PUBLIC RELATIONS IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF FIRMS IN KENYA: A CASE OF UNILEVER (K) LTD

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the student

I declare that this research project has not been previously presented for a degree in Maseno University, or in any other University. The work reported herein has been carried out by me and all sources of information have been acknowledged by means of references.

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Declaration by the Supervisors

This Project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children Eddie and Debbie my entire family for the sacrifice they made for me to complete this project. Their care, concern, support, encouragement and enthusiasm inspired me to achieve this goal. You have been there for me like no one else has. I adore you and thank God for having you in my life.

ABSTRACT

Public relations (PR) in Kenya is a significant discipline and a growing industry. However, it still faces many challenges with one of the major challenges is the misconception of PR in the country. Seemingly, many people still confuse public relations for marketing or advertising. Further, firms are yet to fully understand the benefits of PR in their strategic management particularly when employed to their daily operations. Unilever (K) Ltd faced allegations of sexual harassment and abuse of its female employees on its Kericho tea plantations. This has led to the company acquiring a negative public image both internationally and locally. However, all these problems which were revealed were denied or downplayed by local management. This has led to the public viewing Unilever as a company which focuses on costs reductions and profit maximisation at the expense of their employees. The study focused on PR in strategic management of firms in Kenya by focusing on Unilever (K) Ltd in its Kericho Tea Plantation. The study was guided by three objectives; to examine the value of PR to the strategic management, to study the effect of organisational culture to the effectiveness of PR strategy and to investigate the role of organisational structure to the effectiveness of a PR strategy at Kericho Tea Plantation of Unilever (K) Ltd. The study was guided by a conceptual framework, anchored on system approach theory, stakeholder management theory, and Grunig's situational theory of public. The study area was Kericho Tea Plantation of Unilever (K) Ltd with the study adopting a descriptive research design. The target population was the human resource (HR) department, which was made up 100 of employees and PR department comprised 10 employees of Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. Multistage sampling was used to select the sample to participate in the study. The sample size for the participants to participate in the survey from the HR department was calculated using a formula provided by Yamane (1967) to acquire 50 participants while a census was used to acquire 10 participants to participate in the interview from the PR department. Further, random sampling was used in selecting the sample from the HR department. The data collection procedure entailed self-administered questionnaires to the selected respondents and interviews conducted on the employees in the PR department. The completed questionnaires were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21). The data collected from the interviews were analysed through content analysis. Mixed method data analysis was utilised whereby both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilised. The study established that while Unilever values PR, it lacks structures such as training of its employee on best practices as well as informing employees on PR policies and strategies within the organization. Unilever value for PR is seen from the commitment and support of the top management to the PR issues and department. The study also established that the organizational structure of the company is aligned to the PR strategy. The study recommends that the Unilever (K) Ltd needs to rethink its PR strategy and develop a more effective strategy in PR with all the stakeholders and parties working hand in hand in ensuring the company's image is corrected. The findings of this study are useful to the management of Unilever (K) Ltd as well as other firms in managing and developing its PR strategy. The findings also add to the existing body of knowledge on public relation and its management.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CIPR   : Chartered Institutes of Public Relations:

COYA   : Company of the Year Award

CSR   : Corporate Social Responsibility

EAI   : East African Industries

EAPRA   : East African Public Relations Association

FAPRA   : Federation of Africa Public Relations Association

HR   : Human Resource

IBM   : International Business Machines

IPRA   : International Public Relations Association

KBL   : Kenya Breweries Limited

KIM   : Kenya Institute of Management

KQ   : Kenya Airways

LTD   : Limited

MNCs   : Multinational Corporations

NGOs   : Non-governmental Organisations

PR   : Public Relation

PRSA   : Public Relations Society of America

PRSK   : Public Relations Society of Kenya

SPSS   : Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Public relation (PR) has been in existence since the early 20th century. Different institutions and scholars have different definitions for the concept. According to Public Relations Society of America (2012) PR involves a strategic communication process which develops mutually beneficial relationships between the organisation and its publics. Chartered Institutes of Public Relations (2013) defines PR as a management tool that uses communication to create positive relationship with the people who support the success of a business. The word "people" includes: customer, investors, employees, suppliers, distributors, competitors, and the government (Chartered Institutes of Public Relations, 2013). Looking through the above definitions, PR is a multi-facet concept. Nevertheless, though PR covers a wide range of activities that are highlighted divergently in different definitions all public relations should exist to preserve a consistent reputation and build relationships (Heath, 2001).

Further, the PR roles and functions continue to evolve and change alongside the different definition given to it. Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 2012 in an international effort to modernise and review the definition of PR, they replaced the term which was adopted by the organization in 1982 by initiating campaigns and a public vote which led to the conceptualisation of PR as a strategic communication process building mutually beneficial relations (Heath, 2001; PRSA, 2012). PR is used by a number of institutions such as businesses, governments, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), Multinational Companies (MNCs), and educational institutions in developing relationships with the various stakeholders such as customers, citizens, shareholders, employees and other institution as well as the public at large (Wakefield, 2008).

Ideally, organisations or any group of people pursue various objectives through the use of a number of strategies and tactic (Watson & Noble, 2007). For instance, a business firm utilizes media campaigns to market their products to the public, whereas governments utilize the media and other communication agents in communicating their agenda to the public. Unfortunately, the stakeholders in such organizations may result to using negative tactics in furthering their agenda and attaining advantages over other players in the market (Kim,

2000). As a result of globalization and advances in technology, businesses are currently operating in a competitive as well as dynamic business environment requiring them to utilize various ways of remaining sustainable and profitable. These strategies include promotions of products, campaigns and other techniques (Heath, 2001).

The conditions in the global business environment, however, have resulted to some companies such as Apple in their production in India and China, employees or other stakeholders to utilize negative and at times illegal means to acquire competitive advantage over their competitors (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2006). For instance, companies such as Apple has been accused of violating human rights in their Indian-based factories in their bid to produce products at a minimum costs so as to be profitable. Further, as a result of the internet and other communication outlets such as the media, the public is more aware of the actions of businesses, for instance, Apple has received attention from activists to undertake greener technologies in their company (Taylor, 2007). Kazokiene (2010) argues that PR creates a high level of public scrutiny of every action taken by the businesses. Further, customers are scrutinizing the value addition chain of products from their production to when they are delivered to their premises. This has increased the importance and roles of PR worldwide (Valackiene, 2010).

Besides Apple, other western-based multinational corporations for example General Electric, International Business Machines (IBM), Virgin Group, MacDonalds, Nokia and Coca-Cola among others are using PR to protect their public image. This has resulted to the development of many PR firms such as Edelman to handle their PR issues (Valackiene, 2010). For instance, Edelman has been handling PR campaigns for major oil companies such as American Petroleum Industry, especially on issues touching environmental degradation (Heath, 2001). Other institutions and firms such as Microsoft have opted to develop their own PR department to handle and manage any challenges which arise. For instance, Microsoft in 2014 faced a licensing corruption scandal in Romania, which required pro-active PR strategy to manage the issue (Bird, 2014).

In many developing countries in Africa such as Uganda and Kenya, PR is a new concept whose growth has been fuelled by the various MNCs opening branches in the African

continent. This has led to development of PR in Africa over a short period of time (Blankson, 2009). In Kenya, in particular, companies such as Safaricom, National Bank of Kenya and Jubilee Insurance have PR officers whose main duty is to handle the PR issues of the company (Public Relations Society of Kenya, 2015). Further, the development of the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) has greatly influence the development of the PR industry in the country. PRSK involves a professional body for all the PR practitioners in the country who undertake various activities in guiding and directing the PR field in the country (Mbeke, 2009).

Further, the rise of the Company of the Year Award (COYA) with the Kenya Institute of Management (KIM) has seen high growth rates with each year the number of companies registering for the award increasing. This is an indication of the companies in the country opening up public scrutiny (Blankson, 2009). As a result of this growth in the PR sector in the country as well as internationally, companies operating in the country have no choice but to invest in PR. MNCs operating in Kenya like Unilever are subjected to both the local scrutiny as well as international scrutiny with their actions scrutinized on a daily basis and as such the importance of the PR department (Mbeke, 2009). Unilever for instance in the recent years was faced with a sexual assault accusations. According to Morser (2010) female workers working in tea plantation in Unilever's Kenya plantations were sexually assaulted by their supervisors and other officers in the management. The report illustrates that supervisors used sexual discrimination and assault in providing and managing the employees with female employees made to sleep with the superiors in getting jobs allocations. Largo (2011) agrees with this and further state that in addition to sexual assault, the company has been accused of poor working conditions for their employees. Such accusations negatively affects the reputation and brand of Unilever and it is important for the company to have an effective PR strategy to deal with such accusations.

1.1.1 Public Relations in Kenya

The development of the practice of public relations practice is Kenya has been influenced greatly by the Public Relations Society of Kenya (Onyiengo, 2014). The Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) was established in 1971. It was established in order to guide the

professional body and bring together PR practitioners in Kenya. PRSK is a registered society and was formed to join PR managers who had a similar aim of improving the PR practice in Kenya. The Society's broad objective is to advance excellence in Public Relations in Kenya and to ensure that the practice continues to thrive within the ethical framework defined by the profession. The Public Relations Society of Kenya exists with the following objectives; its first objective is to be the recognized professional authority in Public Relations in Kenya. Second, to educate and inform the public as to the purpose and practice of Public Relations. Third to establish and promote a high standard of professional ethics in Public Relations and fourth to contribute to the improvement of professionalism through education and training in Public Relations (PRSK, 2015).

PRSK is affiliated to regional, continental, and global Public Relations bodies, for instance within the East African region, PRSK is a member of the East African Public Relations Association (EAPRA). PRSK is also a member of the Federation of Africa Public Relations Association (FAPRA) which is the continental body for all PR national associations in Africa. At the global level, PRSK is a founder member of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management. In addition, members of PRSK subscribe to the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), thus forming the Kenya IPRA chapter (PRSK, 2015).

The field of public relations has existed in Kenya since 1971 and has been growing and developing steadily over the years (Muriithi, 1991). The growth of the practice of public relations in Kenya is being propelled by the expansion of well-established public relations firms into the country. One such firm is the International communications consultancy Hill and Knowlton based in the USA, recently expanded into Africa with the launch of a new public relations company in a joint venture with Scangroup Limited (An already existing marketing communications firm in Kenya). The new company is called Hill & Knowlton East Africa. Another such firm is Fleishman-Hillard International Communications based in the USA which also recently extended its branches in Africa with an affiliation with Tell-Em Public Relations in Kenya (Freitag & Stokes, 2009).

PR education in Kenya has a lot of room for growth, more and more colleges and universities are offering training on public relations. According to the PRSK website, there are about

twelve institutions of higher education offering public relations courses (PRSK, 2015). Some of these institutions include; Nairobi University, Maseno University, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Daystar University and the United States International University (USIU-Africa). Public Relations is also offered in several other colleges such as Kenya Institute of Management, School of Professional Studies, Makini, Zafrica Business School, Air Travel and Related studies and Kenya Polytechnic (Freitag & Stokes, 2009).

From the foregoing, public relations is taking strides towards development in Kenya, the profession still faces many challenges (Onyiengo, 2014). One of the major challenges is the misconception of PR in the country. Seemingly, many people still confuse public relations for marketing or advertising. Further, organizations and businesses have not fully understood the benefits that public relations presents to them, especially if employed in their daily operations (Freitag & Stokes, 2009). It is important to have a body of knowledge about most, if not all aspects of public relations. This study sought to investigate public relations practices in the strategic management of firms in Kenya by focusing on the case of Unilever (K) Ltd. Unilever is the world's largest tea company and the largest producer of tea in Kenya. As such the company is a major player in the tea industry both globally and locally (Morser, 2010). Unilever (K) Ltd faced certain allegations of human rights abuses on its Kericho tea plantations which includes allegations of sexual harassment and abuse of its female employees. This has led to the company acquiring a negative public image both internationally and locally (Largo, 2011). However, all these problems which were revealed were denied or downplayed by local management. This has led to the public viewing Unilever as a company which focuses on costs reductions and profit maximisation at the expense of their employees (Morser, 2010). Public perception is very critical in the 21st century with customers and other stakeholders withdrawing from companies which branch PR ethics. It is as such very important for Unilever to have an adequate framework to follow to repair their image and reputation. However, despite having an established PR department at the company's Kericho Tea Plantation, the company's image and reputation is still at risk with the allegations of sexual harassment and poor working conditions and environment cited as major issues at the tea plantation (Unilever, 2015). As such, the study focuses on the PR function at Unilever by investigating the practices and strategies utilised by the company in

repairing its reputation and image amidst the mentioned allegations to the public and other key stakeholders.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Majority of companies are faced with the challenging of managing their reputation and brand names. In the business environment, most organisations are faced with challenges and issues in different aspects of their processes. For instance a company can be faced with quality issues whereby their products are perceived as having low quality or are accused to not paying their employees well. Any challenge and accusation facing organisations poses a risk to their reputation. Unilever is one of the company faced with such a challenge whereby the company is accused of having sexual assaults in its tea plantation in Kericho. Despite the company's management strongly denying the accusations and stating that the employees are operating in good working conditions, the accusations remain with various stakeholders perceiving these accusations as true. This illustrates that the company's PR department is facing challenges in appropriately maintaining and protecting the company's reputation and image. It is important to have a PR strategy which is effective in protecting a company's reputation and image. The current study focused on investigating the PR strategy of Unilever (K) Ltd and examine its effectiveness. The study examines the value of PR to Unilever's management, impact of organisational structure and the role of organisational culture in the effectiveness of PR strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd.

1.3 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions.
1) What is the value of PR to the strategic management of Unilever (K) Ltd?
2) What is the effect of organizational culture to the effectiveness of PR strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd?
3) What is the role of organizational structure to the effectiveness of PR strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following research objectives.
1) To examine the value of PR to the strategic management of Unilever (K) Ltd.

2) To study the effect of organizational culture to the effectiveness of PR strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd.

3) To investigate the role of organizational structure to the effectiveness of PR strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Kenya is the third largest tea exporter, after China and India; she exports around 20% of the world tea in both the volumes of tea exported and the value of the tea exports (Tea Board of Kenya, 2012). As such, Kenya is a major global player in the tea export industry. The tea industry in Kenya is very important to the country's national economy with the industry outperforming other major players such as tourism, coffee and horticulture (Largo, 2011). Further, the industry provides employment for many individuals and a source of livelihood for many households. Reports by Morser (2010) and Largo (2011) illustrate that the tea industry workforce in Kenya is mainly women with about 60% of the entire workforce. This illustrates the high percentage of the population which is threatened by risks of sexual harassment in the workplace as well as other challenges facing the tea sector.

Unilever is reported to be the largest supplier of tea globally with about 15% of the world market share (Unilever, 2015). In Kenya, Unilever (K) Ltd employs many individuals both at its various business departments as well as its tea plantations in Kericho. As a result of the role played by the company both locally and internationally, it is always at the public scrutiny. The company has in the recent past faced challenges in its PR departments from allegations made by various reports and sources. Reports by Oxfam (2002), Morser (2010) as well as Largo (2011) illustrate that majority of the allegations on sexual harassment is by female tea farm workers who are harassed by their male supervisors and managers. Besides these, complaints have emerged around the poor working conditions and inadequate remunerations. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of PR strategy of the company in managing these allegations and exploring the factors which influence the effective PR strategies. This is instrumental in guiding the company on how to better manage this crisis as well as provide recommendation for future PR practices in the future.

The problems faced by Unilever (K) Ltd are similar to other challenges faced by firm in the agricultural sector in Kenya as well as other organisations in the country. The problems experienced in such firms with regards to sexual harassment and violations of the rights of the employees are argued to be as a result of inadequate regulations with regards to employment practices as well as the inadequate awareness of employees on their rights in the workplace (Molleda, 2009). These include flower farms in the horticulture sector, other tea plantations, as well as other industries such as the tourism industry. Further, organisations from other sectors such as manufacturing industry are facing increased scrutiny with regards to their practices in the operations. As such, understanding PR practices and strategies in the strategic management of organisations in Kenya is relevant to these sectors and firms as it ensures that they have an adequate understanding of how to best manage and implement their PR strategies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Kericho at the Unilever tea plantation. The Kericho plantation as chosen as compared to the other tea plantations of Unilever, it had the highest complaints of poor working conditions and sexual abuses by the male supervisor and managers (Largo, 2011). The target population for the study were both the employees at the HR department and the PR department of Unilever's Kericho tea plantation in Kericho County. Questionnaires were administered to the employees in the HR department and interviews to the employees in the PR department on the various practices and elements of PR at the company. The study focused on the HR department since the HR department deals with both issues and concerns of employees working at the tea plantation such as their pay, recruitment, treatment as well as any complaints on their working conditions. Further, the study focused on the PR department to provide the study with information on the strategies and framework utilised by Unilever for effective PR management. The two departments as such provide holistic information on the PR practices at the organisation. The tea farm workers were excluded from the study as despite having insight into the poor working conditions and sexual abuses in the farm, the tea farm workers did not have in depth insight onto the impact that the scandals and accusations had on the company's reputation and the impact that organisational

structure, organisational culture as well as value of PR to the top management have on the effectiveness of the PR strategy.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by the principles of three theories; system approach theory, stakeholder management theory, and situational theory of public, as discussed in sections 1.7.1, 1.7.2, and 1.7.3. .

1.7.1 System Theory Approach

System theory approach refers to the view of the organizations as open social systems which need to interact with the environment for their survival. System theory has been developed through a multi-disciplinary approach with scholars such as Robert Flood, Peter Checkland and Edgar Morin (Heath, 2001). The open system approach was first applied through the adaptation of the general system, theory to organizational behaviour. It focuses on the repeated cycles of input, output and feedback between the organizations and its external environment (Becker, 2007). In the case of systems, the organizations receives output from the environment, the system process the inputs and release outputs into the environment (Wakefield, 2008). The system then takes feedback in determining if the output was effective in restoring equilibrium. According to system theory, majority of effective organizations adapt to their organizations. Organizations which operate in dynamic environment need to be open so as to maintain a balance. As dynamic environments are constantly changing, they create uncertainty and risks on what the organizations need to do for their survival (Heath, 2001).

After an organization adapts to environmental changes, its actions and messages represent its output (Kim, 2000). The automobile industry is constantly enticing car consumers to try the latest models, hoping that it has responded to changing expectations (Kazokiene, 2010). Recently, many auto manufacturers such as Toyota have attempted to colour their products as "green" or environmentally friendly. However, messages are insufficient especially if the cars are not really friendlier to the environment, then these messages eventually will fall on sceptical ears and impugn the credibility of the organization (Valackiene, 2010). An organization measures the effectiveness of its output by seeking feedback. If its actions and

messages were ineffective, then the process is repeated until the appropriate solution is found (Tikolo, 2011). If the organization is unable to adapt to the environmental variation, then it will eventually be non-existent. The PR professional engaged in an organization that takes a systems approach is continually focusing on feedback as a way of measuring organizational success (Thain & Bradle, 2014). PR professionals can utilize system theory to implement actions for regular feedback for the organizations by aligning its expectations with those of the public in its environment (Blankson, 2009). This theory is useful in understanding research and guiding PR practitioners in developing strategies for their organizations.

PR practitioners are focused on utilizing information and strategies available to them in protecting the reputation of the organisations. System theory can be utilised by PR practitioners whereby they can apply the tenents and principles of system theory in ensuring that it appropriately communicates to the public and major stakeholders. As seen above, organisations have system which receive output from the environment, the inputs are processed and then released into the environment. In regards to PR, information is received and feedback is provided to the company in terms of output and this information is processed and then released to the environment. For instance as indicated by Morser (2010), there have been accusation of sexual assault in Unilever and this information is communicated to the company's management who processes it and through its PR department release the information back to the environment. Unilever for instance communicated that there was no sexual assault cases in its plantations. However, the message was not believed and it is important to evaluate the accusations again and develop a PR strategy on how to deal with these accusations.

However, it has a number of weaknesses. First, its focus is on understanding PR and second is whether the means on how an organization survives is really crucial (Watson & Noble, 2007). System theory with regards to PR practice is limited since it focuses on how measurement directs the strategy on quantitative elements while not taking into account the qualitative element of the practice. Taking a holistic approach is the most effective theoretical basis for PR practice. Further, system theory does not provide focus on the means and frameworks to be followed in ensuring the survival of an organisation. Despite these weaknesses, system theory approach enables the study to view Unilever as a system which

requires interacting with its environment for its survival. The theory enables the study to illustrate the relevance of the public to the organisation. By understanding the organisations as a system whereby it receives output from the environment, processes inputs and release outputs to the environment, the study is able to appreciate the dynamism of the environment in which Unilever operates in.

1.7.2 Stakeholder Management Approach

Stakeholder management approach focuses on system approach by understanding the strategic elements. Stakeholder theory was first developed by Edward Freedom and later developed by other scholars such as Robert Philips. The theory argues that there is a need for organizations to focus on the strategic units which threaten survival of the organization (Blankson, 2009). It recognizes the fact that organizations need to deal with its external and internal publics who have the power to constrain or enhance its behaviour (Watson & Noble, 2007). The relationship between the organization and its stakeholders is referred to as interdependence in system theory. Poor relationships can result in forced compliance to restrictions and regulations (Grunig, 1995). When organizations voluntarily establish relationships with stakeholders they have more autonomy because they are not forced into these relationships.

Stakeholder management includes the processes required to identify the people, groups and organizations that could affect or be affected by the organisation, to analyze stakeholder expectations and their impact on the organisation, and to develop appropriate strategies and tactics for effectively engaging stakeholders in a manner appropriate to the stakeholders' interest and involvement in the organisation. The stakeholder management makes sure that stakeholders are effectively involved in decision making and their execution, to gain support for the strategy and anticipate resistance, conflict, or competing objectives among the stakeholders (Grunig, 1995). The stakeholder management includes several sections and phases. First is the identification of stakeholders in the following ways by their name, titles, groups, and organizations that have significant influence on the organisation's direction and its success (Marshall and Stohl, 1993). PR strategist need to properly identity the major stakeholders of Unilever.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Management Process
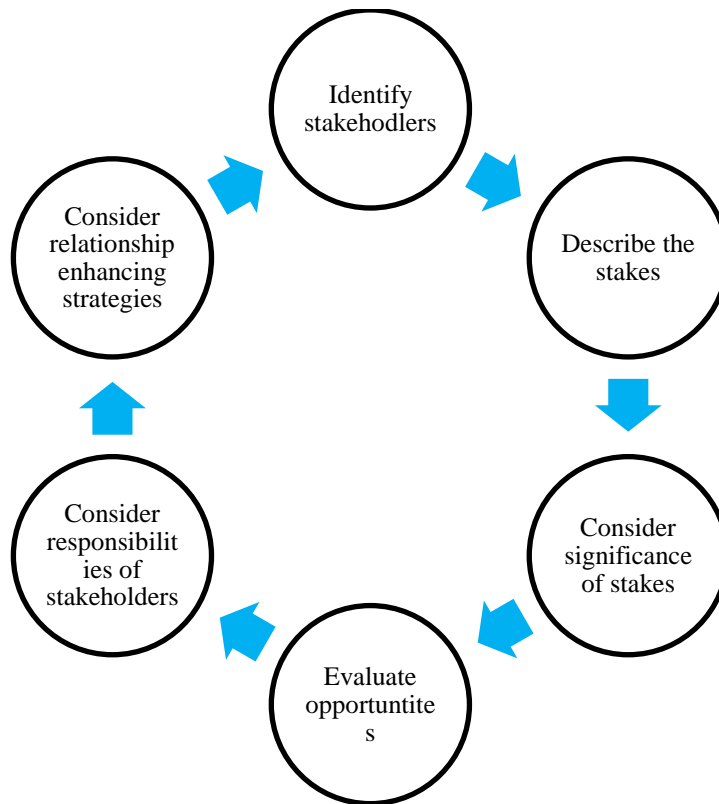
Source: Adapted from Grunig (1995 p. 34)

Second is the planning for the stakeholder management which involves the identification of the strategies and mechanisms that will be used to achieve the greatest support of stakeholders and minimize resistance. The PR managers in Unilever needs to acquire a description of the stakes, considering the importance of the stakes and evaluation of the opportunities presented by the stakes. Third is the management of the stakeholder engagement which involves outlining the processes and steps that will be undertaken to carry out the planned strategies (Grunig, 1995). In Unilever, this involves making sure that all stakeholders are engaged in decision making. Finally is the controlling the engagement of the stakeholders. This involves describing the methods such as stakeholder participation and involvement that will be used to monitor stakeholder engagement and alert the organisation if

problems are surfacing. Stakeholder management approach is important to the current study as it provides insights into the strategic elements which threaten the survival of Unilever by providing insight into how inadequate management of relationships can results into forced compliance with regards to the restrictions as well as regulations. This theory thus provides insight and basis on how organizational culture and structure of the company in its PR strategy.

1.7.3 Situational Theory of Public

Grunig (1995) developed the situational theory of public in his attempts to explain and predict why some publics are actively involved in the firms such as employees while others are passive for instance the general public. Within the stakeholder's categories, he argued that situational theory helps in identification of which publics will communicate actively, passively or none at all on the decisions by the organization (Valackiene, 2010). There are four possible categorisations; non-publics, latent publics, aware publics and active publics. Further categorisations involves the public which faces problems who are referred to as non-publics, those who face the problem but do not recognize it as a problem are referred to as latent publics, those who recognize the problems are referred to as aware publics and those who do something about the problem are active publics (Watson & Noble, 2007).

Table 1: Grunig's Situational Theory of Publics

	High involvement	Low involvement
Behavior Problem-Facing High Problem Recognition Low Constraints Recognition	*Active*	*Active/Aware public*
Constraints Behavior High Problem Recognition High Constraints Recognition	*Aware/Active public*	*Latent/Aware public*
Routine Behavior Low Problem Recognition Low Constraints Recognition	*Active (Reinforce)* *Public*	*None/Latent public*
Fatalistic Behavior Low Problem Recognition High Constraints Recognition	*Latent public*	*Non public*

(Wise, 2002: 34)

There are three variables used in the theory to explain the behaviours of the public; level of involvement, problem recognition and constraint recognition. Level of involvement refers to the extent to which individuals connect themselves personally with the situation which can be high or low (Wise, 2002). Problem recognition refers to how people only seek information when they see a connection between them and the problem. It is important for the PR managers to understand the problem which they are posed with such as investigating the sexual assault accusations that Unilever has been hit with. Constraint recognition is the level of personal efficacy a person believes that he or she holds and the impact on the issue (Watson & Noble, 2007). Constraint recognition is important as it helps in identification of the connection between the individual and the problem. Routine behaviours involves the public which recognise problems and feel a personal connection to it. For instance in Unilever, employees are a category of public which recognise the problem as they are faced with the problem and are connect directly to it. Finally, a fatalistic behaviours involves a public which do not recognise a problem and neither do they see a connection to the consequences of the organization's behaviour. PR managers needs to understand stakeholders who have no recognition of problem and have no link with the consequences. Situational theory provides an analysis on the various different publics that Unilever as a company has, for instance active publics can be argued to involve regulators who actually do something about a particular problem while non-publics mat involve the employees who face the problem being faced.

1.8 Summary

This study was guided by the principles of system theory approach which states that organisations need to interact with the environment to ensure their survival whereby the organisations need to adapt to the environment constantly. It was also be guided by stakeholder management approach which recognises the need to understand and manage external and internal stakeholders by understanding the strategic units which are a threat to its survival. Finally it was also be guided by the situational theory of public which argues for the need to recognise the problem, level of involvement as well as constraint recognition in managing stakeholders of an organisation.

With regards to this study, management of PR issues requires consideration of a number of issues in the business environment of Unilever (K) Ltd. These includes the various publics/stakeholders of the company with the need to understand the stakeholders who may be a threat to the company as well as effective management of public by ensuring communication with the firm. Further, Unilever need to have an understanding of the level of involvement, problem recognition as well as constraint recognition its PR issues as well as having an understanding that the company has to interact with both the internal and external environment in order to survive. This calls for the need for the company to have an effective PR strategy where the value of the public relations, the company's organisational culture as well as its organisational structure is critical for its survival.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review critic's studies that have been done on PR in organization, to unearth gaps existing on the previous studies. It reviews the value of PR as a management function by the organisations, the relationship between organisational culture and effectiveness of PR, and the relationships between organisational structure and effectiveness of PR.

2.2 Value of PR by Management and Effectiveness of PR

The first objective of the study is to examine the value of PR to the strategic management of Unilever (K) Ltd. The value and support provided by top management to the PR function is critical to the effectiveness of PR in serving its purpose (Wakefield, 2008). Organisations have a number of management functions which help them in operating at their maximum capacity. These include research and development, legal, finance, human resource, operations and marketing among others. Each of these functions is focused on unique areas of contributions to the success of the organisation (Watson & Noble, 2007). The unique role of PR is to help the organisation in developing and maintaining relationships with all its stakeholders through effective communication with these groups. Communication is important as it provides satisfactory and long term relationships with the stakeholders. PR provides the greatest value when used strategically. In order to acquire strategic management role within an organisation, the PR function must illustrate its value to management (Tikolo, 2011).

The Excellence study in PR (Grunig, 1992; Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; and Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) stated that to function in an excellent manner, PR must be a part of organization's strategic management and the PR programs themselves must also be managed strategically. Grunig & Repper (1992) further suggested a three-stage model for strategic management of public relations: stakeholder stage, publics' stage, and issues. In the stakeholder stage, PR practitioners need to identify those stakeholders whose behaviours will influence the organization and who will be influenced by the organizational behaviours. They should make a list of stakeholders according to their relative importance and develop programs to communicate with the most important ones until they run out of resources. In the

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publics' stage, practitioners need to use the situational theory of publics to identify which publics are most likely to become active and design programs to deal with them. This can help increase the possibility of achieving communication goals with the strategic publics (Blankson, 2009).

In the issues stage, publics arise and force issues that they believe need to be resolved in their interest. In this stage, practitioners should segment publics, use mass media and interpersonal communication, and engage in negotiation. Grunig & Repper (1992) equated issues management with strategic PR because if practitioners have managed the first two stages of strategic management, then they would have reduced the likelihood that active publics will create issues. A refined model in Grunig *et al.* (2002) showed that management decision implementation needed to involve interaction with publics because such a decision either had consequences on the public's or needed a supportive relationship with them.

Wise (2002) undertook a study in the US state health department linking strategic management and public relations. He explored the process of increasing congruity between an organization's goals and the expectations of its strategic publics through symmetrical communication. The study revealed that having an effective public relations strategy is critical to the organisational effectiveness as it influences the relationships that an organisation has with its stakeholders. Wakefield (2008) conducted a study focusing on the theory of international public relations by focusing on the parameters of public relations in Europe. The study noted that one of the major parameters of public relations is the need for the leader of a global public relations team to maintain daily access to the organization's senior executives. The study argued that this constant access and communication enabled a culture of openness and effectiveness in managing the reputation of the company. The study however focuses only in parameters affecting public relations in Europe. The current study aims to fill this gap in knowledge and focus on the practice of public relations in Kenya by focusing on strategic management of Unilever (K) Ltd.

Molleda (2009) conducted a study on global public relations by taking a global view on the management of MNCs. The study concluded that the truly transnational organizations must account for much greater complexity than the smaller, domestically focused organizations.

These entities that maintain a worldwide reach and presence need to know how to organize and operate their public relations programs on a truly global basis and incorporate best practices and theoretical frameworks can help to generate such an understanding. This conforms with the findings of Wakefield (2008) who reported that having a global outlook is critical to companies which operate on a global scale as they have wider public attention and a bad reputation in one region can result to a loss of reputation at a global scale. Based on these findings, the current study aims to add to this knowledge by analysing Unilever (K) Ltd, a company with a global market and reach and examine the best strategy to undertake in ensuring PR effectiveness in its strategic management.

Blankson (2009) conducted a study investigating the state of public relations in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study illustrates that strategic management is critically influenced by the top management consistent with Wakefield's (2008) accessibility to senior executives, and as such when developing and implementing a PR strategy it is critical for the top management to be committed and support the PR strategy. The study argued that control by top management illustrates the commitment of the management in the development and implementation of the PR strategy. This is in contrast with the findings of Molleda (2009) which indicated that control from headquarters does not mean that there is effective team performance. The study also stated that the global team need not be integrated—that different people on the team may report to different line functions in the entity, with individuals in one unit reporting directly through public relations, and others through marketing, human resources, or other functions. However, caution should be exercised toward this view because the more units' public relations people report through, the more they can become subject to competing priorities or managerial whims throughout the organization as illustrated by Wakefield (2008). The current study as such aims to investigate Unilever and develop a conclusive argument on the value of PR strategy by the management and how this impacts the effectiveness of PR strategy.

To summarize, the value of PR in strategy formulation by doing environmental analysis is at least recognized in the literature (Wise, 2002; Grunig *et al*., 2002; Blankson, 2009). However, there is inconclusive research on the PR contributions to strategy implementation. This study argues that by building the required relationships with different publics

corresponding to different strategies, PR will develop a competitive advantage for and be valuable to an organization. This argument is especially relevant in the global context. As Kim (2000) pointed out, the ultimate justification for global PR programs lies in a thoughtful match with the client's business plan.

In other words, the global strategies for PR will work only when they fit neatly with the business strategy. However, PR research has not explored this area in depth (Wakefield, 2008). In addition, although "situation" and consequences are key factors in the understanding of publics, majority of the studies ((Wakefield, 2008; Blankson, 2009) lump different publics together and some even use groups of people with no direct relationships with an organization. For instance, the study undertaken by Grunig (1995) in the United States investigated the relations of the organisation by focusing on women on Foreign Service. This excluded men from the study and as such, the study was subjective with regards to gender. Therefore, it is useful to focus on the consequences between organizations and their publics and to explore how that affects the cultivation of relationships. Further, investigating the direct relationships within an organisational perspective is crucial. The study's first objective investigated the value of PR in Unilever (K) Ltd and how this value affects the strategic management of the organisation.

2.3 Organizational Culture and Public Relations

The second objective explores the effect of organizational culture to the effectiveness of PR strategy at Unilever (K) Ltd. Organisational culture involves a system of shared values, assumptions, and beliefs which governs and directs the way in which individuals in a particular organisation behave (Ross, 2000). The shared values have a strong impact on the people in the organization and direct the manner in which they dress, act as well as perform their jobs. Before making the connection between organizational culture and public relations, it is pertinent to connect organizational culture with communications. The connection between organizational culture and communications can be found in the conceptual meaning of communication. Since the 1980s, scholars have derived a communication approach to organizational culture (Bormann, 1985; Marshall & Stohl, 1993; Bowen, 2000). Bormann (1985) defined communication as "the human social processes by which people create, raise,

and sustain group consciousness" (p. 100). Goodpaster (2007) reports that in ritual view of communication, communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is created, maintained, repaired, and transformed. The ritual view of communication is similar to one of two major models of communication. The other is the transmission model of communication.

Sriramesh, Grunig, and Dozier (1996) contended that understanding the communication process and linking it to organizational culture is important to PR scholars. They viewed PR as a not only a communication activity but as both a product of culture and instrument of organizational culture. Sriramesh, Grunig, and Dozier (1996) defined PR as the management of communication between an organization and its internal and external publics. Consequently, they conducted a quantitative study to determine whether PR affects organizational culture and sought to answer if organizational culture can be measured and changed. The study measures such aspects as training on the best practices in the organisations, past experiences in PR, information, and communication strategy in the company. The study revealed that PR activities within an organisation affect organisational culture. PR activities involve creating and developing relationships and as such the culture of an organisational is a critical element to consider in understanding the PR strategies of an organisation.

Studies Ndichu & Gikuru (1997) and Ross (2002) have made references about the linkage of organizational culture and public relations. For instance, Ross (2002) did not measure organizational culture specifically, but discussed organizational culture as a factor that decisively affects the outcome of public relations. The preceding literature review suggests that PR can affect organizational culture, and vice versa. PR practitioners must study and understand organizational culture in order to make decisions about organizational goals and improve relationships with key publics. Grunig *et al*., (2002) in their study, 'Excellent Public relations and effective organizations' identified two dimensions of culture: participative culture and authoritarian culture (Grunig *et al*, 2002). On one hand, participative culture put emphasis on teamwork with employees working together in team to achieve a particular goal. On the other hand, authoritarian culture has a central decision making framework with all the important decisions made by the top management. The study analysed how the aforementioned dimensions of culture can be used as measures of organizational culture as

they relate to the present study. Sriramesh, Grunig, and Dozier (1996) in their study analyzed the relation between corporate culture and the organizations PR activities using factor analysis, which narrowed down the large number of items they developed into two factors (p. 242). The factors seemed to be consistent with the concepts of authoritarian and participative cultures.

Grunig *et al*, (2002) on one hand, describe organizations with authoritarian cultures as focused on centralized decision making, where pertinent decisions are made by members of the dominant coalition. They explain that "different departments pursue their separate agendas that may conflict with each other" (p. 482). Participative cultures, on the other hand, emphasize teamwork as a common value among employees (Grunig *et al*, 2002). Departments within the organization collaborate together for a shared mission. In their conclusion, Grunig *et al*, (2002) linked PR with organizational culture and suggested that for excellent PR there need not be a presence of a participative culture. The results pertaining to authoritarian culture did not relate negatively to factors from the Excellence Study. They did establish that a participative culture "provides a more supportive, nurturing environment for excellent PR than does an authoritarian culture" (p. 496). A conceptual understanding of authoritarian and participative cultures is a starting point in studying the effect that culture has on the effectiveness of public relations. The study as such focused on establishing whether Unilever adheres to authoritarian or participative culture and the impact this has on the effectiveness of the PR strategy.

2.4 Organizational Structure and Public Relations

The third objective is to investigate the role of organizational structure to the effectiveness of PR strategy at Unilever (K) Ltd. Organisational structures defines how the activities and process such as task allocation, coordination as well as supervision directs organisation towards meeting its objectives (Nakaya, 1991). It is viewed as the viewing glass through which individuals perceive and view their organisation as well as its environment.Organisational structure involves how the organisation is organised and arranged and this is critical for implementation of a PR strategy. As noted by Grunig (1992), the structure of the organization and the role of the PR practitioner within that structure

largely determine the behaviour of the practitioner. The structural dimensions of centralization, formalization, and complexity are a good place to start when discussing structure and PR because these variables allow for comparison between organizational types depending on the levels of each in the specific structure being analyzed.

Through analysis of the interview results associated with Grunig *et al*, (2002), Dozier & Ehling (1992) indicated that the matrix structure lends itself to the most open communication system. The non-hierarchical nature of the matrix leads to the ability of employees to share problems and conclusions in order to develop the best communication plan. Excellence findings also led to the general conclusion that organizations with an organic structure, participative culture, and symmetrical system of internal communication facilitate the practice of excellent PR (Grunig *et al*, 2002). The association between structure and PR is often discussed in terms of the PR structure practiced in the organization.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) contended that effective PR managers decide on the characteristics of the PR department, including structural elements such as vertical and horizontal relationships and practitioner roles, relative to the dynamic and complex nature of the environment within which the organization operates. In a study of the Use of in House Journals to promote the corporate image in some parastatals in Kenya, Nakaya (1991) analyzes a participatory approach of employees as covered in house journals, an instrument of Public Relations. He observes that employees are the most important segment of an organization and sees house journals as good channels to be used to interpret the organizations goals to both internal and external publics. In house journals are also a motivator to employees to cover and forward their opinions to the management for consideration and that they are used to counsel those in the organization who might have a different opinion about their productive role. Nakaya (l991) further observes that management owes itself to communicate effectively through in-house journals and that is why the responsibility of PR has to be started at the top. This concurs with Blankson (2009) that communication with top management is essential.

Nakaya (1991) notes that in Kenya, PR is viewed to belong to the middle management, and not for the top executives. This is in contrast with counties such as Netherlands whereby a

study conducted by Van Ruler (2002) reports that the PR practitioners are well educated with PR decisions made and monitored by the top management. Nakaya (1991) study of in-house journals alone is likely to give a biased view of public relations; for while the organization might not be emphasizing on the use of house journals, it might compensate on this by good use of other types of media.

A study by Heath & Nil (2008) on corporate social responsibility in organisations established that competition has meant that organizations are no longer assured of customers and that it takes a long time to sell products and services. Thus they strive to maintain good working relations with the press as well as maintain regular publications for internal communication through use of newsletters, bulletins, seminars and workshops to create awareness. They also use internal memos, circulars, press releases, conferences and annual reports and widely publish price lists through the print and electronic media. Heath & Nil (2008) further found out the functions of the organizations under study.

Closely related to Heath & Nil (2008), Mbeke (2009) investigated the role of PR in Kenya Breweries Limited (KBL), and reported that the functions include communicating company policy and maintaining good media relations. At Kenya Airways (KQ), the functions of PR include telling publics about the company, being the custodian of the company's image and co-coordinating company events. At the Standard Chartered Bank, PR bridges the gap between the bank and its customers, government and community relations, Public relations at the East African Industries (EAI) communicates to both internal and external publics (Mbeke, 2009). As such in understanding the effectiveness of PR in strategic management of Unilever (K) Ltd, there is a need to understand the organisational structure of the company which helps in establishing the relationships between them. This helps in understanding the role played by organisational structure in PR activities thus meet the third objective.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology, research design, study area, target population, sampling frame, data collection methods, and data analysis. The research design, sampling procedures and data collection methods used in the study are also elaborated as well as the data analysis, presentation procedures and ethical consideration important to the study.

3.2 Research Design

The research study adopted a descriptive research design which has been described by Borg and Gall (2011) to accurately able to illustrate the attributes of is particular individual or group. The specific descriptive research designs (Saunders *et al,* 2009). The study as such collected data in the attempt to describe accurately the current situation of PR in firms in Kenya. According to Tuli (2012), choosing a research methodology is dependent on the paradigm which guides the research activity being undertaken and in more specific elements, the beliefs on the nature of reality (ontology), theory of knowledge which informs the research (epistemology), and how the knowledge can be acquired (methodology). The main aim of this research was to examine the public relation in the strategic management of firms in Kenya by studying the case of Unilever (K) Ltd with a description of the public relation in Unilever.

As the study adopts descriptive research design, the researcher records the information present from the population with no manipulation of variables (Saunders *et al*., 2009). Ontology has been argued to provide a view on the nature of reality as well as establish if this reality is objective and if it really exists or if the reality is subjective and created only in the mind (Borg & Gall, 2011). The ontological paradigm followed is that there is a reality which can be acquired from this study and it is possible to understand how things are and its causes with regards to social reality.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted on PR practice in Unilever (K) Ltd. Unilever (K) Ltd is a reputable company both in Kenya and worldwide. This is because it has its operations in Kenya and further exports its products to different parts of the world. As such, the company is a representative sample of other firms in Kenya which value PR as their reputation impacts the company both locally and internationally. Further, various articles and reports have been made on Unilever and as such there was data available to inform the study. This is in line with Saunders *et al*., (2009), who note that most studies utilise data from large firms with available public information, as there are difficulties in collecting data from small firms. Further, Unilever (K) Ltd has been facing reputation challenges as a result of scandals with regards to human abuses of its employees in its tea plantations and as such has critical aspects necessary for this research.

3.4 Study Population

The target population for this study was Unilever (K) Ltd whereby the study focused on the HR and the PR departments. According to the company website, Unilever Tea employees more than 20,000 individuals with more than 80,000 dependants. It owns 8,250 hectares under tea production where it produces 160,000 tonnes of green tea leaf and 36,800 tonnes of black tea. The company owns tea estates as well as eight factories manufacturing about 32 million kilograms of tea annually (Morser, 2010). The study focused on Unilever Kericho Plantation in Kericho County which has about 15,000 employees (Unilever, 2016). In particular, the study conducted research on employees in the Human Resource and Public Relations departments as they had insight onto the public relations issue facing the company. The HR and PR departments comprise 110 employees with HR department made up 100 employees and PR department made up of 10 employees.

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Sampling is the scientific act of taking a certain portion of a population or components to act as a representation of the total cycle in that given population. Data sampling involves selection of a subset of individuals from a statistical population for the purpose of estimating

the characteristics of the entire population (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). There are a number of approaches which can be utilised in the determination of the sample size. These include using a census for small populations, imitating a sample size from similar studies, utilising published tables and applying formulas to calculate the sample size. Multistage sampling was used in this research. First, the sample size from the HR department was calculated using a formula provided by Yamane (1967) as follows:-

Sample size = $\dfrac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2}$ $\qquad\qquad$ e = 0.1

$\qquad$ Where,

N- Population size

e- Desired level of precision

n- Sample size

$\qquad$ = $\dfrac{N\,(100)}{1+N\,(100)\,(0.1)^2}$ $\qquad\qquad$ e = 0.1

$\qquad$ =50

Total Sample= 50

Second, simple random sampling, a probability sampling method, was used in choosing the sample from the HR department. Probability sampling is a method whereby each member of the population has an equal chance or being selected. Kitchenham (2002) defines simple random sampling as a method of sampling in which every member of the target population has the same probability of being included in the sample. This form of sampling tends to eliminate subjectivity and obtains a sample that is both unbiased and representative of the target population. This method also facilitates the generalization of the findings from the study. The researcher then administered 50 questionnaires to obtain data on the PR practices and strategies at the Kericho Tea Plantation. 50 questionnaires were completely filled and returned to the researcher. Second, the researcher utilised a census whereby all of the ten employees in the PR department participated in the study as key informants on the PR practice in Unilever's Kericho Plantation.

3.6. Data Collection Techniques

There are two types of data quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative research involves numerical data which are used to inform the research study. Qualitative data uses non numerical data in order to explain the various relationships of concepts in the research study (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Quantitative research has the aim of providing data for explaining relationships through measurements while qualitative uses descriptions to explain relationships (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). The researcher used a mixed method approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Both approaches were used to supplement each other in that qualitative methods provided in-depth explanations while quantitative methods provide the data needed to meet required objectives and illustrates the relationship between the study variables. In addition, using both types of approaches helps avoid bias such as the subjectivity associated with qualitative research is minimized by the objectivity of quantitative research, the findings derived from one approach validates the other.

3.6.2 Primary Data

Primary data collected from the respondents selected to participate in the study. Primary data involves data collected directly from the primary sources by the researcher. The primary data collected using a questionnaire for the HR and PR employees selected and interview schedule was used to collect data from key informants who included the HR manager and the PR manager in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation.

3.6.2.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire was selected as the most suitable method to collect quantitative data collection. The use of the questionnaire was motivated by two main reasons. First, the use of questionnaire is less costly as well as less time consuming. Further, the level of biasness in the study is reduced as the information is acquired first hand form the participants. Second, the use of the questionnaire allows the researcher to have a fully filled and valid questionnaires and this enables the researcher to acquire adequate data to analyze (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The use of the questionnaire is to enable the researcher to acquire a large

amount of information through the use of minimal resources and at reasonable time. Both open-ended and close ended questionnaires were used in the study.

The questionnaire was designed and divided into two major parts. The questionnaire commenced with an introductory section to introduce the participants to the main purpose of the study. The first part involved basic information with regards to a study purpose asking different questions on the age, education level among others. The second part of the questionnaire involved a Likert scale of 1 to 5 in order to enable the measurements of the study variables. The participants were requested to choose how much they agree on the statements given in an increasing manner (1 being strongly disagrees and 5 being strongly agree) (see Appendix 1). This was further divided into three sections on value of PR to the organisation, organisational culture and structure. The questionnaires were self-administered between March to April whereby the researcher distributed them to the selected respondents from the HR department in Kericho Tea Plantation. The questionnaires were left with the participants for a week after which the researcher collected them.

3.6.2.2 Interviews

Qualitative data was collected through the use of an interview. The interviews were conducted with the PR managers in Kericho Tea Plantation. An interview schedule (see Appendix 2) was developed to guide the interviews. The interview is considered appropriate for the qualitative data collection as it enabled the respondents to put forward their opinions as well as perceptions on the PR management issues in Unilever. The interview involved open ended questions allowing the respondents to provide in depth insights and understanding of key issues in PR management in the company. The interviews were conducted one of the company's conference rooms with each interview taking an hour. The researcher noted down key points under alphabetical code names and took notes on a notebook on the questions in the interview schedule for each interviewee.

3.6.3 Secondary Data

Secondary data involves data collected from sources which have already reported on various issues and include sources such as company websites, company policy reports, government

reports, research publication, media articles and books among others. The secondary data was important for the research as it helps in establishing the existing knowledge on the study variables. It includes a literature review of the study topics and is appropriate and essential to guide the current study.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Research validity refers to the fact that the purpose of measurement is measuring what we intended to measure. Reliability refers to the dependability of the results where the results can be repeated if the research is carried out again. It negates the notion that results occurred simply by chance (Kim, 2000). To ensure that the study is reliable and valid, the research employed a pilot study of the questionnaire on a sample size of 10% of the respondents with the sample taken from employees of James Finlay (K) Ltd at the company's Kericho Estates. The researcher went through the results of the pilot study and utilised them to ensure that all the questions in the questionnaire and interview schedules were clear and appropriate to collect the data needed for the study. Reliability of the results is a key element in the field of research and was used to determine whether the conducted research is able to produce independent, objective results. If the research is very reliable, it was expected that by repeating the exact same research, the results can be replicated or found to be substantially similar (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis involves an analysis of the data collected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Both qualitative and quantitative data collected was analysed with the two types of data supplementing each other's limitations. This was the primary data collected through the use of questionnaire in Unilever and the interview conducted on the PR department of Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantations. The primary data from the questionnaire was analyzed through the use of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 21), while the data collected through the interviews was analysed through content analysis. This data was analysed and discussed according to themes to illustrate the effectiveness of PR in strategic management in Unilever (K) Ltd.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Before beginning the data collection process, the researcher sought an introductory letter from Maseno University, Media Department introducing the student as a legitimate student from the university to present to the company as well as the participants in the study. There are a number of ethical considerations that the researcher needs to consider when undertaking the research (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This includes development and putting of an introductory note in the questionnaire illustrating the main purpose of the study and also providing an assurance that the respondents' identities are covered (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

The respondents were assured that their responses as well as identities would not be used for any other purpose other than for the academic purpose stated in the introductory note (Miller & Tewksbury, 2008). This helps in acquiring the researcher's confidence on the respondents which allowed them to provide honest information without fear of being exposed, which leads to fear of personal violation. Further, the researcher explained the rights for the participants to either fully participate or withdraw from the study at any time they want to. It also involved requiring and asking for the participant's full consent only when they return the fully and appropriately filled questionnaire sheet back to the researcher (Collis & Hussey, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present the findings and discussion on the PR issues facing Unilever (K) Ltd. The research findings have been represented by a collection of tables and an explanatory discussion, highlighting the key points of analysis are also included for each of them. The findings have been appropriately divided into various categories. The researcher first presents the research findings through descriptive analysis and content analysis. Further, the researcher provided a discussion of the research findings whereby correlation analysis is utilised to illustrate the relationships between the study variables (Independent and dependent variables).

4.2 Response Rate

The study conducted focused on the PR and HR department of Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. From the sample taken, the researcher administered questionnaires to 50 respondents from the HR department. All the questionnaires distributed were correctly filled and returned to the researcher. This represented a 100% response rate. This return rate was sufficient for the study and for data collection and analysis purposes.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The first part of the questionnaire focused on acquiring the demographic information about the respondents with the researcher seeking to establish the gender, age, number of years of service, level of education and the department of the respondents. The background information of the respondents is important due to ensuring the heterogeneous set of the sample selected for the study. The basic information of the respondents provides the study with an understanding of the attributes of the employees in an organisation.

4.3.1 Gender of respondents

The gender make-up of the respondents was taken with *Table 2* and *Figure 2* illustrating the findings relative to the gender of the respondents.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	17	34.0	34.0
Male	33	66.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Figure 2: Gender of Respondents
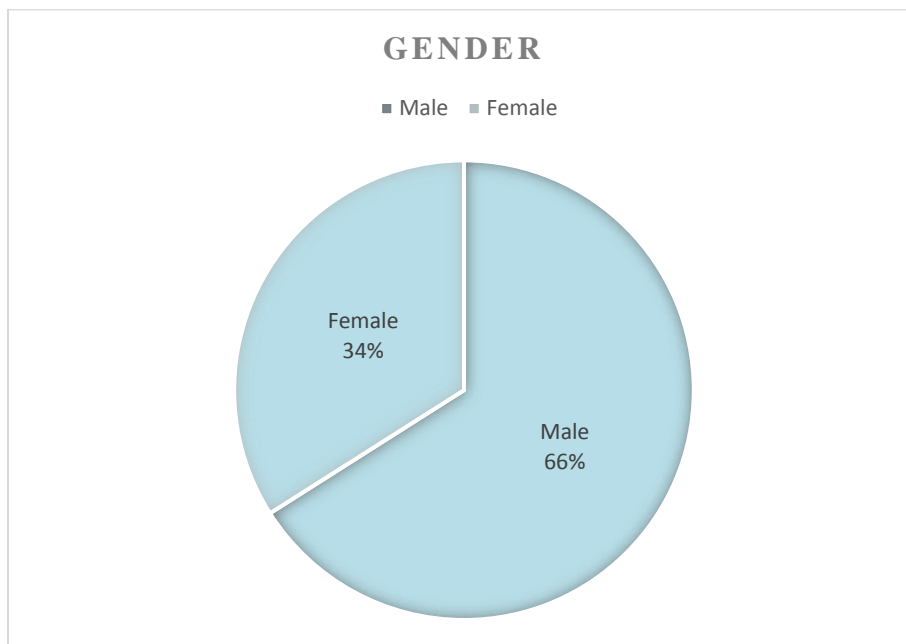
According to the findings, 66% of the respondents were male against the 34% for the females. This may be indicative of the gender imbalance prevalent in the company's employees. As illustrated by one of the employees (Interviewee A) in the PR department, majority of the employees in the company are male.

"Majority of the employees in the company are mainly male. This may explain the high level of accusation on sexual abuse of women with majority of the managers and supervisors male. The company has increased the number of women supervisors and managers but still the male supervisors are the highest proportion."

The interviewee further revealed that managers and supervisory roles are held by men and this may be the reason for the high level of complaints on sexual abuse.

4.3.2 Age of respondents

The researcher also focused on the distribution of the respondents through their age with the results indicated in *Table 3* and Figure 3. Age of respondents is important as it illustrates the age bracket of the employees in the organisation.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Age Groups	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-29	7	14.0	14.0
30-39	10	20.0	34.0
40-49	22	44.0	78.0
50 yrs and above	11	22.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Figure 3: Age of Respondents
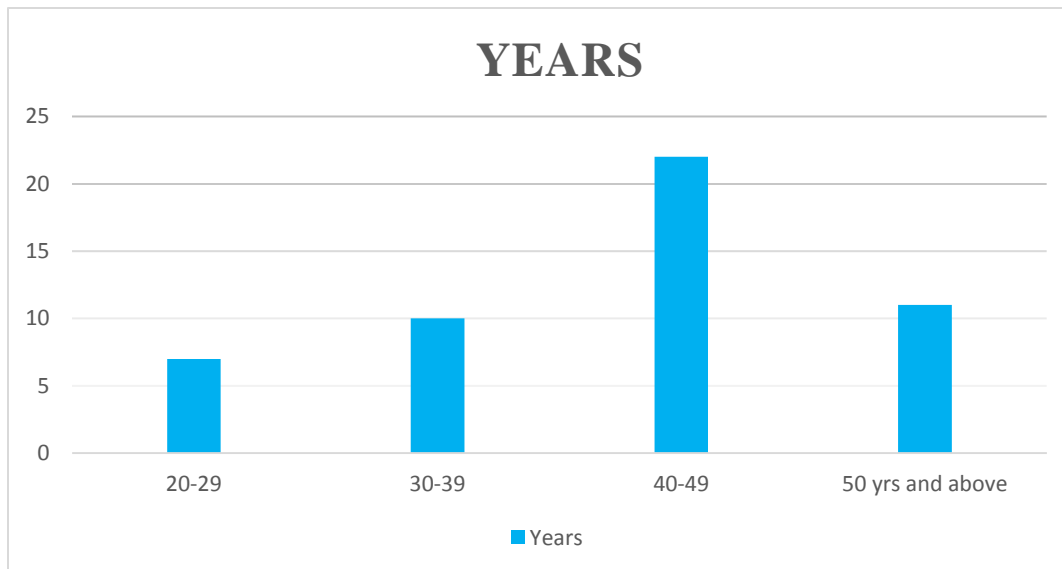
The findings indicated that majority of the respondents were in the 40-49 age group at 44%. The minority of the respondents were in the 20-29 age groups at 14%. The rest were at the 30-39 age group (20%) and 50 yrs and above (22%). The findings indicate that majority of the respondents are above 30 years with only 14% employed below 29. The interviews revealed that the organization seeks experienced employees rather than acquiring new or inexperienced graduates fresh from school. This is as illustrated by Interviewee E who reports:

> *"The company prefers experienced employees due to the high costs of orientating and training new or inexperienced graduates fresh from school".*

It may also mean that the organization retains its employees through various strategies such as career and personal development. This can be determined by analysing the number of years that employees have worked in the organization as illustrated in *Table 4*.

4.3.3 Number of Years in Service

The researcher then focused on the number of years that the respondents had worked at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. The results of this are shown in *Table 4* and *Figure 4*. This is important as it illustrates the experience the employees have had working for the company.

Table 4: Number of Years in Service

Years in Service	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-1 yrs	2	4.0	4.0
2-3 yrs	7	14.0	18.0
4-5 yrs	11	22.0	40.0
6yrs and above	30	60.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Figure 4: Number of Years in Service
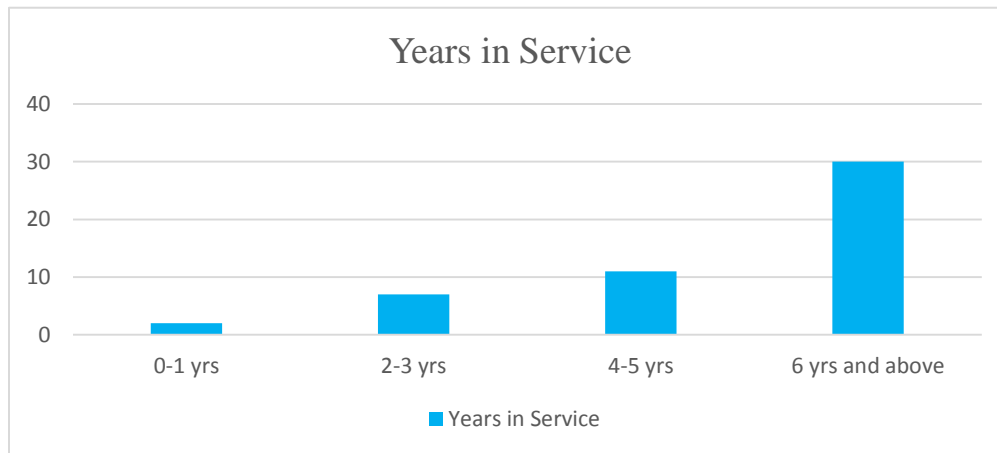
The findings revealed that majority of the respondents had worked at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation for 6 years and above at 60%. This illustrates that most of the employees working at the organization are satisfied and have had no reason to seek other organizations or opportunities to work. Interviewee H reports that,

"I like working for this company. I am able to have a decent living and take care of my family".

This may mean that the organisation's employees are and satisfied with the working environment at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. Interviewees A however reports that if another opportunity to work in a better researching company paying more, they would apply for jobs there. Interviewee A reports:

"I have attended a number of job interviews in other companies and if an opportunity presented itself I would change to a better job with more pay".

Those with less than a year of service in the organization were at a 4% with the interviews conducted to management revealing that the company seeks new graduates and put them through a training program before assimilating them to permanent employees. Interviewee C reports:

I have been working for the company for a few months now. I graduated early last year after which I applied for several companies and landed a position here. In the

first month I was under training on the company policies and my role and responsibilities.

Respondents who had worked for the company for 2-3 years were at 14% while those between 4-5 years at 22%. The interview revealed that the organization invests in the career and personal development of their employees in order to ensure that the employees are motivated. Interviewee I reports:

"There are a number of regular training in the company as well as personal and career development initiatives".

The findings implied that there is a low turnover rate at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation.

4.3.4 Educational Level of Respondents

Further, the researcher investigated the distribution of the respondents by their highest level of education with the results shown in *Table 5* and *Figure 5*. This is important as it illustrates the expertise and knowledge level for the employees in the company.

Table 5: Educational Level of Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma	23	46.0	46.0
Degree	22	44.0	90.0
Masters	5	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Figure 5: Educational Level of Respondents
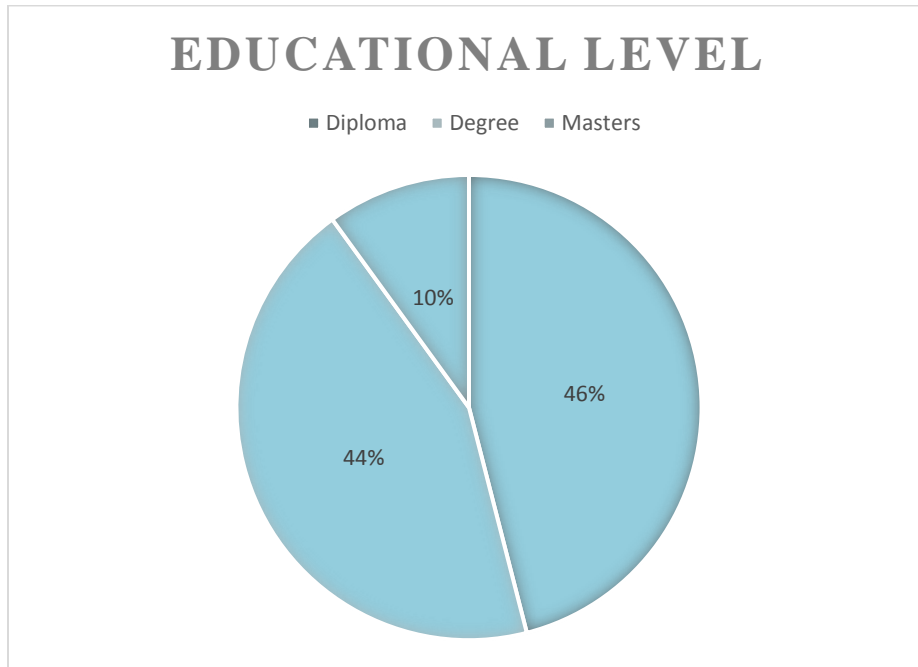
According to the research findings, majority of the respondents had attained diplomas (46%) and degrees (44%). Only 10% of the respondents had acquired Masters Level of education. The results indicate that despite having basic levels of educations, very few employees at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation have advanced degrees the HR department. Further, the interview revealed that many employees working in the different department have Diplomas and Degrees while only a few employees at top management level have a postgraduate degree. The employees working at the farms through for instance the tea pickers mainly only have a primary or secondary level of education. Interviewee B stated that:

> *"Most people have a Diploma or a Degree with only a few managers having a Masters or pursing one. The low level employees such as tea pickers have only attended primary or secondary schools".*

The rest of the interviewees also supported this and reported that a Degree or Diploma were considered adequate educational levels with only some managerial positions requiring higher level of education.

4.4 Research Findings and Discussion

The main objective of the research was to investigate the PR in the strategic management of Unilever (K) Ltd with this backed by three major objectives. The following is data presentation of the data analysed from the second part of the questionnaire.

4.4.1 Influence of Value of PR to the Strategic Management

First, the researcher focused on the value which Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation gives to the PR with regards to strategic management. The findings of the study revealed the following as shown in *Table 6*. The parameters guiding the values in *Table 6* include; the effectiveness of past PR strategies in establishing a good image for the company, training on best PR practices, employees' informedness on company policies and strategies in all departments, openness and honesty on communication to employees and establishment of PR department in the company.

Table 6: Influence of Value of PR to the Strategic Management

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The past PR strategies has been effective in establishing a good image for the company	50	1	5	3.30	1.446
Training on best PR practices is done	50	1	5	2.84	1.503
The employees in all the department are constantly informed on company's policies and strategies	50	1	5	2.28	1.230
The company encourages openness and honesty with adequate communication to employees	50	1	5	3.62	1.292
The PR department has been established in the company for a long time	50	1	5	3.70	1.374

Concerning the value of PR to the strategic management at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the findings indicated that the questionnaire responses were between the mean of 3.70 and 2.28. The findings revealed that the respondents had a mean of 3.30 with regards to the extent to which past PR strategies have been effective in the establishment of a good

image for the company, with a standard deviation of 1.446. This illustrated that the respondents agreed that Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation past PR strategies have led to an improved image for the company. A good image is critical to a company's success. Largo (2011) argues that companies which have a good image are successful as clients and other stakeholders are loyal to the company as well as trust its products.

The interviews revealed that the value and support provided by top management to the PR function is critical to the effectiveness of PR in serving its purpose. This is as illustrated by Interviewee E whereby he states:

> *"The top management in the plantation as well as management from head office is constantly interactive with the PR strategy whereby support is given to the employees in the PR department."*

However, Tikolo (2011) reports that the PR function must illustrate value to management in order to be effective. This is by adding some value to the company, for instance, good reputation increasing sales. The interviews reveal differing views whereby one of the interviewee revealed that there is inadequate coordination of PR activities with the rest of the company with the company's PR team not directly linked to management of the company. Interviewee I states:

> *"It is quite hard to get access to the top managers with the hierarchical structure impeding direct contact".*

Wakefield's study (2008) notes that the leader of a global public relations team needs to maintain daily access to the organization's senior executives.

Second, the study revealed that the respondents did not agree on that training on best PR practices is done at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation with a mean of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 1.503. This illustrated that the respondents disagreed that Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation conducts training on best practices. The standard deviation was more than 1 (1.503) implying that the data was relatively dispersed with regards to training on best practices. The findings are differing indicating that the organization is having challenges in regards to training employees on best practices in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. One of

PRSK objective is to educate on the purpose and practice of PR as well as establish and promote a high standard of professional ethics in PR (PRSK, 2015).

Further, the respondents disagreed that employees in all departments are constantly informed on the policies and strategies of Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation with a mean of 2.28 and a standard deviation of 1.230 (more than 1) thus relatively dispersed. The findings indicated that the organization still lacking in regards to informing the employees on the PR policies and strategies within Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. However, Molleda's (2009) study indicates that control from headquarters is not necessarily a prerequisite for effective team performance. The interviews further indicate that there is inadequate coordination between Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation and Unilever's head office with regards to the company's policies and PR strategies resulting to ineffective activities in the PR department. Interviewee H illustrates:

> *"I once had a problem dealing with a group of customers who required immediate help. I needed to contact head office in order to satisfy their demands. However, I was unable to get access to head office with the customers going home with an impression of inadequate communication. This can be quite damaging to the image of the company".*

Further, with regards to Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation encouraging openness and honesty with adequate communication to the employees, the study revealed that they agreed with the company's efforts with a mean of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 1.292 thus the data was relatively dispersed. Creating awareness and communication is a vital element in PR creating the capability and understanding of employees with regards to a particular strategy is key as indicated (Blankson, 2009). Tikolo (2011) argues that inadequate capacity within organisation with regards to PR knowledge is a major issue and recommends increased training in organisations of PR best practice. Valackiene (2010) supports this and argue that informing the employees on strategies secures their cooperation in enacting them and ensuring that they support the said policy. Finally, with regards to the PR department an already established department, the respondents agreed that the PR department has been established in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation for long with a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.374 illustrating that the data was relatively dispersed.

The research findings indicated that while the respondents agreed that Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation has in the past applied effective PR strategies to develop a good image, adequate communication to employees encouraging openness as well as honesty and the PR department been established in the company for long, they disagreed that the company offers training of best PR practices and that all departments are constantly informed on the strategies and policies of the company. The interviews further revealed that one of the strategies to dealing the poor image and reputation due to the sexual harassment and poor working conditions involves creating awareness to all the employees. Interviewee F states:

> *"The allegations of sexual harassment and poor working conditions have resulted to the company having a bad image. However, due to poverty levels being low, workers still come looking for jobs at whatever conditions they are offered. There is need to improve this as this affects the reputation of the company. The main area we have been suffering is the publicly reputation both locally and internationally particularly with our clients. The company needs to do more to improve not only its reputations but also its working conditions".*

Further, the company needs to collaborate with other stakeholders within and outside the company, both locally and internationally on issues of sexual harassment and ensure that this problem is eliminated from its operations. This as illustrated by Largo (2011) who further argue that this will highly improve its reputation.

4.4.2 Influence of Organizational Culture to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy

The researcher then focused on the influence of organizational culture on the effectiveness of PR strategy. The findings of the study revealed the following as shown in *Table 7* with the parameters guiding the values in *Table 7* include; definition of company's publics, division of PR department into units, interaction of the PR department with other departments, use of teams by PR department, and interconnectedness of the PR department with work process to enhance collaboration.

Table 7: Influence of Organisational Culture to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
The company's publics are oftenly defined	50	1	5	2.16	1.376
The PR department is divided into various units	50	1	5	1.62	.923
PR management routinely interacts with other departments to ensure effective communication	50	1	5	2.14	1.262
The PR department utilizes teams from different departments in developing PR strategies	50	1	5	1.80	1.294
The PR department is interconnected with work processes to enhance collaboration.	50	1	5	2.18	1.410
The company follows a centralised decision making framework	50	1	5	2.84	1.290

Concerning the influence of organizational culture on the effectiveness of PR strategy at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the findings indicated that the responses were between the mean of 1.62 and 2.18. Sriramesh *et al*, (1996) illustrated that PR activities within an organisation affect organisational culture. PR activities involve creating and developing relationships and as such the culture of an organisational is a critical element to consider in understanding the PR strategies of an organisation.

The findings revealed with regards to the definition of the company's publics, the respondents had a mean of 2.16 illustrating that they disagreed that the publics of the company were oftenly defined, with a standard deviation of 1.376. The standard deviation was more than 1 (1.376) implying that the data was relatively dispersed. Valackiene (2010) argues that stakeholder's categories helps in identification of which publics will communicate actively, passively or none at all on the decisions by the organization. The interview further reveals that the employees are non-publics while the media can be recognized as aware public as they ensured that the rest of the world became aware of the issues facing the company. Interviewee H reports:

"There are different categories of the public with the employees the one facing the problem, the media ensuring that the rest of the world is aware of what is happening".

Regulation bodies on the other hand can be considered as active public as illustrated by Watson and Noble (2007) as they do something about the problem being faced.

Second, the study revealed that the respondents strongly disagreed on the PR department being divided into various units with a mean of 1.62 and a standard deviation of 0.923. Organisations have a number of management functions which help them in operating at their maximum capacity. These include research and development, legal, finance, human resource, operations and marketing among others. Each of these functions is focused on unique areas of contributions to the success of the organisation (Watson & Noble, 2007). Further, the interview revealed that division of the company into different units help them understand which roles and responsibilities are for whom and as such enable a smooth running in the company. The Interviewee H states:

"There are different departments within the company, for instance, the finance department, the HR department, and PR department among others. They ensure that the company is run smoothly".

A company which is divided into units as such is able to run smoothly and as illustrated by the interview findings above, it enables the smooth running in the company. For whichever activity such as PR, the company is able to run it effectively. Molleda (2009) stated that the global team need not be integrated and that different people on the team may report to different line functions in the entity, with individuals in one unit reporting directly through public relations, and others through marketing, human resources, or other functions. However, Wakefield (2008) argues that the more units' public relations people report through, the more they can become subject to competing priorities or managerial whims throughout the organization.

Further, the respondents disagreed that the PR department constantly interacts with other department to ensure effectiveness in communication with a mean of 2.14 and a standard deviation of 1.262. The standard deviation is 1.262 (more than 1) thus relatively dispersed. Further, with regards to whether the PR department utilises teams made of employees from

different departments when developing PR strategy, the respondents strongly disagreed with a mean of 1.80 and a standard deviation of 1.294 (more than 1). Interaction with other departments however, does not mean that there is effective team performance as illustrated by Molleda (2009). The interview further revealed that at times they interact with global teams from Unilever in improving the PR strategy in the company. Interviewee H reports:

> *"When developing particular guidelines of PR, we normally interact with global teams from Unilever whereby they provide guidelines on how a particular guideline can affect the global reputation for the company. However at times this is ineffective as at times they do not take our views".*

Molleda (2009) suggests that the global team need not be integrated that different people on the team may report to different line functions in the entity, with individuals in one unit reporting directly through public relations, and others through marketing, human resources, or other functions. However, caution should be exercised toward this view because the more units' public relations people report through, the more they can become subject to competing priorities or managerial whims throughout the organization. As such, the value of PR to the management is critical in ensuring that effectiveness of the PR strategies developed.

Further, with regards to the PR department interconnectedness with the work process in enhancing collaboration, the respondents disagreed with a means of 2.18 and a standard deviation of 1.410 (more than 1) thus relatively dispersed. As illustrated by Ross (2002), there is a linkage between organisational culture and public relations whereby he discusses organizational culture as a factor that decisively affects the outcome of public relations. Interviewee A reveals that Unilever observes a participative culture through aspects of authoritarian culture can still be seen. He reveals:

> *"There is teamwork in meeting specific goals within the organisation however the company still have a central decision making framework whereby employees cannot undertake or make decisions on their own but require permission and go ahead from the top management".*

The research findings indicated that the respondents did not agree on the influence of organizational culture of PR effectiveness with the respondents disagreeing that company

publics are defined, division of PR department into units, interaction of the department with others, utilisation of teams from different departments in developing PR strategies and its interconnectedness with work processes in enhancing collaboration. The interview results reveal that, despite its strategies, the company faces a lot of criticisms from the public and thus a need for the company to rethink its PR strategies. A big step towards changing the culture in the organisation may include discussing and analysing the sexual harassment and poor working conditions accusations, owning up and creating awareness on the strategies which the organisation is taking to improve the situation. Interviewee C reports:

> *"The company is still facing criticisms from the public both locally and internationally with rethinking of PR strategies the only way to improve its reputation and create a good image for the company".*

Further, with regards to the whether the company follows a centralised decision making framework, the respondents disagreed with a means of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 1.290 (more than 1) thus relatively dispersed. The interviews revealed that the company does follow a participative culture though aspects of authoritarian culture can still be seen. Interviewee A reveals that Unilever observes a participative culture through aspects of authoritarian culture can still be seen. He reveals:

> *"There is teamwork in meeting specific goals within the organisation however the company still have a central decision making framework whereby employees cannot undertake or make decisions on their own but require permission and go ahead from the top management".*

Therefore culture is a big part of dealing PR issues in an organisation. As such, the organizational culture of the company is crucial in securing the effectiveness of the PR strategies and thus cannot be ignored.

4.4.3 Influence of organizational structure to the effectiveness of PR strategy

The researcher finally focused on the influence of organizational structure on the effectiveness of PR strategy. The findings of the study revealed the following as shown in *Table 8* with the parameters guiding the values in *Table 8* include; whether PR strategies are beneficial, support from management on improved implementation of PR, whether the

company's culture encourages effective communication, whether the company's structures led to improved PR strategy and whether the PR manager is part of the top management.

Table 8: Influence of Organisational Structure to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
PR strategies in the company are beneficial.	50	2	5	4.16	1.149
Support from management has led to improved implementation of PR.	50	1	5	2.84	1.462
The culture of the company encourages effective communication.	50	1	5	2.74	1.275
The company's structures lead to improved PR strategy.	50	1	5	2.14	1.370
The PR manager is part of top management.	50	1	5	3.42	1.341

Concerning the influence of organizational structure on the effectiveness of PR strategy at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the findings indicated that the responses were between the mean of 4.16 and 2.14. The findings revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that PR strategies in the company are beneficial at a mean of 4.16. The deviation was at 1.149 (more than 1). The unique role of PR is to help the organisation in developing and maintaining relationships with all its stakeholders through effective communication with these groups. Further, communication is important as it provides satisfactory and long term relationships with the stakeholders. PR provides the greatest value when used strategically. In order to acquire strategic management role within an organisation, the PR function must illustrate its value to management (Tikolo, 2011). Grunig, Grunig & Dozier (2002) however illustrate that to function in an excellent manner, PR must be a part of organization's strategic management and the PR programs themselves must also be managed strategically.

Further, the interview revealed that a major issue is the lack of coordination between the company in Kericho and head office. Interviewee C reported:

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"There is a need for a structure which encourages communication between the company's offices both locally and internationally. Further, employees should be able to interact and coordinate their activities here and the head office".

The interviews conducted reported that enacting a structure which allows constant and directive interactions of the head office with other centres is critical in securing effectiveness. As such, having an effective organizational structure is critical for PR strategies. This includes a structure whereby the roles and responsibilities of various department and individuals well defined. As indicated by Kazokiene (2010), coordination and interactions within an organisation ensures that the strategies developed are adequate and aligned to meet the overall objectives of the organisation. The role played by organizational structure is critical in ensuring successful PR strategies.

Second, the study revealed that the respondents strongly disagreed that the support from management had led to improved implementation of PR at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation with a mean of 2.84. The standard deviation was more than 1 (1.462) implying that the data was relatively dispersed. The study reveals that despite the development of a PR department at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the PR strategy effectiveness is still lacking due to the limited focus of PR as a crucial management function. Onyiengo (2014) supports this contention and illustrates that merely developing a PR department is not enough but rather support from top management and aligning of the PR strategies to the company's work processes is critical in ensuring its effectiveness. As illustrated by Thain & Bradley (2014), Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation is an international company dealing with food and personal care products with the company realisation of the importance of its reputation, has paid attention to its corporate social responsibilities for instance in their environmental footprint and further ensuring sustainability and good ethics in its acquisition of raw materials for their products.

Further, the respondents disagreed that the culture of the company is geared towards encouraging effective communication at a mean of 2.74. The standard deviation is 1.275 (more than 1) thus relatively dispersed. The interview results indicate that the PR department is still facing challenges with regards to its communication strategy. Interviewee A states:

"The company's culture is very secretive with the flow of information not as adequate as required for the adequate and effective communication within the company".

However, the results revealed that measures are being taken to improve communication within the company with the use of internal memos, journals etc to communicate to stakeholders. As reported by Goodpaster (2007), communication is important within an organisation and involves a symbolic process whereby reality is created, maintained, repaired, and transformed. This can be explained by the fact that the organizational culture is not aligned to the PR strategy. As indicated by Sriramesh, Grunig, and Dozier (1996) viewed PR as a not only a communication activity but as both a product of culture and instrument of organizational culture. PR activities as such need to involve creating and developing relationships.

Further, with regards to whether the structures of the company led to improved PR, the respondents disagreed with a mean of 2.14 and a standard deviation of 1.370 (more than 1) thus relatively dispersed. Organizational structure involves the hierarchical relationships between various entities of an organization in their collaboration with each other in various activities (Kazokiene, 2010). The research findings indicate that in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the organization structure of the company support and are aligned to the PR strategy with the head of the PR department part of the top management and the PR strategies important in the company. However, the findings reveals that the PR department does not receive support form management, the culture of the company does not involve effective communication and as such a need for structures to be put in place to ensure effectiveness of the PR strategy.

Finally, with regards to whether the PR manager is part of the top management, the respondents agreed with a means of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.341 (more than 1). The findings that the PR manager is part of the top management and is involved in the decision making process. PR has been argued to be a strategic element and strategy management is critically influenced by the top management. The development as well as implementation of PR strategy as such is critical to the top management as it affects the overall performance of the company as illustrated by (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Further the interview revealed that the PR manager attends all the major top management meetings and as such is part of the top management. This illustrates that the company values the PR department as a major element in the company's management. Interviewee E reports:

> *"The PR manager attends all the main meetings and is a major decision maker in issues affecting the firm".*

The research findings revealed that in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the organizational culture is not aligned to the effectiveness of PR with definition of publics, interaction of the PR department with the rest of the company, utilisation of diversified teams and alignment of PR strategies to the company's business processes lacking. The research findings indicated that the respondents thought that PR strategies are important in the company and that the PR manager is part of the top management. The respondents disagree on that support from top management, culture of the company and company structures resulted to improved PR strategy. However as seen from the above analysis, and as supported by Mbeke (2009) the organizational culture is a critical element impacting the effectiveness of any undertaking of an organization.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on drawing conclusions from the study undertaken whereby the discussion and analysis conducted is used a basis to also develop recommendations for the Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation in developing an effective PR strategy in managing the various challenges the company is facing in its image and reputation. The researcher commences with providing a summary of the findings which are then used to draw conclusions on the research undertaken. Finally, the researcher develops pertinent recommendations for the organisation on its PR strategy implementation and securing its effectiveness. The chapter also proposes and recommends future research in advancing knowledge on PR.

Conclusion

The research revolved around three independent variables (value of PR, organizational culture and organizational structure) and effectiveness of PR strategy as the dependent variable. The following are the conclusion from the research conducted.

Value of PR to the Strategic Management of Unilever (K) Ltd

The study established that while the Unilever value PR, it is still lacking in regards to training employees on best practices and informing the employees on the PR policies and strategies within Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation. The study also revealed that there is inadequate coordination of PR activities with the rest of the company with the company's PR team not affected directly to management of the company. In conclusion, the value given to PR by the management is very important in ensuring the effectiveness and success of a PR strategy within an organization.

Effect of Organizational Culture to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd

The research findings revealed that in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the organizational culture is not aligned to the effectiveness of PR with definition of publics, interaction of the

PR department with the rest of the company, utilisation of diversified teams and alignment of PR strategies to the company's business processes lacking. The interview results indicate that the PR department is still facing challenges with regards to its communication strategy. However, the results revealed that measures are being taken to improve communication within the company with the use of internal memos and articles to communicate to stakeholders. The study reveals that despite the development of a PR department at Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the PR strategy effectiveness is still lacking due to the limited focus of PR as a crucial management function. As such in conclusion, the culture of the organization cannot be ignored but rather should be developed and aligned to major strategies of the organization for instance the PR strategy.

Role of Organizational Structure to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy in Unilever (K)Ltd

Finally, on the role of organisational structure to the effective research findings indicate that in Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the organization structure of the company support and are aligned to the PR strategy with the head of the PR department part of the top management and the PR strategies important in the company. However, the findings reveals that the PR department does not receive support from management, the culture of the company does not involve effective communication and as such a need for structures to be put in place to ensure effectiveness of the PR strategy.

5.3 Recommendations

From the conclusions and analysis done in the study, the research proposes the following recommendations for the organisation.

Value of PR to the Strategic Management of Unilever (K) Ltd

The study recommends increased focus of the PR department in the overall management of the company. This will ensure that there is more support from the management thus increases the chances of success for PR strategies developed. Further, the study recommends training on staff on best practices in PR as well as ensuring increased communication to the employees on the PR policies and strategies in place. This ensures the support and involvement of the employees in carrying out and implementing the strategies.

Effect of Organizational Culture to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd

The researcher further recommends the need for the organizational culture to be aligned towards various strategies of the company for instance aligning the culture to the PR strategies through ensuring that communication on PR strategies is effectively communicated to all stakeholders.

Role of Organizational Structure to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy in Unilever (K) Ltd

Further, as PR is a critical department within an organisation with the public increasingly focusing on every activity which firms undertake. Such elements as environmental accountability, financial accountability, fairness and sound business practices are issues customers and other business stakeholders are looking at when making decisions about organization. This has resulted to organization paying more attention to their image and reputation. Further, with the advanced technology and communication has resulted to flow of information to all parts of the globe with globalization further expanding the scope of the public's of the organization. As results, there is need for rethinking the PR strategies and developing a holistic strategy which ensures that the interests of the business are protected by securing a good image and reputation.

Recommendation for Future Research

The current focus on investigating the effectiveness of the PR strategy in Kenya by focusing on Unilever's Kericho Tea Plantation, the researcher recommends future research to focus on comparing the PR strategies undertaken by different companies. This will enable for trends of PR practices in the country to be identified thus providing a holistic overview of PR practice in Kenya. Further, the study recommends a comparison and analysis of the PR practice of Unilever in different locations and countries in order to establish the best framework for PR implementation and practice in organization.

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APPENDICES

A. INTRODUCTION LETTER

The Chairman,
Department of Media and Communications
Maseno University,
Department of Communication and Media Technology,
Box Private Bag,
Maseno.

14th June 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: PUBLIC RELATIONS IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF FIRMS IN KENYA: A CASE OF UNILEVER (K) LTD

This is to let you know Floridah C. Maritim, Student No. FA/MA/00108/2013 is our postgraduate student at Maseno *University pursuing* a *Masters of Communication and Media Studies* program. She is carrying out research on "Public Relations in Strategic Management of Firms in Kenya*"* taking a case study of Unilever Tea (K) Ltd. She selected your organization for the purpose of the study upon which her findings can be used to improve the management of your firm.

Your assistance and support would enable her fulfil the academic requirements as well as meet her research objectives. Thanking you in advance,

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Charles O. Nyambuga

CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

B.   QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

Title: Public Relations in the Strategic Management of Firms in Kenya. A Case of Unilever (K) Ltd

I am a postgraduate student at Maseno University who is undertaking an academic exercise aimed at gathering primary data towards the writing of a project on the above topic. Your co-operation in providing honest and prompt responses to the questionnaire will be greatly appreciated. Any information given will be confidential states and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you

Section A – Bio-Data

1. Gender   Male (   )   Female (   ) (Tick appropriately)

2. Age group 20-29 yrs ☐ 30-39 yrs   ☐-49 yrs   ☐50 yrs and above   ☐

3. Number of years in service

    0-1 Yrs   ☐

    2-3 yrs   ☐

    4-5 yrs   ☐

    6yrs or more   ☐

4. Highest level of education(Optional)

    Certificate   ☐   Masters and above   ☐
    Diploma   ☐
    Degree   ☐

5. Department/ Section

    HR   ☐
    PR   ☐

Please tick (SA-strongly agree; A- Agree; N-Neutral; D- Disagree; and SD-Strongly Disagree) on the statement depending on your level of agreement;

SECTION B: Value of PR in Strategic Management

STATEMENT	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. The PR department is involved in the decision Making process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The PR strategy is aligned to the company's business strategy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The PR department manager meets regularly With the senior executives of the company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The department undertakes measures leading to ease of communication and collaboration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The communication in the workplace is adequate and effective.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: Influence of Organizational Culture to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy

	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. The past PR strategies has been effective In establishing a good image for the Company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Trainign on best PR pratices is done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. The employees in all the departments are Constantly informed on company's Policies and strategies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The company encourages openness and honesty With adequate communication to employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The PR department has been established In the company for a long time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. The company follows a centralised decision Making framework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: Role of Organizational Structure to the Effectiveness of PR Strategy

17. The company's publics are oftenly defined. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

18. The PR department is divided into various

    Units. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

19. PR management routinely interacts with other ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

    Departments to ensure effective communication.

20. The PR department utilizes teams from different

    Departments in developing PR strategies. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

21. The PR department is interconnected with work

    processes to enhance collaboration. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

SECTION E: Effectiveness of PR Strategy

22   PR strategies in the company are beneficial. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

23   Support from management has led to ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

        Improved implementation of PR.

24   The culture of the company encourages ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

        Effective communication.

25   The company's structures lead to improved ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

        PR strategy.

26   The PR manager is part of top management. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

C.   INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Part One: Personal Information

Name   :....................................

Date   :....................................

Managerial Position :....................................

Part Two: Questions

All responses should be written in verbatim

1. What is the current PR issues facing the Kericho Tea Plantations?
2. How has the company managed the human abuse accusations (Sexual harassment and poor working conditions)?
3. What is the PR strategy which has been developed to manage the PR issues within the company?
4. In your opinion, are these strategies effective in managing the PR issues facing the company? (Please explain)
5. What strategies do you recommend for the PR issues facing the company?
6. Does the management value the PR department in the firm? (Explain)
7. Does the organisational culture support or inhibit the effective PR management in the company (Explain)?
8. What is the organisational structure of the Unilever and what is its influence to PR effectiveness?
9. What is the role of the management and the employees in strategic management of PR issues?
10. What recommendations can you make for an effective PR strategy for Unilever (K) Ltd?