to an organization when it helps an organization select and achieve organizational goals that create less conflicts with strategic constituencies in the environment (J. Grunig & Repper, 1992; J. Grunig & Huang, 2000).
J. Grunig and Repper (1992) suggested that such characteristics of excellent public relations help the public relations function to be effective as well as contribute to overall organizational effectiveness. In summary, the key attributes of excellent public relations include the following practices: 1) identifying "strategic publics" from the environment and 2) practicing a "symmetrical" model of public relations to cultivate quality relationships with these strategic publics (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

2.5.3. PR in Higher Educational Institutions

A few other studies have taken on PR practice in higher learning institutions. One study by scholars studying the practice of public relations by universities in the former Soviet-bloc countries (Hall, 2002; Hall & Baker, 2003; Pabich, 2003) emphasized on strategic public relations management. Universities in former Soviet-bloc were facing complex environments. The introduction of capitalism meant that old state-owned universities, which never had to compete, now found themselves losing students to new private universities that offered attractive packages to students (Miroiu, 1998; Neculau, 1997; Stanciulescu, 2002). This competition prompted both state-owned and private universities to seek to utilize public relations as means of getting an edge. In the past, public relations practice at these universities was a mixture of marketing, advertising, and lobbying (Coman, 2003).
Pirozek and Heskova (2003), for example, examined the public relations practice of a university in the Czech Republic. They showed how the two-way symmetrical tactics of research and feedback systems helped the university gain a better understanding of the attitudes of its key publics. Kaverina's (2003) study of a state university in Russia showed how two-way symmetrical efforts to initiate dialogue (e.g. radio call in shows, open house functions) helped strengthen the relationship between the university and its key publics.
In other studies of public relations practice in the university setting, Samsup, Brunner, and Hon (2002), for example, examined how practitioners can measure relationships in a university setting. DeSanto and Garner (2001) recommended that university public relations practitioners set synchronized goals, identify stakeholders, and conduct evaluations. Grillis (1997) argued that it is critical for public relations practitioners to have access to the top leaders within a university. Henderson (2001) proposed a four-step process for managing communication in universities: research, planning, communication, and evaluation.
Popular publications aimed at university public relations practitioners have also advocated practices that are similar to the Excellence characteristics. Schoenfeld, Wiemer, and Lang (1997) encouraged practitioners to embrace strategic planning and outcome evaluation. Jarrell (2003) encouraged universities to involve public relations in decision making because practitioners can lessen risk by forging good relations with publics and can scan for emerging issues. Simpson (2002) advised university communicators to build strong community relationships, take local concerns seriously, and attend to internal and external constituencies. Ross and Lindenmann (2002) suggested that practitioners clearly define their goals and measure output, outgrowth, and outcomes. Ross (2004) urged practitioners to utilize external research resources (e.g., consulting firms) to enhance their practice.
In a study in Ghana, Eniola (2011), submitted that notwithstanding the benefits of public relations to higher education, there were conflicting views about its significance to the operations of universities. This is because Public Relations officers responsible for public relations were often left out of decision-making and on several occasions called in to implement some decisions that they hardly understand having not taken part in decision making processes. Eniola (2011) furthers that practitioners were not accorded the status that would make them part of decision making organs. This gives an impression of insignificance of their function as role players in the management of Universities.
In similar studies, Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) noted that in tertiary institutions, most decisions are made at the committee level and administrators, whom PR practitioners are part of, serve as secretaries or implementers of the decisions and do are not privileged to be part of the decision-making process, and so they are hardly able to comprehend the decisions made by the academics hence impeding their ability to advocate and propagate the decisions. An evaluation of the Public Relations office of some institutions found that there was need to increase public relation activities in the section. This could be achieved only when the Public Relation section is accorded the same status as the other departments by appointing a head with similar status. In agreement, Ojumo, Nikona & Kiroma (2006) posited that for a public relations unit to function as a management tool in the administration of a university, the unit must be seen identifying problems, difficulties or needs of the publics in and around the university establishing channels for information flow, and maintaining mutual and cordial relations with the public. Ojumo et al. asserted that the public relations practitioner or officer in the university should be in the capacity of a Dean and should advice management on how to position the university to enhance its public image.
The above studies illustrate that organizations are encouraged to integrate PR practices and practitioners in their strategic organs to enhance organizational performance. However, more studies needed to be done to see if management of private universities in Rwanda embraced the PR practice in totality as to have it make a positive contribution to organizational effectiveness.

2.6. Critique of Existing Literature

There has been less research conducted in the area of PR practice and organizational effectiveness. Those focusing on educational institutions are even more scanty. The researcher traced few studies conducted mainly in Northern America and Europe and West

Africa but none elsewhere. As such, the studies available are few and far between in time and geography. Many studies done in the practice of public relations such as (J. Grunig & Jaatinen, 1998; J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1998; Rhee, 2002) were located in North America and mainly drew information from the corporate context. The findings revealed the pivotal contribution that PR practitioners can have in organizational effectiveness. This studies, however, fail to paint a picture of the situation outside North America and outside the corporate industry.
The few studies done West Africa, Ghana, (Ojumo et al. 2006; Eniola, 2011; National School Public Relations Association, 2010), mainly dwelt on the functions of PR in universities. These studies did not address how specifically PR practice enhances organizational effectiveness in universities. It was therefore imperative that more studies are conducted in other regions including Rwanda, to specifically unearth the link between PR practice and OE in universities.

2.7. Research Gaps
From the existing literature in the area of public relations practice in universities, glaring gaps that need to be studied emerge. One, no study has been conducted in Rwanda about PR practice in higher institutions of learning, so there was need for a research to fill that gap. Secondly, no study has been done in Rwanda in any industry to specifically address how PR practice contributes to Organisational Effectiveness, and this study would too fill the void. Secondly, similar studies done elsewhere had dwelt on the functions of PR practice in educational settings as opposed to examining the influence the practice has on OE.

2.8. Summary
This chapter reviewed the literature existing in the area of public relations practice particularly in education sector. The chapter highlighted the theories guiding this study; the Excellency theory and the Systems theory. The Excellency theory by Grunig., et al. provides four principles that any excellent public relations practice should demonstrate; empowerment of the public relations function, communicator roles, organization of communication functions, and public relations models used. The systems theory regard public relations as the regulator of the relationship of an organization and its environs. The chapter also clarifies the variables of the study as public relations practitioners' roles on the one hand and strategic decision making on the other as the independent and dependent variables respectively. The chapter also presents past studies in the area of the study which reveal that the area of how PR practice contributes to OE in education context has been under studied. Finally, three key research gaps are identified.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction
Choosing an appropriate method of inquiry is fundamental to ensuring that the knowledge gained from scientific research is credible and advances what we know in a disciplined, replicable manner. This chapter presents the research methods and methodology employed for this study. It describes the research design, study population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection, processing and analysis tools.

3.2. Research Design
The purpose of this study was to investigate the practice of public relations in universities in Rwanda, concentrating on how PR practice enhances organizational effectiveness. The study employed a mixed approach of both quantitative and qualitative. Using a descriptive design, the study relied on survey and in depth interview to collect relevant data. A survey was preferred because through the completion of structured questions, it takes a relatively short time frame, and is quantifiable and generalizable to an entire population if the population is sampled correctly. Babbie (1989) says that surveys can be used for descriptive, exploratory and explanatory purposes. They are also used in studies where individuals constitute the main units of analysis. In depth interview was used to get information from respondents considered Key Informants. An in-depth interview is an extensive one-on-one personal interaction in which much more information can be obtained (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). This technique was adopted because it allows the researcher to probe further and ask follow-up questions where necessary.

3.3. Study Population
The study population was employees, lecturers and management, of private universities in Rwanda. The researcher conveniently selected private universities based in Kigali City which are nine in number (source HEC, 2015) This is because most private universities in Rwanda are based in Kigali, and this would offer the researcher convenience and economy of data collection. This would also enhance homogeneity among survey respondents as established by Bromley (1993). The target population for the study was be top strategic managers, PR heads, and representatives of the teaching staff.

3.4. Sampling Frame-work
The study researcher selected three participants from each of the nine selected universities. Three participants per university were considered sufficient to provide the desired information because they represented key constituents in the universities. This formed a study frame of twenty-seven participants as follows:

	Vice Chancellor	Public Relations Head	Teaching Staff Representative	Total
University A	1	1	1	3
University B	1	1	1	3
University C	1	1	1	3
University D	1	1	1	3
University E	1	1	1	3
University F	1	1	1	3
University G	1	1	1	3
University H	1	1	1	3
University I	1	1	1	3
Total	9	9	9	27

Table 1: Population frame work
Source: Researcher

Public relations officers were selected because they are the ones that actually do the practice and therefore have detailed information on the practice of public relations in their institutions. The top most manager, the VC was targeted because they are dimmed to be the role givers. A staff representative was targeted to give views from a publics perspective to highlight how PR practice serves key constituents.

3.5. Sampling Technique and Sample Size
Given the small size of the sample frame, the researcher used all the twenty-seven respondents thus the sample size was twenty-seven respondents picked using purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was preferred because it could give the researcher liberty to pick participants with relevant data. In universities where the position of staff representative did not exist, the researcher purposively selected the longest serving lecturer as identified from the human resource office.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments
This study employed survey and in depth interview methods of data collection using a questionnaire and interview guide respectively as tools. These methods were appropriate because interviews would allow face to face interaction with key respondents and could fetch additional in-depth information, especially given the small sample size, and questionnaires would enable quick collection of quantitative data. The interview guide was used for key informants in this case purposively picked public relations officers who were six in total. It contained open ended questions centered on how they practice PR in their respective institutions and its contribution in organizational effectiveness. The questionnaires were both structured and unstructured to yield quantitative and qualitative data.

3.7. Data Collection Procedure
Data for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaires were distributed to the specific respondents. In cases where the preferred respondent was not available especially the VCs, the researcher asked for the next available senior manager. The questionnaires were collected within two days of distribution. Upon receiving them back, the researcher constructed an interview guide based on the responses on the questionnaires from PR officers who were regarded as key respondents and then arranged for an interview. The interview guide was constructed after the questionnaire so that it could fetch more information on key issues arising from the responses in the questionnaire. The public relations officers were interviewed in their offices. Prior to each interview, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants and their consent was sought. Each interview lasted between twenty and thirty minutes. Their responses were recorded down verbatim on templates prepared for each question. Participants were not comfortable with being recorded. Secondary sources comprised published sources, books, journals, and online information and organizational records.

3.8. Pilot Test
The researcher tested the validity of the questionnaire and interview guide by subjecting it to similar respondents at a university he works in. The questions in the instruments were then adjusted as necessary.

3.9. Data Processing and Analysis
Data analysis was based on the techniques outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) who argued that qualitative data analysis should consist of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data reduction, short summaries and field notes were written to highlight important recurring themes, and patterns. Recurring patterns were identified by going through the responses severally. The quantitative data from questionnaires was edited and coded. They were checked for completeness and accuracy and inconsistencies which were genuine were cleared. The aim of coding was to classify the responses into meaningful categories so as to bring out a pattern. After coding, the data was transferred to computer files for processing using SPSS software. Data was presented descriptively in a summarized fashion using descriptive and inferential statistics using frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Correlation and Regression analysis were used to establish the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results were presented in the form of tables which helped in describing data and drawing conclusions (Linda, 2002).

4. Research Findings and Discussions

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents findings and discussions on demographic characteristics of the respondents, public relation practices as an independent variable and organizational Effectiveness as dependent variable. The chapter also presents the relationship between the two variables to unearth the contribution of public relations practice to organizational effectiveness.

4.2. Demographic Characteristics

A total of twenty-seven questionnaires were distributed to all individuals in the study sample. All the instruments were received back representing 100% response rate. In the interview with key informants, 6 interviews were arranged but only 3 materialized representing a 50% response rate. This means the information received was reliable to achieve the objectives of the study.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Vice chancellor	2	7.4
	Deputy Vice Chancellor	3	11.1
	HR director	5	18.5
	PR officer	7	25.9
	teaching staff representative	7	25.9
	Other	3	11.1
	Total	27	100.0

Table 2: Position of respondents in institutions

The researcher sought interview top most manager, PR head, and staff representative from each of the nine private universities in Kigali. In the top, most manager category, the researcher was able to get responses form 2 vice chancellors, 3 deputy vice chancellors, and 5 Human Resource Directors. The low number of Vice chancellors and their deputies is explained by the fact that they are often busy and not available in time and some delegated the responsibility to respond to their juniors. The Human Resource directors were readily available partly because they were direct supervisors of most department. Those holding the office of PR and the staff representatives were 7 each. Since the position of staff representative does not formally exist in most universities, that category was filled with the longest serving teaching staff member. 3 other respondents came from other uncategorized positions.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	0-5	15	55.6
	6-10	6	22.2
	above 11	6	22.2
	Total	27	100.0

Table 3: Years of service in same position

Most respondents at 55.6% had served in their positions within the university and elsewhere for a period of between 0-5 years, implying they had not had long experience. But a sizeable combined 45% had experience of above 6 years. This means the information give could be balance between fresh and long experience.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	0-5	17	63.0
	6-10	5	18.5
	above 11	5	18.5
	Total	27	100.0

Table 4: Years of service in the institution

As indicated in the table above, a huge number of respondents, 63%, had served in their institutions for between 0-5 years, while 37% had served for over 6 years. This equally would enrich the information by giving fresh experience as well as long.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	18	66.7
	No	9	33.3
	Total	27	100.0

Table 5: Presence of PR department/officer

The study sought to establish whether PR departments or officer was in place in the respondents' university. 66.7% responded in the affirmative. This proved the fact that alluded by scholars (Grillis, 1997; Kettman & Robinson, 1991; Mullins, 1996) that most universities have set up PR units. However, 33% said the department did not exist. The researcher established that out of the 9 universities, 3 did not actually have a PR unit, rendering credence to some scholars that in Rwanda, organizations still regard PR as a utility function (Murangwa, 2009)

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	since university started	15	55.6
	over half-life of university	12	44.4
	Total	27	100.0

Table 6: Duration PR department/officer been in place

To further sustain the narrative that PR is just being embraced as a management function in organizations in Rwanda, a sizeable 44% of respondents indicated that the unit had been in place just under half the duration their universities have been in place. This means the unit comes as an after-thought in a sizable number of institutions.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Master	2	33.3
	Bachelor	4	66.7
	Total	6	100.0

Table 7: Education level of PR officers

The study also revealed that many who served as PR officers were of basic bachelor qualification – 68%. However, in interviews, many indicated that they had experience in related areas before joining their current universities and were currently pursuing their master studies. 33% only were qualified with a master degree, the ideal minimum to work in a university.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
	Public Relations	2	33.3
	Marketing	3	50.0
	Other	1	16.7
	Total	6	100.0

Table 8: Professional background of PR officers

The research equally sought to establish if the PR officers had professional background in the field. The finding revealed that a significant number of practitioners were marketers at 50%. Those with a PR background were 33%. This is perhaps due to the fact alluded in past studies that few institutions were offering studies in PR in Rwanda, with a majority of them starting just recently (Jjuuko, 2014). This may imply that the universities do not have a rich base of professional candidates even if they would want to hire such. The interview with PR officers also alluded to the role conflict between marketing and public relations. “you see this is a private institution and self-funded and marketing is of priority in order to get numbers, and the managers feel a marketer can do PR roles satisfactorily, while a PR may not necessarily do good marketing”, said a respondent in University C.

4.3. The Contribution of Public Relations Practice to Organizational Effectiveness

To unearth the contribution of public relations practice to organizational effectiveness, the researcher first established the current level of effectiveness in universities by analyzing the three variables of OE: goal attainment level, organizational alignment level, and relationship with key publics level. The results are discussed below.

<u>4.3.1. Level of Organizational Effectiveness in Private Universities in Rwanda</u>

To analyse the level of effectiveness in private universities, three variables drawn from OE modals of rational, system, and strategic publics modals were analyzed. The indicators used were goal attainment, Organizational alignment, and relationship with key publics.

4.3.1.1. Level of Goal Attainment in Private Universities

To analyse this variable five items were used and findings are summarized in the table 9

Assertions	Mean	Comments	Std. Dev	Comments
Realizing set goals	2.88	Moderate	1.33	Heterogeneity
Realizing set goals within set time limit	3.40	Moderate	1.27	Heterogeneity
Achieving set goals satisfactorily	3.11	Moderate	1.33	Heterogeneity
Readjusting set goals to suit changing conditions	2.85	Moderate	1.35	Heterogeneity
Evaluating goals achieved	1.66	Very low	0.91	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	**2.78**	**Moderate**	**1.24**	**Heterogeneity**

Table 9: Level goal attainment

Legend: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from table 4.8 show that universities realized their set goals at a moderate level with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 2.88, \overline{S} = 1.33$. Realization of goals set goals within set time limit was at a moderate level with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 3.4, \overline{S} = 1.27$. The rate of satisfaction of how the set goals were achieved was at a moderate level with the mean $\overline{X} = 3.11, \overline{S} = 1.33$. How universities readjusted set goals to suit changing conditions was at a moderate level shown by the mean and standard deviation of $\overline{X} = 2.85, \overline{S} = 1.35$. The culture of evaluating goals achieved was dismally shown at a very low level with a mean of $\overline{X} = 1.66, \overline{S} = 0.91$. Generally, level of goal attainment was moderate with the mean and standard deviation of $\overline{X} = 2.78, \overline{S} = 1.24$.

These findings mean that universities, while not performing poorly, were also not at their best, going by how they performed in attaining their goals. This means that their very existence was threatened if the performance slipped below the average.

4.3.1.2. Level of Organizational Alignment in Private Universities

This variable was meant to assess how well different managerial units worked together to foster organizational goal achievement. To analyse this sub variable of organizational effectiveness, the researcher used five items to rate the appreciation of the respondents. Findings are summarized in that table 10

Assertions	Mean	Comments	Std. Dev	Comments
Employees share understanding about organizational goals, vision and direction	2.92	Moderate level	1.38	Heterogeneity
Different departments work together to achieve overall objectives	2.44	Low level	1.33	Heterogeneity
Management work with employees harmoniously	3.11	Moderate level	1.45	Heterogeneity
Employees' competencies are aligned to fit the needs of the institution	3.00	Moderate level	1.46	Heterogeneity
Interdepartmental communication is effective	3.51	High level	1.28	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	2.99	Moderate level	1.38	Heterogeneity

Table 10: Level of organizational alignment

Key: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from table 10 showed that all aspects of system alignment were moderately performed except the working together of different departments to achieve overall objectives, which was rated at a low level with the mean and standard deviation of $\overline{X} = 2.44, \overline{S} = 1.33$. Results indicate that employees moderately shared understanding about organizational goals, vision and direction at a mean and standard deviation equaling to $\overline{X} = 2.92, \overline{S} = 1.38$. How management worked with employees harmoniously was at a moderate level with the mean $\overline{X} = 63.11, \overline{S} = 1.45$. How employees' competencies are aligned to fit the needs of the institution scored high shown by the mean and standard deviation equal to ($\overline{X} = 3.00, \overline{S} = 1.46$). Interdepartmental communication was effective at a high level with the mean equals to ($\overline{X} = 3.51, \overline{S} = 1.28$). The general level of Organizational alignment was moderate with the mean and standard deviation of $\overline{X} = 2.99, \overline{S} = 1.38$.

4.3.1.3. Level of Relationship with Strategic Publics in Private Universities in Rwanda

To analyse this variable, the researcher asked the respondents to give their appreciation using five assertions. Findings are summarised in the table 11

Assertions	Mean	Comments	Std. Dev	Comments
Continually identifying groups that are important to it	3.29	Moderate level	1.40	Heterogeneity
Engaging key publics before taking any decision that affects the publics	2.77	Moderate level	1.36	Heterogeneity
Making decisions that benefit both university and other interest groups	4.11	High level	2.92	Heterogeneity
Creating sufficient two-way communication channels for all main interest groups	2.44	Low level	1.39	Heterogeneity
Conducts formal research among the main publics	2.59	Low level	1.39	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	3.04	Moderate	1.69	Heterogeneity

Table 11: Level of relationship with strategic publics

Key: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from the above table shows that the relationship between universities and their strategic constituents was moderate. Universities' continual identification of groups that are important to it was enacted moderately $\overline{X} = 3.29, \overline{S} = 1.40$. This means that at some point, the institutions may fail to notice some strategic publics that emerge in due course, or continue treating as strategic groups that have lost significance. Scholars have emphasized the need for organizations to audit their publics to determine if there are new entrants or arrivals so as to relate with them accordingly. The findings also indicate that key publics were engaged moderately at $\overline{X} = 2.77, \overline{S} = 1.36$ before any decision that affected the publics were taken. Thus, making decisions that benefit both university and other interest groups was at a high level with the mean $\overline{X} = 4.11, \overline{S} = 2.29$. However, questions arise because two key elements for sustaining publics, creating sufficient two-way communication channels for all main interest groups, and conducting formal research among the main publics, were both performed at a low level shown by the mean and standard deviation $\overline{X} = 2.44, \overline{S} = 1.39$ and $\overline{X} = 2.59, \overline{S} = 1.9$ respectively. This may mean that decisions taken assumedly in the interest of the publics, were based on scanty information and imagination of the universities. This explains well the equally moderate performance in goal attain explained in Table 4.10 above. The general level of Relationship with key publics was moderate with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 3.04, \overline{S} = 1.69$. Strategic publics are important for any organization and a relationship other than excellent is detrimental (J. Grunig & Hung, 2002; L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Taking into account the polled means of the three variables of OE: goal attainment (2.78), organizational alignment (2.99), and relationship with key publics (3.04), the general level of OE in private universities in Rwanda is average at a mean of 2.94. This is not a good level of OE for private institutions that are self-funded and are in constant competition. Thus, management of these universities need to improve this level.

4.3.2. The Contribution of Communicator Roles to Organisational Effectiveness in Private Universities

To establish how communicator roles of PR practice contributes to OE, the researcher first analyzed how the different types of communicator roles of communication technician and communication manager were enacted by PR officers in the universities.

4.3.2.1. Communicator Roles Enacted in Private Universities

To analyse this variable, the researcher used five items that described the two main communicator roles of communication technician and communication manager (communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator, and expert prescriber) as established by scholars (Broom& Smith, 1979; Dozier, 1983). Findings are summarized in the table 12.

Assertions	Mean	comments	Std. Dev	Comments
Drafting, editing, sending publicity messages like ads as directed by management	4.48	Very high level	0.70	Heterogeneity
Planning events like picnics, graduation and others	3.51	High level	1.12	Heterogeneity
Coordinating communication flow between university and other publics	2.81	moderate	1.30	Heterogeneity
Working with other managers to find problems and solutions affecting publics	2.77	Moderate	1.39	Heterogeneity
Independently researches to find problems and solutions and advise management	2.00	Low level	0.83	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	**3.11**	**Moderate level**	**1.07**	**Heterogeneity**

Table 12: Communicator roles enacted

Key: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from table 12 showed that drafting, editing, sending publicity messages like ads as directed by management is applied at a very high level because the mean of this assertion was $\overline{X} = 2.44, \overline{S} = 1.33$ (X=4.48;*S*=0.07). The value of the standard deviation showed that the data was heterogeneous. Planning events like picnics, graduation and others was done at a high level with a mean and standard deviation equal to(X=3.51,*S*=1.12). All these activities are typical of the basic technician role. This implies that PR in many universities is primarily hired to conduct these basic functions.

The rest of the roles fall under the broad advanced role of communication manager. Coordinating communication flow between university and other publics, activities that describe a communication facilitator role was enacted at a moderate level with the mean $\overline{X} = 2.81, \overline{S} = 1.30$ Working with other managers to find problems and solutions affecting publics, that describes the problem-solving facilitator role was applied at a moderate level shown by the mean of $\overline{X} = 2.77, \overline{S} = 1.39$. The last managerial role, the expert prescriber described by independently researching to find problems and solutions and advising management was practiced at a low level with the mean equals to $\overline{X} = 2.00, \overline{S} = 0.83$. The general level of Communicator Roles practices is moderate with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 3.11, \overline{S} = 1.07$.

It is worth noting that the level of enactment of roles reduces significantly from basic roles to advanced roles. This implies that PR practice in universities has not been given green light to enact the more advanced functions. This finding corroborates other studies that noted that PR officers are assigned basic and sometimes irrelevant roles (Murangwa, 2009). One practitioner captured it better: "Sometimes you feel you can do much with what you know but you are not just given the platform so you end up doing some secretarial kind of work," said a respondent in university E. Another practitioner from university A claimed that even the writing and dissemination of messages is usurped from them. He said, "other department heads and top managers many times write directly to their audiences or through their secretaries and many times you see an announcement, or memo from a big office that is poorly written in language and structure and you wonder." This was in line with an assertion from one other respondent in University B who said once a VC wrote a warning message to both students and staff on the same memo. "If he had tasked me to communicate this, I would have done better." He said. The lack of PR enacting advance communication manager role is therefore a big obstacle toward realizing the full potential of communicator roles in institutions.

4.3.2.2. The Contribution of Communicator Roles to organizational effectiveness

To analyse the contribution of public Relations practices to organizational effectiveness inferential statistics specifically correlation analysis and coefficient of determination were used as recommended by (Linda, 2002). Findings are summarized in the table 4.11.

			Communicator Roles	organizational effectiveness
Spearman's rho	Communicator Roles	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.986**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	27	27
	organizational effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.986**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	27	27
Coefficient of determination		$(.986)^2$ =0.972 or 97.2%		

Table 13: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between Communicator Roles and organizational effectiveness
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Finding showed that Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was 0.986 with the p-value equaling to 0.000. According to Linda (2002), when rho is 1 there is Perfect linear correlation, when 0.9< rho<1 there is a strong correlation, when 0.7< rho<0.9, there is a high correlation, when 0.5< rho<0.7, there is a moderate correlation, when 0< rho<0.5, there is a weak correlation, when rho =0, there is no relationship between the variables. Linda further said that when the p-value is less than the level of significance, the relationship between variables is significant.

For this case the value of Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was between 9 and 1. The researcher found that there was a strong correlation between Communicator Role practices and Organizational Effectiveness. The relationship was significant because the p-value (0.000) was less than the level of significance (0.01). The coefficient of determination showed that Communicator Roles practices contributed 97.2% to the Organizational Effectiveness.

This finding is well in line with the finding of Pirozek and Heskova (2003), and Kaverina (2003) who established that the when PR officer assume communication managerial roles, they help organization be proactive in identifying and managing issues thus enhancing effectiveness.

4.3.3. The Effect of PR Models Used in OE in Universities in Rwanda

To establish how PR models used influence OE, the researcher first determined which PR model/s were used by PR departments in the universities.

4.3.3.1. PR modals Used in Private Universities

To determine the PR modal/s used, five items that describe press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical models were used and the results are summarized in the table below.

Assertions	Mean	Comments	Std. Dev.	Comments
University sends positive messages like its achievements to the public to enhance its brand	3.48	High level	1.22	Heterogeneity
University studies public perception of it and sends messages geared toward changing the perceptions the public has about the university	3.48	High level	1.22	Heterogeneity
University views of its publics and adjusts to accommodate such views.	3.37	Moderate level	1.36	Heterogeneity
University conducts research to know views of different publics	2.59	Low level	1.27	Heterogeneity
University sets clear objectives of its messages and evaluates impact of its communication activities	2.59	Low level	1.33	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	**3.10**	**Moderate level**	**1.28**	**Heterogeneity**

Table 14: PR models used

Legend: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from table 4.13indicates that activities typical of press agentry model and public information model (university sends positive messages about its achievements to the public to enhance its brand) were dominant at a high level with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 3.48, \overline{S} = 1.22$. The two-way asymmetrical model where an organization embraces dialogue but uses information received to initiate change on the publics is characterized by university studying public perception of it and sending messages geared toward changing those perceptions was equally dominant at a high level with a mean of $\overline{X} = 3.48, \overline{S} = 1.22$.This intense deployment of more outward looking than inward looking models signifies the universities as organizations were not undertaking a balanced communication with their publics.

The findings highlighted a moderate level $\overline{X} = 3.37, \overline{S} = 1.36$ of the ideal two-way symmetrical model described as: university listens to views of its publics and adjusts to accommodate such views. While the moderate use of this model is laudable, the findings indicated that the means of obtaining views of the publics were not of best practices. That formal research was used to know views of the public pulled a low rating of $\overline{X} = 2.59, \overline{S} = 1.27$. Another aspect of the two-way symmetrical model (university sets clear objectives of its messages and evaluates impact of its communication activities) was at a low level with the mean equaling to $\overline{X} = 2.59, \overline{S} = 1.33$. The general level of PR models use is moderate with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 3.10, \overline{S} = 1.28$.

Lack of formal research was also reflected in interviews with key respondents when asked how they obtain information. 'Research? mmm.no, we just capture this informally through conversations and may be media.' said a respondent from university I.

These findings contradict J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) who presented the four models of public relations and argued that the ideal model is the two-way symmetrical that involves flow of information out of and into an organization with the organization also willing to adjust to meet publics' expectations. A low-level use of this model shows PR practice is not at its best.

4.3.3.2. The Contribution of PR model to Organizational Effectiveness

The table below indicates how influential use of PR models is in OE.

			PR model	organizational effectiveness
Spearman's rho	PR model	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.993**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	27	27
	organizational effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.993**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	27	27
Coefficient of determination			$(.993)^2$ =0.986 or 98.6%	

Table 15: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between PR models and organizational effectiveness

Finding showed that Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was 0.993 with the p-value of 0.000.As the value of Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was between 9 and 1 the researcher ascertained that there was a strong correlation between PR modelpractices and Organizational Effectiveness. The relationship was significant because the p-value (0.000) was less than the level of significance (0.01). The coefficient of determination showed that PR model practices contributed 98.6.2% to the Organizational Effectiveness.

This finding echoed finding by Pirozek and Heskova (2003) that the two-way symmetrical tactics of research and feedback systems helped a university gain a better understanding of the attitudes of its key publics.

4.3.4. Influence of Hierarchical Placement of Public Relations on Organisational Effectiveness in Private Universities

This variable set to find out if PR practice in universities was empowered as to contribute at the top management level. The researcher began by ascertaining the nature of the strategic representation in the universities.

4.3.4.1. Nature of Hierarchical Placement of Public Relations in Private Universities

Five assertions were used to ascertain where PR was placed in the managerial hierarchy of private universities. Findings are summarized in table 16.

Assertions	Mean	Comments	Std. Dev	Comments
The PR head is among top managers, attends, management meetings and takes part in making important decisions	2.1852	Low	1.17791	Heterogeneity
The PR head reports directly to the VC's office	2.66	Moderate	1.38	Heterogeneity
The PR unit established separately from marketing with sufficient resources	2.14	low	1.02	Heterogeneity
PR head freely makes important decisions and plans about the PR department	2.07	low	1.20	Heterogeneity
PR department conducts formal research to understand the organization publics	2.48	low	1.28	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	**2.31**	**Low**	**1.21**	**Heterogeneity**

Table 16: Level of strategic representation

Legend: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from table 16 shows that the consideration PR head is among top managers, attends, management meetings and takes part in making important decisions at a low level with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 2.18, \overline{S} = 1.17$. The PR head reports directly to the VC's office at a moderate level with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 2.66, \overline{S} = 1.38$. The PR unit established separately from marketing with sufficient resources at a low level with the mean $\overline{X} = 2.14, \overline{S} = 1.02$. PR head freely makes important decisions and plans about the PR department at a low level shown by the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 2.07, \overline{S} = 1.20$ PR department conducts formal research to understand the organization publics at a low level with the mean equals to $\overline{X} = 2.48, \overline{S} = 1.28$ The general level of Strategic representation is low with the mean and standard deviation equal to $\overline{X} = 2.31, \overline{S} = 1.21$.

These findings reveal that PR heads are not fully embraced into the top strategic management team. In interviews, practitioners revealed that even when they were included in the top management team, their inputs were not genuinely sought. "We put them to validate and implement what has been brought from above, may be from the board or owners," observed a participant from University G. This is contrary to what scholars such as Rawjee, Veerasamy and Gqamane (2012) who note that organisations need to recognize the value of placing public relations at the boardroom table as strategic business partner and critical part of business planning and operations. Lack of admission of PR heads to the boardroom as revealed in this research is a huge impediment that calls for urgent correction.

4.3.4.2. The Contribution of PR Strategic Representation to Organizational Effectiveness

To unearth the contribution of PR strategic representation to OE, Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was used as indicated in the table below.

			Strategic representation	**organizational effectiveness**
Spearman's rho	Strategic Representation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.986**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	27	27
	Organizational effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.986**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	27	27
Coefficient of determination		$(.986)^2$ =0.986 or 98.6%		

Table1: Spearman's rho correlation coefficient between Representation and organizational effectiveness
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Finding from table 4.16 showed that Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was 0.986 with the p-value equals to 0.000. As this value was between 9 and 1, the researcher noted that, according to Linda (2002), there was a strong correlation between strategicRepresentationand organizational Effectiveness. The relationship was significant because the p-value (0.000) was less than the level of significance (0.01). The coefficient of determination showed that strategic Representationcontributed 98.6.2% to the Organizational Effectiveness.

This corroborated with studies by Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) who found out that inclusion at the strategic level of PR CEOs in organization not only improved sound decision making but also enhanced implementation of decision made.

5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study "Contribution of Public Relations Practice on Organizational Effectiveness in Private Universities in Rwanda.

5.2. Summary

The study set out to investigate the contribution of Public Relations practice on Organizational Effectiveness in private universities in Rwanda. The researcher purposed that the study would add a valuable body of knowledge that would be of value to scholars and PR practitioners in demonstrating the value of their practice in organizations. The study was motivated by the researcher's realization that the study of if and how PR practice enhances organizational effectiveness had not been well researched especially in the Rwandan context and in educational institutions to be specific. The researcher wanted to find out if the increased setting up of communication units in universities contributed in any way to the performance of the institutions.

The study set three objectives to guide the study as to: establish the nature of Public Relations practice in private Universities in Rwanda; assess the level of organizational effectiveness in private Universities in Rwanda; and determine the relationship between

Public Relations practice and Organizational Effectiveness in private universities in Rwanda. The researcher premised this study by adopting two theories and three models. The first was the Excellence Theory in Public Relations by James E. Grunig of 1992 and revised in 2002. It is a general theory of public relations that specifies how public relations is organized, managed and how PR makes an organization more effective. It identifies four characteristics of an excellent PR practice as empowerment function, communicator roles, integrated function and relationship with other functions, and models of public relations. Second is the Systems Theory and Public Relations articulated by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968 that defines the operationalization of the organization as a system. It is used to explain how public relations helps understand and manage the relationships an organisation has with its stakeholders and publics who make up its environment.
The research was also informed by the rational, systems, and strategic constituents modals that give a measurement mechanism for Organizational Effectiveness. The rational model is goal oriented and argues that an organization is effective in as far as it achieves its goals. The systems model emphasizes the resources and processes necessary to attain those goals while the strategic constituents measure effectiveness by looking at how an organization satisfies the needs of its key publics. Thus, the study gauged the practice of PR in private universities in Rwanda against the Excellency theory best practices and the level of organizational effectiveness against the indicators provided by the models.
This study employed a qualitative and quantitative approach and a descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey was preferred because it could provide quantitative data that could be easy to analyse and generalize to similar populations. Qualitative data was sought to help shed more light through in depth interview of key informants and open ended questions. The main instruments were questionnaires and interview guide.
The researcher conveniently chose the private universities based in Kigali city. This help ease data collection and provide data homogeneity. The target population was employees in private universities including the topmost manager, the PR heads, and teaching staff representative. Purposive sampling technique was used to pick the participants. Data analysis was done using Miles & Huberman (1994) framework for qualitative data, and quantitative data was analyzed using computer SPSS software.
The findings revealed that the current nature of practice of PR in private universities in Rwanda does not meet the excellence threshold provided by the Excellency theory and did not adequately play the described by the systems theory. Data obtained showed that PR practitioners were limited to play basic communication technician roles at a high level, while the advanced roles of communication manager were not duly enacted. In addition, the ideal two-way symmetrical model of communication was not satisfactorily performed as there was no evaluation of communication activities nor formal research to determine publics' views. Finally, PR was not duly constituted at the strategic level, and even though PR heads got involved in strategic meetings, they were not entrusted to give their professional input but rather ratify and implement decision determined elsewhere.
Findings also revealed that most universities were moderately performing in terms of their effectiveness. While they achieved most of their set goals, at a moderate level, they did not do formal evaluations of their goal attainment rate. The managerial units of the universities also were moderately aligned with the biggest hitch being collaboration in achieving broad organizational goals. Further data indicated that universities did not excellently manage their strategic publics. The study established that there was no formal research based determination of concerns of the key publics as well as adequate channels to enable two-way communication exchange.
The findings also revealed that there was a strong positive relationship of 98.9 % between PR and OE. The individual variables of PR practice, communicator roles. PR models, and strategic representation, had a positive contribution to OE at 0.770, 0.440, and 0.010 respectively. This means if they are negatively practiced, then OE will be affected negatively as well.

5.3. Conclusions
Generally, PR practice in private universities in Rwanda is averagely implemented when determined against the Excellency theory standards. The following conclusions can be drawn for the findings.

5.3.1. The Contribution of Communicator Roles to OE in Private Universities
The advanced roles of communication manager, communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator, and expert prescriber are not optimally performed with the latter dismal at very low level. PR officers were largely limited to performing basic roles of technician. Despite that, the roles still contributed immensely to effectiveness of the universities.

5.3.2. The Effect of PR Models Used on OE in Private Universities
The manner in which PR disseminates and collects information subtly affected OE. The ideal two-way symmetrical communication model is not widely practiced. The communication channels used do not have ample feedback mechanisms to enable exchange of information. Formal research initiatives to establish publics views were hardly conducted.

5.3.3. The Influence of PR Strategic Representation on OE in Private Universities
There is a moderate inclusion of PR heads at strategic management level but this has not necessarily meant that they are contributing much to strategic decisions because their input is no duly sought.

5.4. Recommendations
The researcher makes several recommendations in the light of the conclusions above.

i. Generally, PR practice in private universities in Rwanda needs to be improved to reach the Excellency theory standards.

ii. The researcher also recommends that public relations officers be given more liberty to enact advanced roles of communication manager, communication facilitator, problem solving facilitator, and expert prescriber.
iii. Also, the symmetrical communication model should be fully utilized by providing channels that facilitate feedback and by acting on feedback received.
iv. The researcher also recommends that PR heads input should be soughtat strategic management level.
v. Formal research to determine views of key publics should be carried out periodically.
vi. Universities should empower and also invest in PR officers through recruiting qualified persons and offering them trainings.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

In the light if the findings of the study, the researcher recommends further studies in the following areas:

1. The Practice of PR in light of other excellent principles such as how it is constituted and its autonomy from other departments like marketing,
2. There should a study to investigate further OE in the light of other indicators such as competing values model.
3. Similar research broadened to cover public universities and other tertiary institutions.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire

Please spare a few minutes to complete this questionnaire to enable me accomplish the study. Kindly tick or answer the questions correctly.

Do not write your name. Any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Participation in this research is voluntary.

1. Section One:

1. What is your current position: 1.Vice chancellor { } 2.DVC Administration { }
3. HR director { } 4. PR Officer { }
5.Teaching staff rep { } 6. Other ________________

2. Years of service in same position: 1. 0 -5 { } 2. 6 – 10 { } 3. 11 and Above { }

3. Years of service in this university: 1. 0 -5 { } 2. 6 – 10 { } 3. 11 and Above { }

2. Section Two

1. Does your university have a Public Relations' Department? 1.Yes { } 2. No { }

If No, Why: ____

____

If No, who performs the public relation function? ______________________________

2. If yes, how long has it existed? 1. Since university started { }
2. Over half the life of the university { }
3. Less half the life of the university { }

3. Section Three.

- Communicator Roles carried out by PR officer/s (PRO)

Please indicate how far you agree that the following roles are frequently performed by the PROs in you university.

1. Strongly Disagree; 2 Disagree; 3 No Opinion 4. Agree; 5 Strongly Agree

Rating Responses	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Drafting, editing, sending publicity messages like fliers, ads, press for media and other audiences as directed by top management.					
planning events like picnics, graduation and others					
Coordinating communication flow between university and other different publics like lecturers, students, guardians.					
Working with other mangers to establish problems affecting university publics and finding solutions					
Independently researches to find problems and solutions and advise management					

Please explain any other role done/should be done by your PR officer/officers:

____

4. Section Four

Model of PR practice.

1. In your understanding:

Rating Responses	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
University identifies clear target groups and objectives of its messages					
University sends positive messages like its achievements to the public					
University sends messages geared toward changing the perceptions the public has about the university					
University listens to views of its publics and adjusts to accommodate such views.					
University evaluates impact of its communication activities					

What are the strengths or weaknesses you see in the way the university practices its public relations?

____

____

5. Section Five

The strategic empowerment of PR function.

Rating Responses	1	2	3	4	5
The head of PR is among top managers and attends all top management meetings and is consulted in making very important (strategic) decisions					
The PR head reports directly to the VC's office					
The PR unit established separately from marketing with sufficient resources in qualified personnel and financial					
PR head freely makes important decisions and plans about the PR department					
PR department conducts formal research to understand the organization publics					

6. Section Six

- Goal attainment of the university

Please rate how you agree that your university is effective in:

Rating Responses	1	2	3	4	5
Realizing set goals					
Realizing set goals within set time limit					
Achieving set goals satisfactorily					
Readjusting set goals to suit changing conditions					
Evaluating goals achieved					

7. Section Seven

- Organizational alignment effectiveness

Please rate how you agree that your university is effective in how:

Rating Responses	1	2	3	4	5
Employees share understanding about organizational goals, vision and direction					
Different departments work together to achieve objectives					
Management work with employees harmoniously					
Employees' competencies are aligned to fit the needs of the institution					
Interdepartmental communication is effective					

2. what else do you think contributes to alignment: ________________________________

____

8. Section Eight

- Relationship with publics

Please rate how you agree that your university is effective in:

Rating Responses	1	2	3	4	5
Continually identifying groups that are important to it					
Engaging key publics before taking any decision that affects the publics					
Making decisions that benefit both university and other interest groups					
Creating sufficient two way communication channels for all main interest groups					
Conducts formal research among the main publics					

9. Section Nine

1. Rate to what extent you agree to these statements

Rating Responses	1	2	3	4	5
PR department in your university is managed by qualified people					
PR officers and management, and staff in your organisation have the same understanding of what PR is					
professional education in public relations is necessary for one to be a PR practitioner?					

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix II

Interview guide

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study titled 'Contribution of Public Relations Practice in Organizational Effectiveness in Universities in Rwanda.' My goal is to find out if PR practice in Universities in Rwanda contributes to organizational effectiveness.
The interview should take less than thirty minutes. I will be taking notes to capture your responses during the session. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be used by the researcher. I will ensure that any information I include in the report does not identify you nor your university as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time.
Are there any questions about what I have just explained?
Are you willing to participate in this interview?

_______________ _______________

Interviewee Date

Yours Researcher/Student,

Onsongo, Andrew Nyanyuki
HD321- C010-5883/2014

1. Section One:

1. What position do you hold? ____
2. What is your Educational Qualification? a. PHD { } b. Masters { } c. Bachelors { } d. Diploma{ }
3. How long have you served in this career? 0 -5 { } 6 – 10 { } 11 and Above { }
4. How long have you served in Public Relations in this university? 0 -5 { } 6 – 10 { } 11 and Above { }
5. What is professional training background?
1. Public relations{ } 2. marketing { } 3. Human resource { } 4. Other _______________

2. Section Two
Role of a PR practitioners
1. What exactly is your job in your organisation? Describe the core activities that you do in the organisation.
2. As a practitioner what do you believe should be the job of a public relations practitioner in an organisation?

3. Section Three
PR models used
1. What are the main publics you communicate with?
2. Why is two-way symmetrical communication not optimally enacted?
3. Why do you hardly conduct formal research to establish concerns of your publics?
4. What communication activities do you manage in and out of university

4. Section Four
The strategic empowerment of PR function
1. Which department does public relations fall under in your organisation?
2. To whom does the most senior public relations practitioner report to?
3. Why do you think insufficient resources you are allocated to PR?
4. What makes it difficult for you to independently plan and decide about PR issues?
5. Why is your involvement intop management minimal though you are regarded as a member of top management?

5. Section Five
Goal achievement
1. How do you think you contribute to the university's goal attainment?

6. Section 6
Contribution of PR in organizational alignment
1. How do you relate with other departments?
2. How do you help them deal with PR issues?
3. How do you help employees know university goals, vision and direction?

7. Section 7
1. What do you think causes a difference in understanding of what PR between the top management and you?
2. What qualification would you say is relevant for one to be a public relations practitioner?
3. What challenges do you face as a PR practitioner?
4. what do you suggest should be done to tackle those challenges?

Thank you for your participation