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*Full Length Research Paper*

# To Examine the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Social Media Publicity Channel in achieving Public Relations Functions

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This study is done to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of social media publicity channel to enhance Public Relations Functions. For the purpose of this study, survey approach was employed where through the use of questionnaire employed and distributed to 150 respondents who are basically University final year students of mass communication department who specialized in public relations, who also have been exposed to theoretical knowledge of public relations and practical knowledge of public relations practice through their internship and working experience. The regression analysis done showed support for all the four hypotheses as findings showed relationships between Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management; creating of awareness, crisis management and reputation management. These findings confirmed previous theoretical studies on public relations. Also, the qualitative analysis further showed the importance of public relations practice in awareness creation and relationship management.

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## INTRODUCTION

The world of communication has considerably changed in the past 25 years. The main media used for information dissemination before the advent of the Internet were known be traditional media (i.e. radio, television, film, newspapers and magazines). Traditional media had a large influence on the ways of information flow and thus formed communities who share the same or similar understanding of the world (Matesic et el. 2010).

Today, however, the number of media channels for information sharing has increased. The increasing number of different media is associated with the advent of the internet. The Internet as a marketing channel is interactive, accessible, ubiquitous, and integrates marketing communication with commercial transactions and service delivery (Jennifer Rowley, 2004). As new channel is springing up, information also is becoming closer to people in society. Likewise the rate at which people can get and disseminate information is getting higher. Easy access to media gave rise to peer content production; through this individual with media interest can disseminate preferable content (Aris and Bughin, 2009). As media content is becoming wider accessible so also this avenue is been used to create crisis, as

easy access give chance to express dissatisfaction, hatred or disgust over a certain issue, individual and organization. However, public relations practitioners believed that to address issues, addressing it from the foundation is the best to start with. That is if issues come through the media whether internet (like YouTube) or traditional (like radio, television, and newspaper) best way to address the issue is also through the same media where the issue came from. The advent of internet spring up organization proneness to crisis, most especially through the social media, and practice of addressing such crisis through social media increase constant effort in public relations practice in managing relationship through social media; this is also as more people are involved on a daily basis. According to Matesic, Vuckovic, and Dovedan (2010) advent of social stream, both public and private one enhanced information transparency based on interaction and collaboration that are involved. Likewise, internet media has the capability to manage crisis, build reputation and create awareness through publicity. However, looking at this impact of social media, if harness, it can be seen to be one of the best public relation tools (to manage crisis, create awareness, and relationship management).

Furthermore, Social media as new communication and collaboration channels has profoundly influenced on all structures of society: experts, individuals, scientists, public figures, institutions as well as companies. They are truly participatory media which allows for two-way communication, which certainly isn't a characteristic of a traditional media. These media create communities or public that are critical and at the same time rational. Through the social media new communication-channels emerged to enhance marketing and public relations activities. However, the introduction of instant-messaging tools and e-mails increased the number of Internet-users. This increase became larger when new media-channels like social media entered the Internet. Social-media as special forms of networked media are sets of applications, tools, and services that enable people to connect with each other online for the purpose of sharing and exchanging information (or knowledge) likewise to create their online-communities (Matesic, et el. 2010). This importance of social media shows its benefit in achieving effective communication with group of people that has same identity. This means its potential can be harness to create awareness or publicize to a particular group of people that have familiar characteristics (for example Facebook can be used to reach out to teenagers,

LinkedIn can be used to reach out to those looking for jobs).

Over the years, public relations roles are only considered to just relationship management. This is why some organization synergized public relations department with marketing department and advertising department (Samsup, 2006; Chun-ju, 2005; Grunig, 2000; Sami, 2006).

Some other scholars came up with their study and found that public relations roles is not only in relationship management aspect but its practice have impacts on; organizational financial performance, creation of positive image for an organization; crises management; innovation and creation of good platform to support organizational ethics (Yungwood, 2001; Yi-Hui, 2001; Cutlip, et el. 2006; Jin-A, et el. 2010). Most of this research analyzed the impact of public relations in an organization and placing little emphasis on the tools of public relations which is used to generate these impacts.

Publicity according to William, (1967) is a vital arm of marketing. In the wider sense it covers all marketing communications, direct mail, public relations, brochures, films, display, and exhibitions. Though the author does not mention online publicity based on level of technology when the author wrote

the book, today the online publicity has generated lot of company attention based on speed, accuracy, attractiveness, cheapness, and coverage. However, different scholars have researched the impacts of public relations in an organization (David, et al. 2004; Damjana, et el. 2008; Grunig and Hung 2002; Yi-Hui 2001).

Likewise, various scholars have researched the impact of publicity on an organization. Their findings revealed that publicity has great impact on creating awareness for a firm, relationship management between an organization and its public as well as vehicle to create positive image for an organization (Harlan, et al. 2014; Linda, 1998; Eisend and Kuster 2011).

Scholars have also researched the importance of online media (Jennifer, 2004; Jonathan, et al. 2012; Melewar, 2003; Suresh, et el 2004). However, looking at these previous studies, there has not been study that relates social media publicity to be public relations channel (used to create awareness,

manage crisis; manage relationships and others).

This research is an empirical study which employs a mixed approach, that is qualitative and quantitative research method (Creswell, 2009) with the major objective of looking at the impact of social media (as a publicity channel that can be used in public relations practice) in creating awareness, managing and sustaining organization reputation as well as crisis management.

## 1.1    Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to investigate the effectiveness and efficiency of social media publicity in public relations practice. Thus, this study will guide to know efficiency of social media publicity as a channel that can be harness in the practice of public relations to achieve its functions in the area of online reputation management, relationship management, crisis management, and awareness generation. These functions are majorly known to be core elements in public relations practice.

## 1.2    Significant of this Study

This study will add to public relations literature, likewise will help public relations practitioners to know the level of efficiency and effectiveness of social media publicity.

This empirical analysis, as well as this study theoretical frame work, will give a background knowledge or review for another researcher that wants to undergo study in related work.

## 1.3    Research Framework
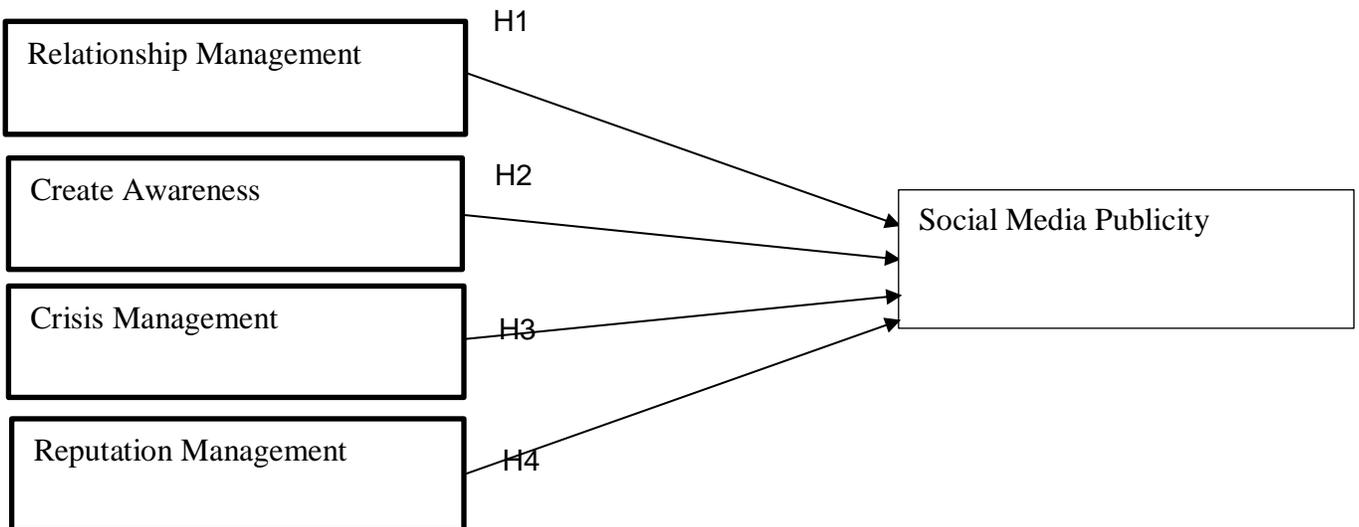


## LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1    Introduction

Based on the objective of this study which is to research the impact of online publicity in an organization. Different scholars have researched the impacts of public relations in an organization (David, et al. 2004; Damjana, et el. 2008; Grunig and Hung 2002; Harlan, et al. 2014; Yi-Hui 2001). Likewise, various scholars have researched the impact of publicity in an organization (Eisend and Kuster, 2011; Grunig, 1989; Linda, 1998). Few scholars have also researched in importance of online media (Jennifer, 2004; Jonathan, et al. 2012; Melewar, 2003; Suresh, et el 2004). However, by examining past studies, there are limited studies that relate

social media publicity as a public relations channel to create awareness, manage crisis; manage relationships and others. However, these past works are relevant to this study, as they provide foundational background to have good understanding of publicity, its uses, and impacts in organization. Various empirical analysis based on the previous work added to support this study secondary data.

## 2.2    Theoretical Framework

**Grunig's, (1989) research added new theories to the existing studies. Grunig theories have helped in improving the practice of public relations in a lot of ways. Through the model Public relations practitioners work have been effective in serving the organization and the public interest. The model is illustrated below:**

| Grunig's 4 models of Public Relations Practice | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Name of the model** | **Communication type** | **Characteristics of the Model** |
| The publicity/press agentry | One way communication | The use of manipulation and persuasion to influence the audience to act as a firm wants (Use of half-truth, PR often refer to liars, no time for research major motive is to manipulate through headlines) |
| The Public Information | One way communication | The use of press releases and other one-way communication tools to transfer a piece of organisation information. Public relations practitioners refer here as the press in residence in house journalists. (Though there is no formal research, emphasis shift away from half-truth to ethical practices. The use of Web content, brochure, and Press releases) |

| One way asymmetrical | One way communication | The use of manipulation and persuasion influences the public to acts as a firm wants. (Research is used to know the audience feel about such firm and what they wanted). Both Parties benefits |
|---|---|---|
| Two way symmetrical | Two-way communication | The use of communications in negotiating with an organizational audience, resolving conflict, promoting mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its public(s). (Acting as a mediator between two groups to resolve conflict) |

*Table 2.2 Grunig's 4 models of Public Relations Practice*

Grunig (1989), highlighted two important models which are publicity model and two-way symmetrical model. The two-way symmetrical model makes organizations be more effective through exchange of information by allowing information flows freely between systems, such as organizations, management, public, and employees. The two-way symmetrical model is known to be most effective and ethical in public relations practice. It is a good replication of normative theory that can be used to achieve excellent communication management. While publicity model can be employed to make information reach the target through various media at a low cost. These two models if properly implemented will transform into organization success and achievement of the above factors (Grunig, 1989). An organization needs to harness these factors as they are a prerequisite to performance and productivity.

This research will place more emphasis on the press publicity model as this model can be used to influence the organization's public to view the organization in certain way. Two-way symmetrical by Grunig that is used by an organization to promote dialogue in order

to create mutual understanding will be examined in the research. The publicity model shed more light on how public relations practitioner uses media, for example, broadcast and social media to gain public direction. (Grunig, J.E. 1989).

All these models by Grunig, (1989) are very important functions in public relations practice. However, the models were explained by Grunig in general terms. Publicity today has gone beyond the use of traditional media (with the use of Press Release), effort is now shifting to social media. However, this research will provide background knowledge of publicity, with the use of social media in order to reach the target audience. Today through different channels like YouTube, Facebook, blogs, and official website organization can reach its audience, not only can organization create awareness through this media, but also can be used to facilitate relationship management (Noel-Levitz, 2007). This indicates the potential of social media, which can be harness to facilitate public relations functions.

This research will reveal the efficient and effective social media publicity channels (like Blogs site, official Website, YouTube, and Facebook) and why they considered to be effective and efficient.  This study will add to the public relations model by investigating the effectiveness and

efficiency of social media publicity as channel that can be harness in public relations practices. The results will indicate the level of effectiveness of Social Media Publicity when using it as public relations tool.

## 2.3    Importance of Public Relations in an Organization

As part of these research objectives, which is to know the benefits of social media publicity as a tool that can be harness by public relations practitioner, it is very important in this study to explain the importance of public relations as this will provide overall knowledge about its practice and its connection with the research objectives. Based on this, Public relations functions are explained below.

### 2.3.1   Reputation Management

Harlan, Spotts, and Marc (2014) when comparing the effect of publicity and advertising, find out that the impacts of negative advertising and publicity depend on a company's existing reputation. Their study revealed that for companies with a weak reputation, positive publicity will be very effective than advertising. A company will only involve in advertising when such company reputation is good and such company is making high sales to justify its advertising revenue. All

organizations, whether small or big irrespective of the financial assets make use of publicity to manage reputation.

### 2.3.2   Corporate Branding

In an effort to enhance organizational effectiveness, public relations officers used persuasion to develop an organization lasting relationship with their publics, and by so doing such an organization is making itself unique to the public. This identity that stimulates uniqueness is known as the corporate branding or way the public see an organization based on how such organization presents itself to the public *(*Smith, 2008). One very important area where persuasion is used in the communication campaigns is in the area of generating an organization's image, brand, and identity. The way an organization portrays itself is not only known through the messages of such organization, also the employee behavior matters (Smith, 2008).

Based on the increasing pressure for profit in an organization in order to demonstrate their social citizenship, which is an integral part of the organization's reputation, public relations professionals plan strategies and create messages targeting specific media outlets to emphasize the organizational traits that are likely to generate better image. (Kiousis, 2007).

Lack of honest, open, proactive communication and unfavorable relationships result in consumer activism and negative media coverage, this will lead to a bad reputation. The organizational corporate culture and other internal factors influenced by public relations activities will result in excellent communication and this will influence the good behavior of the manufacturer. The shows public relations activities to be an integral function aim at communicating the organizational activities in order to create positive image. As suggested by Grunig and Hung (2002), when public relations perform the strategic management function it will have effect on the organizational behavior, thus organization's relationships with its public will improve and will have a positive impact on the organization's reputation as well. Hagan, (2003) concluded that image-making is an effective way to sell an organization to the public

### 2.3.3   Communication and Awareness Generation

Another important contribution to the effectiveness of publicity in an organization was revealed by Linda (1998), indicates that by constantly putting messages out and associating those messages with the company name, the public has a heightened sense of the company mission. The constant effort of

the public relations practitioner to communicate to the public about an organization will result in creation of high name recognition in the eyes of the public. Based on Linda study, public relations practices play an important role in making sure an organization is successful. Public relations goals cannot be separated from organization's mission and because the organization's activities are controversial, the company needs PR to explain to constituents, not only this such organization provides a channel for constituents to give feedback (Linda, 1998). Eisend and Kuster (2011) gave an explanation of the connection between publicity, customer attitudes, and purchase intention. They suggest that credibility perception enhances the importance of publicity.

### 2.3.4   Relationship management

Another important way through which public relations activities can generate organizational effectiveness or performance is the relationship management of the practice. Public Relations is not isolated from the business operation, good public relations are integrated into the organizational business plan. It is holistic that involves relationship with the internal public, media, community, external, stakeholders. This model of Public relations is a broad view that consists of messaging, maintaining relationships with

stakeholders, reputation management, maintaining accessibility to media, linking to the strategic objectives of an organization, listening effectively to stakeholders and advocating of role to the other senior managers. Good public relations are listening and understanding issues. Public relations is about being transparent, this is done through open communication over a long period. This results in trust, building of credibility over time. Trust is built over time by supplying information for the benefit of the public and the company. This represents ethical pragmatism through building relationships that are needed to do business (Sterne, 2008).

However, for an organization to be socially responsible according to James and Grunig, (2000), it is important for such an organization to provide benefits to its publics. James, (2000) also further says that communal relationships as part of public relations functions are beneficial to an organization by helping to build long term reputation. Relationship management of public relations will help to build trust, commitment, and satisfaction. Trust is very important for the success of every organization, relationship built on trust often lasts. Part of public relations effort is to build trust between the public and the organization. According to Grunig, Commitment to communal relationships can help to

generate customer loyalty. He further states that communal relationship is about the present, on like exchange relationship that is about the future which is relevant in marketing. But communal relationship which is public relations function provides a framework for public relations effort at generating a long-lasting relationship between the organization and the public (Samsup, 2006; Chun-ju, 2005).

Linda's (1998) findings revealed that by constantly putting messages out and associating those messages with the company name, the public has a heightened sense of the company mission. Public relations goals cannot be separated from the organization's mission and because the organization's activities are controversial, the company needs Public Relations practitioner to explain to constituents, not only this, such organization must provide a channel for constituents to give feedback. The use of press releases to communicate organizational activities are used to set the media agenda about markets. (Sami, 2006).

Furthermore, Coombs (2001) indicates that organizations that purposefully cultivate relationships with key public members and adopt an organization-wide commitment to excellent relationships find higher levels of key

public member loyalty. Ledingham and Bruning (1998) also examined organization - public relationship variables in relation to customer satisfaction and found that customer satisfaction is influenced by the relationship that exists between an organization and its key publics. This study-based organization-public relationship measurement on factors that are used to predict consumer behavior: trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment. Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) also offered strategies for maintaining organization–public relationships, where they mentioned factors like access, positive, openness, assurance, networking, and the sharing of tasks. In addition, they suggested control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment as organization–public relationship outcomes.

### 2.3.4.1 Relationship Management and organization growth

Managing relationship by public relations officer is associated with growth, analysis of the results of the survey conducted by David, Frank, Blanchard, and Kevin (2004) highlight an interesting connection between businesses that have high rate of growth and use of some public relations techniques and activities. Managing government relations whether local or central, mounting consumer's exhibitions, providing media news releases, also writing letters to the media are associated with growth. Small businesses aiming for

growth need to encourage public relations activities.

### 2.3.4.2 Create Collaborative Value

Public relations managers as a professional negotiate with the organizational clients in order to change organizational behavior by helping organizations to be considered for public interests and other organization's interests. The core value of public relations effort is the collaboration value, which also the concepts of societal corporatism, communism and collectivism relationships (Grunig, 2000).

### 2.3.4.3 Coordinate Open and Trust Relationship

The role of public relations is to identify an organization's strategic public, also to develop communications programs aiming at building a solid, open and trust relationship with the public. This will result in the generation of effectiveness of the organization (Damjana, et el. 2008).

### 2.3.4.4 Coordinate Employee-Management Relationship

Public relations is not only considered to be important in an organization-public relationship but also very important in the Employer-employee relationship. Ensuring there is a cordial relationship between the employer and employee is very important as mutual understanding tends to be generated between the two groups based on this effort in public relations practice. Good relationships

between the employer and the employee will result to trust, commitment to work, and job satisfaction (Water, et al. 2013).

### 2.3.5 Crisis Management or Resolution

The findings of Yi-Hui (2001) support the effectiveness of public relations on conflict resolution which is mediated by organization–public relationships. Theoretically, the study gives evidence that values of public relations in terms of its relationship management and conflict resolution. An ability to properly manage or foresee crisis is a good approach to generate organizational effectiveness. The effort of public relations programs on conflict resolution reflects devotion of an organization to public relations its activities. Every organization is prone to crisis, it depends on the management to realize the functions of public relations programs toward conflict resolution to effectively manage such conflict.

Conflict can be internal and external. Internal conflict can occur between the employee and employer or management and employee. Conflict can also take the form of external that is between organizations and other stakeholders like community, shareholders, government, trade union and others. It is part of public relations functions to be proactive that is foreseen crisis and relate with the management of the organization on the conflict and proffer best way to solve such

crisis. Public relations work is not only left in the hand of the public relations officer but every employee and management must see them self's as public relations officers. In this manner relationship with stakeholders will be effectively managed, hence conflict can be eschewed. As part of image building functions of public relations there is need for the practice to ensure constant effort at managing and preventing conflict. In public relations there is no little problem, if problem seen to be little is not managed, it can escalate to big problem (Yi-Hui, 2001).

### 2.3.6   Promote Innovations

Public relations practitioners are majorly concerned about the information gathering of the company from the company operating environment, this they do with the aim of making the organization adjust and blend to the demands and expectations of the organizational public to generate effectiveness. Not only this, practitioner needs to use innovative mean of publicizing the organization message through the exploitation of technological advancement. The organizational structure has positive effect on innovation in a firm. Handling relationship both between external public and internal public is very technical, therefore innovative initiative is required by person

in charge of organizing public relations (Cutlip, et el. 2006).

### 2.3.7   Promote Ethics

To generate organizational effectiveness public relations officers are more likely to confront the management of a firm when the leader at the top do not exhibit expected ethical behavior. If an organization doesn't have an ethics code, it is part of public relations officers' function to agitate and oppose unethical decisions. Selective use of information and unofficial comments were encouraging when an organization doesn't value open communication. Part of public relations functions is to promote organizational ethics through resistance of unethical organizational decisions (Jin-A, et el. 2010).

### 2.4    Importance of Online and Social Media Publicity in Public Relations Practice

This research major objective is to know the potential impact of social media publicity as a tool that can be harness by public relations practitioners; it is very important to know the importance of online and social media publicity. Though limited studies developed connection between public relations and social media. However, this research is to examine the connection between public relations and social media (as a channel

that can be harness to boost profession practices).

**The s**tudy by Jennifer, (2001) the study shows that there is two-way relationship, with full integration of Internet capability on business. Jennifer's study indicates the impact of online publicity in helping organizations to improve brand recognition, improve corporate image, inform and educate market, thus help to generate competitive advantage. Jennifer, further explain that E-business purposes are mostly to increase visibility, improve customer service; increase or maintain market share; performing transactions; forming alliances in the supply-chain; maintain or improve profitability; establishing a position in a new marketplace; reduce costs through increased efficiency; to create a favorable climate for future sales; and to improve promotional-efficiency. Jennifer observed that visitors are likely to return to a site if they had a successful experience with the site on a previous visit, but only if they think that the site has something new to offer; thus, it will be important that the site creates a sense of a dynamic-environment. Other studies have further indicated different importance of online publicity in public relations practice. These are highlighted below.

### 2.4.1 Online Relationship Management

Noel-Levitz, (2007) examines the use of online media to build an e-recruitment. The study makes use of responses from a telephone-survey of 1,018 college-bound high school seniors. According to Noel-Levitz, like traditional recruitment programs, many e-recruitment also makes effort at gathering student information or data and then pushes them to apply. Further states that increase effort made by the institution at the initial application is complemented when effort is made at keeping collected data from these students on an accepted student site, and these data can be used to continue communicating and making connections with these students as this will increase their chances of enrolling. Therefore, it was suggested in the study that institution need to make it has an effort to harness that potential of online publicity not just to create awareness or published about a particular institution but also to educate admitted students on application process. This study indicates that constant effort needs to be made by organization to keep information pace with their target public, not only at an initial stage but on continuous bases to sustain their relationship. Noel-Levitz, further states that this technique encourages the term "Friendenomics," the use of advertising and marketing on social networking sites by firms to promote their services and products; rather than just advertising, these marketing techniques

will sustain interaction (Noel-Levitz, 2007).

According to Matesic, Vuckovic, and Dovedan (2010), Social media is a new communication and collaboration channel which has profoundly influenced all structures of society. Further explained that social media offer participatory avenue which allows for two-way communication, that the traditional media does not possess. Their study indicates that social media as a new communication-channels emerged to enhance marketing and public relations activities; likewise its uses enable people to connect with each other online for the purpose of sharing and exchanging information (or knowledge) likewise to create their online-communities, which give avenue to reach or publicize to people with certain age group, or particular interest.

In a survey by Reuben, (2008) on the use of social media in higher education. In the study, 148 colleges and universities responded to the survey. The study revealed that social media are prominently used among colleges and the university that was surveyed, as it is been used to reach their target audiences; out of the 148 surveyed, just over half (that is 53.79 percent) of the college/university was reported having an official Facebook-Page for their campus, likewise 20 of

them have developed a custom application for Facebook. Findings show that most colleges and universities surveyed were using the official Facebook page as a tool to communicate with current students, to reach out to alumni, and for recruitment. This study indicates the impact of social media on publicity in universities and Colleges.

### 2.4.2   Online Awareness Generation

According to Noel-Levitz (2007) states that more students get the awareness of the institution through online publicity. However, based on the study when respondents were asked about sites specification for students that were admitted, 57 percent of respondents said they had seen such sites; 57 percent of respondents said they would rather look at a Web site than reading brochures; likewise while 97 percent said they found the use of online publicity valuable.

Melewar Nichola Smith, (2003) study examines the implication that an internet presence can bring to firms' goals marketing strategies. Observed that rapid internet adoption as a commercial channel has generated more innovative ways of marketing to consumers in computer-mediated environment. The use of internet facilitates organization's potential to reach target-audiences in more efficient way. With the use of demographic-data         and         previous

interactions history, companies can get more accurate customers profile. In addition, internet by nature promotes a globally standard-approach to promotion and advertising, this allows companies to realized lost-economies as well as generate cohesive product-positioning globally.

Jonathan, Paul, and Clifford (2012) indicate that social-media are cost-effective tools that enable organizations to do more for less. The different group interviewed indicates that social-media are cost-effective tool. Parents Television Council state in the interview that social media are great way to mobilize their members and at free rate. Similarly, another group in the survey relates impacts of social media on free advertising. The qualitative and quantitative results of the study show that almost all the advocacy groups that were surveyed believe that social media are effective instruments to facilitate civic engagement and collective action. Based on this, most of the 53 advocacy groups assessed are using social-media of various kinds almost on a daily basis. Groups large and small referred to this benefit using different terminology. Participants in the survey mentioned social media's potential to create awareness of organizational-goals, strategies, and messages. Participants indicate the vastness and popularity in the

use of social media by empowering the advocacy-groups reach multitude of individuals, including supporters, members and those who know nothing about the organization.

### 2.4.3 Conflict Management through Engagement and Collective Action

Jonathan, Paul, and Clifford (2012) analysis of how advocacy groups in the United States perceive and use social media as tools for facilitating civic-engagement to avoid conflict. In the study 53 advocacy groups were surveyed and asked on the benefits social-media provide to their organizations. The majority of advocacy groups surveyed noted in their open-ended responses that social-media provide several benefits that help them in facilitating civic-engagement and collective action thus conflict is avoided. The benefits are in three ways 1) Social-media assist to connect individuals to advocacy groups, hence can strengthen outreach effort; 2) social-media assist in promoting engagement, as they enable engaging feedback loops; 3) social-media help to strengthen collective action efforts by increasing communication speed. Another important response that was emphasized by the advocacy group surveyed is how social-media assists them in reaching younger people, most especially provide avenue to demonstrate that their organization is keeping up with the latest trends in the

use of technologies. The participant also mentioned how social media have helped them to reach out to both global and domestic audiences

Suresh, Shivaram and Mohan (2004) in their study sample of 46 e-commerce companies for the period of 1999–2000, through the use of descriptive-Statistics and correlation-matrix**,** their results reinforce the importance of online media in building relationships and customer confidence, as this will help in conflict management. The use of online media help users to access customers data which can be reused to facilitate future transactions, this makes it to support repeat buying, most especially by giving buyer incentives. But this depend on company's potential in building electronic-relationships through personalization, allowing customers to make service inquiries and requests online.

Grunig's, (1989) model shows the importance of Two way symmetrical in communicating process, as it helps in negotiating with the organizational audience, resolving conflict, promoting mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its public(s). Thus, suggests that public relations practitioner need to act as a mediator between two groups to resolve conflict. Lack of mutual understanding between organization and its public can create chance for conflict, also lack of

honest, open, proactive communication and unfavorable relationships result to consumer activism and negative media coverage, this will lead to a bad reputation.

## 2.4.4 Reputation Management-Monitoring and Managing Online Reputation

It is obvious today that Internet has become an unavoidable part of society. Its emergency changed lot of things which include: ways communicate, sending or receiving information, promotion, selling or buying, likewise ways of managing and monitoring personal, corporate or institutional reputation based on emergence of internet. Firms, agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions all have their communities in real-world. However, the use of social media as a form of communication channel or publicity has helped to create as well as manage the online-community thus open new ways for monitoring and managing online reputation. Monitoring of Reputation can be done by measuring parameters like the number of community-members, community-features, and what is being said inside the community about its entities with the use of predefined-sentiments or satisfaction-scores (Matesic, et el. 2010).

Matesic, Vuckovic, and Dovedan, (2010) in their study state that online reputation

monitoring and management is a crucial factor in an open, networked, and transparent society. They further state that reputation can be monitored and managed through media-channels like blogs, and social networks. Through this media channel, users are invited to collaborate with organization, likewise comments and opinions received were monitored and managed. Public responses will help organization to review its image. Indicators show that social-media further continues to grow, and this will accelerate the growth in social media usage as a channel for marketing, promotion, and communication.

Jennifer Rowley, (2004) proposed a model for online brand development. Examined the nature of brands and branding which leads to consideration of some of the unique aspects of online branding. Since Web-pages have significantly played an important role in online-branding, it can help to communicate brand messages and values. **B**randing is an important tool in building customer confidence and familiarity. Rowley suggests that managers should take a systematic approach in developing brands in the online market place by designing Web-site to communicate and reinforce brand. Effective Web-site design is crucial in terms of its uses; likewise, central-focus in the branding process should be

messages and communication. Brand builder task is to tease out and communicate brand values that take the organization exactly where it wants to go, at the same time building and acknowledging the existing attribute, values, or personality-traits that existing users have in common with the organization.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1    Introduction

This research objective is to investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of Social Media Publicity Channel in achieving Public Relations Functions. This chapter highlights the methodological framework which was used to achieve the research objectives. The main focus of this chapter is on the research method, research design, sampling techniques, data collection, and data analysis. This research methodology also provides discussion on the rationale of alternatives, which include benefits and possible limitations of those alternatives.

### 3.2    Research Hypothesis

Testing the effectiveness and efficiency of Social Media Publicity (as a public relations Model) Channel in achieving Public Relations Functions, this proposed research will investigate:

H1: Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management.

H2. Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness.

H3. Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of crisis management.

H4. Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of reputation management.

## 3.3 Research method

The mixed approach of research methodology will be employed for this research. The mixed-approach research is an effective methodology that involves; collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative approach will be done with the use of descriptive statistics done through SPSS 20.0. While the open-ended questions will make qualitative analysis possible. The descriptive analysis will be done on the close-ended questions. Both open-ended and close-ended questions drawn with the use of questionnaire (Creswell, 2009).

According to Creswell, (1994) mixing both qualitative and quantitative research and data in a study makes researcher gain depth and breadth of corroboration and understanding, while off-setting problems or weaknesses that using single approach can cause. However, the triangulation possibility is one of the important advantages of employing mixed-approach. The triangulation gives opportunity for researcher to identify aspects of a study in a more accurate way by approaching study from different vantage-points using different techniques and methods.

Both qualitative and quantitative have strengths and weaknesses (Kumar, 2011). Mixed-methodology helps to harness both strengths to get accurate, reliable, and valid results. For example, quantitative research is weak in understanding why people behave or act in certain ways; while qualitative research is a very good technique of having good understanding of reason people act or behave in a particular way. Likewise, the qualitative analysis also has its own weaknesses part of which is the bias interpretations that can be made from researcher. This is as researcher can look at response from his own angle, at the same time very difficult or complex in analyzing large sample size compared to quantitative analysis. To cover these

weaknesses mixed-approach was employed (Kumar, 2011).

In addition, mixed-approach allows a more comprehensive and complete knowledge of the research-problems than employing either qualitative or quantitative concept alone.

Furthermore, the mixed approach allows researcher to develop better, more context-specific techniques. Also the use of the mixed approach assists in explaining findings or the way causal-processes work (Denscombe, 2006).

However, as a mixed approach have various strengths, it also has weaknesses, though compared to its strengths the weaknesses are few. The major weakness in the approach is that using it can make research-design very complex. Likewise, planning and implementation of mixed-approach take much time. At times, planning and implementing one method by drawing on the result of the other might be difficult. Also, in case there are discrepancies in the interpretation of the findings, the way of resolving such discrepancies might be unclear when using mixed-approach (Blaxter, et el. 2010)

Survey as a method that can be used to draw out responses from the respondents is employed in this study. To facilitate this, a well-structured questionnaire was designed and given to Students of mass communication to know their view about the effectiveness and efficiency of Social Media publicity as a channel or model that can be harness in public relations practice. The designed questionnaire has Likert-scale questions, close-ended questions, and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions include ranking and choice options. Creswell (2003) explains that the mixed methodology approach employs strategies of inquiry, which involved simultaneous collection of data, or sequential collection of data in order to have a vivid understanding of the research problems. The open-ended questions will allow unraveling the respondents (final year Students of Mass Communication, who specialized in public relations) thought on the efficiency and effectiveness of social media publicity channels on public relations practices.

The analysis will be done based on responses to the questionnaire by Students of Mass Communication SEGi University. These are *basically University students of public relations department who have been exposed to theoretical knowledge of public relations and practical knowledge of public relations practice through their internship and working experience.* Based on this the final result analysis will be done both qualitatively and quantitatively. This is good to achieve triangulation of

information which will enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. In addition, mixed methodology will be suitable as it will provide a more comprehensive account of the variables that are being researched.

The approach has more advantages when compared to other methods. It used to achieve triangulation of the results, likewise, it will complement various components in this study. Creswell (2003) explains that mixed methodology adds breadth and scope to a study and serves as a complementary tool to the facets of a study. Based on these benefits, this method is believed to be best approach for this study; this is as it will enable a better understanding of the issues that are being explored.

### 3.4    Research Design

Survey as a method of drawing out responses through the questionnaire is used in this study. The questionnaire will be distributed to the Mass Communication final Students of SEGi University that *specialized public relations, who also have been exposed to theoretical knowledge of public relations and practical knowledge of public relations practice through their internship and working experience.*

In order to have a valid and reliable result, the questions are in-depth, and it will

guide to reach a valid and reliable conclusion. Creswell (2009) indicates survey method as an approach that provides numeric description of trends, opinions or fact of a population by studying a sample of that population. Through the approach the generalization and the interpretation of the result were done based on the analysis of responses gathered through Students of Mass Communication SEGi University, who specialized in public relations.

Questionnaire survey is the tool used for this research; this is as it is believed to suit this research. The questionnaire was chosen because of its advantage of attracting quick data collection at a low cost. According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010) questionnaire survey have given various advantages, which include;

- Questions are designed to be unbiased and impartial.
- It is suitable for large-size data representation
- Less expensive
- Provide high anonymity

Based on the small sample size availability, only 150 questionnaires will be designed and distributed to respondents. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and close-ended questions. It is also designed in a way that will be easily understood by the respondents. The

questionnaire is divided into different sections. The first part contained demographic questions like gender, and level of education, which options are given in Nominal, and Rating form. The second part questions also focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of Social Media publicity in public relations practice, the questions in this part are in Likert-scale form. The first and second part of the questionnaire responses will guide to do quantitative analysis. The third part contained the open-ended questions which will guide in qualitative analysis. The Likert-scale questions contained different options which are: SA-Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, D-Disagreed, SD-Strongly Disagreed. This is designed to measure the level of agreement and disagreement in which respondents have toward a particular question in the questionnaire. For example, respondents that indicate "strongly agreed" toward a question shows his or her strong opinion on such question compare to respondent that just indicate 'agreed".

However, survey has a limitation, which includes; the issues of accuracy and truthfulness, breadth of data rather than depth, focus on snapshots of points rather than underlying processes. Likewise, the

research findings would have been more reliable had it been the sample size larger enough. But the purposive sampling employed is a good technique to achieve reliability in the research findings.

## 3.5 Sampling and Population

The Sample Size is 150 final students from the department of School of Communication Studies SEGi University, who specialized in public relations. The low sample size creates the need to employed purposive sampling. According to Oliver and Jupp, (2006) Purposive sampling is used in cases where the specialty of authority has the chance to be selected, this creates room for a more representative sample that can bring more accurate findings than by using other probability sampling methods. It is believed that students of Mass Communication, who specialized in public relations have in-depth knowledge in the field of public relations through their internship program and by virtue of their work experience in the field. Also, by virtue of their exposure to public relations practice in different courses in the institution, it is however believed that their

responses will enhance the reliability and validity of the results.

## 3.6 Data Collection

The Data collected was done with the use questionnaires with choice options and closed-ended questions as well as Likert-scale. Data collection will be done by distributing the questionnaire to 150 final year students in Mass Communication Department who specialized in public relations who have also undergone an internship in public relations practice. This approach is good as the researcher will have the opportunity to have face to face contact with the respondents. This will allow respondents to ask questions, should in case they want to seek further information. This survey method is suitable to answer the questions of this study, this is as it allows respondents to respond to the structured questions (in the questionnaire) which will then be analyzed to reveal the findings of effectiveness and efficiency of social media channel in public relations practices (Descombe, 2010).

## 3.7 Data Analysis

The primary analysis was done on the collected data with the use of SPSS 20.0. Quantitative analysis was used to examine the close-ended questions in the questionnaire. The quantitative analysis has enormous advantages, which include its capacity to provide solid foundation for analysis and description (Descombe, 2010). Quantitative analysis also indicates that this type of analysis provides an effective way of organizing numerical data and communicating the research results to others. This benefit means quantitative analysis will be very suitable for the achievement of the research objectives.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis was also used to analyze the open-ended part of the questionnaire. This is as the questionnaire also has open-ended questions, the qualitative analysis will be used to analyze and interpret these questions in order to present good solid information. The qualitative analysis will assist in providing detailed and rich information, not only this, it will further explain the quantitative analysis, hence provide a good triangulation of the findings.

### 3.7.1 Validity

Research validity refers to the appropriateness and accuracy of the

data. The validity of a study depends on accuracy of data for the topic and the correct measurement of the data (Descombe, 2006). The mixed approach used for this study was tailor to achieve the objectives of the research, likewise the data measurement was done without bias in order to provide validity and accuracy to the study. Though the qualitative data can be misinterpreted or misunderstood by researcher, this research likewise employed quantitative analysis, which helps in enhancing the validity of the result.

### 3.7.2 Reliability and objectivity

This research reliability depends upon the consistency and neutrality of the research instruments. That is ability of research with the same instruments when undertaking in different occasion to produce the same result (Descombe, 2006). A research is considered to be reliable when there is no impartiality and neutrality in data collecting as well as data analysis, hence similar results are expected if the research is being repeated. The research findings can only be considered to be reliable when it follows the right procedures in order to ensure trustworthy and objective results.

This research makes use of a mixed strategy which will seek convergence of findings. As the results are triangulated, thus assure its reliability and accuracy. On the general note, the mixed strategy made the research to be reliable and objective.

### 3.8 Ethics

To facilitate ethics before involving in the research, a proposal was written which was approved by the supervisor. In the course of the research, the Market Research Society Code of Ethics and Guidelines strictly adhered. Those that participated in this research their consent was sought likewise they were informed about the purpose of the research, also participation was voluntary. The Data analysis was conducted with great fairness, neutrality, honesty, integrity, and impartiality. Also, the secondary data used were cited and they were from the right sources. Also, APA referencing and citation was employed in the report.

### 3.9 Limitations of the study

The small sample size poses little limitation to the study, but this was controlled as the researcher makes use of purposive sampling which

gave opportunity to draw responses from respondents that have good understanding of public relations and social media functions.

In addition, the research would have been better done had it been the researcher could have access to public relations organization to ask practitioner on how social media has been helpful in achieving their goals, reach their target, facilitate relationship as well as crisis management, this would have been helpful to this research.

## ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

### 4.1    Introduction

Based on this study which is to investigate the efficiency and effectiveness of Social Media Publicity Channel in achieving Public Relations Functions; quantitative analysis was done with the use of SPSS, while qualitative analysis was done with comparative technique. 150 questionnaires are distributed to final year students of SEGi University in the Mass Communication department who specialized in public relations and have undergone internship in the field likewise have working experience in public relations practice. This chapter represents the analysis of questionnaire gotten from 150 respondents. The data analysis was done through SPSS Version 20.0 program, otherwise called Statistical Package for Society Science. The

data were put into the SPSS tool which was used for different tests, including normality tests, and reliability tests. Furthermore, in this chapter analysis was done on the pilot test, descriptive analysis, normality test, and regression analysis. The analysis revealed the findings of the research hypothesis which are:

H1: Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management.

H2. Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness.

H3. Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of crisis management.

H4. Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of reputation management.

### 4.2 Pilot Study

The pilot study for this study was conducted with 20 respondents. This was done through a quantitative method using questionnaire survey. The pilot study was conducted to check the questionnaire's validity and reliability. The Cronbach Alpha value was employed to determine the questionnaire reliability, as reliability is considered at value

of 0.7 and above. Thus, after reliability is proven, data collection will be done. The below table indicates the results of the pilot study based on the test value. As the value of above 0.70 indicates the reliability of the questionnaire.

**Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|
| .969 | 30 |

*Table 4.1: Reliability of the Variables*

## 4.3 Research Approach

### 4.3.1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis summarizes briefly the data involved in a meaningful and simple way to enhance easy understanding and interpretation. The descriptive statistics were employed for demographic questions which are: gender, age, ethnic group, and education.

### 4.3.1.1 Gender

**Gender**

| | | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Male | 46.8 | 53.2 | 53.2 |
| | Female | 41.2 | 46.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 88.0 | 100.0 | |
| Total | | 100.0 | | |

*Table 4.2: Gender*
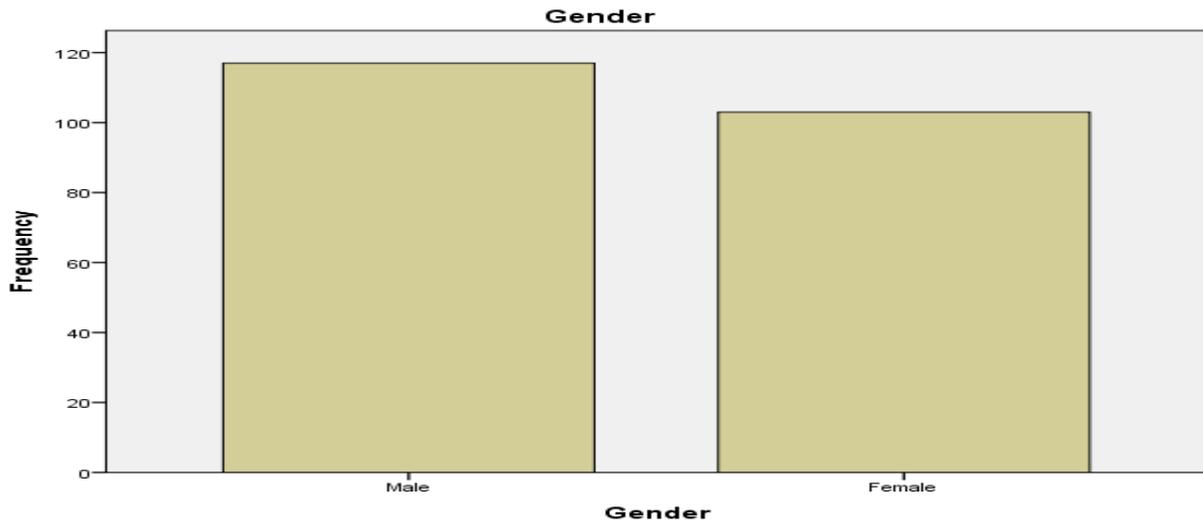
Gender



Chart 4.2 Gender

The data is based on the category of male and female. The data was gotten from 150 respondents in which 53.2% of the data are from male respondents while 46.8% were female respondents. Thus, males contributed more to this study.

### 4.3.1.2 Age

**Age**

| | | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Below 21 | 3.6 | 4.1 | 4.1 |
| | 21-25 | 61.2 | 69.5 | 73.6 |
| | 26-30 | 16.4 | 18.6 | 92.3 |
| | Above 30 | 6.8 | 7.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 88.0 | 100.0 | |
| Total | | 100.0 | | |

*Table: 4.3; Age*

Chart 4.3: Age

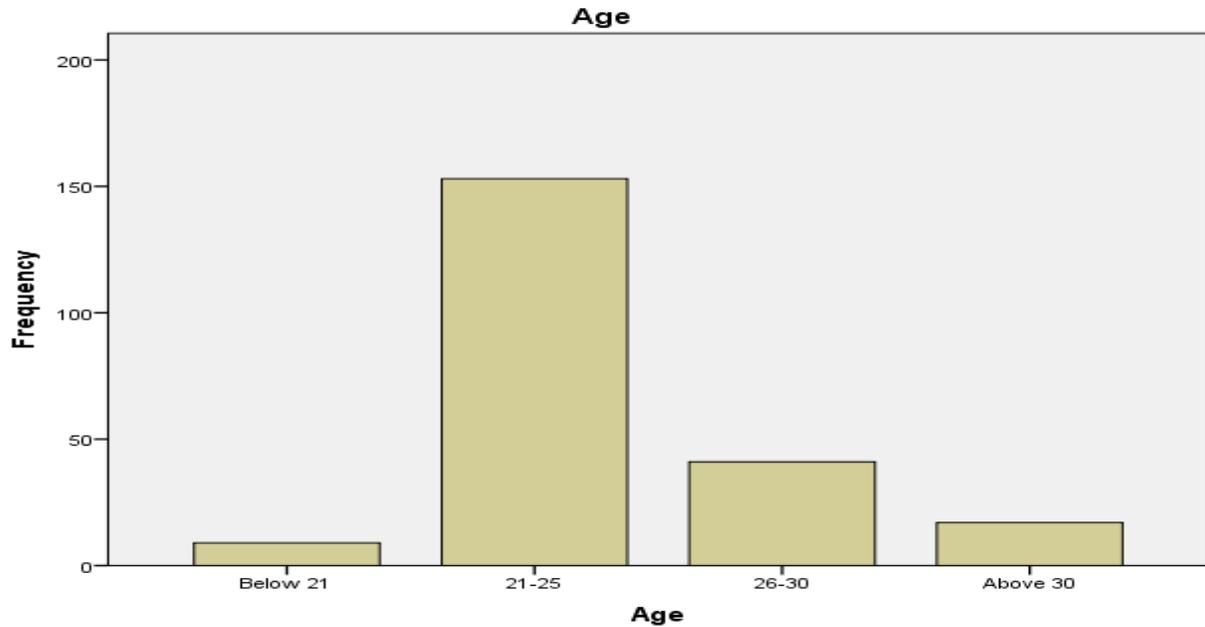The above Chart has data for the age of 150 respondents. The respondent's age was divided into four categories. Under the first category the age is 21 and below; the second category has the age between 21-25 years; the third category has the age between 26-30 years, while the last category respondents are above 30 years of age. As shown in Table 4.3 and Chart above the respondents between age 21-25 years represent 69.5% of the respondents; the age bracket also has the highest contribution to this study; followed by those with age 26-30 years; as they constituted 18.6% of the respondents and those above 30 year constituted 7.7% of the respondents. While those within the age 21 years below are just 4.1%.

### 4.3.1.3 Ethnic Group

**Ethnic Group**

| | | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Chinese | 27.6 | 31.4 | 31.4 |
| | Malay | 27.6 | 31.4 | 62.7 |
| | Indian | 22.8 | 25.9 | 88.6 |
| | Others | 10.0 | 11.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 88.0 | 100.0 | |
| Total | | 100.0 | | |

*Table 4.4 Ethnic Group*
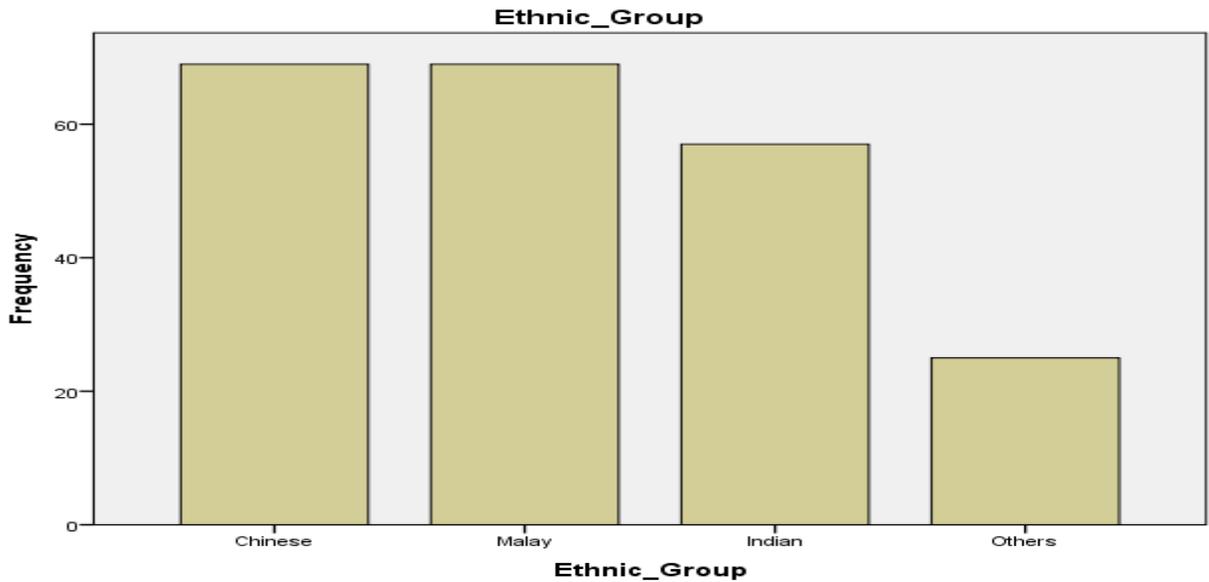
Chart 4.4 Ethnic Group

The above statistics indicated the ethnic group that the respondents belong. The analysis revealed that both Chinese and Malays have the same representation in the survey; as both constituted 31.4% of the respondents; followed by the Indian has they constituted 25.9% of the respondents. Those that belong to other groups are just 11.4%.

### 4.3.2 Reliability Test

### Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|
| .954 | 30 |

*Table 4.5: Reliability Test*

The Reliability Test in Table 4.5 above showed the overall Cronbach Alpha of 30 items is 0.954, this shows that these items are reliable. Hence, a further collection of data for this study can be done.

### 4.3.3 Normality Test

**Tests of Normality**

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Social Media Publicity | .124 | 150 | .000 | .958 | 150 | .000 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*Table 4.6: Test of Normality*

Normality test is done to check if the data is normally distributed or not. To proceed to multiple linear it is important to ensure that the data is normality distributed. This will be illustrated through two statistic model which are: Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. For this study, the normality test is done through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov model, since this study has a sample size of 150. The normality test is when the p-value is more than 0.05 (p-value > 0.05). As shown in the above table, the test value is less than 0.05. This indicates that the value is significant and it is not normally distributed. Thus, z-score is checked.

**4.3.4 Z-Score**

**Descriptives**

| | | | Statistic | Std. Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Media Publicity | Mean | | 2.4333 | .05951 |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 2.3157 | |
| | | Upper Bound | 2.5509 | |
| | 5% Trimmed Mean | | 2.4378 | |
| | Median | | 2.6000 | |
| | Variance | | .531 | |
| | Std. Deviation | | .72886 | |
| | Minimum | | 1.00 | |
| | Maximum | | 4.20 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Range | 3.20 | |
| Interquartile Range | .85 | |
| Skewness | -.334 | .198 |
| Kurtosis | -.254 | .394 |

*Table 4.7: Descriptive Data*

The Z-Score will be calculated with the use of skewness value as illustrated in Table 4.7 above. Thus, the statistic value is divided by standard error value. The below calculation showed the calculation of Z-Score. Z-Score value have to be within the value of -3.29 and 3.29 (-3.29 < Z > 3.29). As calculated below the Z- Score value of this data is -1.69, this implies that even though the data is not normally distributed, the non-normality assumption violation is not serious, therefore this research can proceed to the next stage.

$$Z\text{-}Score = \frac{Statistics}{Standard\ Error}$$

-0.334/0.198

-1.69

**4.3.5 Multiple Regression Analysis**

**Model Summary[b]**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .866[a] | .750 | .743 | .36960 | 2.106 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reputation Management, Relationship Management, Crisis Management, Create Awareness

b. Dependent Variable: Social Media Publicity

*Table 4.8 Multiple Regression Analysis*

As showed in the model summary in Table 4.9, the value of Durbin-Watson is 2.106 (i.e. between the cut off threshold of 1 and 3); this shows that there is no auto-correlation of residual. The R-Square value is 0.866 which indicates that 86.6 percent of the total of variance in the DV (Social Media Publicity) is explained by IVs (relationship management, awareness creation, crisis management,

and reputation management). The remaining 13.4 percent is unaccounted for due to errors or other variables that might not be included in this research.

**ANOVAª**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 59.346 | 4 | 14.837 | 108.612 | .000ᵇ |
| | Residual | 19.807 | 145 | .137 | | |
| | Total | 79.153 | 149 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Social Media Publicity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Reputation Management, Relationship Management, Crisis Management, Create Awareness

*Table 4.9: ANOVA*

The above ANOVA table shows a significant value (i.e. p-value less than α=0.05) which indicates that there is goodness of fit between data and the model .This suggests that at least one of the independent variables is able to significantly influence the dependent variable.

**Coefficientsª**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | -.174 | .196 | | -.886 | .377 | | |
| | Relationship Management | .808 | .081 | .697 | 9.926 | .000 | .350 | 2.856 |
| | Create Awareness | .244 | .084 | .206 | 2.916 | .004 | .347 | 2.880 |
| | Crisis Management | -.112 | .047 | -.100 | -2.383 | .018 | .973 | 1.028 |
| | Reputation Management | .077 | .039 | .083 | 1.979 | .050 | .982 | 1.018 |

a. Dependent Variable: Social Media Publicity

*Table 4.10: Coefficients*

The Coefficient table as illustrated above shown, the VIF values of all the variables are less than 10 (2.856; 2.880; 1.028; 1.018); this shows that there is no multicollinearity

problem. The linear regression equation representing the findings on this study are as follows:

$$DV = const. + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + \ldots + BnXn + e$$

Social Media Publicity = -0.174 + 0.808 (Relationship Management) + 0.244 (Create Awareness) + 0.077 (Reputation Management)

Social Media Publicity = -0.174 + 0.808 (Relationship Management) + 0.244 (Create Awareness) + 0.077 (Reputation Management) + e

A unit increase in Relationship Management will increase social media publicity by 0.808 units.

A unit increase in awareness creation will increase social media publicity by 0.244 units

A unit increase in reputation management will increase social media publicity by 0.077 units.

For managerial implication, management can give priority to the following variables in descending order of importance; relationship management with path coefficient of 80.8 % followed by awareness creation with path coefficient of 24.4%, followed by reputation management with path coefficient of 7%.

### 4.4　　Testing the Hypothesis

From the research hypothesis that was stated in the third chapter of this study, testing of hypothesis was done with the use of SPSS 20.0 software.

**Hypothesis 1**

H1: Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management

Table 4.10 supports the hypothesis that indicates significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management (Since significant value {0.000} is less than 0.05).

**Hypothesis 2**

H2. Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness

Table 4.10 indicates the support of the second hypothesis, which indicates that significant relationship exists between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness (Since significant value {0.004} is less than 0.05).

**Hypothesis 3**

H3. Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of crisis management

Table 4.10 shows support to the third hypothesis which indicates significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of crisis management (since the significant value {0.018} is less than 0.05).

### Hypothesis 4

H4. Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and

public relations practice of reputation management.

Table 4.10 shows the support for the hypothesis that Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of reputation management (Since significant value {0.050} is the same as 0.05).

### 4.4.1 Hypothesis Results

| | Hypothesis Statement | p-Value | B-value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management | 0.00 | 0.808 | **Supported** |
| H2 | Significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness | 0.004 | 0.244 | **Supported** |
| H3 | Significance relationship exist between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of crisis management | 0.018 | -0.112 | **Supported** |
| H4 | Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of reputation management. | 0.050 | 0.077 | **Supported** |

*Table 4.11: Hypothesis Result*

## CONCLUSION

This chapter contained the introduction part; the pilot study discussion, the research approach section where descriptive analysis, reliability test, normality test, and multiple regression analysis were done. The last section which contained the hypothesis result was also discussed.

## 4.5    Part B-Descriptive question

The design of qualitative questions was done to unravel in-depth responses. Analysis of responses was done with the use of Constant Comparative Techniques (Glaserv & Strauss, 1967). This will be done by first Comparing incidents to categories; that is to compare each incident within the categories, this is done to know level of relationship. For easy analysis, similar category of responses will be arranged together and if not, a new group will be created.

The following are the analysis of the findings:

Do you think Social Media has hence Public Relations Practice and Why?

### 4.5.1   Create Awareness
According to the respondents 1

"yes, …..people get there updated knowledge through Social Media"

Respondent 2

"yes…inform on something important and latest News through Social Media"

Respondent 4

"yes, ….today people are active on social media……enhance Public Relations Practices"

Respondent 5

"yes, ….social media can be used to send messages"

Respondent 7

"Create publicity"

Respondent 8

"……...people can get informational knowledge through social media"

Respondent 9

"yes,………use to get awareness and latest event"

Respondent 14

"yes, the majority of people are using social media….using social media can easily get
many people awareness"

Respondent 17

"yes, social media has capacity to inform audience"

Respondent 20

"yes, used to reach audience, through real-life features and overall company background"

Responses above show the importance of social media in facilitating relationship management in Public relations practice. Responses indicate that today social media is used mostly by people on a daily bases, thus as public relations practitioner have the responsibility of publicity, Social Media channel can be harness in public relations practice to reach diverse people either globally or locally. The analysis of the result shows the triangulation of findings (similarity in the quantitative and qualitative analysis) in the area of the use of social media in public relations practice to generate awareness.

### 4.5.2 Relationship Management
Respondents 2

"yes, it's a tool…..to keep contact with the public"

Respondent 3

"yes, it helps them manage relationships with customers and organization"

Respondent 13

'yes, more direct and fast way to reach customers"

Respondent 15

"yes, ……… the relationship between organization and its public"

Analysis of the responses shows that social media has enhanced public relations practice in the area of relationship management. That is as part of public relations functions of enhancing cordial relationships with the public, responses indicate that social media can be harness in public relations practice to boost relationship management and reach out to the target. The analysis shows the triangulation of findings in public relations practice of managing relationship.

### Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. The discussion takes a comparison of the findings of the study and of previous studies. The discussion shows how this study finding integrates with as well as adds to the existing literature. The discussion is also conversed to answer the research questions, hypothesis, and objectives.

### 5.1 Social Media as a Public Relations Tool

Analysis of responses from respondents shows that social media can be

considered as public relations tool. This is as out of 150 respondents, 45 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that social media is a public relations tool, also 45 percent of the respondents agreed, only 5 percent are undecided, while 5 percent also disagreed. These findings show that social media can be considered as public relations tool.

## 5.2    Relationship management

Findings of this study indicate that the significant relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management, hence, in public relations practice, social media potential can be harness to manage relationship thus boost relationship management practice of the profession.

Previous researchers also indicated that relationship management is an important public relations practice. Sterne, (2008) explains that relationship management in Public relations practice is a broad view that is consist of messaging, maintaining relationships with stakeholders, reputation management, maintaining accessibility to media, linking to the strategic objectives of an organization, listening effectively to stakeholders and advocating of role to the other senior managers, according to Sterne, (2008) good public relations is listening and understanding issues, likewise, Public

relations is about being transparent, this is done through open communication over a long period, thus, help to build trust which is important for an organization growth. Furthermore according to Samsup, (2006) and Chun-ju, (2005), Communal relationship is about the present, on like exchange relationship that is about the future which is relevant in marketing, and communal relationship as public relations function provides a framework for PR practice to generating a long-lasting relationship between the organization and its public. The analysis of previous scholars' past studies showed that relationship management is a crucial function in public relations practice. In addition past studies also show the importance of social media in managing relationships. Jonathan, Paul, and Clifford (2012) evaluate how advocacy groups in the United States perceive and use Social Media as tools for facilitating civic-engagement, finds that it has potential for fast outreach, immediate feedback capacity, as well as communication speed. Noel-Levitz, (2007) states that the use of online media can be used to build an e-recruitment. Noel-Levitz further states that more students get the awareness of the institution through online publicity.

## 5.3    Awareness Creation

The findings of this study further support significant relationship between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness. This shows that social media publicity is an efficient channel that can be harness in public relations practice to create awareness about organization activities, products, and services, thus need for practitioners to harness its potentials. The findings of this study were further supported by previous studies which revealed the importance of awareness generation as part of public relations functions. Eisend and Kuster (2011) gave an explanation of the connection between publicity, customer attitudes, and purchase intention. They suggest that credibility perception enhances the importance of publicity. Linda (1998), findings revealed that by constantly putting messages out and associating those messages with the company name, the public has a heightened sense of the company mission. Linda further states that Public relations goals cannot be separated from organization's mission and because the organization's activities are controversial, the company needs Public Relations Practitioner to relates with the constituents, not only this such organization must provide a channel for constituents to give feedback. Reuben, (2008) also indicate the importance of social media in creating awareness in colleges and Universities. Furthermore,

previous researches indicate importance of social media in creating awareness. Participants in the survey by Jonathan, Paul, and Clifford (2012) mentioned that social-media have potential to create awareness of organizational-goals, strategies, and messages. Participants indicate the vastness and popularity in the use of social media by empowering the advocacy-groups reach multitude of individuals, including supporters, members and those who know nothing about the organization. Another important response that was emphasized by the advocacy group surveyed is how social-media assists them in reaching younger-people, most especially provide avenue to demonstrate that their organization is keeping up with the latest trends in the use of technologies.

## 5.4    Crisis Management

Conflict can be internal and external. Internal conflict can occur between the employee and employer or management and employee. Conflict can also take the form of external that is between organizations and other stakeholders like community, shareholders, government, trade union and others. The findings of this study support significance relationship exist between Social media publicity and public relations practice of crisis management. This shows a link with previous studies as indicated that managing crisis is a key

function in public relations practice. The findings of Yi-Hui (2001) supports the function of public relations practice on conflict resolution, which is mediated by organization public relationships. Different studies have also indicated the importance of social media in managing relationship in order to facilitate two-way communication (Jonathan, Paul, & Clifford, 2012; Suresh, Shivaram & Mohan, 2004).

### 5.5     Reputation Management

The analyses of this study revealed that significant relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of reputation management. Previous studies further indicate that reputation management is an important public relations function. Smith, (2008) study indicates that in an effort to enhance organizational effectiveness, public relations officers used persuasion to develop an organization lasting relationship with their publics, and by so doing such an organization is making itself unique to the public. This identity that stimulates uniqueness is known as the corporate branding or way the public see an organization based on how such organization presents itself to the public. Kiousis, (2007) study shows that based on the increasing pressure for profit in an organizations to demonstrate their social citizenship, which is an integral part of the organization reputation, public relations

professionals plan strategies and create messages targeting specific media outlets to emphasize the organizational traits that are likely to generate in a better image for the organization. Furthermore, study by Jennifer, (2004) proposed a model for online brand development. Jenifer examined the nature of brands and branding which leads to consideration of some of the unique aspects of online branding. Since Web-pages have significantly played an important role in online-branding, it can help to communicate brand messages and values. Branding is an important tool in building customer confidence and familiarity. Matesic, Vuckovic and Dovedan, (2010) in their study state that online reputation monitoring and management is a crucial factor in an open, networked, and transparent society. Therefore, social media potential in building online reputation can be harness to boost public relations practice of managing organizational reputation.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

#### 6.1       Conclusion

The findings of this research have shown that public relations practice is not just a relationship management function. Both the analyzed secondary and primary data revealed that public relations practice has gone beyond relationship management to other functions which include: Reputation Management (Harlan, Spotts, & Marc,

2014) Corporate Branding (Hagan, 2003; Smith, 2008); Communication and Awareness Generation (Linda,1998), leads to purchase intension (Eisend & Kuster, 2011); Create Collaborative Value-Communism and Collectivity (Grunig, 2000); Crisis Management or Resolution (Yi-Hui, 2001).

Furthermore, analysis of secondary data revealed that online publicity is a good tool that can be used to achieve the following functions; coordinate open and trust relationship (Damjana, et el. 2008); coordinate employee-management relationship (Water, et al. 2013); promote Innovations (Cutlip, et el. 2006); Promote ethics (Jin-A, et el. 2010); two-way communication with identifiable Group (Matesic, Vuckovic, and Dovedan, 2010); monitor and manage online reputation (Matesic, et el. 2010); communication tool (Reuben, 2008); e-recruitment (Noel-Levitz, 2007); reputation management *(*Matesic, Vuckovic and Dovedan,2010); likewise, it is an Innovative way of Marketing (Melewar Nichola & Smith, 2003).

However, this research was done to link the use of social media with public relations practice, this is as there is limited research in this area. This study was done to know if the use of social media can help to boost public relations practices. Based on these four hypotheses were

formulated. Analysis through the use of SPSS 20.0 revealed the support for the four hypotheses. That is, significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media publicity and public relations practice of relationship management; also, significance relationship exists between the use of Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of creating awareness. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing showed that significant relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of crisis management. Likewise, Significance relationship exists between Social Media Publicity and public relations practice of reputation management. Though the qualitative analysis majorly revealed two aspects which are relationship management and awareness creation, the quantitative support all the aspects (which are: relationship management, awareness creation, crisis management, and reputation management); this might be as a result of low sample size. However, in general overview these study findings support the proposed quadrant-Functions Model of Social Media Publicity in Public Relations Practice. This model is based on the core four functions (termed, quadrant) of public relations practice which are relationship management, awareness creation, crisis management; where the findings show the integration between this functions and how social media can be harness to

achieve efficiency and effectiveness of these functions, thus, enhanced validity of this model.

Though the small sample size used, create limitation for this study, but this was managed as purposive sampling was employed. In this situation mass communication students were given questionnaire and based on their in-depth knowledge in public relations subjects, and their social media awareness, they were able to give responses which make these study findings to be reliable and valid. However, future research can base their data collection on public relations professionals. By interviewing public relations professionals in an organization, more concrete and reliable evidence will be generated, based on their high level of experience in the practice of public relations.

## 6.2    Model

*Quadrant-Functions Model of Social Media Publicity in Public Relations Practice*
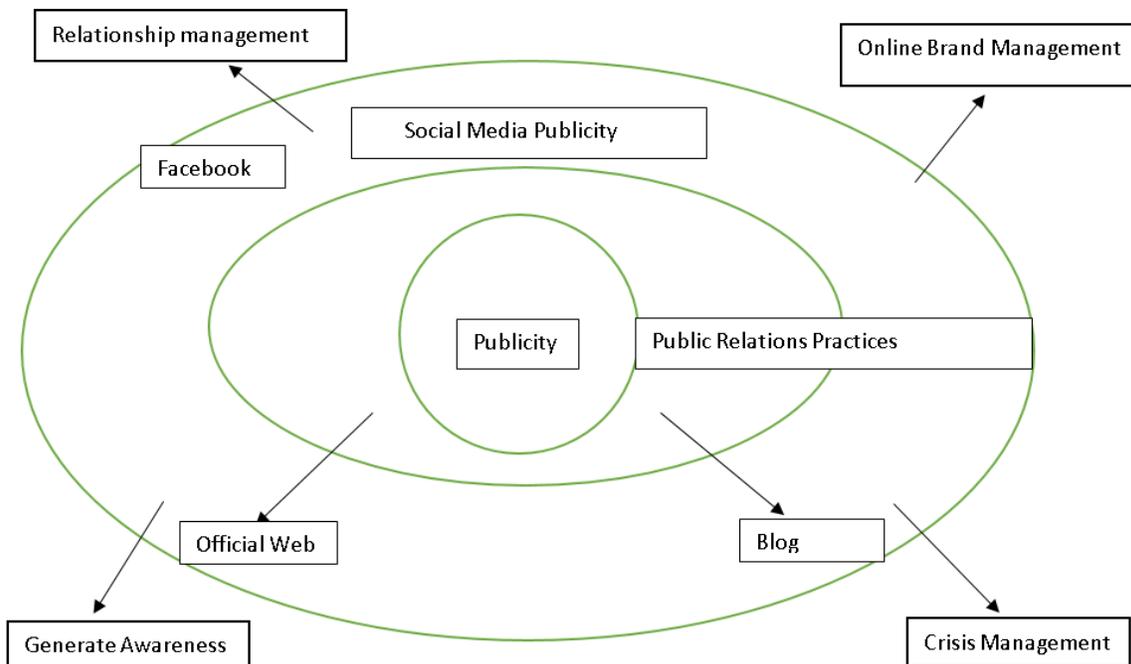


*Chart 6.2. Quadrant-functions Model of Social Media Publicity in Public Relations Practice*

## 6.2    Recommendations

Analysis done through the use of secondary and primary data recommend the need for            Public relations practitioners to harness social media potential to maintain and retain relationships with stakeholders. Today most people are making use of social media on a daily basis, and as part of public relations practice of building trust through cordial relationship, effort need to be made by practitioner to use it in achieving constant communication tailored at building trust and cordial relationships.

Furthermore, online brand reputation can only be built through trust, practitioners need to build their online activities on trust. An online campaign can also be harness by practitioners to relate with the target groups. Online media is a good channel to engage proactively with the public; that is practitioner can tap from social media potential to proactively curtail crisis. Through responses of stakeholders through online media; the organization can tap from this response or public opinion to know where crisis is looming, then devised strategy to rectify such crisis.

SEGi University needs to intensify effort at making use of social media to relates with students, knows their feelings, maintain relationship after students' enrolments (not just for enrolment, effort must be to use it to continuously relates with them) and also create awareness about the institution. This is based on its cost efficiency in reaching out to prospective students. Responses show that all the respondents make use of social media on a daily basis, hence shows the importance of social to reach diverse public on a daily basis. Therefore, SEGi University can build independent solid social media platform where students can relate with lectures, students can relate with one another, students can have easy access to school resources, lodge complaint and quick response enhanced, as well as have access to past lectures and material for each department in the institution. This will further build trust and confidence of the students; this will also go a long way to encourage prospective students to enrol. Though through SEGisphere students could have access to lecture materials and journals, there is need to educate students on its use.

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## 8.0     Appendixes

## 8.1     Questionnaire

Below questions are to know efficiency and effectiveness of Social Media Publicity Channel in achieving Public Relations Functions. Kindly give out your response by ticking the most appealing options.

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnic

   **4.** Dependent Variable- Social Media Publicity

| No. | Statements | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|-----------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| A1 | I make use of social media on daily basis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A2 | I will considered social Media as a Public Relations tool? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A3 | In Public Relations Practice Social Media can be used to facilitate relationship management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A4 | In Public Relations Practice Social Media is an efficient channel that can be used to manage organization reputation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A5 | In Public Relations Practice Social Media is an efficient channel that can be used in managing and resolving crisis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A6 | In Public Relations Practice Social Media is an efficient channel that can | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | be used to generate awareness about organizational activities | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## Independent Variable- Relationship Management

| No. | Statements | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B1 | I think I can trust SEGi Online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B2 | I am highly involved in SEGi online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B3 | SEGi Online publicity is open to all students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B4 | SEGi is highly committed to online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B5 | SEGi placed high marketing efforts through online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B6 | I was able to network with other students through SEGi online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Independent Variable- Create Awareness

| No. | Statements | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C1 | I was able to know SEGi through online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C2 | I have friend that know SEGi through online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C3 | I constantly visit SEGi official website to know latest bout the institution | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| C4 | Most time I am notify for lectures through online | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C5 | I used SEGi online platform to engage my colleagues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C6 | I am constantly updated about my academics record through SEGi online platform | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Independent Variable- Crisis Management

| No. | Statements | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D1 | SEGi devotes considerable time to manage crisis online | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D2 | I constantly visit SEGi online platform to render by feelings about the institution | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D3 | Most times I render my feelings through SEGi online platform I am quickly attended to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D4 | I engaged in collective discussion through SEGi online platform | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D5 | SEGi online platform has helped to promote unity among students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D6 | SEGi online platform has helped to promote management-students relationships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Independent Variable- Reputation Management

| No. | Statements | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----|-----------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| E1 | I will say I trust SEGi online content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E2 | SEGi always keep its online content promises | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E3 | I will recommend SEGi university to my friend through its online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E4 | Most times SEGi publicized its recent award through online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E5 | I have confidence in SEGi online publicity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E6 | SEGi online platform is highly transparent and widely access by students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Section B**

This section question was asked to know student's opinion about social media as a channel that can be harness to facilitate public relations practice.

1. Do you think social media has enhance public relations practice and why?

_____

_____

_____

_____