

The professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions: a manager's perspective.

Regine Mutimukeye

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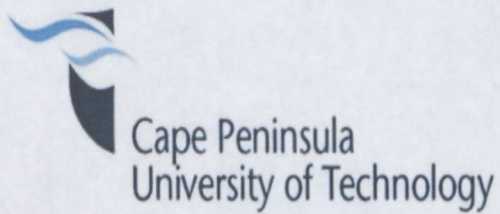
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**The professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions: a manager's perspective.**

**by**

**Regine Mutimukeye**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**Master of Technology: Public Relations Management)**

**in the Faculty of Informatics and Design**

**at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

**Supervisor: Deidre Porthen**

**Cape Town campus  
December, 2011**

## DECLARATION

I **Regine Mutimukeye** declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed

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Date

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions by using direct managers as a focal point to get their perspectives about their staff. The study used a structured questionnaire to get information from the managers in public relations or communication departments.

While different authors such as Aldoory & Toth, (2002); Wilcox and Cameron (2006:35) and Hon (1995) indicate that the public relations industry is feminised to the extent of 70 percent, the results of this study present it otherwise. The findings reveal that the trend of feminisation in Rwandan public relations industry is not on the same speed as the one in the industry worldwide. This means that based on the findings from different studies worldwide, females are represented by a big number in the public relations industry than males do. Furthermore, there is a gender gap in terms of responsibilities whereby women are more clustered in technical tasks rather than managerial ones. Although Rwanda has opted to empower women in its reconstruction process, they are still affected by the legacies of indigenous culture in terms of stereotypes associated with them and salary gaps which shows that the promotion of a female professional continue to be a problem in some organisations.

Considering the research results, the public relations industry in Rwanda is still a new field and hence its practitioners' professional status especially women is not well depicted. However, the results show that female practitioners are able to offer good services to their customers due to their innate caring character and professionalism. The results recommend that local high learning institutions should include public relations courses in their program to ensure long run availability of public relations professionals. In addition the Rwanda private sector is encouraged to open up public relations agencies which will contribute to the improvement of customer care in Rwanda.

Finally, the researcher recommends that public relations activities should be well planned in organisations to avoid confusion with other related fields such as marketing, for instance. The researcher further recommends that advance studies should be conducted to engage in the evaluation of the implementation of gender promotion laws and its efforts in various organisations.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Emmanuel, my daughter Gaga Lee-Ann,  
My late mother Florida, my father Raphael and the rest of the family.  
For your love, encouragement, support and inspiration.

## GLOSSARY

- ADB:** African Development Bank
- ARJ:** Association of Rwandan Journalists
- AU:** African Union
- BC:** Before Christ
- BCR:** Banque Commerciale du Rwanda
- CASE:** Council for the Advancement and Support of Education
- CEDAW:** Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CEO:** Chief Executive Officer
- CEPR:** The European Confederation of Public Relations
- CIA:** Central Intelligent Agency
- CIPR:** Chartered Institute of Public Relations
- CPUT:** Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- DESA:** Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- DPADM:** Division for Public Administration and Development Management
- EAPRA:** Eastern African Public Relations Associations
- EDPRS:** Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
- FAPRA:** Federation of African Public Relations Associations
- FWCW:** Fourth World Conference for Women.
- GBV:** Gender Based Violence
- GOR:** Government Of Rwanda
- GORDP:** Government of Rwanda Development Partners
- HIDA:** Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency
- HIV/AIDS:** Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
- IABC:** International Association of Business Communicators
- IPR:** Institute of Public Relations
- IPRA:** International Public Relations Association
- MIGEPROF:** Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
- MINECOFIN:** Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance
- MTN:** Mobile Telecommunication Network
- NEPAD:** The New Partnership for Africa's Development
- NGO:** Non-Governmental Organisation
- NIPR:** Nigerian Institute of Public Relations
- NIRI:** The National Investor Relations Institute
- NSPRA:** The National School of Public relations Association
- PR:** Public Relations
- PRAG:** Public Relations Association of Ghana
- PRAR:** Public Relations Association of Rwanda

**PRAT:** Public Relations Associations of Tanzania  
**PRAU:** Public Relations Associations of Uganda  
**PRETFUND:** Public Relations Education and Training Fund  
**PRISA:** Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa  
**PRSA:** Public Relations Society of America  
**PRSK:** Public Relations Society of Kenya  
**PRSSA:** Public Relations Student Society of America  
**PSF:** Private Sector Federation for Rwanda  
**REF:** Rwanda Editors Forum  
**RITA:** Rwanda Information Technology Authority  
**RWJA:** Rwanda Women Journalists Association,  
**SPSS:** Statistical Programme for Social Science  
**UK:** United Kingdom  
**UN:** United Nations  
**UNDP:** United Nations Development Program  
**UNIFEM:** Programme des Nations Unies pour la Femme (United Nations Program for Women)  
**USA:** United State of America  
**WCRWC:** Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

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## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

According to Struweg & Meintjes (2008:224) professionalization of public relations is a topic that can no longer be ignored and the future of public relations as a profession is in the hands of its current practitioners. The contemporary public relations as a profession originate in the 20th century (Skinner, Von Essen, & Mersham, 2004:20). Struweg & Meintjes (2008:227) state that professionalisation of public relations will improve some issues in the industry like increasing the salary of practitioners and promoting the public relations' body of knowledge among others.

The question is whether both men and women practitioners are doing their best to make it happen despite some stereotypes that did not allow women to fully participate in positions of higher responsibilities in public relations. Kankel & Dennis (2004:157) state that gender bias is one of these stereotypes which depict unfair difference in the treatment of men and women because of their gender. The authors indicate that traditionally this issue has been encountered mainly by women and when the topic is raised it often invokes images of women struggling to get along in a men's club environment (Kankel & Dennis, 2004:157)

Kankel & Dennis (2004:160) further denotes that social attitudes, cultural biases as well as gender bias are major factors discriminating against women and holding them back from attaining higher level jobs. Hence holding them back from reaching the desired level of professionalism. Gender imbalance in schools, in managerial positions, in hiring, in status and promotions prove the prevalent gender gap which has been a debatable issue in recent years by the officials of Rwandan government.

Gower states that women were initially accepted into the profession as it was a new field with few entry barriers. One reason for this trend was that the field did not have the same institutional barriers as other professions like law, medicine and accounting (Gower, 2001). Furthermore, the feminisation of public relations is credited to World War II as it was a new field that developed during the period of war. With men off at war, unable to shape and fill the majority of public relations jobs, women had greater access to higher positions in the field (Gower, 2001).

According to Toth & Aldoory (2001) about 70 percent of today's worldwide public relations practitioners are women, but this does not necessarily mean that they have all professional opportunities provided by the industry (Aldoory & Toth, 2002). According to Aldoory & Toth (2002) women hold just 20 percent of the top leadership spots in major firms. Furthermore, studies still reveal that men earn more than women and get promoted at higher levels than

women in the industry. While women do have many opportunities in public relations, they are not on the same pace with men when it comes to management and leadership (Aldoory & Toth, 2002). This is not unique to the public relations profession only and views have been shared by some male and female academics in different studies.

In his study, O'Neil (2003:168) reveals that women receive less professional recognition in the field of public relations around the globe. O'Neil contends that female practitioners in corporate organisations have significantly less formal structural power, employee support, organisational roles and hierarchical positions than male practitioners. As a result, academics consider that the glass ceiling in many fields including public relations and banking still exists and that the feminisation of some fields is increasing this disparity (Jamali, Safiedine & Daouk, 2006:626).

According to Wilcox & Cameron (2006:35) the significance of the glass ceiling in public relations shows how women can dominate a field in numbers on the one hand, and on the other hand that same field can still discriminate against their opportunities for advancement. Wilcox & Cameron (2006:35) state that women in public relations are segregated into the lower-level technician roles, spending time on routine activities such as writing, editing, and handling media relations. Conversely, more men are promoted into more powerful managerial role, engaging in activities such as counselling senior management and making key policy decisions.

All these studies seem to have only been carried out in the USA, United Kingdom, Germany and Australia. There are a limited number of similar studies conducted in Rwanda. Rwanda (see Figure 1.1) is one of the Sub-Sahara African countries that have made greater strides in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. In terms of women empowerment Rwanda is rated first in the world for the high number of women elected into parliament i.e. 56 percent of members of the parliament (ADB, 2008).

This research was conducted in 52 Rwandan public institutions and 41 private institutions specifically in public relations departments as the first option and communication departments where public relations departments do not exist. The study provided some scientific evidence regarding the handling of female public relations practitioners in Rwanda. It concentrated on the female public relations practitioners by exploring their professional status in their organisations as perceived by their direct public relations managers.



Figure 1.1: Map of Africa showing the location of Rwanda

## 1.2 Problem statement

Gender issues have been left out by Rwandan history in past years. Rwandan women were fully granted the right to stand for election in 1961. During the post-1994 genocide reconstruction of the country, the Government of Rwanda recognised women as key players in the nation building process. Gender issues have been targeted to be one of the key leading areas for Rwanda's economic and social development recovery after the 1994 genocide. In this regard, gender mainstreaming, affirmative action and empowerment of women in all aspects of life was the main emphasis of the government of Rwanda. Commitment to gender equality at the highest level of leadership and women's resiliency in poverty and willingness to step up to the challenges were the key elements that played a role in making women equal participants.

However, though the country's gender policy underpins the involvement of women in all areas of the country's life, the legacy of history, indigenous culture and many challenges of inequality still prevail to some extent. Public relations industry being a relatively new academic discipline is not an exception. Although there have been some media reports focusing on Rwandan public relations practice, there is no scientific research studies

focusing specifically on Rwandan public relations practice and more especially focusing on the position and contribution of female practitioners in the field. This study, therefore, investigated the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan institutions by targeting direct managers in public relations and communication departments.

### **1.3 Motivational background of the research problem**

In 2008 the Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR) was launched in Kigali with the aim of regulating the industry and strengthening professionalism in the public relations practice in Rwanda. This is an indication that public relations practice is still a relatively new industry in Rwanda. In an effort to develop the industry, a body of knowledge needs to be developed and understood by practitioners. In the late 1990's, Hutton (1999:200) states that public relations was a relatively new field of practice and scholarship. In review of current practice, one can denote that it is still a developing practice and scholarship. According to Hutton (1999:200) there is a need for general agreement in order for public relations to grow as a scholarly and professional venture. Hutton's argument entails that more exploratory studies need to be done in the industry's different areas. This study contributed to the professional status of female public relations practitioners in a country where the industry is relatively new.

Most of the literature and empirical evidence found in the public relations field about female public relations practitioners originate from well structured countries like USA, UK and Australia. However, in order, to understand issues related to females in public relations in Rwanda the researcher used available global literature so that the research findings and conclusions in this study can be compared to those used in the literature review.

Female issues in the public relations industry have been discussed by different authors. A 1978 Business week article entitled "PR: The Velvet Ghetto of Affirmative Action" asserted that "communications at least was safe, a 'velvet ghetto', where female managers could be counted as such but would not threaten men for top managerial roles (Grunig *et al.* 2001:253).

The article and term 'velvet ghetto' imply that public relations is a comfortable and safe department for women but is a department that is on the external edge of organisations with no real managerial status and no route of progression up in the organisation.

In 1998, the debate on whether public relations was certainly a ghetto for women workers continued and became the subject of Brown's 1998 article "Spin Sisters: Why is PR the only high tech field that women run?" Brown asks the question whether public relations is a 'pink

collar ghetto' that women get stuck in simply because organisations see it as low risk and a marginal business function rather than a central function such as finance or marketing.

Within Brown's article, Grunig seems to give credence to the idea that public relations can potentially become a 'velvet ghetto' for women workers, suggesting that the reason that public relations is a 'female intensive carrier' is because management positions in the industry are more accessible to women (Grunig *et al.* 2001:253). However, the academics suggest that the reason why management positions in public relations might be more accessible to women is because public relations is viewed as an insignificant function in business (Grunig *et al.* 2001:253).

Similarly to the 'velvet ghetto' phenomenon, the debate on whether a glass ceiling exists in the public relations industry which prevents women from reaching the upper echelons of management has been debated for several decades (Grunig *et al.* 1998). There is, however, lack of glass ceiling researches specific to the public relations industry in general and particularly to the Rwandan public relations industry. Wrigley's 2002 study "Glass Ceiling? What Glass Ceiling?" is one of very few which have examined whether glass ceiling exists in public relations.

Wrigley considered two feminist perspectives: the radical feminist approach which challenges the entire social structure and views female oppression as being deep rooted in the way society is structured, and the liberal feminist approach which is more accepting of the patriarchal structure of society and rather than looking to change it, looks to incorporate women into this structure. Wrigley (2002) identified a trend of refusal to acknowledge a glass ceiling amongst female public relations workers which was called 'negotiated resignation'. However, a study 'the glass ceiling audit' conducted by Grunig *et al.* (1998) found that women interviewed perceived much more gender discrimination within organisations than their male counterparts, contradicting Wrigley's 'negotiated resignation' concept.

Besides studies on Velvet Ghetto and Glass Ceiling phenomenon, a number of authors have also discussed the different roles females and males occupy in their organisations in the public relations practice. The main two roles identified were the technician role and manager role. Aldoory *et al.* (2001) describes a public relations technician as someone who carries out routine activities such as writing, editing, media relations and implementing the decisions of others. Grunig *et al.* (2001:220), on the other hand, described the public relations manager role as; counselling management, making communication policy decisions, evaluating programme results, supervising the work of others, planning, managing budgets, planning public relations programmes and meeting clients and executives. Research into gender roles can also perhaps shed some light on the reasons men and women operate at certain levels

within public relations. It should be considered whether either gender really is entrenched in a particular role or whether in actual fact, men and women just choose the roles that best suit their innate gender skills and competencies (Grunig *et al.* 2001:220).

Gender role refers to the positions that men and women should occupy, the relationship between women and men, and their distinguishing characteristics (Grunig *et al.* 2001:222). Research into public relations roles and the roles men and women play in the public relations industry has shown that women are more likely to work in the role of 'technician' within the industry as opposed to 'manager' role (Grunig *et al.* 2001:221). Grunig *et al.* (2001:221) argue that there is a continuing pattern of women engaging in technical activities with greater frequency than men. This trend continued to appear into the public relations industry of the 1990s and the new millennium with authors such as Brown and Grunig identifying the issue in recent years. Brown (1998:4) reported that women are over represented in technician roles and underrepresented in management roles while Grunig *et al.* (2001:221) found that women viewed gender as a crucial determinant of whether practitioners function in technician or manager roles. The authors estimated that women more than men perceived that women were more likely to be hired for public relations positions involving mainly communication skills (Grunig *et al.* 2001:264).

The 'roles study' supports the idea of the existence of glass ceiling across the upper levels of public relations industry, restricting women to technician roles. However, there are possible reasons for the predominance of women in technician roles that do not involve gender constraints but rather gender competencies. Lindley (2006) found that women in public relations are better communicators than their male counterparts which could perhaps explain why there are so many women working in technician roles. Authors (Yeomans, 2006; Grunig *et al.* 2001) support the idea that women are perhaps more adept at communication skills which are required in public relations. Yeomans (2006) reported that emerging research carried out among practitioners in Australia, Germany and the UK as to why women enter public relations suggests that it is an industry that is perceived as being 'feminine' and women have better communication skills than men making them eligible for roles involving communication.

The technician level of public relations in particular, demands excellent communication skills because often many tasks requiring skilled communication are delegated to technicians on a daily basis, for example 'selling in' stories to journalists, communicating with clients and communicating with suppliers (Yeomans, 2006). According to Yeomans (2006) if this is the reason that women are better at the job, rather than discriminating against men at junior levels, employers are actually just being sensitive in who they employ, wanting the best which more often than not happens to be female candidates.

Weaver Lariscy, & Tinkham, (1994:13) investigated the roles of female public relations practitioners working in higher education institutes. All participants in the research reported that they worked in technician rather than manager roles. The study also creates two role types; a female role and a male role within public relations. The 'female role' consists of women forming the 'conscience of the organisation'(Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham (1994:13). This is due to the perception that women are concerned about social issues and care about the organisations they work for and organisational publics. Weaver Lariscy & Tinkham (1994:13) described the male role as 'dominant insider' which refers to the organisation dominated by men and they have complete access to information. They also believe that they have the right to argue within an organisation more than women (Weaver-Lariscy & Tinkham, 1994).

The research conducted by Weaver Lariscy & Tinkham (1994) offers insight into the possible ways in which males and females operate within organisations, especially in public relations departments. However, the roles identified could lead to the assumption that gender bias is something which could never happen to men as they are just too dominant and too strong to fall victim. Consequently, leading to the assumption that gender bias only affects women and that they are the only potential victims within organisations.

Connolly's (2004) article "Real Transparency will break the Glass Ceiling" raises an extremely interesting point that perhaps women are discouraged from entering management because the stakes are so much higher for them. Connolly (2004) focuses on job security and the importance women place on it and examines how women who progress into management often face the new phenomenon of 'the glass cliff'. The glass cliff refers to the situation whereby women managers have a greater risk of failure and are more likely to be subjected to greater criticism when things go wrong than their male counterparts. Connolly (2004) argues that, especially, in periods of depressed markets and low share value, any female in management position faces a very challenging role. The author states that there is almost a culture in organisations of 'waiting' for women managers to fail (Connolly, 2004).

Research conducted by Large & Saunders (1995) examines gender inequity within the work place. The authors state that despite the trend for equal opportunities and advances in legislation, there is still a culture of gender inequality and job segregation. The authors explore a decision making process model which shows how a mixture of choices of individuals and organisational blockages can sustain a glass ceiling. The study found that management was still largely perceived as a male position and that segregation based on gender is still abundant within management. A significant finding was that segregation seems to be getting worse and that equally qualified male and female graduates are now playing on increasingly bumpy playing fields (Large & Saunders, 1995).

However, it is noted that often women may be juggling the desire to work in public relations with the desire to have children and raise a family so may be unwilling or unable to work in managerial roles. Women may actually be voluntarily resigning themselves to technician roles simply because these roles may offer more flexibility and less responsibility and pressure. Aldoory (2001);Toth *et al.* (1998); Grunig & Toth (1993) generally concur that the females that reach the management level still carry out more technician tasks than males working in manager roles. Possible reasons cited for this are that females do not feel as comfortable delegating tasks in comparison to male practitioners who are comfortable with delegation. This may explain why female managers carry out more 'technical' tasks. The authors further denote that often female managers have fewer subordinates than male managers, so cannot fully delegate, thus requiring female managers to complete some technician tasks themselves.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

There has been few studies conducted in Rwanda on female public relations practitioners, it creates an opportunity to explore the professional status of female practitioners in the Rwandan public relations industry. The main focal area for this study is to establish the status of the female public relations practitioners in the Rwandan public and private institutions, and to explore whether there is professional recognition of these females by their managers. In an attempt to obtain solutions, the following research questions were developed:

- To what extent female public relations practitioners experience a glass ceiling problem within the Rwandan public relations practice?
- How does education assist female practitioners in reaching management positions in Rwandan public relations practice?
- Are female practitioners receiving the same amount of status, power and respect as their male counterparts?
- How does Rwandan institutional culture assist female practitioners to balance work and family responsibilities?
- To what extent gender stereotypes exist in Rwandan Public relations industry?

## **1.5 Aims and objectives of the study**

### **1.5.1 Main objectives**

The major aim of this study was investigate the PR managers' views of the status of female practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions, in relation to professional recognition in the industry. This was achieved by investigating and gathering information relating to the daily activities and behaviour of female practitioners. The information was retrieved from the respective managers in the selected public relations offices. Moreover, as an exploratory study and due to the limited prior research done in this field, this study was motivated by three reasons. As Babbie (1998) also explained the objectives stated below attempted to pave the way for future researchers to explore the status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan institutions.

- To satisfy the curiosity of the researcher and better understand the Rwandan public relations industry as the industry is relatively new in Rwanda.
- To provide scientific evidence on an under-researched area in Rwanda, the public relations industry.
- To test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study in this industry in Rwanda.

### **1.5.2 Specific objectives**

Specific objectives to this study are the following:

- To determine the extent to which glass ceiling exist in Rwandan public relations practice against female practitioners.
- To determine whether education assist female practitioners in reaching management positions in Rwandan public relations practice.
- To determine if female public relations practitioners receive the same amount of status, power and respect as their male counterparts
- To determine the contributions of Rwandan institutional culture in assisting female practitioners to balance work and family responsibilities.
- To establish if gender stereotypes exist in Rwandan public relations industry.

## **1.6 Clarification of key concepts**

This section contains some of the terms that were deemed to be vital for the meaning of the topic and the researcher has opted to define them for the readers.

### **1.6.1 Glass ceiling**

The term glass ceiling in public relations has been a debatable issue. It is argued that, glass ceiling is one of the reasons why women in public relations are held in technician roles rather than managerial ones. According to Large & Saunders (1995) it refers to situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organisation is stopped at a lower level because of some form of discrimination, most commonly sexism or racism.

It is generally believed to be an unofficial, invisible barrier that prevents women and minorities from advancing in various careers. When the term is broken down, a "ceiling" means that there is a limitation blocking upward advancement, and a "glass" (transparent) because the limitation is not immediately apparent and is normally an unwritten and unofficial policy (Large & Saunders, 1995). This invisible barrier continues to exist, even though there are no explicit obstacles keeping minorities from acquiring advanced job positions as there are no advertisements that specifically say "no minorities hired in this organisation", nor are there any formal orders that say "minorities are not qualified", but they do lie underneath the surface. The "glass ceiling" is distinguished from formal barriers to advancement, such as education or experience requirements.

However, this glass ceiling tends to cripple working women the most (Large & Saunders, 1995). It prevents a large number of women, ethnic minorities, and sexual minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious, and high paying jobs in the workforce. According to Grunig, Toth, & Hon (2001), this barrier not only makes many women feel that they are not capable of handling these high-ranking positions, but also that their bosses do not take them seriously or actually do not see them as potential candidates. It is usually indicated by paying differently for comparable work, Sexual, ethnic, racial, religious discrimination or any other harassment in the workplace and lack of family-friendly workplace policies. In this study, this term is very important as its existence in an organisation prevents its victims to reach the desired level of professional status.

As Wrigley, (2002) states: The glass ceiling hinders not only individuals, but also society as a whole by effectively cutting out a pool of potential corporate leaders and eliminating over one-half of population. It deprives the economy of new leaders, new sources of creativity and the "would-be" pioneers of the business world.

### **1.6.2 Public Relations Technician**

Public relations technician is someone who carries out routine activities such as writing, editing, media relations and implementing the decisions of others, producing messages; disseminating messages; making media contacts; meeting with peers; handling correspondence and making calls (Aldoory *et al.* 2001; Sowel, 2004:1).

### **1.6.3 Public Relations manager's role**

Grunig *et al.* (2001:406) described the public relations manager's role as: advising management, making communication policy decisions, evaluating programme results, conducting or analysing research, supervising the work of others, planning, managing budgets, planning public relations programmes and meeting clients and executives.

### **1.6.4 Velvet Ghetto**

The velvet ghetto is an idea describing the high profile, but low power positions in business and government that are given to women and minorities (Domhoff and Zweigenhaft, 2006). Placing minorities and women into these positions presents an image of diversity and progressiveness. Domhoff and Zweigenhaft contend that such positions tend to have a great deal of influence, but rarely are given the power to veto.

### **1.6.5 Glass cliff**

A situation wherein someone has been promoted into a risky, difficult job where the chances of failure are higher (Connolly, 2004). Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2007:351) also contends that the glass cliff refers to the situation whereby the positions women gain on entering senior management tend to be more precarious and to be associated with greater risk than those occupied by men.

### **1.6.6 Professional status**

Due to the importance of this concept to the study; the researcher has defined the two words separately. This is done to emphasise the significance of its meaning and to provide authors' views about the term. Wylie (1994:1) provided interdisciplinary guidelines for an undertaking to be called a "profession". Firstly, it needs to be a well-defined body of scholarly knowledge; secondary, the practitioners must have completed some standardised and prescribed course of study; thirdly, the undertaking should be examined and certified by a governing body; and lastly oversight by a governing body with disciplinary powers.

On the other hand, Cogan described a "profession" as an undertaking that concentrates on the vocational aspects of applying an understanding of the theoretical structure of some

department of learning or science (Cogan, 1953:34). Furthermore, Lennertz (1991:577) states that the essence of a profession, above other complex social institutions, is its identification with public purpose, intellectual tradition, and a fiduciary relationship. However, defining "profession" is not that easy. The essence of a "profession" could be argued as practitioners receiving a special training in a specific body of knowledge leading to an exclusive area of practice, of them being learned, and of them as having a duty or social responsibility.

As far as the term status is concerned, it is the position or rank an employee holds as well as their formal title within the organisation. Shell (2003:118) defines it as "a hierarchical ranking or ordering of people in a given society". According to Barnard (1946:47) the conditions that determine one's status in an organisation; the differences in abilities of the individuals, the differences in the difficulties of doing various kinds of work and the differences in the importance of various kinds of work define one's status. Hence, it is evident that status is something given to the individual by others and cannot be claimed.

For the purpose of this study, the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions was based on the statistics of females in managerial positions of these institutions. The researcher focused on the manager's perspective because Barnard (1946:47) asserted that one's status cannot be claimed as it is determined by one's ability and difficulties in handling various tasks and this can only be evaluated by the direct manager who usually assigns those tasks.

### **1.6.7 Gender stereotype**

According to George & Jones (1999:112) a stereotype is a set of desperately simplified and often inaccurate beliefs about the typical characteristics of a particular group. The danger of using stereotypes is that they categorise people into generalised compartments that might not be true for the individual. Wood (2001:224) revealed that organisations tend to classify women into one of four roles: sex object, mother, child or iron maiden. Sex object stereotype defines women in terms of their sexuality and much emphasis is placed on appearance and reflects the cultural tendency to judge women on what they look like rather than their competence (Wood, 2001:244).

The consequences of stereotyping women as mothers in organisations are twofold. The first is the expectation that women will 'listen to, support, and help others' (Wood, 2001:245). This stereotype can lead to job segregation where women are put in positions that traditionally support 'women's roles' in society. The second is that women will not be as serious as men about their careers because they are or will be mothers in the future; it assumes that motherhood will take priority. This perception hinders women from receiving organisational

backing in terms of training and promotional opportunities which then perpetuates the stereotype.

The woman as a child stereotype reflects the social view of women by organisations as less mature, competent, or capable of making decisions than men (Wood, 2001:246). Wood (2001:246) emphasises that stereotyping females as children often occurs under the pretence of protecting them. This view assumes that women will not be as effective in carrying out their job responsibilities and therefore should be limited to positions where they can be supervised.

Lastly, according to Wood (2001:248) iron-maiden stereotype sees women as being unwomanly; "she is unfeminine, manly or one hard women." A woman who is an iron-maiden is seen as possessing masculine personality which she is criticised for. In addition, even women who are more ambitious for instance who dream about constructing their own houses, getting their own cars are perceived as iron-maiden.

## **1.7 Research design and methodology**

### **1.7.1 Methodology**

This research is an exploratory study and used both qualitative and quantitative data in order to reach the conclusions drawn. The research instrument is survey questionnaires sent to public relations/communication managers as respondents in both public and private institutions. The majority of the questionnaires were distributed via email while others are posted to the research assistant who handed them over to the respondents and collected them after they were filled by the respondents.

### **1.7.2. Sampling technique**

Non probability sampling technique and more specifically convenience sampling was used in this research. This means that the probability of any particular member of the population being chosen was unknown (Zikmund, 2000:474). Welman & Kruger (2002:61) added that any element to be included in the sample cannot be specified and some elements may have no chance of being included at all. After identifying the number of Rwandan public and private institutions, a convenience sampling method is used in order to get the institutions to be included in the sample. In this research, convenience sampling was used because the population under study was considered to be heterogeneous. Welman & Kruger (2002:62) define accidental sampling as the collection of members of the population that are near and readily available for research purposes. Hence, after being divided into two groups i.e. public and private any institution which has an online facility from each group was included in the population in order to get the desired number of the sample. The researcher contacted 280 institutions that were on the list of organisations in the Private Sector Federation for Rwanda

(PSF) database, which was formulated through its eight chambers for the first group of private institutions and the official Rwandan Government web site for public institutions. A public relations or communication manager at each institution is regarded as part of the sample.

### **1.7.3 Delineation of the study**

This study is conducted in the Rwandan public and private institutions and questionnaires are restricted to senior managers in public relations or communication departments.

### **1.8 Significance and contribution of the study**

The number of studies on the professional status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners are limited. The study is beneficial to both academics and public relations practitioners as more evidence about the prevailing issues regarding gender and leadership in Rwandan public relations industry will be presented.

Furthermore, the study could build a network among Rwandan public relations practitioners as it creates awareness about the current development of the industry. It could also lead to knowledge and skills being shared which could bring about further development of the industry. In addition, the study is beneficial to PRAR (Public Relations Association of Rwanda) because it may act as a guide to managers' perception to the abilities of female staff in the public relations industry.

The study serves as a secondary source of information available to the public relations industry as well as increasing the body of knowledge at the academic institution, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), where the researcher is pursuing her studies.

### **1.9 Overview of the study**

This study consists of six main chapters which are structured as follows:

Chapter one provides a basic outline of what the study covers including the statement of the research problem, the motivational background to the study, research questions as well as research aims and objectives. It discusses some of the basic concepts deemed important for the better understanding of the topic and further delineates the study and provides its significance.

The second chapter examines various literature on public relations as a profession, its practice and its development throughout the continents. The theoretical grounding of public relations, international and African public relations governing bodies are also presented. The status of females in the industry with a detailed examination of various challenges that

particularly women face and female leadership in public relations are expressed. The chapter also identifies the relationship between public relations and its associated fields, with specific reference to marketing.

The third chapter presents an overview on the role of women and their professional status in the Rwandan context with specific reference to the current status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners.

The fourth chapter describes the methodology of the study. It examines the methods used in collecting data for the study. The study population, sampling method, data collection and description of the research instrument is described in this chapter, which leads to the data analysis process.

Chapter five depicts the results of the study by presenting the profile of the respondents including the description of the research data. The findings and analysis are presented in a manner that expresses its validity.

Finally, the sixth chapter of the study discusses the conclusions and major findings of the research study and critically evaluates the level of professional status among Rwandan female public relations practitioners according to their managers' perspective. This assessment is based on the components of the questionnaire framework as well as its demographical section and then limitations of the study and recommendations for further study are presented.

### **1.10 Summary**

The chapter introduced the research problem by presenting a clear background of the research problem and the motivation behind the study. The chapter noted that the main purpose of this research was to explore the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions. In order to give concise meaning and direction of the research problem, clarification of fundamental terms was presented in this chapter. Finally, the chapter presented a brief thesis structure to explain what is written in each chapter. The following chapter concentrates on the evaluation of historical and theoretical grounding of the public relations profession and the involvement of women in the industry.

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL GROUNDING OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSION, AND WOMEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE INDUSTRY

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines literature on fundamental public relations theories including four models of public relations, feminist theory, situational theory, excellent theory and systems theory of public relations. For the purpose of this study it is important to define the term public relations which will be supported by literature with reference to the historical development of the public relations profession on the African, American, European and Asian continents in order to present a holistic overview. The importance of governing bodies and public relations education will be addressed as this has a direct impact on the development of the industry on a developing continent like Africa.

The public relations discipline is at times compared to or confused with other fields like marketing and journalism, this chapter presents differences and similarities between public relations and its associated fields. Moreover, public relations as a profession, a brief review on its code of conduct and ethics is also presented. The involvement of women in the industry at the international level, especially in America will be discussed as it has a direct effect on the study. The barriers that females encounter when trying to reach managerial positions in the public relations industry including barriers associated with organisational culture and societal barriers are also addressed. A deep look is placed on the stereotypes associated with gender in public relations, including sexual harassment which are among reasons leading gender gap in leadership positions in public relations industry (Kiely & Henbest, 2000:66). The concluding discussions identify the public relations roles, professional position of women in the public relations industry as well as other factors behind gender gap in the public relations discipline.

### 2.2. Theoretical grounding of public relations

According to Van Heerden (2004:37) the theoretical composition is the most important axis of an academic discipline as it guides the learner about the practice of that particular discipline in real life. Grunig's four models of public relations which describe the early days of public relations practice and its characteristics form the platform for this discussion. Feminism theory of public relations, Situational theory, Excellence theory and Systems theory are presented and its impact on the practice of public relations is expressed.

According to Grunig (1992:2) these theories have helped to improve the field of public relations in many ways. Grunig (1992:2) state that "the early days of public relations knew no theories, and hence little to no thought was put into communication plans, tactics, strategies, or programmes". Therefore, being deficient of a theoretical foundation, public relations mostly did much damage in the past (Grunig, 1992:3). This deficiency posed negative consequences to companies such as financial losses as well as tarnished organisational image. Public relations pioneers had to become more innovative to ensure public relations' survival (Grunig, 1992:3). According to Grunig (1992:2) the application and practice of public relations are enhanced by theories in order to serve the organisational and public interest.

### 2.2.1. Grunig's four models of Public Relations

A range of world views of the public relations practice have been captured in the following four models developed by Grunig & Hunt (1984:13). One of the major contributions to public relations is Grunig's four models of public relations as they depict the developmental stages that public relations went through to become what it currently is (Grunig, 1992:76). Grunig (1992:286) explains that these models are viewed as a set of principles and patterns in order to describe the behaviour that characterises any approach taken by any public relations department or individual.

**Table 2.1. Four models of Public Relations**

Model Name	Type of communication	Model Characteristics
Press agency/publicity model	One-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audience to behave as the organisation desires.</li> <li>• It is synonymous with promotion and publicity and</li> <li>• It strives to get the particular organisation well mentioned in the media.</li> </ul>
Public Information model	One-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses press releases and other one-way communication techniques with the intention to inform.</li> <li>• Public relations practitioner is often referred to as the journalist in residence.</li> </ul>
Two-way asymmetrical model	One-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses persuasion and manipulation to influence audience to behave as the organisation desires.</li> <li>• Does not use research to find out how the public(s) feel about the organisation.</li> </ul>
Two-way symmetrical model	Two-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses communication to negotiate with publics to resolve conflict,</li> <li>• Promotes mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and its public(s) and they adjust to each other.</li> </ul>

Source: Grunig, 1992:289

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:23) during the press agency era, the press agent was intended to influence public opinion through the creation of news. To some extent their output was not the whole truth but as long as their clients' needs were met, nothing else mattered. Press agents did not invest any time in research or care much about ethics the main focus was behaviour manipulation. According to Lubbe & Puth (1994:8) the press agency era was mainly based on the technician role of public relations as the primary function is reporting in mass media. Lubbe & Puth (1994:8) defines public relations technicians as people who supply technical services like writing, editing, media contacts, photography and production of newspaper. Press agency could be perceived as detrimental to the organisation if the news provided is incorrect and distorted (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:21). Propaganda is the purpose of this communication; it focuses on one way and viewed as telling and not listening.

Lubbe & Puth (1994:8) describes the public information model as a technician sided role used to broadcast information through mass media and other controlled media. Compared to the previous model, there was a bit of improvement in public information model because at least a little research was done in order to get the facts (Lubbe & Puth 1994:8). One way communication is used as the public is not given room for comments and feedback. The purpose of this model is used to spread information but not necessarily with a convincing intention (Grunig, 1992:289; Grunig & Hunt, 1984:23).

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:23) the asymmetrical model dates to 1920 and its purpose is scientific persuasion. The model denotes the organisational goal as that of environmental control and public relations' contribution is through advocacy of the organisations position. The two way asymmetric model is perceived as an improvement because practitioners were required to implement real public relations techniques in order to get inside the heads of consumers and satisfy them (Grunig & Hunt 1984: 23). These techniques included research and Grunig and Hunt called this era "scientific persuasion" (Sharpe, 2000:349; Grunig & Hunt, 1984:23). According to Lubbe & Puth (1994:9) having research component in the practice, made it possible for practitioners to determine the proper messages and channels through which to disseminate information in order to persuade the public.

The two way symmetrical model dates back to 1960 and values mutual understanding. Grunig & Hunt (1984:23) found that two way communication was emphasised to negotiate with publics and promote mutual understanding as well as respect between the organisation and its publics. With this model, public relations practitioners serve more as intermediaries than as advocates (Grunig, 1992:77). Grunig (2000:32) noted that with two-way model, practitioners use research and dialogue in order to bring about symbolic changes in the ideas, attitudes and behaviours of both the organisation and its publics. Research was very

crucial in the two way symmetrical model to learn how the public perceives the organisation on one hand and to determine the consequences of the organisation's actions to the public on the other. Research was also used to measure the effects of the public relation' efforts on the public's understanding of the organisation and vice versa (Grunig, 1992:289). Lubbe & Puth (1994:9) emphasises that the model requires the combination of technical and managerial roles of public relations to be successful. According to Grunig (2000:32) this model also adjusts an organisation to the environment in the sense that the organisation must act and react to changes including political, economical, social, technological factors from the environment and so should the environment.

**Table 2.2. Characteristic of public relations four models**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Models</b>			
	<b><i>PR press Agency</i></b>	<b><i>Public information</i></b>	<b><i>Two way asymmetrical</i></b>	<b><i>Two way symmetrical</i></b>
<b><i>Purpose</i></b>	PR propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
<b><i>Nature of communication</i></b>	One way communication	One way and the truth was important	Two way: imbalanced effects	Two way: balanced effects
<b><i>Communication model</i></b>	Source to the receiver	Source to the receiver	Source to the receiver and feedback back to the source	Group to group
<b><i>Nature of research</i></b>	Little: counting house	Little: readability readership	Formative: evaluative of attitudes	Formative: evaluative of understanding
<b><i>Leading historical figures</i></b>	PT Barnum	Ivy Lee	Edward Bernays	Bernays educators, PR professional leaders
<b><i>Where is PR practiced today</i></b>	Sports, theatre, PR Product, PR promotion	Government , non-profit Public relations business	Competitive business agencies	Regulated business agencies

Source: Sharpe, 2000:349; Grunig & Hunt, 1984:22

The overview presented on of the four models of public relations aims to identify the developmental stages of the field. The need to present information about public relations practitioners and the conditions under which they work in the field through the use of public relations theories. The feminist theory of public relations is based on the thought that women practitioners suffer from social injustices because of their gender (McCammond, 2006:57). Those injustices could present reasoning with regards to the gender gap in managerial positions in the field of public relations.

## 2.2.2. Feminist theory of public relations

According to Rubin (1975: 204) feminism aims at creating a genderless society in which a person's sexual anatomy is irrelevant to the identity of the person, what the person does and what should be done to the person. Dow (1996: xxiii) defines it as "a set of political ideas and practices developed through feminist movements dedicated to the progress of women and the transformation of patriarchy". Liao (2006:106) on the other hand emphasises that empowerment of women should be an essential concept in feminism. Liao states that individuals have a sense of ability and confidence which might be used in order to change something in their lives (2006:106). Hooks (2000:26) defines feminism as the movement to end women's oppression.

Feminism was reinforced with its current issue within the public relations industry. According to Grunig, Toth & Hon (2001:522) the public relations industry is now feminised to the extent that 70 percent of practitioners are women but only 20 percent of them are in management positions. Wilcox & Cameron (2006:35) consider that women are being maltreated and discriminated against in the public relations industry hence the feminist movement came into place to encourage people to get rid of any form of unfairness and oppression that might exist against women.

McCammond (2006:57) state that the basis of feminist ideology is that society is organised into a patriarchal system in which men have advantage over women. The first wave of feminism describes the feminist movement during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when there was a growing belief in the Western countries that women were being oppressed. According to McCammond (2006:57) the result of feminist activism, was that women succeeded in becoming enfranchised in terms of the political and legal system in the United States and the United Kingdom. This era granted women the right to vote, to pursue higher education and lifted restrictions on employment (McCammond, 2006:59).

Dahlerup (1986:2) described the second wave of feminism as the second peak of a feminist movement that has existed for more than 100 years. According to Whelehan (1995:8) feminists of the late 1960's and 1970's were more reflective on what it means to be a woman and were interested in questioning women's roles in the social and familial realm. Although women could to some extent redefine their social status by working, the naturalised association of 'women and the home' still haunted them (Whelehan, 1995:9). This era focussed on creating support networks where women could help each other.

According to Wood (2001:84) feminists often disagree on the necessity of the third wave due to the fact that it has not fully developed yet and are still in the process of defining itself. Third wave feminists see the primary goal of the third wave as addressing the gap between the second wave goal of unlimited possibilities for all people and the evident inequities and exclusions that tarnish social life (Wood, 2001:84). Furthermore, Wood (2001:84) states that the third wave is supposed to change the belief that feminism is only a western philosophy and one of its distinguishing features are that it includes women of different ethnicities, abilities, disabilities, classes, appearances and sexual orientations.

Grunig, Toth & Hon (2000:52) focused on how women and feminist values can benefit the industry, positing that feminist values are intrinsic to the public relations profession. Grunig, Toth & Hon (2000:53) argue that public relations is an industry founded on feminist values, such as honesty, justice, and sensitivity, which will enhance the symmetrical communication patterns of public relations. Furthermore, the two-way symmetrical model of public relations requires resolving conflict and building relationships, which are fundamentally feminist values (Grunig, Toth & Hon, 2000:52).

#### **2.2.2.1. Forms of feminism**

According to McCammond (2006:59) feminism is comprised of different forms although the foundation of all feminist thought is the belief that women suffer from systematic social injustices because of their gender. However, the difference lies in defining the oppressor of women and the source of the oppression (McCammond, 2006:59). Liberal, cultural, Marxist/socialist, radical, ecological and post-feminism will be part of the discussion in the following section.

##### ***Liberal feminism:***

This theory originates from liberal political philosophy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which viewed laws and politics as the approach in which women can achieve equality. According to Wood (2001:64) liberal feminism believes that men and women are basically alike and equal in all important aspects. This perspective argues that all humans possess natural rights, but only men have been granted these rights. Hence, Maynard (1998:253) focused on individual rights; concepts of equality; justice and equal opportunities and the fact that women are prevented from achieving these rights by certain social barriers.

Liberal feminists question equality in organisations and use this as a frame from which they criticise the system (Wanaca-Thibault & Tompkins, 1998:611). Liberal philosophy advances the argument that the rights of the individual are supposed to be untouchable (Whelehan, 1995:37). This argument ignores other social or cultural factors which might make it impossible for an individual to enjoy their rights (Whelehan, 1995:37). According to McCammond (2006:59) liberal viewpoint tends to assume that people act in their own best interests but it is clear in the case of women particularly, that they frequently put others before themselves in their homes as well as in their work places. Liberal feminists offer a two-fold solution towards achieving equality and say that women should enter the male-dominated work force and secure positions of power. Sowell (2004:1) state that women simply need to empower themselves in order to be socially, politically and professionally equal to men.

### ***Marxist or Social feminism:***

The social feminists state that private property which gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion, and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the root of women's oppression in a social context, hence the emphasis on dismantling capitalism (Wood, 1995:75). The Marxist view point emphasises that the oppression of women is also attributed to their social class in the society (Wood, 1995:75). This is aggravated by capitalism which forces mostly women to be involved in reproduction labour without forgetting their usual domestic labour and this lead to further economic inequality (Tong, 1989:173). Social feminists are committed, like radical feminists, to the concept that personal and private lives of women should be publicised to be able to trace any possible oppression (Sowell, 2004:1). These activists are interested in the position of women in the workplace (Wood, 1995:75). According to Wood (1995:75) social feminists consider that traditional gender division of labour should be eliminated and fathers should fully play a part in house work and childrearing as well. Feminists also believe that women should be rewarded for house work and that it should be regarded as any other career (Wood, 1995:75).

Whelehan (1995:49) state that the theoretical tendency of women for domestic and caring roles influences dominant attitudes to women within the labour market. Being the best at the caring role, women loose some employment opportunities and end up in lower paying jobs. According to Whelehan (1995:49) women's jobs are qualitatively different from men's, they require high care like nursing and teaching and they are likely to pay less. Whelehan, (1995:49) state that "women who are in good paying jobs also suffer from the effects of trying to do it all by doing impressive work in their offices and carrying out routine responsibilities of housework and childcare in their homes".

Social feminism ideology received support from the public as it spread the attention not only to the oppressed women due to their social class in general but also other people who are culturally; socially; economically and physically disadvantaged (Van Zoonen,1996:31). These groups include people who are affected by racial discrimination; gender orientation; age and physical ability which make them vulnerable.

### ***Radical feminism:***

According to Wanaca-Thibault & Tompkins (1998:608) these feminists describe women's oppression as being stranded in reproduction and sexuality. Women are advised to distance themselves from men in order to realise their full potentials. However, psychoanalytic feminists argue that women's nature is socially orientated and cannot help but to exercise their compassionate character of nurturing and being concerned about others (Wood, 2001:68). According to Littlejohn (2002:223) radical feminism perceive patriarchy as the cause of women's oppression and advises it must be abolished to achieve proper equality. The author state that men must consent to share supremacy and possessions that patriarchal society has provided them with.

### ***Cultural feminism:***

According to Evans (1995:78) these activists "greatly value women's role in the home, embrace femininity and the definition of woman is central to their school of thought". Cultural feminists believe that only women can define themselves and how they should be valued. Evans (1995:78) advances two arguments in support of this school of thoughts. Firstly, Evans argue that women must reclaim their feminine values and secondly women and men should neither live nor work together. Cultural feminists disagree with the basic assertion of liberal feminists that women and men are equal and alike in many aspects (Wood, 2001:67). This women's group believes that women are deeply different to men as they are more committed to harmony than men (Wood, 2001:68).

### ***Ecological feminism:***

According to Wood (2001:103) ecofeminism or ecological feminism is a thinking born from the combination of feminist and environmental thoughts. The philosophy articulates that if an individual thinks that committing environmental abuse is something minor, that individuals' state of mind may also lead to the oppression of women. This is because ecological feminists compare treatment of women to the treatment of the Earth's natural resources (Wood, 2001:103). Ecofeminism may include goddess worship and pagan rituals and is therefore, matriarchal in nature. The activists confirm that everything in the environment whether visible or not should be given undisturbed peace and this should be applied to people as well

(McCammond, 2006:64). These include supernatural beings, animals, plants, oceans, and people.

### ***Post feminism:***

According to McCammond (2006:65) women are still finding it difficult to redefine their roles when traditional stereotypes are still widely accepted in some societies. Wolf (1990:2) contends that "today's successful woman is still tyrannized by Western standards of beauty particularly in this age of cosmetic surgery". Wolf (1990:2) further explains that the beauty industry is seen as an innovative form of patriarchal authority where the female body is regarded as incomplete. However, Wolf (1990:2) blames women for this position and expresses that the environment never ceases to change and so should people in order to adapt to it.

Wood (2001:83) contends this approach by asserting that it is naïve to think that by not exercising personal aspiration, individual women can avoid being target of violence. In Wood's perspectives, a woman should be independent to do whatever she wants with her body as long as it doesn't harm others. Moreover, choosing to exercise her will or not must not have anything to do with the way she is treated in society. Wood adds that women are not created to be victims but they are often mistreated in society, whether they exercise their ambitions or not (Wood, 2001:83). Furthermore, Whelehan (1995:219) state that to acquit men from blame of being the party most responsible for carrying out gender based violence, is to blame women entirely for their current material and ideological position. According to Whelehan (1995:219) women are partly responsible for their cultural and historical conditions of being aggressively targeted.

### **2.2.2.2. Feminist approaches to communication**

According to Reiter (1975:12) the research on communication of feminist perspectives and gender roles was criticised to be absent or ambiguous. Reiter (1975:17) described the term "gender roles" as "the set of preparations by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity". In other words, Reiter examined the way in which the society set a standard where the type of work people do is based on biology, and women perform certain activities based on their gender similarly. According to Wanaca-Thibault & Tompkins (1998:612) women have a desire to maintain a work and life balance, and are traditionally primary caretakers and have biological ties to children like pregnancy and nursing. Therefore, striking the desired balance between work and home becomes a challenge for them (Wanaca-Thibault & Tompkins, 1998:612).

In the light of the above women and men are differentiated by many aspects including biological reproduction referring to conceiving, giving birth, and breast-feeding which men cannot do (Alcoff, 2006:172). Similarly, men can do most of the heavy work while women are selective on some jobs due to the fact that men in general are physically stronger than women and tend to have higher body mass than women in the same conditions. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration the individual biological aspects when assigning roles.

With reference to communication, Grunig & Hunt (1984:254) state that communication especially internal communication is very important to public relations as employees are the best communicators to the public. In this regard, it is assumed that employees are the ones who should provide the correct information regarding the organisation to its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:254). According to Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg (2007:120-122) the symmetrical model of public relations facilitates feminist values as it opens a two-way, balanced and interactive communication and allows for the discussion of various feminist issues in the organisation. Feminist scholars advance the idea that women being good at communication skills, deserve all the opportunities that the field can offer as they are able to make their organisations survive due to their talents and skills (Alcoff, 1988:416).

According to Eadie (2009:82) the second wave of feminist was inspired by studies on gender differences in communication which promoted a deficiency model against women in communication. In this model, the personality of speech distinctive of men was considered to be the standard for an effective interpersonal communication and characteristics of speech distinctive of women were disapproved. Examples of the results of the studies include women's lack of assertiveness and confidence rather than men's aggression and overconfidence or arrogance in conversation. Therefore, feminist researchers were questioning about the relationship between power and gender in communication and about the problem of using men's behaviour as the standard for good communication (Eadie, 2009:82). Feminist researchers argued that different styles of communication have different strength and weaknesses in different contexts, hence women's personality shouldn't be jeopardised.

### 2.2.3 Situational theory

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:148) situational theory state that "the communication behaviour of publics can be understood by measuring their perceptions against a situation that affect them directly like the quality of products". Grunig (1977:63) state that situational theory consists of two dependent variables active and passive communication behaviour which can also be identified as information seeking and information processing. Information seeking as described by Grunig & Hunt (1984:149) is also called 'active communication behaviour'. This relates to the type of publics who try to find information about an organisation in order to plan their behaviour. Information processing on the other hand is "the unplanned discovery of a message followed by continued processing of it" (Seitel 1995:6). It is also passive communication behaviour when people put no effort into sourcing information about something but when they get it by chance; they process it (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:149).

The theory is comprised of also comprises of three independent variables which are problem recognition, constraint recognition and level of involvement. The independent variables are situational because the authors describe the perceptions people have about specific situations, especially problematic ones causing conflict. Grunig & Hunt (1984:149-150) defines these five variables as follows:

- **Problem Recognition:** this is when people detect that something should be done about a situation and start to think about what to do. When the public perceive that something should be done about the situation, they start to search for information in order to solve the problem.
- **Constraint Recognition:** people perceive that there are obstacles in a situation that limit their ability to do anything about the situation or to plan their behaviour. With reference to females in public relations industry, they face various constraints in the field according to the feminism theory. According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:149) those who are not qualified enough have even more difficulties to get promoted. Hence, as a result of education constraint plus other barriers in the field, women rarely look for information about jobs that call for higher education and expertise. Women will not also care about the information regarding promotion in the organisation.
- **Level of Involvement:** this describes the extent to which people connect themselves with a situation through their communication behaviour. If linked to feminism and women public relations practitioners in particular, they are directly involved in the situation of field feminisation. Hence, women are trying to create better strategies like education to fight against negative connotations against them in the public relations field.

Grunig & Hunt (1984:152) noted that high level of involvement decreases constraint recognition as concerned people try to overcome the constraints that would hinder them from communicating their behaviour about the problem. High problem recognition, low constraint recognition and high level of involvement increase energetic information seeking and passive information processing (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009:593; Grunig & Hunt, 1984:153). With reference to feminism, women have been aware of their social status for years and many of them are explicitly oppressed, however they still passively respond to their responsibilities in the society as if they are not aware (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006:35). The level of involvement also increases, however it has little effect on information processing. People hardly ever seek information about situations that do not involve them, however, they will randomly process information about low involvement situations if they recognise it as being challenging (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2009:593).

#### **2.2.4 Excellence theory**

According to Grunig (1992:2) the excellence study gave birth to this theory. The study focussed on researchers' attempt to answer three important questions relating to communication, primarily investigating how, why and to what extent communication affect the achievement of organisational objectives. These questions are of great importance in terms of theoretical interest as well as in the practice of public relations (Van Heerden, 2004:44). According to Grunig (1992:2) this theory resulted due to an integration of theories in the literature of expert fields such as public relations, management, communication, organisational psychology, feminist studies, political science, decision making and sociology.

Excellence theory is aimed at providing an idealistic framework of how public relations should be practiced in order to serve public interest (Van Heerden, 2004:44). Excellence in public relations describes the ideal state in which well-informed communicators seek symmetrical relations through management of communication with key stakeholders (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995:4). According to Dozier *et al.* (1995:4) the foundation of excellence theory in public relations is summarised in trying to find out on one hand how the organisation benefit from public relations and the need for effective communication efforts from the practitioners on the other. In order to be successful, any organisation needs to practice excellent public relations with its stakeholders which is embedded in asymmetrical model of effective communication (Van Heerden, 2004:46).

Grunig (1992:12) emphasises that through efficient management of organisational autonomy, interdependence as well as relationship with the stakeholders, public relations contributes to the organisational effectiveness. Grunig further states that autonomy, interdependence and relationships with stakeholders are interlinked and public relations practitioners need to

effectively manage communication with various external and internal stakeholders that the organisation has relationships with (Grunig, 1992:12). Organisations with good relationship are more effective as they have more freedom and more autonomy. Therefore, building relationships and managing interdependence is the essence of public relations (Grunig, 1992:6).

The fact that little is known about the Rwandan public relations industry, the excellence theory guided the researcher in employing the strategic component of the public relations discipline and the importance of effective organisational communication to achieve its objectives. The theory also aided to understand the magnitude of maintaining quality relationships with key stakeholders, like employees and more specifically female employees.

### **2.2.5 Systems theory**

Littlejohn (1999:41); Lubbe & Puth (1994:41) assert that the Systems theory was scientifically developed between the two world wars. According to Littlejohn (1983:29) a system is "a set of objects or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole". Lubbe & Puth (1994:41) explain that the system helps to describe how organic and inorganic systems interact with their environments. According to Van Heerden (2004:38) the typical society is comprised of interdependence, equilibrium and balance which forms a discussion for Systems theory. According to Mersham, Van Rensburg & Skinner (1995:47) the society is regarded as an integral whole and various subsystems work together to keep the whole in balance. The system's primary concern is to sustain itself through the interactions of the system and the environment to ensure a controlled interdependence (Mersham *et al.* 1995:47). An organisation can be compared to a system which is comprised of interrelated subsystems or departments, and therefore any single change in a department will affect the entire system which in this case is an organisation.

According to Spicer (1997:57) an organisation exists in a dynamic environment whereby it needs to modify the internal process and restructure itself in response to the changing environment. This means that environmental scanning is as important as planning, because being aware of what is happening in the environment helps the organisation to plan accordingly, in order to reach mutual understanding with its stakeholders. Consequently, an organisation is regarded as an open system whereby there must be exchange of information, energy or material with its environment in order to succeed (Spicer, 1997:57). According to Lubbe & Puth (1994:42) an open system refers to an organisation with leaky boundaries which allows the exchange of information, material and energy to its environment. Open systems are responsive to their environment and their survival depends on the adjustments made due to the feedback from the environment (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994:212).

This theory should have been applied to public relations in its early years. Based on the description made by Grunig & Hunt (1984:93) the press agency and public information public relations models used some closed system devices among them no sharing of information no matter what. In addition, practitioners who follow those two models of public relations pay much attention in producing information but they don't present feedback from the environment. In a closed system, management accept little or no opposition at all and this leads to biased results as the management team is composed of people who only agree on everything even if it is wrong (Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg, 2007:217; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000:238). According to Van Heerden (2004:39) an open system is highly needed in any organisation in order to properly manage the relationship with its stakeholders. Open systems give room to the two way-symmetrical model of communication which focuses on shared meaning and this will have organisational as well as behavioural consequences. This perspective was emphasised by Cutlip *et al.* (2000:239) who attempted to illustrate that open systems use the information gathered in order to make adjustments and this is referred to as the proactive public relations programme.

According to Spicer (1997:57) the systems theory is important to public relations in a way that it helps to understand the context of management within an organisation, whereby interaction between all the departments is vital in order to position the right image to the publics. It also helps the organisation to know that without the feedback from the environment, it becomes hard to plan for improvements. Grunig (1992:352) points out that the systems theory provides an understanding of the importance of adapting to the progressively more unsteady and threatening environment within which the organisation operates. The systems theory serves as a useful device in assisting the public relations function to conceptualise the complex nature of organisational interdependencies (Spicer, 1997:57).

Systems theory which originated from organisational theory adds value to feminism in a sense that in order for the organisation to be effective, they must be concerned with the environment in which they operate if they are to survive (Toth, 1992:8). According to Toth, organisations attempt to maintain equilibrium with their environment (1992:8). The organisation is a subsystem of the society; therefore it must continuously look outward to discover how to approach its audience in order to achieve its objectives. Public relations is compared to the bridge between the organisation and its publics, it can play an important role in making policies as well as advising the dominant coalition or the most powerful people in the organisation on how to move strategically within its environment (Van Heerden, 2004:38). Furthermore, systems theory acknowledges that the organisation creates

structures and make decisions based on what the dominant coalition choose to do (Toth, 1992:9).

Although the dominant coalition is responsible for the direction that the organisation is proceeding in, the organisation will not be completely successful without taking into consideration the opinions of its stakeholders and publics (Grunig & Hunt 1984:93). According to Gregory (1999:267) the systems perspective can help to create more synergistic existence in the organisation. When systems and sub systems are interconnected, they work together to reach the desired goal and they represent different departments in an organisation. This can create an opportunity for public relations to bring feminism values to the attention of the dominant coalition and to translate this into appropriate messages in the organisation's communication strategy (Gregory, 1999:267). Through the exchange of information between the organisation and its public various ideas can be contested, problems can be solved in a friendly way and decisions affecting either of the parties can be made in a mutual approach. Hence, the need for mutual communication exist, which offers a channel through which the organisation's views are known by the stakeholders and vice versa (Heath, 2000:69).

### **2.3. Defining Public Relations**

Public relations literature and practice offered no significant help with regard to the adoption of a single public relations definition and this calls for an ongoing process to search for a single, generally accepted definition of the public relations field (Hutton, 1999:199; Mersham, Rensburg & Skinner, 1995:8). This lack of a single agreed upon definition for public relations according to Hutton (1999:199), is a result of identity crisis of the field in its modern beginnings. Many definitions for what 'public relations' is, are ever emerging but fail to agree on one universal definition. Furthermore, the situation can be attributed to public relations' unlimited scope and activities as its job description depends on the organisation in which it is practiced (Seitel, 1995:6). Edward Louis Bernays, who is considered the founding father of modern public relations along with Ivy Lee, in the early 1900s defined public relations as "a management function which tabulates public attitudes; defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organisation; followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance" (Bernays, 1923).

According to Seitel (1995:6) this search for a single definition started in 1975 when the American Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education searched for a common definition whereby 65 public relations leaders participated and they analysed (472) definitions. From there, the following definition was developed by Harlow (1976:36);

Public relations is a distinctive management function which:

- Helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organisation and its publics
- Involves the management of problems or issues
- Helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion
- Defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interest
- Helps management keep abreast of and effectively make use of change
- Serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends
- Uses research, sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools

According to Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg (2007:2); Skinner & Von Essen, (1993:3) the following definition was developed in 1978 during the first World Assembly of International Public Relations Association in Mexico City, "Public relations was defined as the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organisational leaders and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organisation and public interest"

As part of an ongoing process, research has been done including the one of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1980 which emphasised on the importance and roles of public relations (Lesly, 1982:11). PRSA defined public relations as "a management function which involves counselling at the highest level and being involved in strategic planning for the organisation" (Newsom *et al.* 2007:2). Some years later in 1988, the governing body of PRSA adopted the following shortest definition for public relations and it was widely used. Public relations helps an organisation and its publics to adapt mutually to each other and an organisation's effort to win the cooperation of groups of people (PRSA, 2003).

In 2008, Smith proposed another definition of public relations as being " a set of management, supervisory, and technical functions that foster an organisation's ability to strategically listen to, appreciate, and respond to those persons whose mutually beneficial relationships with the organisation are necessary if it is to achieve its missions and values. Public relations is essentially a management function that focuses on two-way communication and fostering of mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics" (Smith, 2008).

PRISA also developed two definitions for the field and the earlier one emphasise the nature and role of public relations. The definition states that "public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics" (Lubbe & Puth, 1994:6). The current definition of PRISA

acknowledges public relations as the management of communication, as well as strategic relationship with various stakeholders of the organisation. According to Koekemoer (1998:348) the definition read as follows: "Public relations is the management, through communication, of perceptions and strategic relationship between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders"

**Table 2.3. Summary of Public relations Definitions over the years**

<b>Time frame</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Author</b>
Early 1900s	PR is a management function which tabulates public attitudes; defines the policies, procedures and interests of an organization; followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.	Bernays
1975	Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics, involves the management of problems or issues, helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion, defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interest, helps management keep abreast of and effectively make use of change, serves as an early warning system to help anticipate trends and uses research, sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools.	American Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education
1978	Public relations was defined as the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organisational leaders and implementing planned programs of action which will serve both the organisation and public interest	International Public Relations Association
1980	PR is a management function which involves counselling at the highest level and being involved in strategic planning for the organisation	PRSA
1988	Public relations helps an organisation and its publics to adapt mutually to each other and an organisation's effort to win the cooperation of groups of people	PRSA
2008	PR is a set of management, supervisory, and technical functions that foster an organisation's ability to strategically listen to, appreciate, and respond to those persons whose mutually beneficial relationships with the organisation are necessary if it is to achieve its missions and values. Public relations is essentially a management function that focuses on two-way communication and fostering of mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics	Smith

It is clear that the search for a single broadly accepted definition for public relations is a continued process. This, according to Hutton (1999:199) is due to the fact that public relations has suffered from identity crisis in its beginnings and the fact that it is a growing field. It is also clear that all individuals who tried to find a definition for this field have three words in common in almost all the definitions which are: management, organisation and publics (Gordon, 1997:60). This means that the past, present and the future of public relations revolves around the implementation of proper management strategies and tactics in an organisation designed to mutually benefit both the organisation and its publics. Moreover, Gordon (1997:60) concluded that public relations is a management function designed to manage communication and an intermediary between the organisation and the public.

#### **2.4. Historical development of the public relations profession**

According to Newsom *et al.* (2007:26) public relations has progressed through a series of developmental phases to the point it can now be regarded as a management function. In many corporations, government agencies, and non-profit organisations the public relations function has been elevated from its traditional role as a support service and made it an integral part of upper management decision-making (Turney, 2003).

Various authors have contributed to providing general developmental stages that public relations went through to become what it is at present. For instance, Seitel (1995:14) provided the values of good public relations in what is called the essence of public relations as ethics, truth and credibility. Turney, (2003); Lubbe & Puth, (1994) discovered that public relations has had a three-stage evolution identified as the publicity phase, explanatory phase and mutual satisfaction phase. Lubbe & Puth (1994:4) explained the stages as follows:

- Manipulation phase/Publicity Phase: during the manipulation phase of development, practitioners were primarily concerned with creating awareness and building recognition for the individual or organisation employing public relations. Public relations was closely joined to advertising and promotion, and getting the message out to the widest possible audiences was the major aim. This phase was called "manipulation phase" as manipulation was the technique used by press agents in 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to launch and direct political campaigns.
- Information phase/Explanatory phase: during this developmental phase of public relations, the organisation was supposed to communicate clearly the reasons for its actions and policies so that its publics would understand, sympathise with, and patronise the organisation. Merely getting the organisation's message out wasn't

enough, as the receivers had to understand and accept the point of view of the sending organisation. As regards to South African public relations, this phase started in 1937 and this is when South African government created the Bureau of Information after realising the need for organisations to make their official information known (Lubbe & Puth 1994:4)

- Mutual influence and understanding phase/Mutual satisfaction phase: in this phase of public relations, Turney discovered that practitioners encourage organisations and their publics to adapt to one another. This can be done through making complementary adjustments or compromises in order for both of them to benefit from their relationship. Practitioners are now more concerned with incoming messages and information which they can use to counsel management on current public opinion, than developing and delivering outgoing messages.

On the contrary, Roodt (1988:43) discussed the development of the public relations field in terms of its structure. The author noted its evolution through the formation of professional associations, the formation of codes of conduct and the licensing. This leads to the public relations industry to be officially recognised through the creation of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1947, licensing in 1964 and a code of professional standards in 1954 (Lubbe & Puth 1994:4). It was followed by the creation of International Public Relations Association (IPRA) in (1955) and its code of conduct in 1961. The international code of ethics was adopted in 1965 and the Public Relations Institute for Southern Africa (PRISA) was created in 1957 followed by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) in 1970 (Lubbe & Puth 1994:5). In the next subsection the review concentrates on the evolution of public relations in different parts of the world, including, America, Europe, Asia and Africa.

#### **2.4.1. Public relations in America**

According to Newsom, Scott & Turk (1992:32) public relations does not seem to have a single founder even though Ivy Ledbetter Lee is considered to be the pioneer of modern public relations in America. Ivy Ledbetter Lee referred to by many authors as the father of modern public relations emphasised that for a business to gain acceptance as well as understanding, its public need to be informed about what happens inside the business and answer critics accurately and honestly (Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg, 2000:32; Seitel, 1995:33). According to Newsom *et al.* (2000:35) in America, public relations practice was extremely influenced by the continent's history as well as environmental factors. The field of public relations in America grew during the 30 year period from 1940 to 1970. During that time the PRSA became a powerful national association for practitioners. Trade journals

created forums for discussion and resources for professional development and agencies began attracting large corporate clients (O'Neill, 1991:29).

According to Seitel (1995:27) public relations was one of the tools used to influence public opinion; it was practiced during the American Revolution and the results were immeasurable. Colonists used persuasion method in order to gain the same rights as Englishmen. The promoters of American Revolution saw public relations as an opportunity to persuade people through the use of public relations tools like newspapers, press agency, publicity, poetry and songs (Newsom *et al.* 2007:25).

According to Newsom *et al.* (2007:31); Newsom *et al.* (2000:34) the years between 1600 and 1800 were marked by the American Revolution as well as the initial colonisation. Public relations in America was in its preliminary stage whereby the development of communication channels and the initiation of public relations tactics like public relations promotion, publicity and public relations agencies were initiated. By 1776, many of the public relations function were well developed in America. According to Newsom *et al.* (2007:31) by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, America was a well developed continent in all aspects. The 20<sup>th</sup> century obliged old publicists to modernise their ways of operating to respond to the development of the public relations industry. Mass media was more sophisticated working with well informed publics and muckraking journalism appeared with a huge need for press agents (Newsom *et al.* 2007:31).

From 1800 to 1900, industrial revolution and the western expansion activities was taking place and on the public relations side it was considered as the time of press agents, propagandists and publicists (Newsom *et al.* 2000:34). The years 1900 to 1939 was marked by a massive public relations progress, World War I and economic depression. During this period, a number of writers were recruited to become spokespeople for special interests organisations and issues (Newsom *et al.* 2000:34).

In their study, Newsom *et al.* (2000:35) discovered that 1940 to 1980 episode was marked by many events like World War II, Cold War in 1950's and consumer movement. All these activities fostered the maturation of public relations in America as it began to be considered as one of the management functions which encouraged planning to prevent any unforeseen matter. By the end of 1950's, many women had entered the field of public relations due to the fact that men were still in the war and this drew worldwide attention as the world started to see the public relations field as a potential career for women (Newsom *et al.* 2007:36). In 1970's and 1980's a number of large public relations firms in America were acquired by advertising agencies as the latter were trying to move into related fields like public relations,

merchandising and specialised advertising to diversify their business (Newsom *et al.* 2007:43).

The decade between 1980 and 1990 expressed an incredible growth of public relations practice in America. Public relations education continued to grow at an even faster speed than ever and advertising and public relations devices which have started in 1970's continued to mature. The advent of new technologies that connect the whole world emphasised the need for the use of communication (Newsom *et al.* 2007:43). According to Cutlip *et al.* (1994:100) from 1980 up to present, public relations practitioners are taking the profession to the desired level of professionalism by using emerging high technology and multiple channels of communication, whereby global communication plays a major role to position public relations practice at the global level.

According to Newsom *et al.* (2007:52) the 21<sup>st</sup> century in America was highly welcomed and the needs of individuals or companies to use public relations services were more prevalent than ever. On the other hand, however, public relations practitioners have been challenged and facilitated by the advent of today's communication technology and people's creative use of it in order to focus on the needs of the society. When public relations started to be practiced press agents did not know anything about research, they were just concerned with persuading the public no matter what. This was partly due to the lack of enough technology to help them with research like portable computers, internet, memory sticks among others (Sharpe, 2000:349). The need for more public relations services is highly due to the cutback of employees in some organisations that outsource as a result of technology (Newsom *et al.* 2007:52). This triggered the creation of many professional public relations agencies.

**Table 2.4. Summary of public relations history in America**

<p><b>Stage 1: PR preliminary period</b> This was the era of development of communication channels as well as exercise of PR tactics namely: publicity, PR promotion and PR press agency.</p>	<p><b>1600-1799</b> Initial colonisation American Revolution</p>
<p><b>Stage 2: communicating/initiating</b> Time of primary publicists, press agents and propagandists and promoters.</p>	<p><b>1800-1899</b> Civil war, western expansion, industrial Revolution</p>
<p><b>Stage 3: Reacting/Responding</b> Period of writers hired to be spokespeople for special interests</p>	<p><b>1900-1939</b> PR progressive era, Muckrakers, world war I, Roaring twenties Depression</p>
<p><b>Stage 4:planning/Preventing</b></p>	<p><b>1940-1979</b></p>

Maturation of PR as it began to be incorporated into other management functions.	World War II, Cold War of 1950s, consumer movement
<b>Stage 5:PR professionalism</b> An effort by public relations practitioners to control PR's development , use and practice on an international level	<b>1980-present</b> Global communication

Newsom *et al.* 1992:36; Newsom *et al.* 2000:35; Newsom *et al.* (2007:26)

## 2.4.2. Public relations in Europe

According to van Heerden (2004:55); in order to understand the development of public relations in Europe, it is important to look at the history of the origin of European public relations. In Germany, Carl Hundhausen was considered to be the father of public relations. The term public relations was first used in 1939 by the German Carl Hundhausen (Newsom *et al.* 2007:29). Hundhausen continued to encourage further discussion about the topic in order to develop it in theory as well as in practice during the time frame of 1950 to 1974 (Newsom *et al.* 2007:29).

Furthermore, public relations has been discussed in terms of social criticism earlier than 1937 within the European tradition. Between the two world wars discussions as well as scientific debates continued (Nessmann, 1995:152). Jurgen Habermas, a German researcher in sociology, developed the foundational inter-subjective public relations paradigm on which most public relations theory is based. This theoretical framework provides a structure for studying the ideal of public relations practice. Habermas referred to ethical business practice where ethical communication is the prerequisite in order to analyse business practice (Nessmann, 1995:152). According to Nessmann (1995:153) Habermas' thoughts on symmetrical communication, discussion, mutual understanding, dialogue and compromise influenced the development of public relations theory in Germany.

According to Nessmann (1995:155) a number of European public relations specialists tried to define the public relations field and have expressed it clearly as a management function. However, in European practice, professionals who work in big corporations are still not employed in top management positions. American public relations has influenced the European one but the same goes for American public relations being influenced by European public relations (Nessmann, 1995:155). In Europe, the two World Wars had a negative impact on the development of public relations.

According to Newsom *et al.* (2007:24) the time of war propaganda further developed government's awareness of the necessity to manage public opinion in democracies. In addition, during the decade between 1920 and 1930 there was establishment of many organisations including propaganda-inspired ones like the Empire Marketing Board in 1926 and The British Council 1934 and most of them were government sponsored (Newsom *et al.* 2007:24). According to L'Etang (2002:44) public relations consultancies emerged out of press and advertising agencies in 1960's. This public relations development in Europe was only possible after World War II due to the fact that British economy was still recovering from the war and the massive debt it had incurred during the wars (L'Etang, 2002:44).

The formation of the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) in 1948 was a crucial development in the occupation's history (Hess, 1948:3). IPR gave public relations an institutional force and a focus for professionalisation. In reality, Hess (1948:3) points out that once it was established the IPR made its aims clear and one of them was to consider the institution of examinations or other suitable tests with the objective of raising the status of those practising public relations to an agreed professional level. At the beginning, the membership to IPR was limited based on the public relations experience or backing by existing members. Even though the IPR council was unable to distinguish between public relations and publicity, IPR denied membership to those whose career to date had been publicity (Hess, 1948:3). IPR members shortly initiated issues of training and development and their curricula from the late 1940's until the 1960's emphasised technical skills, personal qualities and experience above objectively determined expertise and theoretical knowledge (L'Etang, 2002:44).

In England around 1897, the practice of public relations was noticed in the kingdom whereby the Lord's Chancellors were regarded as the keepers of the King's conscience which introduced a third party to facilitate communication between the government and its people, instead of letting the king communicate directly with the people (Odedele, 2003:14; Cutlip *et al.* 1994:90). By the 1920's civil servants were publishing articles in their specialised journal: *Public Administration* reflecting on their concept of public relations (L'Etang, 1998:413). Public relations in Britain emerged basically from state activity at both local and central levels in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (L'Etang, 1998:415). Records show that at that time public relations encompassed internal and external communications, the gathering of intelligence for senior management, information and publicity and a range of techniques including media relations, exhibitions and publications (Odedele, 2003:14).

Public relations was used in Roman times whereby Julius Caesar used various persuasive techniques through publications and dramatic events to get public support during battle preparation (Newsom *et al.* 2000:35). According to Vercic (2000:342) by the year 1991, the

survey published about European public relations education stated that there were only 79 public relations programmes at the higher level of education in which 61 was at the university level. However, it was only after three years that another public relations survey took place and stated that there were already 60 000 public relations practitioners in place (Vercic, 2000:342).

According to Vercic (2000:344); Seitel, (1995:27) Greeks were more interested in effective communication skills in that the best presenter often got elected for leadership position. This relates to lobbying whereby the best speaker in a lobby group try to influence government policy, corporate policy or public opinion through communication and that is public relations practice. The development of public relations occurred more or less simultaneously in Europe and in the United States during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Nessmann, 1995:151). According to Newsom *et al.* (2000:31) the historian Alan Raucher's opinion is that the America's political, social, cultural, economical climate and the power of media have been the cause of fast public relations development. It happened faster than in any other country in the world. Vercic (2000:342) state the differences in public relations development are also due to environmental as well as economic differences resulting from the two world wars. Europe was dramatically affected by the wars and it was left behind.

According to Tsetsura (2009:78) the public relations industry in Russia was developed by women since they were among the first to work in the industry and had to face the stereotypical challenges and the doubts about the field. Despite the patriarchal society, culture and the feminisation of the field which many authors find as a threat, Lauzen, (1992:176) states that public relations practice in Russia is progressing (Tsetsura, 2009:78).

### **2.4.3. Public relations in Asia**

According to Aldemiri (1988) public relations in Asia originates in Arab culture and dates back to as far as 1200 years. Public relations has been widely used during the Prophet Mohamed period to spread either new message or new religion (Aldemiri, 1988). Cutlip, Center & Broom (2000:102); Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg (2000:30); Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron (2000:26); Mersham, Rensburg & Skinner (1995:4); Seitel (1995:26) presents the following as examples of the integrated public relations practice. In 1800 BC, messages intended to Babylonians farmers were posted on the stones by their authorities to inform the former about the elasticity of food crop in relation to the overall wealth of the country. Those authorities had a specific purpose in mind to persuade the public to increase the food crop and it was in the interest of both, hence public relations practice involving planning.

Even though public relations in Asia originates in Arab countries, the expression 'public relations' is still misconceived, misunderstood and misappropriated especially in the Arab World and generally refer to the public relations as public information and publicity (Kirat, 2005:324). The profession still suffers from poor performance, lack of strategies and absence of vision in Asia (Kirat, 2005:324). Public relations is vital to the Arab world due to the expanding economy, globalisation, information technology and an ongoing process of democratisation (Kirat, 2005:326). The effective practice of public relations is applied in Asia as some organisations and institutions practice high-quality and professional public relations, primarily in the business and marketing sector.

According to Gupta (2007:306) Indian public relations is growing and by the year 2007, there was about 700 public relations firms in India with a workforce of approximately 10,000. The public relations industry is growing at a rate of 30 percent every year and with regard to financial indicators it is in a good position. However, due to the rapidity of growth, public relations agencies in India are facing severe shortage of qualified manpower (Gupta, 2007:306).

#### **2.4.4. Public relations in Africa**

Discussion about public relations in Africa is very important to this study due to the fact that Rwanda being a study area is one of Africa's countries, and again, this field of public relations developed differently in different continents. According to Narty (1988:25) the African continent was not left behind as far as public relations growth is concerned. The application of public relations techniques is not a new concept on the continent as it dates back to the beginning of the African civilisation and before colonisation era (Narty, 1988:25). The practice of public relations in Africa can be traced to approximately 1700 BC in the ancient Egypt. According to Odedele (2003:14) the ancient Egyptians believed in the importance of recording and communicating information about religion and government. The Egyptians made up written scripts that could be used to record this information and the most famous one is hieroglyphic (Odedele, 2003:14). In 1600's, the Catholic Church participated in the coming out of public relations. Through the process of informing the public about their denomination, they established the college of public relations propaganda in order to propagate their faith in Africa (Rensburg, 2002:7).

According to Odedele (2003:17) ancient public relations practice is traced in the pre-colonial era. It was concerned with how to record and communicate information about religion and government which lead to the invention of written scripts. These scripts were used to record information such as hieroglyphic and papyrus scrolls. The ancient practice of public relations was related to the use of communication tools and media, gong, talking drum, moon-light

storytelling, folk tales telling, village square gathering and sporting activities (Odedele, 2003:17).

Narty (1988:24) explained how the task of spokesman at the chieftaincy in traditional villages is similar to that of a public relations practitioner. Spokespeople act as intermediaries between chiefs and the citizens or visitors and some countries still practice in this way (Narty, 1988:25). African tradition did not allow any chief to interact directly with the visitors or citizens. All communication and interactions were channelled through a spokesman who is to be well versed in the customs and traditions of a particular village and was highly respected by the villagers (Rensburg, 2002: 5). In most of the African countries, this position is passed on from generation to generation believing that anyone in the same family possesses good communication skills (Van Heerden, 2004:108).

Narty (1988:25) added numerous instances in African communities whereby public relations has been used.

- In most of African marital affairs public relations plays a big role through a go between called "umuranga" in Rwandan culture, or "Munyayi" in Shona (Zimbabwe) who must ensure the success of the two families union. The person is also in charge of negotiating the value to be awarded to the bride's family as dowry.
- Concerned people in African countries handle their poverty issues by uniting themselves in "farming cooperatives". For the process to succeed there must be effective communication and trust amongst members. For instance, in some African villages heads of families gather to plan how they can help on the farm of one of the cooperative members and on the other day, the same work will be done on another member's farm until each family in the cooperative has been assisted.
- The scribes in ancient Egypt had two main duties namely writing hieroglyphs that appeared on the tomb and temples; and secondary keeping government records and writing letters for pharaoh.

According to Narty (1988:26) the scribes kept record and communicated information about religion and government issues to the masses hence they were considered as the government's and the religious organisation's public relations executives. Joseph in the Bible was the public relations executive to the government of Egypt of his time. To prevent famine at that time, he used a public relations campaign to educate the Egyptians for gathering food for seven years of prosperity and to distribute food for the other seven years of famine (Holy Bible, 2004 [Genesis, 41:41-56]). According to Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg (2007:2) Joseph applied the IPRA's definition of public relations by analysing trends, predicting their

consequences, counselling Pharaoh (the head of the government) and implementing planned program of action which served the government's and the public interest.

According to Odedele (2003:17) before the advent of colonial masters there were different means of communication in Africa; these include using the gong by the town crier to call the attention of the target audience and announcing the message of the leader. In addition, there was an elder consultative forum, age-group forum, moon-light storytelling, folk tales telling, talking drums, village square gathering as well as sporting activities (Odedele, 2003:17). Despite the fact that one of the early histories of public relations practice is traced to North Africa, public relations practice is still at a low development rate in the region (Kirat, 2005:323).

According to Kirat (2005:324) there are not many public relations associations in the region and the most famous one is "Arab Public Relations Society of Egypt". Egypt's major public relations firm, Rada Research and Public Relations Co, caters mostly to foreign companies that understand the importance of public relations in the business environment (Kirat, 2005:324). This situation is attributed to the lack of understanding of the value of a positive public image in the region (Kirat, 2005:326). Observers of the Egyptian business outlook, Egyptian businesses do not understand the contribution that public relations can create in the organisation (Kirat, 2005:326). Public relations is either confused with advertising or not even believed in yet.

According to Holtzhausen (2005:407) public relations practice is more advance in South Africa than other countries in the southern African region. The era of modern public relations in South Africa is traced to the colonial era and led to the establishment of Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) which is the governing body for southern African countries (Odedele, 2003:16). The advancement of public relations in South Africa is due to political instability which characterised the country for a long time. According to Weick (2001:148) turbulent environment plays an important role in shaping organisational behaviour. The scholar states that when managers experience uncertainty, they manage their organisations accordingly and this allows organisations to survive the unstable phase. Therefore, this strategy helped South African public relations to grow rapidly regardless of political change (Holtzhausen, 2005:408). According to Odedele (2003:16) the practice is developing in Zambia even though there is no public relations association in the country. Swaziland and Zimbabwe have national public relations associations. Public relations practice is also developing in Lesotho, although there is no national public relations association.

According to Pratt & Ugboajah (1985:24) the development of public relations practice is more noticeable in Nigeria and Ghana due to the fact that those countries are former British colonies, combined with growth of civilisation, industrialisation and political development in the two countries. Both countries have national public relations associations, have both hosted the Federation of African Public Relations Association (FAPRA) conference and there are public relations firms in the two countries (Pratt & Ugboajah, 1985:24). There is no public relations association in Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Togo and other West African countries. The development of modern public relations in Nigeria started in 1948 when the colonial administration set up a public relations department with four offices in Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu (Odedele, 2003:14). In charge of the department was a public relations expert, who successfully modernized government information services, and initiated the policy of interpreting government policies to the people. The department was designed to monitor the reaction of people to official policies and activities; it also served as liaison between the mass media and the government and carried out general public relations functions for the government (Odedele, 2003:14).

Odedele (2003:16) state that activities of the public relations department in Nigeria were initially concentrated on publicity work, dealing with problems arising from the World War II. These problems include shortages of goods, deprivation of the necessities of life and imposition of a strict system by the colonial government. In addition, publicity and popularity of the work of marketing board was among the responsibilities of the public relations department (Odedele, 2003:16). Similar publicity activities were at the same time taking place in large organisations such as the Nigerian Railway.

According to Odedele (2003:16) the next significant changes in the development of public relations in Nigeria occurred between the years 1950 and 1960. This period witnessed political, social and economical changes in the country including the achievement of independence, the discovery of oil and the shift of emphasis from general trading to industrialisation (Odedele, 2003:16). Simultaneously with these developments, the public relations group in the Nigerian press club in 1959 decided to organise its own separate activities beginning with film shows and lectures. According to Pratt & Ugboajah (1985:25) such activities are intended to be in consonance with the fundamental principles of public relations practice in a developing society. Public relations activity gained professional identity in 1962 with the establishment of the Public Relations Association of Nigeria (Odedele, 2003:17). According to Odedele (2003:16) the Public Relations Association of Nigeria helped draw together an increasing number of practitioners who over the years had become members and associates of the British Institute of Public Relations. From 1972 the association was renamed the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR). The NIPR got the

status of Chartered Institute in June 1990 and the status resulted in power to register members, regulate the practice, develop the profession and monitor professional conduct through an establishment of code of ethics and professional conduct (Offonry, 1985:16). This uninterrupted development of public relations in Nigeria led to the formation of the Nigerian Public Relations Consultants Association in 1983 (Offonry, 1985:15).

According to Wu & Baah-Boakye (2008:3) public relations is developing in Ghana; there is a national professional body. The Institute of Public Relations Ghana was established in 1972 as the Public Relations Association of Ghana (PRAG) and registered as a professional body in 1972 (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2008:3). PRAG was re-organised and a new constitution as well as a code of ethics was adopted in 1991 which transformed PRAG into Institute of Public Relations, Ghana (IPR) (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2008:3).

In east Africa, Odedele (2003:17) state the Eastern African Public Relations Associations (EAPRA) which was established in 2002, comprising the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), Public Relations Associations of Uganda (PRAU), Public Relations Associations of Tanzania (PRAT) and Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR). Public relations is evolving in Mauritius, an independent Island republic in the Western Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar, which is in East Africa. Although Mauritius is not a member of EAPRA, it has a national public relations association named Public Relations Association of Mauritius (Odedele, 2003:17)

According to Sriramesh & Vercic (2003:299) in central Africa, public relations practice is more noticeable in Cameroon as there is a national public relations association in the country, while other countries in the regions have no public relations associations. The FAPRA) is a Non-Governmental and non-profit making professional association established to promote unity and interaction amongst public relations practitioners in the whole Africa (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:299). FAPRA was inaugurated in Nairobi Kenya in 1975 as the umbrella body of all National Public Relations Associations in Africa (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:299). FAPRA is the continental body of the public relations practitioners and was established to improve public relations co-operation and development in Africa (Ophukah, 1992:22). It aims at functioning like the European Confederation of Public Relations (CEPR), its European counterpart but with focus on environmental adaptation to make modern public relations practice relevant to African nations (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:299). Its mission is to help in creating an enabling professional environment for accurate perception, goodwill and understanding of necessary and effective performance of public relations practice in Africa.

Rensburg (2002:6) proves that public relations is not a foreign concept in African context as it has been practiced for many decades in Africa in different formats and it is deeply rooted in African culture. Wilcox *et al.* (2000:26) added that public relations is as old as human communication itself.

## **2.5. Public Relations Education in Africa**

According to Ophukah (1993:17) education and training are among the fundamentals for the practice of public relations profession. Public relations education in Africa can be categorised in formal and informal sector. Ophukah (1993:17) explains that the informal sector comprises training offered by private or independent colleges as well as seminars organised by national public relations associations. As for the formal sector, education offered in universities, colleges and other higher learning institutions fit in this category. Given the challenges in the environment, education and training are vital to any organisation. Public relations practitioners need to be equipped with necessary skills to ensure the survival of their organisations (Ophukah, 2003:7). This is because well informed publics know exactly what they want from practitioners and competition always calls for excellence in any operation.

Public relations education is developing in Africa; there are many universities in South Africa offering degree course in public relations (Struweg & Meintjes, 2008:228). In Nigeria, the first university to offer a degree programme in public relations is the University of Nigeria Nsukka (Odedele, 2003:16). The Ghanaian Institute of Journalism, Accra is offering public relations courses along its 2 year Diploma course in Journalism. African public relations associations play an important role in the development of public relations curriculum in many colleges and universities. They also organise seminars, conferences, workshops for the improvement and development of the profession in the continent (Ophukah, 1993:17). South Africa has a long history of public relations education, as evidenced by Malan and L'Estrange's first handbook of public relations in South Africa published in 1965 (Struweg & Meintjes, 2008:228). According to Struweg & Meintjes (2008:224) public relations courses at South African universities tend to follow the more theoretically leaning European model, whereas training at South African universities of technology and technical colleges tends towards the American, more skill-based, model.

## **2.6. International public relations governing bodies**

Struweg & Meintjes (2008:228) state that having an authoritative body with disciplinary powers would contribute to public relations professionalisation and such a body should have disciplinary powers to regulate the industry in a particular country. Additionally, the proposed

body should be autonomous in the industry and should not tolerate misbehaviour or unethical practices (Struweg & Meintjes, 2008:228).

### **2.6.1 Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)**

According to Cameron, Wilcox, Reber & Shin, (2008:82) PRSA is the largest national public relations organisation in the world. It has more than 20 000 members nationwide. Apart from the above, it has 19 professional interest sections that represent businesses, industry, counselling firms, independent practitioners, military, government agencies, hospitals, schools and non-profit making organisations. PRSA has an extensive professional development programme which offers short courses, seminars, teleconferences and web casts all year round.

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:146) PRSA's objectives include:

- Nurturing exchange of ideas through publications and conferences.
- Promoting a sense of professionalism.
- Provision of opportunities for continuing education.
- Fostering high standards and ethical behaviour.

PRSA is the parent organisation of Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) (Newsom, *et al.* 2007). The PRSSA is the organisation for students interested in public relations and communications. The association seeks to advance the public relations profession by nurturing future generations of professionals.

### **2.6.2 The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)**

This is the second largest organisation of Communication and Public Relations professionals headquartered in San Francisco. According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:70) the IABC has more than 16 000 members in 60 nations and most members live in the United States. It aims at providing lifetime learning opportunities that give its members tools and information to be the best in the chosen disciplines through seminars, workshops and annual meeting (Cameron, *et al.* 2008:83). According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:70) the IABC is the foremost source for effective communication practice. It provides products like Communication World magazine about trends and issues in communication, services like organising international conference for worldwide practitioners and accreditation programme. IABC makes available networking opportunities to help individuals and organisations achieve excellence in public relations, employee communication, marketing communication, public affairs and other forms of communication (Cameron, *et al.* 2008:83).

IABC is structured into three levels, specifically chapters which are organised into regions and international levels. Grunig & Hunt (1984:224) explains that chapters refer to local organisations established by volunteer members in many cities of the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States. Furthermore, IABC has 9 regions specifically:

- Europe and Middle east region
- Asia/Pacific/ Africa region
- The North America region
- The south America region
- Two regions in Canada
- Three regions in USA

At the international level, IABC is managed by elected volunteer executive board which sets policies and directions of the association.

### **2.6.3 The International Public Relations Association (IPRA)**

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:148) the third largest global organisation is the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) which is based in London and was established in 1955. IPRA has more than 1 000 members in 96 nations and its membership is primarily senior international public relations executives. It aims at providing the intellectual leadership in the practice of international public relations through making helpful services and information available to its members in order to meet their professional responsibilities and succeed in their careers (Bliss, 1966). Apart from organised regional and international conferences intended to discuss the issues in global public relations practice, IPRA uses online communication to reach its widespread members. According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:148) the objectives of IPRA include:

- Promotion of professional recognition.
- Promotion of high standards and ethics among practitioners.
- Supporting of professional development.

Cameron, *et al.* (2008:83) noted other smaller organisations which include: the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the European Confederation of Public Relations (CEPR), The National Investor Relations Institute (NIRI), and the National School of Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

## **2.7 African public relations governing bodies**

### **2.7.1 Federation of African Public Relations Associations (FAPRA)**

According to Sriramesh & Vercic (2003:299) the Federation of African Public Relations Associations (FAPRA) was inaugurated in 1975, in Nairobi Kenya. It is the umbrella body of all National Public Relations Associations in Africa. The Association was started to achieve the following aims & objectives:

- To be the clearing house for public relations information in Africa.
- To set standards of public relations practice through its code of ethics.
- To foster the establishment of national and sub-regional public relations organisations so that the profession can flourish in the continent.
- To promote African Unity and Co-operation especially as consultant body to the African Union and its various agencies.
- To publish bulletins and journals on public relations in Africa.
- To affiliate with all other similar international professional bodies.

FAPRA focuses on:

- Collaborating with the higher educational institutions in providing education/training.
- Conducting research on African Union (AU) on public relations affairs in the continent.
- Establishing a Public Relations Education Training (PRETFUND) to promote public relations education, training and research.
- Publishing of the professional journal, 'Public Relations in Africa'.
- Re-positioning Africa's image and reputation, correcting the misperceptions and misrepresentations.
- Exploiting the power of the mass media, establishing a continental broadcasting network and encouraging the exchange of news between journalists and public relations practitioners.
- Transparency, trust, honesty and integrity should portray public relations practice in the continent.
- Forging partnership with NGO, private and public enterprises and governments to galvanise change on the continent.
- Making the practitioners to intensify training, change orientation, update knowledge of current issues, engage in peer review mechanisms, self-critique and assess their contributions to Afro-optimism beyond rhetoric.
- Making the national public relations associations to become more active and add impact on the activities and image of FAPRA.

Sriramesh & Vercic, (2003:231) pointed out other national public relations associations which are members of FAPRA.

- Nigeria Institute of Public Relations,
- Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa,
- Swaziland Public Relations Association,
- Zimbabwe Institute of Public Relations,
- Cameroon Public Relations Association,
- Arab Public Relations Society,
- Institute of Public Relations in Ghana,
- Public Relations Society of Kenya,
- Public Relations Association of Mauritius.

### **2.7.3 Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA)**

The Institute for Public Relations & Communication Management was founded in 1957 by a handful of public relations practitioners. Membership grew over the years and at the moment membership stands at 3 800 (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:232; Lubbe & Puth, 1994:5). PRISA represents senior practitioners and consultants as well as student members from Southern Africa countries like Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland among others. According to Sriramesh & Vercic (2003:232) some of its objectives are:

- To deliver dynamic, value-added services to members.
- To ensure continued growth and professionalisation of the industry.

The vision of PRISA is recognition of public relations professionals as role players of significance in Southern Africa and beyond (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:232).

## **2.8 Public Relations Practice**

According to Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg (2007:2) in 1978, the World Assembly of Public Relations held in Mexico City approved the following public relations practice definition. It was also approved by 34 national public relations organisations. "Public relations practice is the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequence, counselling organisation leaders, and implementing planned programs of action which serve both the organisation's and public's interest " (Newsom *et al.* 2007:2).

According to Newsom *et al.* (2007:3) public relations has the following principles and they should be kept in mind by the practitioners:

1. Public relations deals with reality not false fronts in other words it deals with facts not invented story

2. Public relations is a service oriented career in which public interest is the primary focus rather than personal reward
3. Public relations practitioners should never lie to the public communication channels either outright or by implication
4. Public relations practitioners should exercise effective communication through transmission of information from the organisation to the publics and vice versa until consensus is reached
5. Public relations must use scientific public opinion research extensively
6. Public relations practitioners must employ social sciences, psychology, and sociology in order to understand their publics' views
7. Public relations people must adapt to the work of others, related disciplines, learning theories, psychological theories, sociology, political science, economics and history as public relations is a multidisciplinary field
8. Public relations practitioners should be vigilant and informative to avoid people being taken by surprise
9. A public relations practitioner should be measured on ethical performance
10. A Public relations practitioner should select programmes and policies by keeping in mind the public interest

Public relations is a reflection of the society in which it operates, moreover, it is a subsystem that reflects the way the whole society thinks and works (Kirat, 2005:328). Kirat (2005:328) adds that effective public relations practice needs democracy, political participation, high level of transparency and respect between the organisation and its public as well as the respect of the individuals and their opinions. Effective public relations starts with public opinion and concludes with it in order to evaluate its programmes and objectives (Kirat, 2004).

Whilst practicing public relations Creedon (1996:17) advised that the dimension of the public in the profession should be emphasised by adopting public interest as a standard for the business. According to Wilcox & Nolte (1997: 4) public relations practice is:

- Counselling based on an understanding of human behaviour
- Analysing future trends and advising on their consequences
- Researching public opinion, attitudes, and expectations, and advising on necessary action
- Establishing and maintaining two-way communication based on truth and provision of full information
- Preventing conflict and misunderstanding
- Promoting mutual respect and social responsibility

- Harmonizing the private and the public interests
- Promoting goodwill with staff, suppliers, and customers
- Improving industrial relations
- Attracting good personnel and reducing labour turnover
- Promoting products or services
- Maximising profitability
- Projecting a corporate identity
- Encouraging an interest in international affairs
- Promoting an understanding of democracy

According to Sriramesh & Vercic (2003:231) professional public relations involves a number of important aspects including:

- The area of practice like non profit, private business or government
- The functions like research and planning are crucial
- Tools of practice like writing and editing
- Knowledge that a practitioner must have like communication skills
- Identification of related fields of practice like journalism, marketing or advertising to avoid confusion

Public relations is an activity which requires qualified people to undertake varied functions which fall under the broad category of communication. Wilcox & Nolte (1997:5) state that it is no longer simply a matter of being able to get along with people or being able to produce large amount of news releases as public relations function has become an important part of management. According to Lubbe & Puth (1994:10) public relations function establishes good relations with people who are directly or indirectly concerned with the organisation as well as its products and services. Public relations functions involves research, planning, communication and evaluation. The following table highlights the details of essential aspects of public relations practice. It covers public relations functions performed by using specific public relations tools and the knowledge that practitioners should possess. This information is crucial to public relations practitioners as it gives details of every step to be taken in the practice from research and planning to the code of conduct and ethics.

**Table 2.5. Essential aspects of professional public relations practice**

Public Relations			PR practitioners		
PR Functions	PR Tools	Knowledge/Content	Area of Work	Related fields	Conduct
Research	Writing	Communication theory	Government	Journalism	Ethics
Counseling	Editing	Communication arts	Politics	Marketing	Beliefs
Communications	Speaking	Arts, Psychology	Lobbying	Advertising	Attitudes
Promotion	Production	Sociology	Business	Personnel	Opinions
Publicity	Organising	Political science	Industry	Industrial/Employee relations	
Human relations	Interpersonal skills	Economics	Non-profit		
Strategy Planning	Technical	History, Business management	Welfare		
Management		Personnel management	Consultancy		
Consulting		Literature/art/music	International		
		Industrial relations			

Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:231

According to Kirat (2005:328) public relations practice could suffer from some hindrances that cause it not to be practiced optimally, especially in underdeveloped countries. Kirat (2005:328-329) identifies misconception as the primary cause of the poor performance of public relations when the decision makers do not know much about the practice of public relations. Lubbe & Puth (1994:288) state poor customer service, insufficient funds to develop the field and lack of accountability as threats to public relations field especially in African countries.

Lack of professionalism may also hinder the practice of proper public relations as it requires qualified practitioners, ethics and leadership (Kirat, 2005:328). Public relations being a well developed profession, its practitioners should be well trained in writing, communication as well as having good skills of research, opinion polls, ethics and leadership skills (Kirat, 2005:328). Kirat (2005:329) added that the lack of qualified practitioners who do not have good understanding of what public relations is all about cannot do proper planning which is the backbone of public relations. This may harm public relations practice as it is very uncomfortable for such practitioners to talk about planning since it is based on research, evaluation and transparency which many of them are not able to do (Kirat, 2005:329). Some practitioners do not consider research as an important priority in their work, others lack time, resources and qualified personnel to do the research and therefore the majority of their actions are not based on concrete statistics and research (Kirat, 1998).

## 2.9 The relationship between public relations and its associated fields

According to Alsaqer (2008:78) public relations is still confused by people with some of its associated fields, this is presented as Table 2.5 and highlights some differences and similarities between the fields. Cameron, Wilcox, Reber & Shin (2008:10) stated that public relations and journalism are similar in the way they apply writing and, in job functionality; namely interview people, gather and synthesise large amount of information and produce a journalistic copy on closing date.

Public relations differ from journalism in scope, objectives and channels that they use to communicate to their target audiences (Cameron *et al.* 2008:10). Cameron *et al.* (2008:10) state that public relations has many components including counselling management and organising special events. The effectiveness of public relations practice lies in strategic thinking, problem solving capability, and other managerial skills from the practitioner as seen in Table 2.4 (Sriramesh & Vercic, 2003:231). The primary objective of journalism is to provide the public with news and information while that of public relations is to gather facts and information not only to inform the public but also to change people's behaviour in order to further the organisation's goals and objectives (Cameron *et al.* 2008:11).

Journalists primarily write for mass audiences while public relations carefully segments the audiences into demographic and psychological characteristics to whom it delivers a message which meets their needs, concerns and interests for maximum outcome (Cameron *et al.* 2008:11). The channel used in journalism is commonly the medium that publishes or broadcasts its work, whereas public relations uses a variety of channels to reach the target audience. According to Cameron *et al.* (2008:11) public relations practitioners may channel their messages through mass media like newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Public relations may also use direct mail, posters, pamphlets, newsletters, trade journals, special events and Internet.

Spicer (1991:293) emphasises that even though marketing and public relations programmes are related in an organisation, each field stresses different communication skills and both functions should be regarded as independent and interdependent. According to Cameron *et al.* (2008:12-13) all three fields use similar communication tools, deal with organisation's relationship, have the ultimate purpose of ensuring the organisation's success and economic survival. The scholars acknowledge that all three fields support sales in the organisation and support the creation of a good organisation image (Cameron *et al.* 2008:12-13). Table 2.5 summarises the differences in terms of definition, tools that are mostly used, target audience, scope, primary function, area of promotion, major purpose, the way they define their public and organisational relationship. This section is relevant to this study in that through the

exploration of Rwandan female public relations practitioners' status, one cannot ignore that in some institutions they might be practicing marketing while calling it public relations and vice versa which is why the differences had to be highlighted.

**Table 2.6. The differences between PR and its associated fields**

	<b>Public Relations</b>	<b>Advertising</b>	<b>Marketing</b>	<b>Journalism</b>
<b>Definition</b>	There are many different PR definitions but Seitel defined it as a planned process to influence public opinion, through sound character and proper performance, based on mutually satisfactory two way communication.	Advertising is a form of communication intended to persuade an audience; viewers, readers or listeners to purchase or take some action upon products or services.	Marketing is defined by the Institute of Marketing as the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer requirements profitably	It is the investigation and reporting of events, issues, and trends to a broad audience.
<b>Tools mostly used</b>	PR uses communication tools like publicity, Personal contact, Printed material and Audiovisual material and special events.	Advertising works exclusively through mass media outlets.	Marketing communication tools include advertising, direct marketing, Sales promotion and personal selling.	Journalism works through mass media as well as other communication tools through writing.
<b>Target Audience</b>	PR presents its message to specialised external audiences like stockholders, vendors, community leaders, environmental groups as well as internal audiences who are employees.	Advertising is addressed to external audiences primarily the consumers of goods and services.	Marketing's target audience is described as target market, consumers, or customers.	
<b>Scope</b>	PR is broader in scope and deals with policies and performance of the entire organisation from the morale of employees to the way telephone calls are responded to.	Advertising is narrow in scope and is identified as a specialised communication function.	The scope of marketing revolves around: goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organisations, information, and ideas.	Journalism is broad in scope and includes: history, sociology, journalism itself, media policy, Women, regulation, ethics, media ownership and journalism minorities.
<b>Primary Function</b>	PR's function is to create an environment in which an organisation can thrive in complex and competitive environments. It deals with economic, social and political factors that can affect the company.	Advertising's function is primarily to sell goods and services.	Marketing is concerned with persuading customers to buy the company's products & services. Its goal is to attract and satisfy customers on a long term basis to achieve an organisation's economic objectives.	Journalism is concerned about investigation and reporting of events, to its broader audience.

<b>Area of promotion</b>	Public relations promotes the entire organisation through writing, media relations, planning, counselling, researching, generating positive publicity, marketing communications, community relations, consumer relations, employee relations, Government affairs, investor relations and dealing with special publics to the organisation.	Advertising promotes an individual product / service in the organisation.	Marketing promotes an individual product / service in the organisation.	
<b>Major purpose</b>	The major purpose of PR is to save money for the organisation by building relationship with publics that constrain or enhance the ability of the organisation to meet its mission.		The major purpose of marketing is to make money for the organisation by increasing the slope of demand curve.	
<b>Organisational relationship</b>	PR's fundamental responsibility is to build and maintain a hospitable environment for the organisation. PR is concerned with building relationship and generating good will for the organisation, its purpose is to create mutual understanding and cooperation through two way dialogue.		Marketing's fundamental responsibility is to build and maintain markets for an organisation's products or services.	
<b>Publics</b>	PR deals with broad array of publics beyond customers which includes employees, communities, stockholders, governments, students, suppliers, donors and consumers.		Marketing's public include mainly the target market for the product or service.	Journalism has a broad public including all types of people in the communities, governments, consumers, stakeholders, etc.

Source: Cameron *et al.* 2008:11-13; Seitel, 2004:3; Haywood, 1984:110

Kotler & Mindak (1978:17) developed five models of public relations and marketing showing further relationship between the two. The models are illustrated in the following figure.

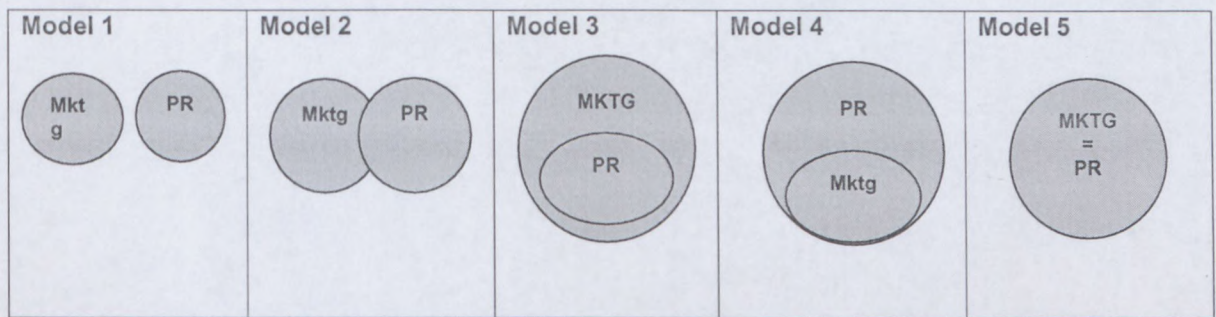


Figure 2.1. Models of relationship between marketing and public relations (Kotler & Mindak 1978:17)

- **Model 1: Separate but equal functions**

In the first model, the academics emphasised on the traditional view of marketing and public relations as different and yet equal functions (Kotler & Mindak, 1978:17). The authors say that public relations in an organisation serves to create goodwill with various publics of the organisation to prevent them from interfering in the organisation's profit making capability. As regards to marketing according to Kotler & Mindak (1978:17) it must exist in the organisation to sense, supply and satisfy customer needs with the aim of making profit. Hence they are equal in a sense that they both aim at the organisation's profit making among other aims but separate through the ways that they reach that goal.

- **Model 2: Equal but overlapping functions**

In this model Kotler & Mindak (1978:17) admitted that even though marketing and public relations are equal and yet separate functions in an organisation, there is a common territory that they share in an organisation which is product publicity and customer relations.

- **Model 3 : Marketing as the dominant function**

According to Kotler & Mindak, (1978:18) marketers believe that organisational public relations should be placed under the control of marketing department. The arguments in support of this model are that unlike public relations which just exists to ease the process of marketing the product through creation of good relations with the public, marketing is vital to the organisation as it goes beyond to the product design. The model's supporters also argue that public relations is unable to measure its profit contribution.

- **Model 4 : Public relations as the dominant function**

Taking into consideration some other factors, marketing can also be viewed as a sub function of public relations (Kotler & Mindak, 1978:18). The authors emphasize that

organisation's future highly depend on how it is perceived by its publics especially all its key stakeholders. Therefore, the organisation must satisfy them as much as possible which is the key function of public relations.

- **Model 5 : Public relations and marketing as the same function**

According to Kotler & Mindak (1978:18) this model depicts that marketing and public relations functions are somehow the same in concepts and methodologies. Kotler & Mindak further explained that the two functions are concerned with markets and publics analysis before formulating their programmes. Furthermore, they both go through planning process, implementation and control techniques. From the discussion, it is clear that these two functions are equally vital in the organisation and one should not replace another. However they should work hand in hand to make the organisation successful in all angles.

## **2.10 Public relations as a profession**

Several approaches have been used by various authors to determine the extent to which an occupation is professionalised. According to Grunig (2000:25) the idea of professionalism started in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C and by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century these discussions around the term profession were mostly limited to medicine, law and religion. As time went by, the concept of profession started to be applied to other occupations like accounting, architecture, computer science, social work and teaching (Grunig, 2000:25). These occupations called professions share the dominant factors of public respect as well as autonomy to practice their profession.

According to Horsley (2009:101) the first use of the term "public relations" as it is used today appeared in the Electric Railway Journal in 1913 in a discussion of publicity and the influence of public opinion. O'Neill (1991:28) state that the PRSA adopted its code of ethics in 1950, marking a significant step in public relations professional development. The first research and educational institute for PRSA was created in 1956, and the Council on Public Relations Education was created by the Association for Education in Journalism in the same year (O'Neill, 1991:28).

According to Cutlip *et al.* (2000:51) the general principles which apply to professions are:

- Social responsibility and public service is emphasised over private interests.
- Autonomy and responsibility is given to practitioners in order for them to decide and act by being individually accountable.

- Codes of ethics and performance standards are enforced by self governing association with colleagues where values are interpreted and enforced by disciplining those who deviate from agreed upon behaviour.
- Specialised educational standards are set by professional societies in order to prepare and determine future practitioners.

Leicht & Fennell (2001:26) provided the following defining characteristics for a profession:

- Knowledge is based on theory; and complex intellectual techniques.
- Mastery of knowledge base requires long period of training, usually university based, which is technically specialised and designed to socialise trainees into the culture and symbols of the profession.
- Tasks are inherently valuable to society and relevant to key social values.
- Practitioners are motivated by service to the client's welfare and to the profession.
- The profession has a well-developed code of ethics that guides professional behaviour and defines the profession's values.

According to Sallot, Cameron & Weaver Lariscy (1997:198); Nelson (1994:1) the following five major characteristics apply to professionalism:

- Professional values.
- Membership in professional organisations.
- Professional norms.
- An intellectual tradition.
- Development of technical skills.

Grunig & Hunt (1984:66) used the trait method to develop theoretical characteristics of a profession which are applied to a particular occupation to determine the extent to which it is professionalised. According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:66) a set of professional values, membership in a strong professional organisations, observance of professional norms, technical skills, intellectual tradition and established body of knowledge are the general qualities needed for public relations profession. Professional norms are provided by the code of ethics while technical skills are acquired through professional training (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 66). Grunig & Hunt (1984) expressed their concern about practitioners hanging on to career values like job security, position and salary instead of professional values like ethics, skills and knowledge which are the pillars of public relations professionalism. Also, the authors stated that occupations should only become professions once the individuals are qualified as professionals and they must understand what is expected of them in order to act as professionals.

Public relations professionals must act as the bridge between the organisations and the publics. These actions should be as honest as possible (Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008:285). According to Wilcox *et al.* (2000:60) assistance needed to become a real public relations professional can be provided by professional associations as they often have codes of professional conduct used to set acceptable norms of behaviour for any profession. Wilcox *et al.* (2000:65) added that the evolution of a certain occupation can be determined by its current status measured against a list of characteristics that define a profession. The academics further stated that professionalisation of public relations is essential as it will assist practitioners in terms of credibility, decision making and will emphasise the value and purpose of public relations (Wilcox *et al.* 2000:65).

L'Etang (2002:50) provided a process through which an occupation can achieve professional status:

- The adoption of a formal code of ethics.
- The emergence of the full-time occupation.
- The founding of professional associations.
- Establishment of the training school.
- Political agitation directed towards the protection of the association by law.

In order for public relations to achieve professional status, Cutlip *et al.* (2000:149) and Holmstrom (1997: 25-31) emphasised that four prerequisites must be present:

- Specialised educational programmes must be developed.
- Community recognition must be present.
- A body of knowledge must exist and.
- Individual commitment to abide by the established codes must be evident in order to protect public interest.

In the literature on public relations professionalism Wylie (1994:1) provided interdisciplinary guidelines for an undertaking to be called a "profession". According to Wylie (1994:1) a well-defined body of scholarly knowledge is necessary in public relations practice because a comprehension of the field of public relations is fundamental. This body of scholarly knowledge helps practitioners to deliver a standardised service to customers. Struweg & Meintjes (2008:228) states that the standardisation of public relations course material will lead everyone to think in the same way and hence inhibit creativity and liberation. The authors further lamented that the majority of people employed in the industry are not completely sure of what they as public relations practitioners should do. Hence, the authors advised that public relations practitioners need to always update their knowledge regarding

the industry and should have access to research studies conducted in the industry (Struweg & Meintjes, 2008:224).

Struweg & Meintjes (2008:224) added that examination and certification by an authoritative body would contribute to professionalising public relations. However, this professionalization can only be achieved if the authoritative body is respected by the public relations practitioners in the industry that the body serves and has a genuine commitment to standards. Struweg & Meintjes (2008:228) criticise that a non compulsory membership to such authoritative body is problematic as its disciplinary function is undermined. On the contrary, the authors argue that professionalism resides in the integrity of the individual and not in a watchdog. Some public relations practitioners had more than enough experience in the field but without basic qualifications; in the case of such people having an authoritative body in charge, it would restrict the action of market forces (Struweg & Meintjes, 2008:228). According to Struweg & Meintjes (2008:228) examination and certification of public relations practitioners by an authoritative body only is not enough, the profession should be supervised and disciplinary powers should be applied to practitioners by such a body.

Despite the existence of extensive literature about public relations profession: Struweg & Meintjes, (2008:228); Cutlip *et al.* (2000:51); Sallot, Cameron & Weaver Lariscy, (1997:198); Nelson, (1994:1), confusion about the field's professionalism has been noticed. Tench & Yeomans (2006:52) argue that public relations should not be called a profession since its practitioners are not licensed while lawyers, medical Doctors are. Cornelissen (2004:169) commented that there is no clear distinct domain of expertise for public relations or communication management. L'Etang (2002:44) admitted that public relations is seen as media relations only, in which the main tasks are managing press conferences and writing press releases. Kitchen (1997) perceives public relations as a persuasive tool by which organisations use as a promotional mix or publicity to achieve marketing goals. Others consider public relations to be managing reputations or image building (Hutton *et al.* 2001; Hutton, 1999: 202).

According to Tench & Yeomans (2006:52) public relations is not seen as a full time occupation by some practitioners and there are only a small number of qualified public relations personnel practising public relations. White & Mazur (1995) explain that there are people who join public relations by mistake or who consider it as a second choice in their career development. Newsom *et al.* (2000) argued that public relations could not yet be viewed as a profession because it lacks a tradition of continuing education. There is a critical debate about the location of courses of public relations whether in media or mass communication or business schools (Cornelissen, 2004; Grunig & Grunig, 2002). According

to Cornelissen (2004:47) and Kitchen (1997) public relations curricula should be included in business schools as these are appropriate educational training institutes to foster in business leaders the importance of public relations to their organisations. Kitchen (1997) state that public relations can be a true profession if all parties involved are united and committed to developing standardised; universal forms of public relations practice. Public relations practice should be seen as a full time occupation that maintains its exclusivity to balance its two-fold role as advancing stakeholders' importance and protecting the public interest over personal interest (Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008:285).

## **2.11 Public relations codes of conducts and ethics**

Abdullah & Threadgold (2008:286) state that there is no universal standard of accreditation and licensing practised by public relations professional bodies throughout the world. Therefore, different public relations associations practice different forms of accreditation and codes of ethics. Although many public relations associations have adopted the Code of Athens, some public relations bodies such as the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, UK (CIPR) have adopted their own code of ethics (Abdullah & Threadgold, 2008:286). This discussion raises an issue in defining what ethics accordingly mean. Coskun (2007:12) state that ethics is a vital theory in daily people's lives and its meaning is difficult to define precisely because it was defined by many people in different ways. According to Aristotle a person without ethics is like a wild animal (Carroll & Buchholtz, 1993). Solomon (1999:4) explained that the word ethics comes from the Greek word "ethos" meaning character or custom. According to Coskun (2007:12) ethics was defined by Dr. Albert Schweitzer as "the name given to the concern for good behaviour and ethically, it is believed to feel an obligation and to consider not only one's own personal well-being, but also that of others and of human society as whole". Seitel (2001) provides an abbreviated definition of ethics as a guide that demonstrates the right or wrong values in the society.

Velasquez, Andre, Shanks & Meyer (2006) defined ethics in two ways. Firstly, ethics relates to well based standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans should do, usually in terms of human rights, responsibilities, and benefits to society. When guided by ethics, people refrain from rape, robbery, murder and physical attack. Ethical principles also comprise qualities of honesty, kindness, and devotion. Secondly, Velasquez *et al.* (2006) explain that ethics relates to the study and development of an individual's personal ethical standards. It refers to feelings, laws, and social rules support what is ethical. Ethics also means a constant effort to study one's moral beliefs and moral conduct (Velasquez *et al.* 2006). According to Seitel (1998:77) public relations practitioners must be honest, reliable and must at all time act in the public interest guided by ethics as an essential instrument. It

means that public relations practitioners must always guide their customers in an ethical direction (Seitel, 2001). Trevino & Nelson (1999:12) state that ethical behaviour in organisations is like the principles and rules in business life and every employee should follow them. According to Leeper (1996:2) "ethics must be vital to public relations".

In America, early public relations practices introduced many ethical concerns as the press agency approach emphasised exaggeration, sensationalism and often lacked truth (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:17). Edward Bernays; called this time period of 1850 to 1905 "the public be damned era" (Cutlip *et al.* 2006). Press agents were concerned with generating publicity at almost any cost, and this approach engendered the unethical reputation of modern day public relations. Ethics as a consideration entered the development of modern practice in about 1906, with well-known practitioner Ivy Lee's declaration of public relations principles. Lee's declaration changed the practice from "the public be damned era "into "the public be informed era" with his emphasis on telling the truth and providing accurate information (Cutlip *et al.* 2006).

Ethical code of conduct is like company rules or house rules, without them everybody behaves in their own way and this may harm the company. Likewise ethical code guides public relations practitioners about how to behave in order to gain professional status (Lattimore, Baskin, Suzette, Toth & Van Leuven, 2004).

Even though every professional organisation develops its own code of ethics, most of them emphasise on honesty of practitioners which is one of public relations principles (Coskun, 2007:25). According to Lattimore *et al.* (2004) the ethics code of the PRSA is the most comprehensive, complete and is continuously updated to respond to the turbulent environment. PRSA's code emphasises the honesty of practitioners, obedience of the rules, keeping privacy of customer's information and protecting the organisation's morals (Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee, 1992:80).

## **2.12 Women involvement in public relations**

According to Grunig (1988) women are making a great contribution in the public relations industry worldwide. Scholars that have developed feminist theories of public relations thought that female values in general can benefit the public relations industry. The theoretical research of Grunig, Toth, & Hon, (2000:52); Hon, (1995:27) primarily focus on how women and feminist values can benefit the industry, positing that feminist values are intrinsic to the public relations profession. The academics state that public relations is an industry founded on feminist values, such as honesty, justice, and sensitivity, which will enhance the symmetrical communication patterns of public relations. According to Grunig, Toth, & Hon

(2000:52), the two-way symmetrical model of public relations requires resolving conflict and building relationships which are intrinsically feminist values.

Other studies have reported differences between men and women public relations practitioners' approaches to negotiating abilities and the ability to get things done (Cline & Toth, 1993:184; Toth & Cline, 1991:161). Contrary, Schwartz (1989:592) state that it is not ideal to allow women to advance into senior positions as the costs of employing women in management is greater than the cost of employing men due to maternity leave and the possibility that they might not come back after having` a baby. In the rest of this section the researcher reviews and discusses the international perspectives of women in public relations.

The decades between 1940 and 1970 are significant for examining the contributions of women to American public relations for the following reasons (Horsley, 2009:101). During this period public relations associations were formed, a professional code of ethics was developed, and professional accreditation system was implemented (Horsley, 2009:101). After World War II, many women were still enjoying the job opportunities created by men who went to war. During this time period, there was a remarkable growth in the number of women's contributions to American public relations. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of women in the American profession increased greatly more than 100 percent while the number of men in public relations only increased at a very low rate of 40 percent (Horsley, 2009:102). The PRSA created the Committee on the Status of Women in Public Relations in 1971, embodying a larger concern to understand and address gender discrepancies that were well recognised (Cline, Masel-Walters, Toth, Turk, Smith, & Johnson, 1986). By 1972, the PRSA elected its first female chair, suggesting that by this time women were being acknowledged for their work on a national scale (Gower, 2001:16). Public relations is an expanding field and it appears that this is one area where gender equity has become a reality and the consistent feminisation of the industry has contributed to assumptions that women are not experiencing gender based disadvantage (O'Neil, 1991:28).

By 1970s, public relations was seen as a major growth area for employment opportunities. There were 75,000 jobs in public relations, 25 percent of which were filled by women (Horsley, 2009:104). As the number of women in public relations was increasing, the pay disparity between men and women, as well as lack of advancement opportunities for women increased (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006:35). This prevented them from achieving the same career goals as men in this profession.

To confirm the above situation, Wilcox & Cameron (2006:35) stated that "women are segregated into the lower-level technician roles, spending time on routine activities such as

writing, editing, and handling media relations while more men are promoted into powerful managerial roles, engaging in activities such as counselling senior management, and making key policy decisions". Once American men began to return home from World War II, the tone changed dramatically as women were laid off from their jobs. The same propaganda that had encouraged them to leave their families and go to work was now telling them to go back home where they belong (Meyerowitz, 1994:3).

By the late 1980s the dangers of feminisation of public relations were widely acknowledged among practitioners, educators, and researchers (Lesly, 1988:5). According to Cline *et al.* (1986) the salary gaps and promotion disparities were well-known, but the reasons varied among those in the field. Most did agree, however, that the field would continue to decline in stature as long as the number of women increased. Evidence of the declining status included lower salaries for men as well as women; a continuing pay gap between men and women; lack of advancement opportunities for men and women; and susceptibility of the public relations department to cutbacks or suspension (Cline, *et al.* 1986).

Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) (2005) state that public relations industry in the United Kingdom comprises 62 percent women and are becoming feminised in parallel with the trends in the United States, Australia and Germany. According to CIPR (2005) this means that women in public relations have found a discipline where they can work and show self-confidence, assertiveness, a risk-taking attitude, and an accountability necessary for any business success. Furthermore, public relations is being feminised because communications skills, empathy, networking and multi-tasking are naturally embedded in females and they are mostly encouraged and valued by the industry (CIPR, 2005).

According to Cameron *et al.* (2008:76) the research carried out among practitioners in Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom suggest that public relations is perceived as being feminine. This means that the industry is transforming from a male dominated field to one in which women dominate. With the increasing feminisation of public relations many young women are eager to work in the public relations industry, so the gender shift in the industry shows no signs of slowing down. The transformation has been going on for several decades as in 1979 women were only 41 percent and only four years later they became 50.1 percent and by the year 2000 they were 70 percent (Cameron, *et al.* 2008:76). There are many reasons behind the feminisation of the industry and the most common reason put forward by Fröhlich & Peters, (2006); Lindley, (2006); Smith, (2005:190) is that it is simply perceived as being feminine. This can be explained by the fact that the industry is often perceived as being glamorous and a soft career option and women have naturally better communication skills than men.

Grunig, Toth & Hon (2000:62) state that interviewed practitioners admit that they prefer working with women as they are more cautious, less likely to speak off the cuff and more willing to take advice rather than young men who can be over confident and go their own ways. Women are recognised as being better at relationship building, which is crucial for dealing with both clients and the media. Women have empathy with people and are more interested in interactive dialogue; listening as well as speaking. As public relations need high levels of communication, women seem to adjust better than men (Grunig, *et al.* 2000:55). Feminist public relations scholars in the United States claim that it is the tendency for women to value honesty, justice, sensitivity, and conflict resolution that enable women to practise two way symmetrical public relations the normative model of practice (Grunig *et al.* 2000:53). From this it would appear that women enter Public Relations because they perceive themselves and are perceived as better at building relationships.

Cameron *et al.* (2008:77) state a number of reasons for the major invasion of women into public relations field:

- Women find more welcoming environment in public relations and see more advancement opportunities than in other field.
- Women are more sensitive than men in facilitating two way communication.
- They tend to have better listening and communication skills than men.
- Women still make more money in public relations than other comparable female dominated fields like social work or teaching.

The implications of the feminisation of public relations appeared to be damaging to this still evolving field. Whether feminisation and the promotion of women into senior roles are having a detrimental impact on the industry is debatable. As more women entered the field, men left for better salaries and higher status. According to Aldoory & Toth (2002:124) the influx of women created an image of public relations as being a lower-ranked technical or clerical function as opposed to strategic management function. According to Aldoory & Toth (2002:124) feminisation of public relations will lead to the loss of status of the field. Other research has indicated that the simple perception that there are more women than men in a field can damage its credibility (Dozier, 1988).

Based on the issue of feminisation in public relations, Aldoory & Toth (2002:124) developed new theory about gender inequities in pay and promotions. The academics suggested that as the number of men decreases throughout the profession due to feminisation, attempts to recruit and retain them become an emphasis of many public relations firms (Aldoory & Toth, 2002:124). In an effort to balance males and females, and to discourage the appearance of public relations as a female-dominated profession, the industry actively seeks to hire men

and offsets the feminine reputation of the occupation with appealing offers. These stronger attempts to boost the number of males in the industry lead to favouritism toward males in terms of salaries, promotions and benefits (Aldoory & Toth, 2002:124). However, the balancing efforts were ineffective as the percentage of men in public relations dropped from 70 percent in 1970 to about 30 percent in 2005 (Toth, 2001).

According to Yeomans (2007:213) women's competence in these areas are taken for granted and exploited as women are expected to perform the emotional labour of listening, counselling, serving, dealing with difficult people and even cleaning up literal and figurative messes of others. Despite societal pressures to stay at home, the number of women in the workforce continued to grow, doubling between 1940 and 1960 (Chafe, 1972:533). The feminisation theory of public relations can be applied here as it addresses the impact on the field of public relations that occurs when the number of female practitioners is larger than the number male practitioners (Heath, 2005:323). In some cases, women were hired over men because they would work for lower salaries, and they could identify with female consumers who managed the household purchases. This economic argument is still relevant today as the salary gap persists between men and women in public relations (Toth, 2001). According to Grunig *et al.* (2001:264) one of the facts about public relations field is that it values communication and organisational skills, which are characteristics traditionally, associated with women. Through interviews with young practitioners, Grunig *et al.* (2000) found that women are attracted to public relations because the hurdles are not too tiring and they can attain professional status. Remuneration is better than in many other careers chosen by women, particularly at entry levels. Women also appreciate the flexibility in work arrangements and believe that promotion prediction look promising, particularly with increasing numbers of high profile women leaders in the industry (Grunig *et al.* 2001:221).

Grunig *et al.* (2002:183) state that the decreased status of public relations is a result of society's devaluation of women. Women were seen as undependable hires that would leave a job because of pregnancy, childcare issues, or their husband's job transfer, and would not make good managers because of their nurturing nature (Cline *et al.* 1986). Complicating the fact that the public relations function lost status in the organisational hierarchy, male managers with different career backgrounds from other departments began to be hired to run the public relations department instead of qualified female public relations professionals. This concept of encroachment threatens the authenticity of the profession Dozier, (1988) and perpetuates negative implication of feminisation of public relations (Grunig *et al.* 2001: 284).

Feminisation needs to be understood and monitored because it seems to be masking the continuing reality of gender inequity (Grunig *et al.* 2002:183). The research evidence across

other professions and industries is that over time feminisation leads to a decline in status and remuneration (Valian, 1998; Rafferty, 1996; Acker, 1989). Moreover, despite an increasingly feminised profession, the feminist public relations research also points to a negotiated resignation towards the glass ceiling effect. Glass ceiling is referred to as situation where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organisation is stopped at a lower level because of some form of discrimination and this will be elaborated in the section about barriers faced by women in the industry (Wrigley, 2002).

Women dominate public relations, making up 70 percent of its work force; however, women only fill 20 percent of the top leadership roles in major agencies. The issue of gender and leadership in public relations needs to shift toward those women who are leaders, examining the factors that make them successful (Aldoory, 2005). Although women have been part of the workforce for a number of years, the question is whether they are reaching the top rungs of the corporate ladder; and if they are receiving professional recognition for their contribution. Holton (2000:151) presents a global overview indicating that women directors in the UK are more positive than in many other countries with the exception of USA. In Switzerland, Spain and Italy, Israel, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Netherlands and Greece, the situation is similar to the UK with few women in management positions. In Belgium women hardly hold any board level appointments. In France and Sweden there have been greater advances in the public sector than in the private sector, in Norway women hold less than 10 percent of management positions (Holton, 2000:151).

A study by Catalyst (2003) about women in U.S. corporate leadership states that women continue to comment that barriers in terms of work culture and environment are still plaguing them. This indicates that women still see themselves as outsiders in the industry. The study previously mentioned says that in most societies, male power is still prevalent and this power is carried into the workplace and materialises as a male-dominated corporate culture. With women entering the workplace, this power is being re-examined and redistributed. This presented some problems as feminine qualities are still seen as less effective for management (Haslett, Geis & Carter, 1992:29; Dubno, 1985; Eagly & Wood, 1991). This position is evident and was emphasised by Bilimoria (1995:13) who noted that even when women do all the right things and have all the right stuff, they continue to be blocked from the internal most circles of power. One of the reasons why women are not much respected in the workplace for their contribution is because many societies value masculine rather than feminine traits (McCammond, 2006: 67).

According to Rajan & Krishnan (2002) successful managers have been identified more with men than with women in terms of emotional stability, aggressiveness, leadership ability, self-

reliance, certainty, vigour, desiring responsibility, seriousness, objectivity, knowledge and straightwardness. According to the study conducted by Mueuen-Bae (1998) culture has more impact than gender on the difference in leadership styles utilised by managers. Mueuen-Bae (1998) agrees with this position as research has failed to find differences between male and female leadership styles based on personality traits; in the same research study it was also found that there is no difference between male and female managerial styles. The Table 2.6 depicts the involvement of American women in the public relations profession from 1940 to 1970 and how the American society analysed that involvement as it was published in the trade journals for advertising and public relations (Horsley, 2009:104)

**Table 2.7. Women's involvement in the development of American Public Relations.**

	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s
<b>Depictions of women in PR trade journals</b>	Women as professionals; unlimited possibilities in PR for women	Women as "cheesecake;" women are marginalized and slowly disappear	Complaints are voiced about representation in PRSA; use of "PR man"	Complaints are voiced about representation in PRSA; use of "PR man"
<b>Depictions of women in American society</b>	Women as professionals because they are filling men's roles; asked to leave after WWII	Symbolic annihilation; conflict between traditional values and women in workforce	Women as housewives and secretaries	Salary gaps persist between men and women as more women enter male dominated occupations

Source: Horsley, 2009:104

### **2.13 Barriers faced by women in public relations**

During the past few decades, women have attained high levels of education in all parts of the world and comprise around 40 percent of work force worldwide (International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2002). According to Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine (2005:581) in many countries, women have higher rates of enrolment in schools and universities and they dominate certain economic sectors as in the educational, public relations and nursing fields Ogenyi & Victoria (2004). This phenomenon, however, has not been paralleled by equal access to work opportunities at higher levels of organisations or equal access to fair and equitable pay. Ogenyi & Victoria (2004) state that women's accumulation of management experience and completion of professional education programs is not sufficient to ensure their access to senior management positions at comparable rates to men.

The under representation of women in managerial positions in public relations is mostly attributed to their socialisation into caretaker roles and the continued characterisation of their paid work as minor and temporary (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994). From this perspective, women's dominance in top management positions has been systematically, historically and culturally undermined by their prescribed socially constructed roles and male control over institutions.

Alternatively, scholars attribute women's under representation in managerial positions to barriers of an attitudinal nature, which flourish and perpetuated in corporate cultures (Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994). Included in this category is a set of constraints like employer biases, negative perceptions of women's professional capabilities and commitment, stereotypical attitudes, attribution of behaviour, the use of patronizing language or other discriminatory behaviour by colleagues and or superiors (Cordano *et al.* 2002; Lahtinen & Wilson, 1994). These constraints although intangible and sometimes unintentional are yet frequently characterised by female managers as having a real and profound impact on career advancement.

Metz, (2003); Yoo, (2003) emphasises the continued existence of structured corporate inequalities and institutional discrimination as barriers to the under representation of women in management positions. These barriers are more tangible, stemming from legitimised institutional practices, comprising for instance:

- Preference for male candidates in recruitment, promotion or out of office assignments.
- Lack of flexible working hours or other family friendly initiatives.
- Absence of role models.
- Limited education and training opportunities.
- Pay discrepancies.
- Limited availability of childcare arrangements.
- Exclusion from power networks.

Stone & McKee (2000:67) present another angle from which to attribute the under representation of women in managerial positions as segregation in the workplace. The authors articulate that women play a big part in this issue as they are generally clustered in relatively poorly paid occupations, and there are fewer of these female dominated occupations than there are male dominated ones. Segregation being promoted by a variety of factors, it is partly fostered by women themselves who orient their own training and self-images toward lower-paying, less prestigious careers (Stone & McKee, 2000:67). According

to Astin (1978:99) the interrelationships among gender, higher education and inequality in the workplace have been examined from diverse theoretical perspectives and through a number of different disciplines. Probably the most influential idea to account for women college students' lower career aspirations and their resignation to accepting lower paying, less prestigious careers has been that institutions of higher education discourage or discriminate against women (Astin, 1978:99)

Stone & McKee's (2000:67) study shows that women students' educational and occupational goals frequently decline as they move through their college years. This is attributed to the fact that the structure of institutions of education starting from elementary schools fosters male students at the expense of female students.

According to Stone & McKee (2000:68) this discrepancy encouragement includes:

- Lack of faculty mentoring of and feedback to female students.
- Lack of appropriate role models for women students.
- Professors giving more attention to and constructive criticisms to the work of male students.
- Faculty unconsciously, encouraging male students' predominance in class discussions.

These forms of institutional discouragement of female students, combined with sexual harassment and other more explicit forms of sexism may continue to complicate the educational climate for women. Above all, it will continue to foster the gender gap in leadership positions (Stone & McKee, 2000:68).

Female students in Stone & McKee's study appeared less concerned with future income, less aware of salaries, and less knowledgeable about expectations or requirements of particular career trajectories. With the assumption that future husband's earnings would make it less necessary for women to be concerned about earning their own income women chose to be ignorant about the issue. Women students made this point in one way or another in the context of their marital plans but even more in discussions of their future reproduction and motherhood perspectives (Stone & McKee, 2000:74).

Jamall, Sidani & Safieddine (2005:588) conducted an interview among Lebanese women and compiled information about the constraints facing Lebanese women and classified these into the following three main categories:

- Socio cultural environment.
- Stereotypical attitudes perpetuated within corporate cultures.

- Structural barriers.
- Other barriers

### **2.13.1 The socio cultural barriers**

According to Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine (2005:587) despite the fact that some studies have alluded to a favourable attitude towards the work of women in Lebanon, cultural factors continue to play a major role in shaping women's work experiences and environments. In reality, Lebanon seems to offer no exception to Middle Eastern value systems that emphasises the role of women as mothers and homemakers (Jamali, Sidani, & Safieddine, 2005:587). Although increasing financial need is forcing men to comply with women's employment, patriarchal attitudes are still deep-rooted in some contemporary societies. Tradition, patriarchy and culture are generally expected to exercise less weight against the forces of education and modernisation, but the alleviation of cultural constraints may differ across regions and religious groups (Jamali, Sidani, & Safieddine, 2005:588). Some of the women interviewed alluded to the existence of internal regional discrimination in gender codes whereby in rural areas as well as conservative muslim communities, men remain dedicated to the ideology of domesticity and refrain from encouraging female participation in the paid labour force.

According to Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine (2005: 587) women desire and have the potential to reach the highest management positions, but their primary concern and role should continue to revolve around the family. Good children upbringing is the backbone of a healthy society and this role should not be compromised. Women should continue to bear primary responsibility for children upbringing and socialisation and this important role should neither be under estimated nor negligated (Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine, 2005:587). However, women should not be penalised and their career aspirations as well as prospects let down or compromised during the process.

### **2.13.2 The corporate barriers**

Concerning corporate barriers Jamali *et al.* (2005:588) point out that women are generally perceived to be at a higher employment risk than their male counterparts. It is commonly assumed that women's family and domestic commitments will take priority. The authors state that when marriage and family enter the picture they put women at a competitive disadvantage with regard to employment for the rest of their lives. However the choices made by women in their personal lives should not mean that they cannot be committed professionals (Jamali *et al.* 2005:588). According to Aldoory, Jiang, Toth & Sha (2008:3); Grunig *et al.* (2001:406); Hon, (1995:32) there is a common perception that women are less

committed because of their familial obligations especially when they get married or pregnant and this impact their career advancement opportunities and they are persistently perceived as less reliable than their male counterparts. Although, many women have demonstrated their ability to balance high aspirations in different areas of life, their professional commitment continues to be doubted and questioned and judgments about effective management continue to be based on adherence to an entirely masculine gender stereotype (Haslett, Geis & Carter, 1992:29). Stereotypical attitudes were thus frequently mentioned as hindering career advancement (Jamali *et al.* 2005:587). Based on the stereotypical thoughts, women are characterised as unable to assume high responsibility positions like men (Haslett, Geis & Carter, 1992:29).

Some of the interviewed respondents in Jamali *et al.* (2005:588) research on Lebanese women agreed to the point that women in Lebanon are perceived as passive and emotional individuals and hence they are not fit to assume leadership positions. On the other hand, men are always perceived as being balanced, assertive, aggressive and autonomous and this becomes even more obvious in Lebanon environment which still capitalises on a masculine leadership model (Jamali *et al.* 2005:588). Respondents added that several times in practice women's capabilities and skills were doubted by superiors, colleagues and sometimes by subordinates which was considered to be an uncomfortable situation. A number of women managers reported having to openly confront highly stereotypical attitudes to establish respect and authority in their positions (Jamali *et al.* 2005:588). Ironically, these attitudes stemmed not only from male subordinates and colleagues, but also from women as well. Even some women have a stereotypical thinking that according to some cultures, women are not perceived as potential leaders or as capable of exercising leadership roles (Jamali *et al.* 2005:588.)

### **2.13.3 The structural barriers**

Apart from cultural and corporate barriers, structural barriers relate to organisational policies and practices that slow down women's development. Jamali *et al.* (2005:589) identified in their study numerous constraints of a structural nature. These include exclusion from all kinds of networks, the absence of relevant benefits and corporate developmental assignments that are designed to tidy up male managers for senior leadership in their companies. Several women reported having been denied the informal networking opportunities with colleagues. Some of the women managers interviewed, pointed out that "not all organisations in Lebanon have cultures that enhance gender interaction; many organisations have a strong masculine culture, which translates more concretely into structural arrangements that isolate and alienate women". Consequently women managers

were simply not getting the same opportunities as their male colleagues for mixing throughout the organisation, neither horizontally nor vertically (Jamali *et al.* 2005:589).

One interviewee lamented that a general sense of being continuously a dispensable staff in the organisation has consistently bothered her since she joined the organisation. The way women are treated in their respective workplaces resulted in an accentuated sense of frustration and job dissatisfaction (Sowell, 2004:1). A few organisations segment opportunity structure and job markets in ways which enable men to achieve positions of power and prestige more easily than women. In addition, several women respondents reported that they are rarely assigned high visibility projects or corporate developmental assignments that are otherwise commonly used to groom male managers for senior leadership in their companies (Jamali *et al.* 2005:589). The consequences implied that women in organisations are often not exposed to the same sort of experiences or varied job assignments that are necessary for job development. Consequently some women managers reported feeling increasingly disappointed with lack of support in their work environments. The respondents commented on the absence of relevant benefits, such as flexitime and childcare support, despite their request for married women and their potential for decreasing turnover and impacting commitment; job sharing, flexitime, and childcare support to a great extent are virtually not existent in most of the organisations (Jamali *et al.* 2005:589).

The post war economic crisis in Lebanon was also recurrently mentioned as a significant macro structural constraint. In the view of many of interviewed women, several companies are taking advantage of the deteriorating economic situation to force women into accepting work conditions and rewards that would not have been acceptable under normal circumstances (Grunig, Toth & Hon. 2001:370). According to Sowell (2004:2) this means that women are more than ever working under stressful conditions of reduced salaries and lowered advancement prospects. It must also be noted that women may be juggling the desire to work in public relations with the desire to have children and raise a family and hence may be unwilling or unable to work in managerial roles (Sowell, 2004:1). Women may actually be voluntarily resigning themselves to technician roles simply because these roles may offer more flexibility, less responsibility and pressure (Jamali *et al.* 2005).

#### **2.13.4 Other barriers**

##### **2.13.4.1 Gender Stereotypes in Public Relations**

According to George & Jones (1999:112) a stereotype is a set of excessively simplified and often incorrect beliefs about the typical characteristics of a particular group. Haslett, Geis & Carter (1992:29) defined gender stereotypes as "common, culture wide beliefs about how men and women differ in personal qualities and characteristics". According to Haslett *et al.*

(1992:29) men are usually stereotyped as objective, competitive, logical, independent, aggressive, responsible, rational and ambitious, while women's stereotypes often include characteristics such as being gentle, emotional, intuitive, dependent, sensitive, passive, illogical, nurturant, warm and accommodating. George & Jones (1999:112) explains the danger of using stereotypes is that they categorise people into generalised compartments that might not be true for some of the individuals. Wood (2001:244); Wood (1999:258) assert that organisations tend to classify women into one of four roles: sex object, mother, child or iron maiden.

#### ➤ **Sex Object**

This stereotype defines women in terms of their sex or sexuality (Wood, 2001:244). It focuses on the expectation that women need to be feminine and much emphasis is placed on appearance and reflects the cultural tendency to judge women on what they look like rather than their capability.

#### ➤ **Mother**

According to Wood (2001:245) the stereotype of women as mothers in organisations has both indirect and literal forms. The first form is the expectation that women will listen to, support, and help others. This stereotype can lead to job segregation where women are put in positions that traditionally support women's roles in society. The second form is that women will not be as serious as men about their careers because they are or will be mothers in the future. It assumes that motherhood will take priority and this perception hinders women from receiving organisational support in terms of training and promotional opportunities which then perpetuates the stereotype. Lahtinen & Wilson (1994) prove that segregation can be maintained by differential recruitment or by keeping women to the lower positions within the organisation which usually have less status and lower pay.

#### ➤ **Child**

This stereotype reflects the social view of women as less mature, less competent, or unable to make decisions than men (Wood, 2001:246). According to Wood (2001:246) stereotyping females as children often occurs when people pretend to be protecting them. This view assumes that women will not be as effective in carrying out their job responsibilities and therefore should be limited to positions where they can be supervised. Through the measurement of the number of subordinates managed by men and women, Lyness & Thompson (1997) found that women's jobs have less authority than those of men.

### ➤ Iron Maiden

Wood (2001:248) addresses this stereotype as when people see a particular woman as being unwomanly, unfeminine and manly or a hard woman. A woman who is an iron maiden is seen as possessing masculine personality and she is criticised for it because those traits are taken in a negative way. Many women in the past have suffered the embarrassment of this stereotype in order to progress in the corporate world. In most of the time, women with these qualities succeed even though they are generally discouraged by their female colleagues who think that such women are traitors to their gender (Aldoory, Jiang, Toth & Sha, 2008:10). In order to be successful in the workplace, women undertake a figurative sex change so as to fit into masculine defined managerial roles (Aldoory *et al.* 2008:10). By altering their behaviour in order to fit in, women face the iron maiden stereotype and are reinforcing the male dominated culture by competing with men on their own terms and suggesting that femininity is somewhat deficient or inferior.

Stone & McKee (2000:68) pointed out another stereotype which is often given to females as "passive pawns" and it is better explained in what the authors called "chilly climate theory". The theory depicts students, particularly women students, as passive pawns of larger institutional structures. According to the theory, the university experience obstructs female students' professional development, substantially contributing to their subordination both in the school and later on in the workplace and in the society as well. This view of female students as passive pawns denies that students like other human actors, are themselves agents of cultural construction (Stone & McKee, 2000:68).

#### 2.13.4.2 Glass ceiling

According to Toth & Aldoory (2001) the expression glass ceiling has been used to describe the invisible attitudinal and organisational barriers that hinder the advancement of women. Factors keeping the glass ceiling integral can range from the more slight discrimination of stereotyping to sexual harassment, from lack of mentorship or networking to male oriented organisational structures and cultures (McCammond, 2006:44). Not only the individual organisation may suffer from the effects of glass ceiling but also the whole society as one part of the society members is considered inactive. It effectively cuts out a pool of potential corporate leaders by eliminating over one half of population and deprives the economy of new leaders, new sources of creativity and the would be pioneers of the business world (McCammond, 2006:44).

If an organisation is aiming to compete successfully in today's global market, then glass ceiling should be discouraged in order to get the full potentials of varied workforce (Wrigley, 2002). According to Wrigley, (2002) it will not benefit organisations to ignore the dire effects of

glass ceiling due to the fact that organisations will need to use all their best resources effectively as well as efficiently to stay competitive in today's turbulent environment. According to Wallace (2000) this will include talents, skills and knowledge of their employees, regardless of gender and discrimination will become more and more difficult to indulge in when considering the cost of recruitment and training as a result of a high turnover rate. This argument is supported by Rosener (2003) who asserts that companies which demolish the glass ceiling enjoy higher profits. On the other hand however, Black (1989:102) denies the idea of glass ceiling in public relations and confirms that the number of women in management positions is increasing in Britain agencies. Consequently, Black (1989:102) stated that there is no artificial barrier to success for women only that they are required to work hard. According to Black (1989:102) women can be assumed as are managers in their own agencies which they open as a result of not being able to handle corporate challenges like glass ceiling. It is important to discuss some of the reasons why women start their own agencies in the public relations industry.

#### **2.13.4.3 Limited rewards in corporate work environment**

According to Wallace (2000) many are frustrated with corporate work environments; others believe the corporate world offers limited rewards; others are kicked out by glass ceiling issues and lack of recognition for their contributions. Fortunately, entrepreneurship can offer increased flexibility, recognition, more money, greater challenges and an opportunity to balance work and family responsibilities (Aldoory, 2005:669). Considering these advantages, women think twice before dedicating themselves to a permanent position within the organisation. Organisations must realise the dangers of ignoring the frustrations of the business woman caused by male dominated corporate culture and traditional structure as entrepreneurship is becoming a practical option for many women.

Although there is no equity yet, the managerial gender gap may be narrowing due to the fact that several women are heading their own public relations agencies worldwide hence increasing the number of females in management positions (Black, 1989:102). By comparing the results of surveys done by PRSA members in 1979 and 1991, Dozier & Broom found that the percentage of female practitioners involved in management positions was 39 percent in 1991 increased from 28 percent in 1979 (Farmer & Waugh 1999:237). Even though there may be evidence that the managerial gender gap is narrowing, a critical finding in Toth & Grunig (1993:68) study was that women are being paid less for doing same or more job than their male counterparts. The authors further reported that the women in their study persistently do technical activities while carrying out the managerial function as well and this contrast male practitioners views who said that their managerial activities were

more managerial in nature.

According to Toth & Grunig (1993:68) female practitioners are doing it all which is, executing both technical and managerial functions for less pay than their male counterparts. More to this, the concept of women "doing it all," includes not only combining managerial and technical duties in the same job, but also family responsibilities (Farmer & Waugh 1999:237). The impact of children on women's careers in all professions has been a debatable issue by various authors (Stone & McKee, 2000:76).

In the study conducted by Stone & McKee (2000:80) on college students, the authors found that respondents mostly believe that men should be the primary breadwinners and women should be based at home occupying household work and children nurturing. These traditional attitudes toward gender roles extended to career roles as well, with many women in the study admitting that they would be willing to move or adjust their career plans based on the plans of a boyfriend or fiancé. Women are also prepared to interrupt their own future careers depending on their husbands' salaries in order to raise children (Stone & McKee, 2000:75).

#### **2.13.4.4 Sexual harassment**

Various theories and illustrative models regarding the origins of sexual harassment are visible in the literature and are categorised mainly into three groups (Kiely & Henbest, 2000:66). According to Malovich & Stake (1990) the first group includes models which view sexual harassment as a product of Western society which generally delineates male dominance over females by perpetuating beliefs, attitudes and actions that devalue women because of their gender. Sexual harassment is seen as an inevitable consequence of cultural experience and culturally legitimated power and status differences rather than being unique to the workplace (Kiely & Henbest, 2000:66).

Secondly, a group of models argue that sexual harassment is a result of power and status inequalities within an organisation (Gruber, 1992; Stringer, Remick, Salisbury & Ginorio, 1990). While initially arguing that sexual harassment was an abuse of power to sexually pressurize or intimidate women, later researchers have argued that certain facilitative factors or conditions within an organisation make it more likely for sexual harassment to occur (Stringer *et al.* 1990). Included in these factors are opportunity structures, gender ratios in an organisation and organisational norms.

Thirdly, sexual harassment has been seen to relate to individual differences in terms such as perceptions of harassers and non-harassers as well as victims and non-victims (Kiely & Henbest, 2000:66). Research on victims' perception of sexual harassment also links to

perceptions of gender role traditions (Malovich & Stake, 1990). Sexual harassment continues to be a problem for these days working women. Nielsen (1996) provided insight on the sexual harassment in the workplace as follows: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- Such conduct has a purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidation, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Contrary, Kiely & Henbest (2000:65) emphasised that there is a clear line between teasing romantic behaviour and offensive harassment and it follows that it is for each individual to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them, and what they regard as offensive. The scholars identified that sexual harassment can take a variety of the following forms:

- Physical conduct
- Jokes
- Offensive language
- Gossip
- Slander
- Sectarian songs and letters
- Posters
- Graffiti
- Obscene gestures
- Flags
- Bunting and emblems
- Isolation or non- co-operation and exclusion from social activities
- Coercion for sexual favours
- Pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering
- Spying and stalking

George & Jones (1999:138) identified two types of sexual harassment in the workplace:

➤ Hostile Environment Sexual Harassment

Hostile environment sexual harassment is creating or maintaining a work environment that is offensive, intimidating, or hostile because of a person's gender. It may involve rude remarks, using language that demeans one gender, hanging pinups and circulating rumours about an individual's real or speculated sexual activities (Wood, 2001:318; George & Jones, 1999:138).

➤ Quid Pro Quo Sexual Harassment

According to George & Jones (1999:138) this type of harassment is requesting or forcing a worker to perform sexual favours in order to receive some opportunity or avoid a negative consequence. This type of sexual harassment may involve receiving a raise or promotion for sexual favours or may result in dismissal or demotion if the individual refuses.

## **2.14 Organisational structure and behaviour towards working women**

According to Brief & Weiss (2002:280) the organisation in which people work affect their thoughts, feelings and actions in the workplace. In retrospect, people's thoughts, feelings and actions affect the organisation as well. Organisational behaviour is concerned with finding out the influence of organisations on people and people on organisations. Every organisation is a society on its own, thus each organisation has its own internal culture or social system (McCammond, 2006:32; Brief & Weiss, 2002:280). This culture held by every organisation is shaped by people in management positions and turbulent environmental factors and is upheld by the employees who embrace and reinforce organisational values (McCammond, 2006:32). According to Brief & Weiss (2002:280) the current changes in the nature of business brought about changes in women's and men's opportunities to enter and exit businesses. Those changes have reflected and signalled societies changing attitudes towards business and the relation between women and men over time. In view of this complex relationship between society and business, legislation alone will not be responsible for creating equality in the workplace. Only permanent change will occur as soon as conventional attitudes and perceptions of women are transformed in the workplace (Brief & Weiss, 2002:280). According to the traditional behaviour, organisations are male inventions, run by men, for men and hence women cannot make the changes alone (Yeager, 1999: xvi). Women require the support of the organisations they work for, revised organisational structures, policies and procedures need to be put into place in order to progress (Brief & Weiss, 2002:280).

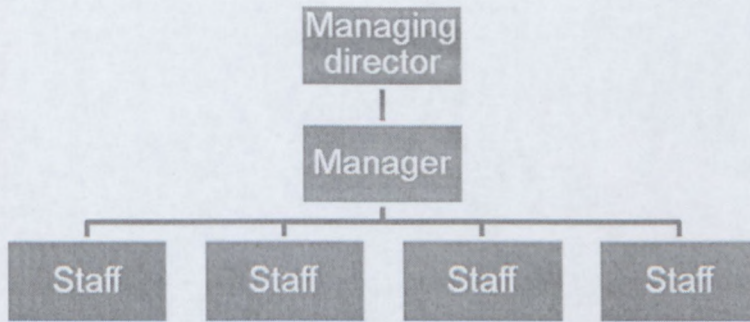
Taking into consideration the conflicting responsibilities of working women, women would prefer to be employed with virtual companies which operate globally and link together people in different geographical locations as if working in the same room (McCammond, 2006:29). Women recommend that selection criteria of a potential employee should not only include salary and location for the prospective employee, but also other added benefits such as

childcare, education, working conditions like telecommuting and flexible working hours (McCammond, 2006:31). Organisations that do not make their structures women friendly will lose out on valuable talent in the long run. Networking is another good practice for an organisation which needs to retain its employees and avoid employee turnover costs (McCammond, 2006:28). Network organisations contribute positively to the advancement of women in that they allow for increased interaction and information sharing (Achrol & Kotler, 1999:146). The promotion of knowledge management, which is necessary in network environments, has the potential to transform women into valuable intellectual assets and as the value of knowledge increases, so will the value of the employee who possesses it (McCammond, 2006:28).

The following guidelines to implement important organisational changes to help women advance in managerial positions and gain professional status were suggested by Akande (1994):

- Flatten the organisational structure by trimming any fat in staffing in order to decentralise authority and empower employees at every level.
- Change the financial reward system to pay employees equally regardless of sex or race but for their knowledge and skills.
- Make surroundings equal to reinforce the classless structure of the firm and to impress upon people especially women that decisions and rewards are based on expertise rather than hierarchy.

In contrast to a tall organisation, a flat organisation has relatively few layers or just one layer of management. According to Carzo & Yanouzas (1969:178) this means that the chain of command from top to bottom is short and the span of control is wide. Due to the small number of management layers, flat organisations are often small organisations or units within a bigger organisation. Flat organisation also known as horizontal organisation refers to an organisational structure with few or no levels of intervening management between staff and managers (Carzo & Yanouzas, 1969:178). The thought behind is that well trained workers will be more productive when they are more directly involved in the decision making process, rather than being closely supervised by many layers of management. Flat organisations have just three or four levels of management and are commonly referred to as decentralised organisations. The following figure depicts a simple flat organisation.



**Figure 2.2. Flat organisational structure**

Source: Carzo & Yanouzas, 1969:178.

According to Carzo & Yanouzas (1969:178) there are many operational and organisational advantages to having a flat organisational structure, including cost reductions, faster turnaround time for decision making, improved communications and improved customer responsiveness that results in faster product delivery and increased creativity. These are summarised in the following table.

**Table 2.8. Advantages & disadvantages of a flat organisation**

Advantages	Disadvantages
Greater communication between management and workers	Workers may have more than one boss.
Better team spirit.	May hinder the growth of the organisation.
Less bureaucracy and easier decision making.	Structure limited to small organisations such as partnerships, co-operatives and some private limited companies.
Fewer levels of management which includes benefits such as lower costs as managers are generally paid more than worker.	Function of each department/person could be blurred and merge into the job roles of others.

Source: Carzo & Yanouzas, 1969:178.

Many of the changes occurring in business have aided and accelerated women's advancement in the workplace as they have forced businesses to restructure in ways that are beneficial to encourage mobility. Denitto, Martin & Harrison (1984:16) emphasised that when lack of upward mobility appears to be related to structural causes, the employee is advised to seek a new exposure which offers greater structural support for advancement. Women are among the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs worldwide mainly due to increasing technology (Aldoory, 2005).

According to McCammond (2006:26) e-commerce is offering women more prospects in the business world when they are frustrated with corporate life they leave the corporate and start their own businesses. With new technology, comes new business possibilities, such as the ability to set up a business with a much smaller physical presence, which provides better service to customers, whereby most information is customised to the unique needs of the customer (Rossini, 1999:66). The trend of women starting their own businesses is more apparent when they have been working long enough in the organisation without advancement or when the promotion does not happen.

According to Grunig *et al.* (2001:406) when women reach the upper management positions, the best way to handle pressure is to work extra hours, travel and relocate if necessary. This creates a heavy burden for women who want to balance their family responsibilities and work life and most of the time; the family loses out as women try to prove that they are right candidates for the position. This is where virtual organisational structure offers a number of advantages for women who still are responsible for most of the child care duties and domestic tasks (McCammond, 2006:29). McCammond (2006:26) identifies that many organisations have contributed to helping women advance in the business world by adopting flexitime, mentoring programs, child care and women networking initiatives. These organisational policies and benefits improve the quality of corporate life for working women. Some organisations have implemented the above mentioned changes for fear of costly lawsuits; and others to survive in the constantly changing business environment by employing diverse workforce. With turbulent environment, increased international competition where success depends mostly on the productive use of diverse knowledge, it will be more critical than ever to lose women from key positions in the workplace as they are equally talented individuals as men.

Lahtinen & Wilson (1994) emphasise that organisations which choose to ignore the need to adapt their cultures to the contemporary workforce will continue to waste valuable talents as they lose female employees who exit for better conditions. According to Tench & Yeomans (2006:173) companies need to create an environment where equality is valued and this can be facilitated by ensuring that job performance is evaluated fairly based on comparable work which should be a beneficial way of achieving equality. Work should be valued and rewarded according to individual's actual skills and abilities required regardless of their gender.

**Table 2.9. Four levels of change to address women's position in public relations**

Societal	Organisational	Professional	Individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise levels of awareness about sexism</li> <li>• Elect women to high government positions</li> <li>• Introduce legislation to support working parents</li> <li>• Outlaw sexual harassment</li> <li>• Ensure affirmative action is effective</li> <li>• Ensure equal representation for woman in governmental organisations</li> <li>• Eradicate sexism in education</li> <li>• Break down gender stereotypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish family friendly policies.</li> <li>• Rethink the masculine and ethnic dominating most organisations.</li> <li>• Value feminine attributes.</li> <li>• Make recruitment, hiring, promotion criteria and processes more objective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise specific strategies for overcoming the marginalisation of the profession.</li> <li>• Reassess undergraduate education</li> <li>• Incorporate women's perspectives in the curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor your behaviour</li> <li>• Create a person of promotability</li> <li>• Join professional associations</li> <li>• Help other women in every possible way.</li> <li>• Strive to become your own boss</li> </ul>

Source: Tench & Yeomans, 2006:173

The exodus of women from corporations into smaller businesses is costly to organisations in terms of high employee turnover which leads to increased expenditure on recruitment and training, not to mention the loss of the employees' valuable knowledge and experience. Thus, it is recommended that corporations address the problems concerning the exodus and find workable solutions because if companies don't adapt to turbulent times, they may find that their women managers have become their toughest competitors (Wallace, 2000).

### 2.15 Female professional status

To be able to discuss the professional status of females in public relations, it is deemed necessary to elaborate more about the roles that are found in the public relations profession and find out which role women often serve. Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig (1998:146) identified the following four roles in public relations:

- **The expert prescriber:** who operates as the authority on both public relations problems and their solutions. The client or management is often content to leave public relations in the hands of the 'expert' and to assume a relatively passive role.

- **The communication facilitator:** casts the practitioner as a sensitive 'go-between' or information agent. This practitioner serves as a liaison, interpreter and mediator between the organisation and its publics.
- **The problem-solving process facilitator:** serves as a member of the management team, guiding others through a rational problem-solving process that may involve all parts of the organisation in the public relations planning and programming process. This practitioner also collaborates with other managers to define and solve problems.
- **The communication technician.** Provides the specialised skills needed to carry out public relations programs. Rather than being part of the management team, technicians are concerned with preparing and producing communications materials for the public relations effort.

Dozier emphasised that the four roles described by public relations practitioners could be reduced to the manager and technician roles because the expert prescriber, the communication facilitator and the problem-solving process facilitator roles all represent a broader managerial role (Dozier, 1992:329). Toth *et al.* (1998:145) illustrate that a higher rate of females occupies technician roles compared to managerial ones and are still struggling to move up to the ladder. Few women who are in managerial roles seem to be doing 'it all' for less money which means that they carry out both managerial and technician roles at the same time.

When public relations practitioners mention professionalism, the discussion often centers on professional status. This is unpleasant because professional status and professionalism are different (L'Etang, 2002:50). According to Cutlip, Center & Broom (1994:135) professional status is a distinction enjoyed by certain occupations after they have met specific criteria basic to all professions. Among those specialised skills and criteria include:

- An intellectual and practical training
- A high degree of professional autonomy
- A fiduciary relationship with the client
- A sense of collective responsibility to the profession as a whole
- A prohibition on some methods of attracting business
- Regulating standards
- Maintaining discipline
- Salary
- Respect and higher positions in the organisations

Cutlip, Center & Broom (1994:49) noted that professionalism refers to the combination of professional skills and ethics to which professionals should seek. Technological and social changes continue to transform aspects of public relations profession. Since the time when societal factors didn't allow women to do paid jobs, public relations now counts about 70 percent of female practitioners and the field is becoming even more feminised (Cameron *et al.* 2008:76). However, the status or positions that they hold in various companies and the pay that they get worldwide do not seem to be increasing in the same speed. There is a remarkable senior disparity in gender in the public relations industry. Cameron *et al.* (2008:77) pointed out that 72 percent of chief Communication officers of Fortune 200 companies are men while women are only 28 percent in the same post. Furthermore, a number of studies show that women in public relations earn less money than their male counterparts and they are usually found in technical roles rather than managerial roles (Jamali, Sidani & Safieddine, 2005: 581; Ogenyi & Victoria, 2004; Metz, 2003; Yoo, 2003; Meyerowitz, 1994).

By examining the literature above concerning gender discrepancies in public relations, it is important to identify why it exists. According to Aldoory & Toth's (2002:123) study the factors that could explain why gender discrepancies exist in public relations were identified as follows:

- Socialisation
- Sex discrimination and sexism
- Unrealistic expectations of women who balance family and work
- Biological determinism
- Skill differentials
- Favouritism toward men due to their low numbers
- Type of organisation influences access to promotion

Furthermore, Aldoory, Jiang, Toth & Sha, (2008:3); Hon, (1995:36) pointed out other causal factors for gender inequity in public relations as follows:

- Marginalisation of the public relations function
- Women's exclusion from men's social and informal work networks
- Women's lack of self-esteem
- Too few female role models
- Outmoded attitudes of senior men
- Conflicting messages for women
- Women's balancing act between career and family
- Gender stereotypes
- Socialisation

- Sexual harassment
- Ageism

Mathews (1988:25) added that gender bias in public relations is not only manifested by low salaries for women as that wouldn't be such a big issue because if they were easily promoted their work would speak for itself and lead to salary increase. However, there are other issues leading to bias against women like temerity and lack of focus by women about their personal and professional lives which in turn contribute to their low status in public relations industry. According to Jamali, Safiedine & Daouk (2006:627) the bias against women in the workplace lead to the doubt about women's management styles. When women adopt the predominant male management style, they are criticized for being aggressive and bossy, and when they use a feminine management style, they are considered ineffective leaders. This mismatch in roles often leads to discrimination against women when it comes to top management positions. (Mathews, 1988:25). In an attempt to address the issues caused by women themselves, women are advised to create a career path by looking out into the future and see where they are going and project themselves into the future to see what positions they would like to hold at their retirement (Mathews, 1988:25).

Mathews (1988: 28) advised that women should know that to be where they want to be, there should be a sacrifice. If they want to develop a strong career in public relations for instance, having children may be shifted or even left out as a price to being a public relations professional. According to Mathews (1988:28) if the personal goal is to have children and take care of them yourself, the sacrifice might be turning down all job opportunities that help in career advancement. Only if women combine their resources, talents and energies can retrogression be changed to progression both in status and number in the public relations industry (Mathews, 1988:28).

## **2.16 Summary**

This chapter examined various literatures on public relations as a profession, its practice and its development throughout the continents like America, Asia, Europe and Africa. It addressed the theoretical grounding of public relations including public relations theories and models, international and African public relations governing bodies the status of females in the industry with a detailed examination of various challenges that women face particularly and female leadership in public relations. The chapter also tackled the relationship between public relations and its associated fields like marketing and gave a briefing on codes of conduct. The professionalization of public relations and the status of women in the industry were also addressed in the chapter. The next chapter concentrates on the public relations practice and gender issues in Rwandan context.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE AND GENDER ISSUES IN RWANDA

#### 3.1 Introduction

The chapter highlights the challenges that Rwandan women face in achieving equality by identifying current disparities in the political and social participation of women and men in Rwandan society. Issues with regards to the status of Rwandan females across all ages are presented. Social issues such as violence and abuse towards females during the war and genocide periods are also discussed. The chapter highlights the behaviour of Rwandan females towards labour and remuneration thereof. Specific emphasis is placed on the status of Rwandan women in the public relations industry and management's perspective of females' professionalism. The chapter further explores whether women in Rwanda have access to equal opportunities compared to men.

Rwanda is known as the "land of thousand hills", it is a mountainous, relatively small country located in the African Great Lakes region and surrounded by Uganda in the north, Burundi in the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west and Tanzania in the east (GOR, 2006). According to GOR (2006) Rwanda is a landlocked country with few natural resource, minimal industry and before European colonisation, Rwanda had a monarchical system. Rwanda has the highest population density in Africa with a population of 10 746 311 on the area of 26 338 sq km (Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 2010). According to MINECOFIN's (2007) study, 59 percent of the population live below the poverty line and World Bank indicators estimate the population growth at 2.5 percent per year and 60 percent of the population is less than 20 years. Women account for 57 percent of the population between the ages of 20-44 and 58 percent in the group of 45-64 ages.

According to the study by African Development Bank group ADB (2008:4) Rwanda is a developing country and in 2007/2008 it was ranking 161 out of 177 on the UNDP Human Development Index. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2000:4) Rwanda remains a persistently under-developed country with agrarian based economy. The human rights country report of 2005 indicates that the life expectancy at birth is 48 years old for females and 45 year old for males. Approximately 91 percent of the population is engaged in the agriculture sector and rely on subsistence farming (ADB, 2008:9). As a result, land is a precious natural resource and the need for which often overrides other developmental initiatives (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000:7). According to the study by ADB (2008:13) the size of Rwanda's formal private sector is small. There are about 400 large private companies in the country and half of them employ less than 50 people each. The rest are about 3,000 formal registered firms. On the other hand, Division

for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) & United Nations study, (2004:5-9) Rwandan public sector is quite big compared to private one. The 2000 estimates of employment in public sector amount to 900 000 people scattered in central government, education, health, police and army (DPADM, DESA & UN, 2004:4). Women's rates are the lowest in the public as well as private sector employment which is the indication of their low education and training situation (ADB, 2008:32).

Despite ethnic differences, Rwandans speak the same language Kinyarwanda and other official languages are French and English (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:7). The literacy level is still low in rural Rwanda; only 60 percent of females are literate compared to 72 percent of males (ADB, 2008:12). According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2000:8) the catastrophic 1990 war and 1994 genocide severely damaged an already fragile economic base and badly affected the livelihood of the population. Furthermore, the image of the country was damaged, which in turn had an impact on both local and foreign direct investments into the country (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000:8). To the outside world, Rwanda is famous for the genocidal events of April 1994 which created enormous challenges in terms of responding to the needs of thousands orphans and widows (ADB, 2008:2). Analysts' views differ regarding the causes of the genocide, but most of them agree that 'bad governance' and the ongoing abuse of human rights, mostly women rights, were the major root causes (ADB, 2008:2).

According to Mazimhaka (2007:58) since 1994 the country faced a daunting task of rebuilding its economy and women were seen as necessary participants in the overall reconciliation and rebuilding process. This was mainly due to the fact that in the aftermath of genocide, many men were killed; others in jail and others fled the country after participating in the genocide or just running for their lives (ADB, 2008:2-3). Since then, many families were headed by women, who had to manage their households and actively participated in the reconstruction of the country (ADB, 2008:3). To address the challenges of economic growth and poverty reduction, the Government of Rwanda had acknowledged the potential of women in building the nation economically as many 1994 genocide widows had done well in sustaining their homes, despite some continuous challenges (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000:19). Women involvement in the country's rebuilding, among other issues, was the booster behind 2003 constitutional reform.

According to Mazimhaka (2007:58) the reform efforts brought about a surge of growth during the last 15 years particularly in agriculture, and this is the leading economic sector and contributes 41.6 percent of national gross domestic product. Mazimhaka (2007:59) estimates

that although Rwanda continues to depend heavily on foreign aid to meet its various development challenges it has, post 1994, made substantial progress in stabilising its fledgling economy. Levels of poverty still remain severe though and government's main economic challenge is to stimulate new employment opportunities by empowering the private sector which is the source of reducing poverty and enhancing economic growth (ADB, 2008:4). As part of vision 2020, Rwandan government is implementing the stabilisation of macroeconomic policies to encourage private investors and it will cease to provide services that the private sector can deliver more efficiently and competitively (Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000:9). ADB (2008:18) describes the Private Sector Federation - Rwanda (PSF) as a professional organisation, dedicated to promote and represent the interests of the Rwandan business community more specifically the private sector. It is an umbrella organisation that groups 9 professional chambers and it was established in 1999 as a replacement for the previous Rwanda Chamber of Commerce and Industry. ADB (2008:18) study lists the PSF- Rwanda key priorities for the period of 2007-2010 as:

- To promote entrepreneurship and business growth
- To build private sector capacity
- To promote effective private sector advocacy
- To support active involvement in regional and international trade
- To develop quality member services and enhance communication

### **3.2 General status of Rwandan women**

According to Uwineza & Pearson (2009:8) Rwandan women have been the victims of human rights abuses; traditional practices and sexist stereotypes for many years. This is mainly due to Rwandan patriarchal society in which Rwandan women are subordinated to men in all areas of social, political and economic life. Uwineza & Pearson (2009:8) state that this status of Rwandan women has largely remained the same for years, as girl and woman continue to be victim of sex-based discrimination and harmful traditional practices. This is still there despite Rwanda being a participant in several international legal instruments which promote and protect women's substantive equality rights (Powley, 2008:155). These include the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African's Charter of People's Rights and Women's Rights and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference for Women (FWCW).

The oppression of women persisted until 2003 when constitutional reforms took place. Historically lawmakers in Rwanda were men who rarely considered women's concerns (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:15). However, GOR (2004:9) state that there are some historical examples whereby women were involved in decision-making, like the existence of female

chiefs and the Queen Mother and these are considered as the foundation for the present level of women's political participation. According to Powley (2008:157) the new constitution considered by many as the peace treaty for women is not the end of atrocities for them, as many females still face the legacies of traditional laws and practices like polygamy as well as 1990-1994 war and genocide to a certain extent.

In Rwanda, the traditional society views of gender roles defined the public field as the man's domain and the private sphere as the woman's domain (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:9). For instance, education is generally viewed as the means to prepare young people for future adult roles in society. Historically, it oriented girls toward domesticity and boys toward the world of paid work outside home (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:9). According to ADB's (2008: iii) study the low rate of enrolment of girls in school is a root cause for gender gap in formal employment and persistent poverty among females. This gender stereotyping was a result of traditional and sexist views of the Rwandan woman's role as a wife and a mother. These sexist stereotypes limit the paid employment opportunities available to women and contribute to sex based income disparities. This issue will be discussed later in the chapter as women have greater difficulty accessing higher paying jobs. The gender gap is not only visible in schools and work places, but also in academic performance. Girls lag behind in examination scores and passing rates from primary schools to tertiary level as well (ADB, 2008:25). According to ADB (2008:26) studies have shown that traditional gender roles in domestic work and family care are some of the reasons for girls' low performance in schools. The primary reason for this low performance is that the girl is to help the mother with home chores and look after the siblings (ADB, 2008:25). Table 3.1 shows performance gaps among boys and girls as discussed in the previous section.

**Table 3.1. Gender performance gaps in national examinations in percent**

Primary school leaving examinations			Secondary school leaving examinations	
Years	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2000/01	63%	37%	56%	44%
2002/03	58%	42%	52%	48%
2004/05	61%	39%	59%	41%

Source: NEPAD, 2006

Table 3.2 depicts some gender disparities in schools and shows how girls' education level in Rwanda has been and is still low compared to boys. Girls' enrolment in secondary schools is 9.5 percent, in technical and vocational training it is 17 percent and 33 percent in tertiary education. The adult literacy rate for women is 60 percent compared to 72 percent for men (ADB, 2008: iii).

**Table 3.2. Students enrolment in higher learning institutions based on gender in 2007**

	<b>Boys (%)</b>	<b>Girls (%)</b>
Public schools	73.7	26.3
Private schools	50.4	49.6
<b>Average</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>33.7</b>

Source: Ministry of Education Statistics cited in UNIFEM/NEPAD: Independent Review Report 1999-2005

However, Rwanda has entered the twenty first century with constitutional reforms tackled on earlier which promote gender equality. After emerging from a destructive and genocidal conflict, many Rwandan women view the new Constitution of 2003 as their peace treaty (Powley, 2008:155). Women have enthusiastically embraced its potential to improve the quality of their lives. Since the coming into force of the new constitution, Rwandan women have enjoyed some important victories in the struggle for women's equality rights (ADB, 2008:4).

In pre-colonial Rwanda and in the history of Rwandan society, women could not go or speak in public with men (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:13). According to Uwineza & Pearson (2009:15) where men were, women were not supposed to talk or show their needs, as men were supposed to talk and think for women. In addition, polygamy and the bride price is harsh to Rwandan women as some men believe they must be rewarded for the money or cows spent through violence against their wives and believe women must submit themselves to their husbands no matter what (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:10). Furthermore, in some parts of the country customary laws still govern the lives of men and women. Although the Rwandan law requires the registration of marriages and only recognises monogamous marriage, some men in polygamous unions registered their latest wives leaving older ones vulnerable (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:10). On the other hand though, the practice of deep respect for motherhood in Rwandan society promotes and protects women (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:11).

According to Powley (2008:157) the women's councils unit has been a mobilisation tool and has mobilised, educated and has brought women to some level of self confidence. It boosts and aids women's well being even to the extent when the general elections are approaching, it becomes a topic in the women's councils and now they have acquired confidence of leadership. However, according to Jefremovas (1991:383) legally married women have strictly restricted rights. These women can vote now but prior to the institution of the new civil code, their husbands' consent was required for them to engage in commerce, register a business, buy land, act as a witness or undertake court action.

Women can open a bank account but husbands have the right to withdraw money from their wives accounts without permission. Currently, the new Civil Code (Article 212) gives Rwandan women full legal rights to open bank accounts, appear in court in relation to the matrimonial property regime, witness a legal act (Article 184), and use their own name in any administrative act in which they are involved (Article 63). It also lays the ground for divorce under the following conditions:

- Fault on the part of spouse;
- Mutual consent, three years de facto separation; and
- Desertion for twelve months.

By acting as good wives, married women can continue to engage in many activities and try to retain control over their income but this can be lost at divorce or through the death or remarriage of the husband, because a husband is well within his rights to use a wife's production to marry polygamously. The husband can reallocate his resources at any time either by giving a prosperous business to another wife or forbidding access of a wife to her own bank account (Jefremovas, 1991:383).

Furthermore, with the new Constitution of 2003 in place, the adherence with the principle of ensuring equal rights between men and women is emphasised. Article 9 stipulates that women are granted at least 30 percent of the posts in decision making posts. Article 76 provides that 24 of the eighty seats in the Chamber of Deputies (the legislature), roughly 30 percent of the total, are reserved for women. Likewise, Article 82 specifies that at least thirty percent of the seats in the Senate should be occupied by women. Moreover, the Constitution recognises only civil monogamous marriages. It provides for the protection of the family by the State and stipulates the rights and duties of both parents for the care and upbringing of their children (Powley, 2008:158). Additionally, the Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Donations, Succession and Liberalities of 1999 is a key legal framework that stipulates equality in property and inheritance rights between men and women. Upon entering marriage, spouses have the options to choose one of the following matrimonial regimes:

- community of property;
- limited community of assets; and
- separation of property.

According to Jefremovas (1991:382) as far as widows are concerned, even though their position seems vulnerable, these women are in the best legal and social position as they are considered to be the head of their households and therefore can make any decision

regarding their lives. However, widows are not allowed to sell the land that belongs to the late husband, but must use it for the sake of the children left by the late husband.

Unmarried women have full legal status in Rwanda but socially they are wards of their fathers and brothers. These women can try to get the temporary access to their fathers' resources by acting in a socially acceptable manner which the society calls 'timid virgins'. However, bearing an illegitimate child in Rwanda classifies a woman as a loose woman and removes any familiar responsibility to provide for her or protect her and often it carries a social stigma which may even lead to a life of prostitution. In former times, Rwandan women who became pregnant before marriage were killed (Codere, 1973:144).

The 2003 Constitution allow women equal property and inheritance rights. Rwanda can serve as an example for many Sub-Sahara African countries. Ensuring property and inheritance rights is a critical element for improving women's economic status and social protection which has significant impact on the well being of women and children. Jonson Welch & Nicolli (2007) indicated that women who have ownership of property including land are less likely to suffer from domestic violence and severe poverty. Despite the revision of the Rwandan legal frameworks, there are still some gaps in the legal framework and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is reviewing various laws to identify those that are discriminatory to women (Uwineza & Pearson, 2008:16).

### **3.3 Working women in Rwanda**

According to WCRWC (1997:6) in the immediate aftermath of genocide, the population was 70 percent female. This is due to the fact that many men were either killed during the conflict, fled the country or jailed, many women became sole breadwinners for their immediate and extended families. Women instantly discarded Rwandan cultural taboos like women cannot build a house, climb a tree, or talk in public and came out of their shells to support the damaged society (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:15). This led to their increased engagement in agricultural and non-agricultural income generating activities including construction work and creating their own businesses (WCRWC, 1997:6). Although the exact number of firms owned by women is not known, a few women entrepreneurs have ventured as owners and managers of successful businesses (ADB, 2008:13). According to ADB (2008:20) rural women carry out many tasks to support their families and it is estimated that they contribute up to 70 percent of the labour to the country's agricultural production. Given the demographic imbalance after the 1994 genocide, women immediately assumed roles as heads of household, community leaders and financial providers, meeting the needs of devastated families and communities (Powley, 2008:158). The genocide forced women to think of themselves differently and in many cases develop skills they would not otherwise have

acquired. Today, women remain a demographic majority in Rwanda, comprising 54 percent of the population and contributing significantly to the productive capacity of the nation (Powley, 2008:158).

According to GOR (2005) gender differentiated participation in the labour market is a key indicator that shows the types of opportunities women and men have in employment and the types of marketable skills they have that determine their income earning capacities. In Rwanda, women account for 55.2 percent of the economically active populations but have low rates of employment, 34.6 percent in the formal public sector and 31.9 percent in private sector (GOR, 2005). Furthermore, 5.2 million Women live in poverty and 3.6 million of them in extreme poverty (GOR, 2005). Unemployment is higher in Kigali ranging from 19 to 20 percent and partly due to the high rate of migration, thus increasing the supply of labour. According to GOR (2005) 70 percent of job seekers do not have the necessary skills to be employed in both public and private sectors.

According to ADB (2008:5) there is an existence of wage differentials between men and women for similar jobs; with 83.6 percent participation in agriculture, women are highly engaged in the sector as independent farmers, wage farmers and unpaid family labour. Women find it difficult to move into non-agricultural jobs and it was confirmed that the level of poverty among those employed in non-agricultural employment is low, it is estimated at 36 percent and lower (ADB, 2008:5). This situation raises a concern to the government of Rwanda and private investors to generate more off farm jobs in aiding poverty reduction. To further reduce poverty, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS, 2008-2012) envision creating 1,000,000 jobs and 50 percent of which will be off farm jobs (ADB, 2008:5).

Rwandan working women in the paid labour force are primarily found in the agriculture and informal sectors. According to Uwineza & Pearson (2009:19) in local administrative and management positions women are underrepresented i.e. 9.1 percent of provinces governors, 1.9 percent of district Mayors, 37 percent executives and in Supreme Court women comprise 41 percent of judges. However, there has been a noticeable improvement in employment opportunities for women since the establishment of 2003 new government as women in Rwanda currently have higher levels of representation in parliament than in other country in the world (56 percent) (ADB, 2008: ii; Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:19). Nonetheless, Rwanda still has a long way to go to increase the representation of women in public as well as private sectors. In 2005, the employment situation in both sectors was characterised by profound gender disparities. In public sector for example, women occupy only 34.6 percent of jobs

against 65 percent for men while in private sector women hold 31.9 percent of jobs compared to 68.1 percent for men (GOR, 2005)

In Fukamusenge's (2005) study, it is proven that several challenges still persist with respecting the rights of Rwandan working women and the most important challenge is that women's unequal participation in the labour force has contributed to the feminisation of poverty. A significant number of women in Rwanda continue to be employed mainly in 'female' jobs that pay lower wages and require lower level of skills. Furthermore, gender stereotyping in employment is evident and it is shown by the income gap between men and women salaries. Rwandan working women also remain severely constrained by the limited change in the gender division labour in their households (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:11). According to Uwineza & Pearson (2009:11) many Rwandan women fulfil multiple roles: they are single parent heads of households, primary breadwinners for their families and primary caregivers for children and relatives who survived the 1994 genocide. As a result, these women must balance their responsibilities as paid workers outside home with their domestic obligations and the situation is quite daunting on them.

### **3.3.1 Constraints faced by Rwandan female entrepreneurs**

In Rwanda, an estimated 41 percent of businesses are run by women (ADB, 2008). According to ADB (2008) and GORDP (2002) although both men and women entrepreneurs face similar constraints in a number of areas, women experience additional gender based challenges in operating their income generating activities and lack of access to productive resources is one of the major constraints for women and its root causes are attributed to the following:

- Many women still see taking bank loans as a risk.
- Women's lack of control, decision-making power on intra-household resources in general, and the use of the micro-credit loans in particular, increase their risk.
- Lack of collateral.
- Low capacity of Micro Finance Institutions in developing flexible products designed to meet women's needs in particular.
- Low status of women in society and the cultural burden that discourages their economic ambitions.
- Preference to get grants, an attitude that stems from post conflict grant programs.

Other constraints were also noted to have a greater influence on the development of women owned businesses:

- Low access to non financial services delivery such as business development services.
- Unavailability of appropriate and affordable time and labour saving technologies for both domestic and business activities, skills training and access to markets.
- Lack of affordable child care services close to work.
- Limited market.
- Taxation system.
- Difficulty in obtaining raw materials.
- Limited market, heavy taxes, inadequate access to credit, low purchasing power of their main clients, and inadequate technical and advisory support.

### **3.4 Gender stereotypes in Rwanda**

In recent years Rwandan women were stereotyped as mothers who are supposed to stay at home and do all the housework, including child upbringing while the man was supposed to work for the households' needs (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:9). Girls were not trained in school like boys and sending the former to school was not a priority. However, the recent gender promotion and general country's development place both boys and girls in the same position. In addition, the Rwandan government adopted affirmative action as one of the strategies designed to increase the number of educated females and working females as well (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:9). Viewing a woman as a 'mother' may lead to segregation in jobs where women are put in positions that traditionally support women's roles in society (Wood, 2001:245). Moreover, women will not be ambitious about choosing their careers because if the society tells them to stay at home and just be mothers, they will not struggle to make their lives better any further.

According to Jefremovas (1991:382) Rwandan women's capacity to control resources and surplus is extremely socially limited. Men and women in Rwanda hold separate responsibilities for household reproduction but men have rights over any surplus in the household even if it is generated by the woman. This creates an ongoing struggle between them over access to women's surplus (Jefremovas, 1991:382). This situation arises from colonial legacies and has serious implications in women's everyday lives, especially those ones who manage to have businesses of their own. To fight the battle, both men and women use the language of public morality and stereotype as weapon (Jefremovas, 1991:382).

According to Jefremovas (1991:382) Rwandan women are stereotyped as loose women, virtuous wives or timid virgins in order to interpret, manipulate, validate or negate control over labour, resources and surplus. Women in Rwanda are still responsible for daily subsistence and still do most of the heavy labour of agriculture especially in rural areas (Uwineza &

Pearson, 2009:9). Rwandan women may earn cash from crops but they can only control small amount of the income depending on the relationship they have with the men. Jefremovas, (1991:382) states that most women try to enforce their rights by asserting that they have behaved in an appropriate manner, hence, they don't mind to be called "upright wives, virginal daughters, good mothers and virtuous widows". On the other hand, some women try to establish their lives independent of men and they are called "loose women".

### **3.5 Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Rwanda**

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) in 2004, GBV is a serious problem in Rwanda. The study indicated that 54 percent of the women interviewed indicated having experienced severe domestic violence from their spouses and partners (ADB, 2008:14). In light of this problem, a law for the prevention, protection and punishment of gender based violence was approved in 2008. For the first time, rape was recognised as a category one genocide crime against humanity which violates the Geneva Convention and offenders were charged and convicted with the crime (ADB, 2008:14).

According to Powley (2008:158) the dramatic gains for Rwandan women in Parliament can also be traced to the significant changes in gender roles in post genocide Rwanda. Women were targeted during the genocide on the basis not only of their ethnicity, but also of their gender: they were subjected to sexual assault and all kinds of torture, including rape, forced incest and breast oblation (Powley, 2008:158). Women who survived the genocide experienced a horrifying cruelty and lost husbands, children, relatives and communities. In addition to this violence, women lost their livelihoods and property; they were displaced from their homes, and saw their families getting separated (WCRWC, 1997:6). Armed conflict affects the lives of men and women differently and the abuse of women in the course of armed conflict is not by any means accidental.

According to Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (WCRWC, 1997:6) sexual assault, beating and other violent acts against women and girls are employed in order to achieve military objectives such as breaking the resistance of a community and spreading political terror. In fact, male violence against women has been used as a weapon of war. In Rwanda, women were raped and physically assaulted by men during the civil war and the genocide of 1994. In reality, more than fifteen years later, women continue to suffer from the wounds of war mostly those who were sexually abused as many of them contracted HIV/AIDS and they have to live with it (Uwineza & Pearson, 2008:31). A study conducted by MIGEPROF (2004) estimated that between 250,000 and 500,000 Rwandan women were raped during the genocide. In addition, many of the women who were sexually assaulted

during the genocide are still struggling to find justice and some of them have lost confidence in the national justice system. This is due to the slowness of the legal system especially the International Tribunal for Rwanda and insufficient protection for women who are victims of abuse (Fukamusenge, 2005). There is also the occurrence of sexual abuse to women in their homes as men are supposed to have the right to insist on sex with their wives, and the latter cannot legitimately refuse in order to show respect to their husbands (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:13). Furthermore, Rwandan culture allowed men to beat their wives as it was meant to correct women (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:15).

Fukamusenge (2005) describes how Rwandan women who have been victims of sexual assault are also afraid of being stigmatized. These women are afraid of their husbands or may be concerned about finding a husband for a young woman who has been a victim of sexual assault. According to ADB (2008:14) crime statistics showed an increase in the number of rape and child molestation cases in 2002. During that year, the country of 8 million people recorded 481 cases of rape and child molestation, compared to 1,335 young girls below the age of 18 years and a total of 345 adults raped in 2004 ADB (2008). Authorities suspect the actual number of cases may be higher as most cases of sexual assault and child molestation are not reported. The spread of HIV/AIDS also continues, with the infection of 13 percent in the age group of 15 and 49. About 30 percent of women aged between 13 and 35 were subjected to sexual aggression, many of whom were exposed to HIV infection, physical and emotional trauma. Currently, an estimated 16,000 female survivors who were infected with the HIV virus are living with the consequences of gender based violence (Fukamusenge, 2005).

### **3.6 The Government of Rwanda remedies to gender related problems**

Rwandan Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (2000:7) state that although a post-conflict environment poses serious challenges to operate micro-credit services, some Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Faith-Based organisations were able to provide micro-loans to strengthen the economic base of vulnerable groups of whom the majority were women and children. The Rwandan experience clearly confirms the long held beliefs by development practitioners and leaders that the equal participation of women in decision making and other arenas can ultimately benefit the entire community and the nation at large (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:7). However, the success of this process requires that the following factors be fulfilled:

- The Government's commitment to addressing gender-based discriminations.
- The demonstration of commitment to gender equality at the highest level of leadership.
- Women's high involvement in supporting vulnerable groups.

- The availability of funds by donors for supporting gender equality.
- The existence of organised groups on the ground which are able to implement the necessary projects.

In order to achieve the above, the implementation of the following approaches as well as gender policy is the main undertakings of the Rwandan Government (ADB, 2008:5).

1. The gender mainstreaming approach which is defined as a process for integrating a gender perspective into policies, activities, budgets in all sectors and at all levels; and
2. The affirmative action approach that seeks to correct the gender imbalances in society.

According to ADB (2008:5) the Ministry for Family Promotion and Gender should play a leading role in implementing the National Gender Policy. The ministry is also accountable for the coordination of gender mainstreaming into policy formulation, capacity building of key implementers concerned with the implementation of the gender policy implementation, mobilisation of resources and monitoring of the progress (ADB, 2008:5).

In promoting women's economic empowerment, the African Development Bank study identifies that women, mainly rural women, gain equal access to and control over economic opportunities such as employment and credit (ADB, 2008:6). There is emphasis on the need to strengthen partnerships between governmental institutions and the private sector in order to advance the agenda of improving the status of women in Rwanda (ADB, 2008:6).

According to GOR (2005) the National Employment Policy of 2005 recognises some of the constraints such as limited employment opportunities for women; high unemployment and underemployment levels (especially among the youth); low literacy among women (currently 60 percent compared to 72 percent for men); the under representation of women in wage earning jobs and insufficient data on the labour market. Specific measures for promoting employment among the youth and women are targeted and include:

- The development of formal vocational training or on the job training adapted to the needs of the labour market.
- Increasing production and productivity in firms and their employment capacities by giving them facilities for investment expansion.
- Encouraging the youth and women to create enterprises in various sectors of the formal economy.
- Equal opportunities for young girls and young boys.

GOR (2005) state that the promotion of income generating activities, particularly self-employment for women, is an appropriate and sustainable answer to reduce their vulnerability to poverty. In line with this policy, the Ministry of Labour developed a Women and Employment five year strategic plan which was approved by the Cabinet in 2007.

Additionally, a gender monitoring office was established by Law in 2007 which is an independent entity supervised by the Office of the Prime Minister and some of its major responsibilities, include:

- Monitor the existence of policies and programs that promote gender equality, their implementation and allocation of budget.
- Develop gender responsive indicators.
- Propose strategies to relevant institution to enhance the promotion of gender equality.
- Advise institutions to respect the principles of gender equality at all levels.

Furthermore, the Constitution of Rwanda (2003) affirms the country's adherence with the principle of ensuring equal rights between men and women. Article 9 stipulates that women are granted at least 30 percent of the posts in decision making organisations. Article 76 provides that 24 of the eighty seats in the Chamber of Deputies, approximately 30 percent, are reserved for women. Similarly, Article 82 specifies that at least 30 percent of the seats in the Senate should be occupied by women. The constitution recognises only civil monogamous marriages to protect women in relationships. It provides for the protection of the family by the State and stipulates the rights and duties of both parents for the care and upbringing of their children.

### 3.7 Professionalism and women in Rwanda

**Table 3.3. Occupation by Gender 2001 – 2006**

Occupations	Male		Female	
	2000/1	2005/6	2000/1	2005/6
Professionals	2.4	2.6	1.5	1.5
Senior officials & managers	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0.00
Office clerks	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0
Commercial & sales	3.3	6.5	2.3	5.4
Skilled services	3.4	7.2	2.4	4.1
Agricultural/fisheries	83.5	71.2	92.4	86.3
Unskilled elementary	7.2	12.3	0.8	2.1

Source: EICV Poverty Analysis for Rwanda's Economic Development and poverty Reduction Strategy, May 2007

The above table identifies the extent to which Rwandan women were involved in professions between the years 2001 and 2006. It is clear that most of Rwandan women were not involved in professions as much as their male counterparts and the percentage remained stagnant in six years time while that of men increased from 2.4 to 2.6. A greater number of Rwandan women were rather involved in the agricultural sector while there was no one in senior official positions or top management. However, with the new constitution, the country's development as well as increased number of educated females, there seems to be an improvement as many women own businesses and others are in high ranking government positions (Powley, 2008:154).

### **3.8 The practice of Public Relations in Rwanda**

This section explores the practice of public relations in Rwanda and the problems it encounters such as cultural influence, confusion in tasks, prerogatives and lack of professional manpower. Furthermore, it views the launch of the Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR). Due to the fact that the practice of public relations practice in Rwanda has previously not been regulated and the sector is populated by people with a variety and often irrelevant qualifications, the Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR) was launched to regulate the professionalism of the industry (Ruburica, 2008:3).

According to Julius (2007:81) it is not easy to state an exact date of the entry of Rwandan women into public relations, as it is difficult to state precise time of the practice of public relations in Rwanda. Rwandan history identifies Rwandan public relations as rooted in Rwandan culture (Philip & Janice, 2006:29). Rwanda does not have a long history of written literature, but it has a strong oral tradition ranging from poetry to folk stories and many of the country's moral values and information about history have been passed on through generations using oral literature. The leading figure in oral literature was Alexis Kagame (1912 – 1981), who carried out and published research into the oral tradition as well as writing his own poetry (Philip & Janice, 2006:29). According to Ruburica (2008:3) most of the current public relations practitioners entered the public relations profession from different backgrounds like marketing and journalism, as public relations is new in Rwanda and not well defined like journalism and marketing. However, Public relations departments were established in some governmental associations from the 1970s but had just the title of public relations, while they were doing a mixture of technical tasks such as secretary, sales and marketing (Ruburica, 2008:3). This situation is not only present in Rwandan public relations industry, as Alsaqer (2008:78) identifies that public relations has been and still is confused to marketing , journalism and advertising in many countries globally.

Female practitioners encounter several challenges in their work such as cultural challenges, corporate environment and relationship with their colleagues, personal life and social domination as well as marginalisation of the public relations function. Public relations in Rwanda is still looked at as a tool for the organisation to foster its image, to market its products through public information, publicity, marketing and propaganda. Public relations in Rwanda is often confused with advertising, journalism and marketing however, Cameron, Wilcox, Reber & Shin, (2008:11-12) highlight clear distinctions of these practices. According to Ruburica (2008:3) planning and research are mainly missing in public sector organisations. This profession still suffers from poor performance, lack of strategies and absence of vision (Ruburica, 2008:3). One cannot be subjective in saying that there is no effective public relations in Rwanda because some organisations and institutions do practice high quality and professional public relations, mainly in the media business and marketing sector (Ruburica, 2008:3).

In spite of these drawbacks, public relations is the profession of the future in Rwanda and it is growing and expanding rapidly in all sectors of life. Rwanda, as a developing country, needs public relations to meet the challenges of customer care, public opinion, civil society and globalisation (Kirat, 2005:323). The important factors that make public relations an indispensable tool for a third world country like Rwanda is the ability to respond to the requirements, challenges and demands of the 21st century as being globalisation, information technology and an ongoing process of democratisation (Kirat, 2005:324). The last decade has seen a huge expansion of public relations in various domains of economic, political, social and cultural sectors of Rwanda and it resulted in the creation of Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR) in 2008 (Ruburica, 2008:3).

According to Uwineza & Pearson (2008:15) after the 1994 genocide, Rwanda suffered from bad image campaign of accusations, stereotypes and misconceptions. Rwanda was known as a country whereby killing a person is far less important than killing an animal (Uwineza & Pearson, 2008:15). Genocide painted Rwanda with a broad brush of killings and the whole great lakes region was seen as a war zone. Currently, due to effective communication which dominated rumours, speculations, allegations and accusations, democracy, justice and good governance are attempting to reposition the world's perceptions of Rwanda (Uwineza & Pearson, 2008:15).

### **3.8.1 Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR)**

PRAR was officially launched in 2008, the event was sponsored by various Rwandan corporations including Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency (HIDA), RITA, Banque Commerciale du Rwanda (BCR), the New Times, Kigali Serena and

MTN among others (Ruburica, 2008:3). PRAR is a member of the East African Public Relations Association (EAPRA), and the membership is open to Public Relations officers from both the private and public sectors. Its main aim is to professionalise the public relations profession in Rwanda. The profession is often considered to be the poor cousin of advertising and event management and often report to lower levels in an organisation such as the human resource or the finance departments, instead of having its own department. From the literature reviewed, institutions that have departmentalised the public relations have reaped big benefits from it (Newsom, Turk & Kruckeberg, 2007:120).

According to the advisor on communications and public relations in the office of the president, the launch of PRAR comes at the right time as there is need to adapt quickly in order to respond to global issues that are beyond Rwandan borders (Ruburica, 2008:3). In addition, that it can only be done by professionals who can design and implement proper communication strategies to fight diseases, poverty, bad international relations and illiteracy, among others (Ruburica, 2008:3). While still at its infant stage, much is required from Rwandan public relations practitioners to improve the current state of the profession, especially in establishing a code of ethics (Ruburica, 2008:3). Ruburica (2008:3) added that PRAR's members, as well as other practitioners are advised to act as agents of change in order to shape the public relations profession in Rwanda.

Entry to the PRAR is free in order to attract public relations professionals to becoming members. Public relations practitioners are often considered as failed or re-traded journalists and the perception by the general public is that to occupy a public relations job is having a good looking face and being fluent in English, must be redressed (Niyonshuti, 2009:6). Furthermore, Rwandan journalists have accused institutional public relations officers of frustrating their work by hooding information that is supposed to be public consumption. However, during a meeting that brought together PRAR and representatives from the Association of Rwandan Journalists (ARJ), Press House, Rwanda Editors Forum (REF) and Rwanda Women Journalists Association, there was a general agreement for better cooperation between the two professions (Niyonshuti, 2009:6).

PRAR has worked out strategies to promote professional public relations, these include:

- To restrict access in order to weed out unqualified people.
- To elaborate a skills development program with the help of the Human Resources and Institutional Capacity Development Agency (HIDA).
- To initiate and supervise quarterly public relations forums.
- To organise PR lectures and benchmark tours to enable their members to learn from experiences abroad.

- To set up a training program for public relations practitioners.
- To organise public relations awards event whereby best practices will be recognised in order to further encourage increased professionalisation in the field.

PRAR is planning to host the forum of the East African Public Relations Association (EAPRA), which will attract more than 400 participants. According to Niyonshuti (2009:6) it will be a great opportunity for the members to network with practitioners who have been in the industry for long time and with varied experiences and challenges.

According to Ruburica (2008:3) the overall duty of the association is to develop and publicise the best practices in both private and public institutions. Ndahiro was quoted in the new Times by stating that good and bad public relations practice "consists of good planning, proper handling of clients and working hand in hand with the media as well as being equipped to manage information whereas bad public relations practice is characterised by chaos, lack of information and poor media relations" (Ruburica, 2008:3). Ruburica (2008:3) emphasises that public relations should be a deliberate and sustained effort to improve the relations between an institution and the public. Additionally, a good public relations officer is characterised by perseverance, persistence, endurance and a good balance (Ruburica, 2008:3).

### **3.9. Summary**

In this chapter the status of Rwandan women in general was examined showing the discrepancies between boys' and girls' education. The situation of Rwandan working woman was talked about in this chapter as well as constraints faced by Rwandan female entrepreneurs. Gender stereotypes and gender based violence were noted as some of the barriers encountered by Rwandan females in their daily lives. As a result, government remedies to alleviate those barriers were also examined in this chapter. Towards the end of the chapter, practice of public relations in Rwanda was explored with much emphasis on the public relations association of Rwanda (PRAR).

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

According to Wilcox, Ault & Agee (1995:158) research is the controlled, objective and systematic gathering of information for the purpose of describing and understanding a phenomenon. Lotter (2003:83) defines it as "a systematic, methodical search for scientific information about a precise, defined theme". According to the Collins Dictionary (1995) the term methodology means "the system of methods and principles used in a particular discipline". This denotes that some scientific methods, principles and systems must be in place for the research to reach its goals. In addition, for public relations to maintain its status as a profession, it relies heavily on academics and practitioners adding to the disciplines' body of knowledge because without research and theory, practice becomes inflexible and inactive (McCammond, 2006). For the purposes of this study, information was drawn from the previous chapters in order to create a framework which was used to explore the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwanda. This chapter aims to provide an insight into practical ways and methods that were used in gathering data for the empirical part of the study. The chapter will primarily focus on survey design, sampling and data collection procedures. The research ethics, instruments, measures and techniques will also be discussed in this chapter.

### **4.2 Research aim**

The aim of this exploratory study is to investigate the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwanda using the managers' views. Chapter one provided the meanings of some concepts deemed to be important for better understanding of the study. Various authors attempted to define a 'profession' as well as the prerequisites for an undertaking to be called a profession as seen in chapter two. Concerning status, it is the position or rank an employee holds as well as their formal title within the organisation. Shell (2003:118) defines it as "a hierarchical ranking or ordering of people in a given society". This led the researcher to investigate the status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners and the challenges they face in the workplace. The issues affecting Rwandan female professional status under the present research are as follows: gender stereotypes, gender based violence, education and training opportunities, the glass ceiling, salary, power, respect, and the influence of institutional culture. The above factors were investigated based on a manager's point of view and in depth analysis of the findings portrayed the position of Rwandan female in the industry.

#### **4.2.1 Statement of the problem**

Gender issues have not been addressed by Rwandan history in past years; for decades Rwandan women have been the victims of human rights abuse, customary practices and sexist stereotypes which have firmly entrenched a patriarchal society in which Rwandan women are subordinated to men in all areas of social, political and economic life. The status of Rwandan women has largely remained the same for years becoming even worse during 1994 war and Genocide. Rwandan women were fully granted the right to stand for election in 1961 (Powley, 2008:154). During the post 1994 genocide reconstruction of the country, the Government of Rwanda recognised women as key players in the nation building process. Commitment to gender equality at the highest level of leadership and women's resiliency in poverty and willingness to step up to the challenges were the key elements that played a role in making women equal participants.

However, though the country's gender policy underpins the involvement of women in all areas of the country's life, the legacy of history and many challenges of inequality still prevail to some extent. Public relations industry being a relatively new academic discipline is not an exception. Although there have been some media reports focusing on Rwandan public relations practice, there is no scientific research studies focusing specifically on Rwandan public relations practice and more especially focusing on the position and contribution of female practitioners in the field. This study, therefore, investigated the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions.

#### **4.2.2 Research questions**

This study aims at developing a knowledge base on the professional status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners. There has been few studies conducted on female public relations practitioners in Rwanda and this creates an opportunity to explore the professional status of female practitioners in the Rwandan public relations industry as well as the challenges they face. The primary question to be addressed in this study is to establish the status of the female public relations practitioners in the Rwandan public and private institutions and to explore whether there is professional recognition of these females by managers.

The following research questions were developed to aid in exploring the manager's perceptions:

- To what extent female public relations practitioners experience a glass ceiling problem within the Rwandan public relations practice?

- How does education assist female practitioners in reaching management positions in Rwandan public relations practice?
- Are female practitioners receiving the same amount of status, power and respect as their male counterparts?
- How does Rwandan institutional culture assist female practitioners to balance work and family responsibilities?
- To what extent gender stereotypes exist in Rwandan public relations industry?

## **4.5 Methodology**

### **4.5.1 Study definition**

This is an exploratory study; Zikmund (2000:72) state that an exploratory study is undertaken when not much is known about the situation at hand or no information is available on how similar problem or research issues have been resolved in the past. In such cases, extensive preliminary work needs to be done to gain familiarity with the phenomenon in the situation and understand what is occurring before a given model can be developed and set up a rigorous design for comprehensive investigation. Though in this case many studies have been conducted elsewhere in the world, there are no research studies available on Rwandan public relations industry and specifically no research on the status of Rwandan female practitioners and the challenges they face in the workplace. Hence, this motivated the researcher to conduct the exploratory study which will pave the way for further studies to be conducted in the industry.

### **4.5.2 Defining the target population**

The target population is the complete group sharing common characteristics which are relevant to a particular study (Zikmund, 2003:369). In this study, the target population were Rwandan public and private institutions having public relations or communication departments. The target population was defined by identifying private institutions grouped under 8 chambers in Private Sector Federation (PSF) Rwanda. Thereafter, public institutions ranging from Rwandan government ministries (departments) were identified through the official web site of Rwandan Government. The decision was made to target the public relations departments where they exist and communication departments where public relations was not active in the institutions. However, the population was very broad, it would have been very costly to reach all the institutions included in this population, and therefore the sample was drawn.

### **4.5.3 Sampling design**

A sample frame refers to the list of all sample units available for selection at a particular stage in the sampling process (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2001:367). Martins, Loubser & Van Wyk, (1996:252) identified three requirements of a reliable sample which are: "all elements of population should be represented, there should be no duplication and it must be free from foreign elements". For the purpose of this study, contact details of various major institutions were identified and used for sampling frame. Although the sampling frame should ideally include all the members of the population, it is obvious that in this study it was not practically possible. The reason for this is that the availability of information, even the contact details of some institutions, proved to be a challenge. However, the researcher continued to explore this opportunity and the final result was a representative sample.

Czaja & Blair (1996:107) defines sampling as the selection of elements by following prescribed rules, from a defined. The aim of sampling is to choose cases of the population which will supply representative information about the population (Uys & Puttergill 2003:109). The process of sampling involves using a small number of items or parts of the population to make conclusions about the whole population and its purpose is to enable the researcher to estimate some unknown characteristic of the population (Zikmund, 2000:462). According to Zikmund (2000:42) sampling cuts costs, reduces labour requirements and gathers vital information quickly and if properly selected will give sufficiently accurate results. This is one of the reasons why a research study with limited resources should focus on obtaining a high response rate rather than trying to reach all respondents in the sample.

### **4.5.4 Sampling procedure**

Czaja & Blair (1996:108) identified two types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling procedures. Zikmund (2000:474) noted that when using probability sampling every element in the population has a known, non zero probability of being selected. This means that all units in the population have an equal chance of being selected. In non-probability sampling however, the probability of any particular member of the population being chosen is unknown (Zikmund, 2000:474). In addition, Welman & Kruger (2002:61) comment that any element to be included in the sample cannot be specified and some elements may have no chance of being included at all. For the purpose of this study, non probability sampling was used and more specifically convenience sampling.

After identifying the number of Rwandan public and private institutions, a convenience sampling or incidental sampling method was used in order to get the institutions to be included in the sample. In this case, it should be explained that accidental sampling technique was chosen because all the population units under study were considered to be

heterogeneous due to various factors. Welman & Kruger (2002:62) defines accidental sampling as the collection of members of the population that are near and readily available for research purposes. Hence, after being divided into two groups (public and private) and therefore an institution which has an online facility from each group was included in the sample, until the desired number of the sample was reached. The researcher made various personal contacts at the institutions based on the list of organisations made available by the Private Sector Federation for Rwanda (PSF) through its eight chambers for the first group of private institutions and the official Rwandan Government web site for public institutions.

#### **4.5.5 Sample Size**

According to Uys & Puttergill (2003:114) the size of a sample is determined in two ways: sophisticated statistical techniques or researchers making considerations based on experience. The former is rarely used to calculate a suitable sample size social science research and some considerations to use the latter can be based on the number of variables being studied, accuracy and the size of the population (Uys & Puttergill, 2003:114).

Welman & Kruger (2002:64-65) provided the following four guidelines to follow when selecting a sample size:

- When selecting a sample size, the researcher should bear in mind the population size as the smaller the population is, the larger the sample should be to achieve satisfactory results.
- The desired sample size does not depend on the size of the population only but also on the heterogeneity of variables. As a rule hence, the larger the heterogeneity level of the variables, the larger the sample required.
- If each stratum of a highly heterogeneous and the population is relatively homogeneous, a relatively small sample size may be sufficient.
- In determining the size of the sample, the researcher should bear in mind that the number of units of analysis from which he/she will obtain usable data at the end may be smaller than the number drawn originally as some individuals may not be willing to participate in the research and others may not provide the necessary information hence the original number of possible units of analysis decreases. Welman & Kruger went on to advise the researcher in such a case to send out as many questionnaires as he/she can in order to get at least the desired number of questionnaires back.

Furthermore, the general rule as far as sample size is concerned; one should never use a sample size which is less than 15 units of analysis but at least 25 units of analysis c,g(Huysamen, 1991:186). Huysamen further suggested that if the population size is 500 units then the sample size should be 200 units and added that there is no need to use a sample

size bigger than 500 units of analysis no matter what the size of the population may be (Huysamen, 1991:186).

Based on the above mentioned insights, the sample size of this study was set to be approximately 100 respondents from both public and private institutions. Moreover, bearing in mind the last guideline on sample size as suggested by Welman & Kruger, 280 questionnaires were emailed to respondents targeting at least 100 responses to be returned. However, it turned out to be less (93) as public relations is not well developed in Rwanda. One person per institution, especially the person in charge of public relations or corporate communications in the institution was sent the questionnaire. Questionnaires were directed to practitioners with a strategic role in the public relations departments, such as the Director or head of public relations department, communication department or CEO in case of public relations companies.

#### **4.6 Questionnaire design**

Zikmund (2000:218) state that survey research is mostly descriptive research, and the term survey is most often associated with quantitative findings. Although it is true that most surveys are conducted to quantify certain factual information, some aspects of surveys may also be qualitative. The research questionnaire is, therefore, quantitative and qualitative in nature. This study used survey method for gathering information. Zikmund (2000:66) explains that surveys are the most common method of generating primary data. However, it requires a high standard of systematic planning and implementation of research (Booyesen, 2003:128). There is a lack of primary data or research on this specific research problem about the professional status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners. Therefore, a survey is seen as a better option. According to Zikmund (2000:66) a survey is a research technique in which information is gathered from a sample of people through a questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire was divided into two main parts (see appendix A). Part one encompasses 11 questions about respondents' demographic and educational information while the second part includes 22 statements which sought respondents' perceptions on the issues revolving around the status of female public relations practitioners. All the questions in part II are closed ended type of questions and is designed to be measured using a 5-point Likert type scale, with a neutral central category (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = Unsure, 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree). The statements comprised in the Likert scale were derived from the literature reviewed in chapters two and three. Specific concepts were identified as major issues affecting female public relations practitioners in the workplace and were taken as important aspects to this study, specifically in the Rwandan context.

A Likert scale is one of many ways to present the respondents with a continuum of numbered or verbal statements representing a range of attitude judgements (Aaker *et al.* 2001: 277). This scaling technique uses statements which require the respondents to indicate the extent to which they are in agreement or disagreement with the statement and therefore determining their attitude (Du Plooy, 2002:137). Finally, there was an open ended question which allowed the respondents to feel free and add any additional comments and information that they regard as important to the study.

The questionnaire includes 34 questions aimed at obtaining general demographic information, the type of institution that the respondent work in, education level as well as background, number of female and male staff in the public relations department and the position held by the respondent. Question 11 in particular, was adapted from the study carried out by Toth & Aldoory in 2001 about gender study and in this study; it is used to investigate the specific roles professionals perform in Public Relations Department. More specifically, for the purpose of this study, the question helped the researcher to explore whether female managers carry out both technical and manager's role even when they are promoted to higher level position, as Toth & Aldoory (2001); Toth *et al.* (1998) presented it in their various studies. It also focused on the gender gap in managerial positions throughout public relations industry as presented by Brown in his study "spin sisters: why is PR the only High-tech field that Women run?" (Brown, 1998:4).

#### **4.6.1 Description of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of six pages with an introductory letter at the front. The questionnaire was estimated to take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. It has been divided into two parts; part I and part II. Part I deals with the demographical component of the questionnaire. Typical questions found in this section deal with factors such as gender, age and income. These questions were placed in this section as, according to McNamara (1999), demographical questions are normally easier to answer and can ease the respondents into the actual questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire consisted of an introductory letter to the respondents which provided some background information about the research, such as the research title and the purpose of the study. Then proceeded ahead to define the person who must respond to the questionnaire, some instructions about answering the questions and lastly contact details of the researcher and the researcher's supervisor. The second page through to page three is mainly concerned with the demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender, and marital status. Furthermore, some background information of the respondents' work related questions were also present on the second and

third pages of the questionnaire as well as income and educational background of the respondents.

Part II of the questionnaire consists of Likert scale questions except one last open ended question which is included to gather any additional comment about the study. According to Zikmund (2000:389) a Likert scale is a measure of attitudes designed to allow respondents to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with carefully constructed statements. It has been used for its simplicity and ease of administration. Furthermore, it facilitates the simultaneous measurement of reliability and the collection of data (Swart, 2001:158). However, its disadvantages include the need to recompose if the topic under investigation changes.

In total, part II of the questionnaire consists of twenty-two statements and one open ended question. Respondents were given five response alternatives to choose from: strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree. They were asked to mark an "X" in the appropriate box to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the various statements. The scale aims to measure the respondents' perceptions and attitudes to the statements provided. It was also utilised to increase the response rate. It is likely that if a number of open ended questions are asked, that there is a greater chance of low response rate which is the reason why open ended questions were kept to the minimum and they are only two throughout the questionnaire. Part II of the questionnaire is found on pages 4 to 6 which focus on the statements relating to gender issues and public relations which were mostly talked about in chapter two and three. The measuring scale was explained and respondents were told how to mark their answers in the table.

#### **4.6.2 Advantages of survey method**

According to Zikmund (2000:220) surveys provide a quick, inexpensive, efficient and accurate means of assessing information about a population; it is also quite flexible and when properly conducted, provided valuable information. In addition, they require a minimum of personnel and organisation (Booyesen, 2003:129). Mail questionnaires allow for wider geographical coverage (Bourque & Fielder, 1995:10) as well as allowing for respondents' convenience (Zikmund, 2000:261). This means that the respondent can answer the questionnaire in their own time as there is no immediate time constraint. Booyesen (2003:11) asserts that in some cases, respondents are much more willing to answer self-administered questionnaires than make a commitment to meet an interviewer at an appointed time. There is also a better chance that the respondent will give more thought to their answers. Anonymity of the respondent also plays a role in the advantages of using the survey method. According to Zikmund (2000:262) respondents are more likely to provide sensitive or embarrassing information when they can remain anonymous. It is for this reason that the respondents in this

research study have remained anonymous. Anonymity can also reduce social desirability bias (Zikmund, 2000:261).

#### **4.6.3 Disadvantages of survey method**

One of the greatest disadvantages of questionnaires is their low response rate (Bourque & Fielder, 1995:14). Booysen (2003:129) asserts that "the response rate in mail surveys is low, often around 30 percent." It is, therefore, important that the layout of the questionnaire is in understandable order and follows professional techniques that make it easier to answer. Zikmund (2000:262) noted that the absence of an interviewer can also be a disadvantage, as once the respondent receives the questionnaire, the questioning process is beyond the researcher's control. Respondents have the opportunity to read the entire questionnaire before they answer individual questions and often the text of the later question will provide information that affects responses to earlier questions. Another disadvantage to the questionnaire method is that the researcher's control over the environment is limited and therefore the loss of control means that the validity of the results is more reliant on the honesty of the respondents (McNamara, 1999). Without the presence of the researcher, there is less pressure on the respondent to fill in the questionnaire or to take the time to fill it in correctly. Bourque and Fielder (1995:19) also comment that there is no control over whoever completes the questionnaire or what kind of people consulted by the respondents during answering. According to McNamara (1999) it is therefore more difficult to claim objectivity with questionnaire data than it is with results from a tightly controlled lab test.

#### **4.6.4 Administration of the survey instrument**

The questionnaire for this study is set in English only as the target respondents are managers who are expected to be proficient in English. The researcher administered the questionnaires online and one trained research assistant on the site, helped in obtaining the contact details of some of the respondents. The questionnaire was first sent to the research supervisor appointed by the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) for approval and the authorisation was obtained from Rwandan Gender Monitoring Office (see appendix B) to conduct research about women in Rwanda. While awaiting the approval of the questionnaire, the researcher commenced contacting various institutions to be acquainted with possible respondents and prepare them regarding the research and consequently this contact provided the researcher with institutions willing to participate in the research. Upon approval of the questionnaire emails were sent to selected institutions inviting them to participate in the research and afterwards questionnaires were emailed to them in December 2010.

Respondents were supposed to complete the required information themselves, hence, a self-administered questionnaire (Bourque & Fielder 1995:2). In this way, the respondent took the responsibility for reading and answering the survey. Czaja & Blair (1996:35) noted that the length of time to conduct a mail survey is usually 8 to 10 weeks as respondents should be allowed enough time to get the questionnaire, to go through it, complete it and return it. In this study, respondents were given 6 weeks since emails were used to distribute the questionnaire.

#### **4.6.4.1 Advantages of using email as a distribution method**

According to Bourque & Fielder (1995:9) using email as a distribution method has the following advantages:

- It saves costs in terms of not having to photocopy, use paper and delivery through the post.
- It also speeds up the distribution process as it is quick and efficient tool, saving time.

#### **4.6.4.2 Disadvantages of using email as a distribution method**

Bourque & Fielder (1995:9) identified the following disadvantages associated with using email as a distribution method:

- Email is often seen as impersonal and this could affect response rates dramatically.
- People are also very wary of computer viruses and are often warned by their IT department not to open attachments from people they don't know. However, this one was overcome as prior contacts were made to inform the respondents what is expected of them, a short introductory email and a cover letter to the questionnaire explaining the research study, information about the researcher and the learning institution at which the researcher is enrolled (see appendix A).
- People can also find filling in questionnaires difficult on their computer and might not have the knowledge on how to use the basic Microsoft Word functions like highlighting, attaching etc.
- Some respondents might not use Microsoft Word and the difference in software could distort the questionnaire format when opened by the researcher.

### **4.7 Data analysis**

The data gathered using the above procedures and described methods combined with available literature was presented in a scientifically understandable format using statistical methods such as tables, charts and graphs. All primary data collected through questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 18)

programme with the help of CPUT research statistician for analysis. The software helped to analyse data and appropriate frequencies and percentages were produced in table and chart formats.

#### **4.8 Ethical consideration**

Most codes of ethics attempt to identify general moral principles of ethical behaviour such as dignity, respect and human rights. Public relations codes of ethics generally hold as cross-cultural and universal moral principles, the concepts of honesty, fairness, and not harming others, as seen in the IPRA endorsements of the Code of Athens. In the public relations discipline, ethics includes values such as honesty, openness, loyalty, fair mindedness, respect, integrity, forthright communication and these should be taken into consideration when carrying out a research (Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001:196)

Welman & Kruger (2002:171) contends that ethical considerations come into practice at three stages in a research project:

- When participants are recruited
- During the intervention and/or the measurement procedure to which they are subjected
- In the release of the results

In this study, the researcher ensured that the data collection process adhered to ethical principles. From the questionnaire design, ensuring it is understandable to the respondents and that it does not offend them in any way. Ethical and participatory practices have been considered by the researcher in that emails and telephone calls were made to recruit respondents, meaning that respondents who participated in the study did so at their own will. Moreover, the cover letter on the questionnaire describes the reason why this study is carried out which is exclusively for study purposes and ethical clearance letter was applied for and awarded from Rwanda Gender Monitoring office (see Appendix B).

#### **4.9 Summary**

In this chapter the research aim, problem statement, research questions, methodology and target population definition is explained in detail. It is noted that the population size was not definite but the researcher planned to use a sample size of not less than 100 units. Sampling design, including sampling procedure and sample size determination, as well as unit of analysis was explained in detail. This was designed to collect data on the professional status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners both in public and private sectors and to be aware of the challenges that female practitioners encounter in Rwandan public relations

practice. The questionnaire is set based on various gender issues affecting female practitioners in the workplace discussed in the literature review. Toward the end of the chapter, the advantages and disadvantages of using a questionnaire and email as a distribution method were discussed followed by data analysis methods as well as ethical consideration section. The next chapter provides a description of data and presents the results. The chapter also presents the analysis and discussion of the results.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents and discusses the results obtained from the survey conducted. The experimental data collected for this study was subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS version 18). The chapter comprises with one section discussing the results from the questionnaire that was distributed to respondents by email. The section commences with the presentation of demographic characteristics of respondents followed by the applicable discussion of the questions relating the roles and activities performed by public relations practitioners, especially managers who are the target respondents for this research. The chapter further addresses the statements which sought respondents' perceptions about the issues pertaining to the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwanda. These statements were derived from the literature which was reviewed in chapter two and three. These are closed ended type of questions designed to be measured using a 5-point Likert type scale. Furthermore, the qualitative information that was provided by respondents as additional comments will also be presented in this chapter.

### **5.2 Rate of realisation**

Data collection was conducted in three phases, an initial email was sent on 7 October 2010 to the target population to invite respondents to participate in the research. In this email, the description of the study was presented and respondents were asked to respond to the email to indicate their willingness to participate in the study and hence receive the questionnaire. After the willingness of the respondents to participate in the research, 250 questionnaires were emailed to them on 15 December 2010 requesting feedback by 24 January 2011. On 24 January 2011, only 65 questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher. A reminder was sent to the respondents who failed in returning their questionnaires, and they were asked to return it by 14 February 2011. After the reminder, 18 questionnaires were received by the researcher, totally 83 questionnaires for this study. During this time, the researcher decided to use an alternative approach to stimulate the low rate of online feedback. The researcher emailed the questionnaire to the research assistant in Rwanda who was instructed to print out 30 questionnaires and manually deliver to those respondents who did not have access to the internet. These respondents were given three weeks to complete the questionnaires and the research assistant went back to collect them and posted them to the researcher. To maintain consistency, all phases of data collection used a

questionnaire as a measuring instrument and the only difference was that some were emailed while others were delivered in person to the respondents.

As discussed in chapter four, the researcher aimed at distributing 300 questionnaires but based on the number of people who were willing to participate in the research from both private and public institutions, the aim was not reached. The information obtained from the Private Sector Federation for Rwanda (PSF) and Rwandan government's official websites, the public relations industry is still in its embryonic stage and hence there are not as many respondents as the population planned by the researcher. Therefore 280 respondents were given questionnaires to reach the minimum sample of 100. Out of 280 questionnaires sent to the respondents 106 were returned including 30 questionnaires handed over to respondents by the research assistant, however only 93 questionnaires were usable and 13 were unusable as they were not completed correctly. Table 5.1 summarises the sample realisation rate.

**Table 5.1. Sample realisation rate**

<b>Means used</b>	<b>Planned Sample</b>	<b>Realised sample</b>	<b>Unusable questionnaires</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
Emailed questionnaires	250	83	9	33%
Posted questionnaires	30	23	4	77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>38%</b>

The overall response rate of the study was a low 38 percent due to the fact that electronic media generated a very low rate of 33 percent. The primary cause for this low result could have been caused by the fact that during December-January period most people in organisations are consumed with a lot of work and pressed to meet their end of the year targets and plan for the next one or either on vacation. Furthermore, technical issues can also be considered as some respondents might have struggled to download the questionnaire or just did not have time to do so. However, based on the target sample of 100 respondents, which was planned in advance by the researcher, and the fact that the public relations industry is fairly underdeveloped in Rwanda, the realisation rate of 93 respondents is satisfactory.

### 5.3 Results of the study

Questionnaires were captured using SPSS version 18 and data were coded accordingly to generate sound statistical evidence about the problem under investigation. According to Cooper & Schindler (1998:413) coding is a technical process of assigning numbers or symbols to answers from questionnaires in order to group a limited number of categories. At first, questionnaire variables are entered into SPSS variable sheet which generated codes to all variables automatically. The 106 received questionnaires were screened in order to distinguish those valid for use in the study from those that are unusable. Correctly completed questionnaires were given numbers from 1 to 93 and data were entered into SPSS data sheet.

The results of the 93 questionnaires will be disclosed in the following section. The first being the demographical section of the questionnaire which is accompanied by charts and tables. This section presents statistical results such as gender, marital status, disciplinary background, qualifications received in disciplinary background, monthly income, experience and job title. The second section identifies the extent to which public relations practitioners perform certain tasks and the last section discusses the Likert scale results. Following each variable, comments are presented to express an overview of the finding.

#### 5.3.1. Demographic profile of the respondents

##### 5.3.1.1 Question 1: Respondents' age

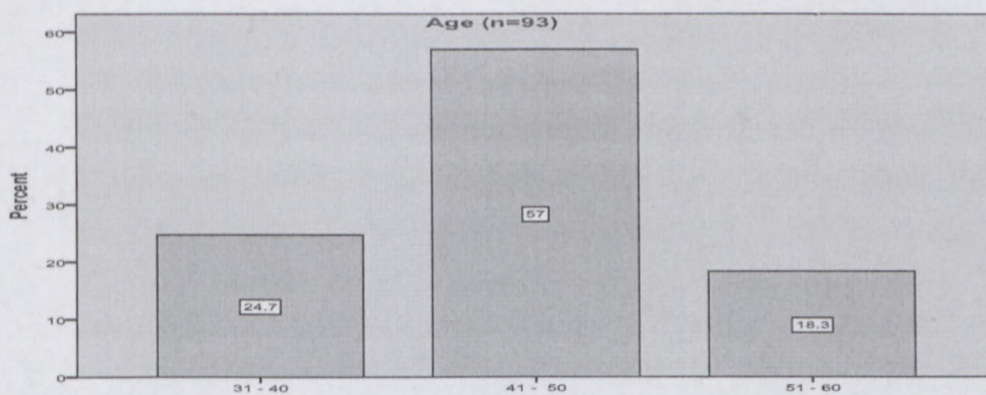


Figure 5.1: Respondents' age

In order to make the results more interpretable, respondents were requested to state their age group. The age was divided into six categories and only three are indicated in Figure 5.1. It is clear from the figure that the largest group of respondents fall under the age group

of 41-50 with 57 percent followed by 31-40 age group with 25 percent. The smallest group of respondents fall in the category of 51-60 with 18 percent. The remaining groups of below 20, 21-30 and over 60 years were not represented in this study. The results indicate that respondents were mature and are expected to have knowledge and awareness of what's happening in their workplaces.

### 5.3.1.2 Question 2: Respondents' gender

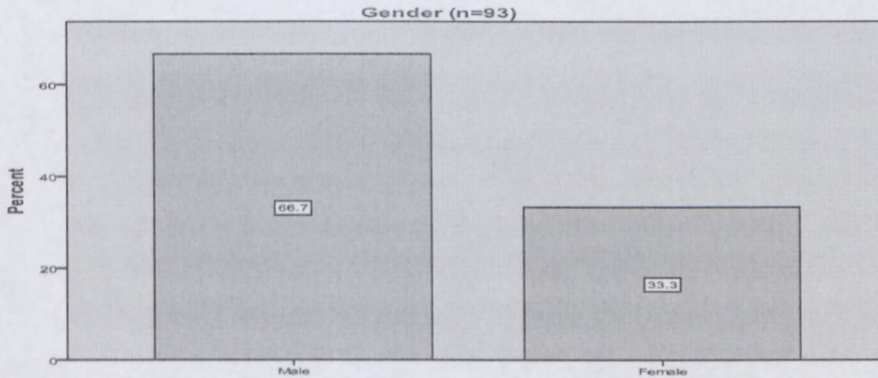


Figure 5.2: Respondents' gender

The results indicate that 66.7 percent of respondents are male with 33.3 percent female, as shown in Figure 5.2. This disproportional ratio in respondents' gender could be caused by the fact that the target respondents were managers or anybody holding a senior position in the public relations department. The literature reviewed in previous chapters identified gender gap in managerial positions in the industry. Moreover, according to Van Heerden (2004:169) most of African public relations practitioners are males, which could explain why males' ratio is higher than females' in this study.

### 5.3.1.3 Question 3: Respondents' marital status

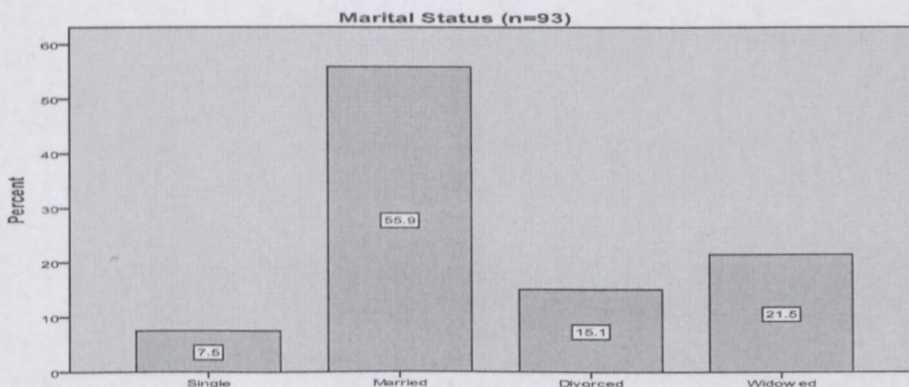


Figure 5.3: Respondents' marital status

To be able to classify the respondents' roles in the practice, they were asked to state their marital status. This was divided into four categories and all the categories have been represented as it is indicated in Figure 5.3. The results indicate that the largest group of respondents falls in the category of married people with 56 percent followed by widow category with 21.5 percent. The next category is the divorced with 15 percent while the smallest group of respondents fall in the category of singles with 7.5 percent.

**Table 5.2 Gender versus marital status**

		Marital Status				Total
		Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	
Gender	Male	5	32	11	14	62
	Female	2	20	3	6	31
Total		7	52	14	20	93

To be more analytical about marital status, a cross tabulation was presented to find out marital status per gender. It was found that even though the highest number of respondents are males 66.7 percent against 33.3 percent females, the majority of females are married (20 females out of 31). Alcott (1988:416) state that this paradigm exists specifically in public relations as women are good at handling pressure and can do it all in public relations, i.e. career, marriage and family. Table 5.2 presents the gender distribution and their marital status.

### 5.3.1.4 Question 4: Respondents' institution type

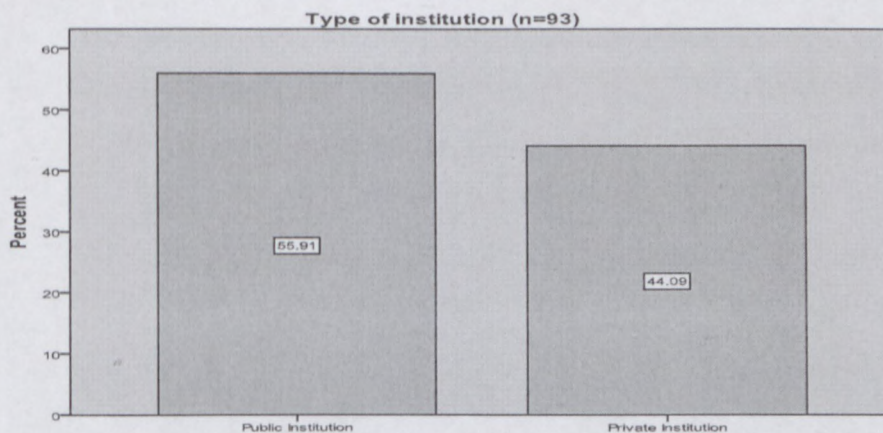


Figure 5.4: Institution type.

In an attempt to identify in which area public relations is most practiced, respondents were required to state the type of institution they work in from a list consisting of public, private and a third option marked as "other" for respondents whose institution does not fall in the two categories provided. Of the respondents, 55.9 percent indicated that they work in the public sector while 44.1 percent work in the private sector. These results indicate that the public sector in Rwanda is advancing in the practice of public relations and holds the dominant representation in this study.

### 5.3.1.5 Question 5: Respondents' qualification

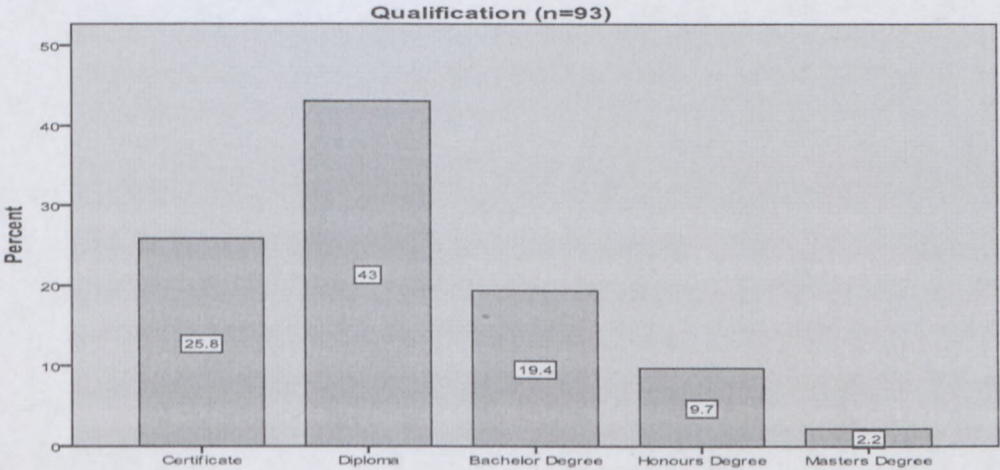


Figure 5.5: Respondents' qualification.

Respondents were given an opportunity to indicate their qualification from a list containing Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors Degree, Honours Degree, Masters Degree, PhD and "other" as the option for those qualifications which did not fit in the category presented. Of the respondents, 25.8 percent possessed a Certificate, 43 percent indicated that they obtained a Diploma, 19.4 percent possessed a Bachelors Degree, 9.7 percent held an Honours Degree and only 2.2 percent had obtained a Masters Degree. None of the respondents indicated that they hold a PHD or any other qualification. The observation is that the majority of the respondents 88.2 percent held an undergraduate qualification, i.e. Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor degree. However, it is also interesting to note that at least 74.3 percent of the respondents had a tertiary education which can lead to the conclusion that the respondents who participated in this study had received an academic education at a higher education institution.

**Table 5.3 Comparison of gender and qualification**

Gender	Qualification					Total
	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Honours Degree	Masters Degree	
Male	13	26	14	7	2	62
Female	11	14	4	2	0	31
Total	24	40	18	9	2	93

The results of Table 5.8 show that the higher the qualification, the fewer the respondents are. This compliments the discussion presented under Figure 5.5. More specifically, there is no female with a masters degree, however most of the female respondents possessed a certificate or a diploma.

**5.3.1.6 Question 6: Respondents' educational discipline**

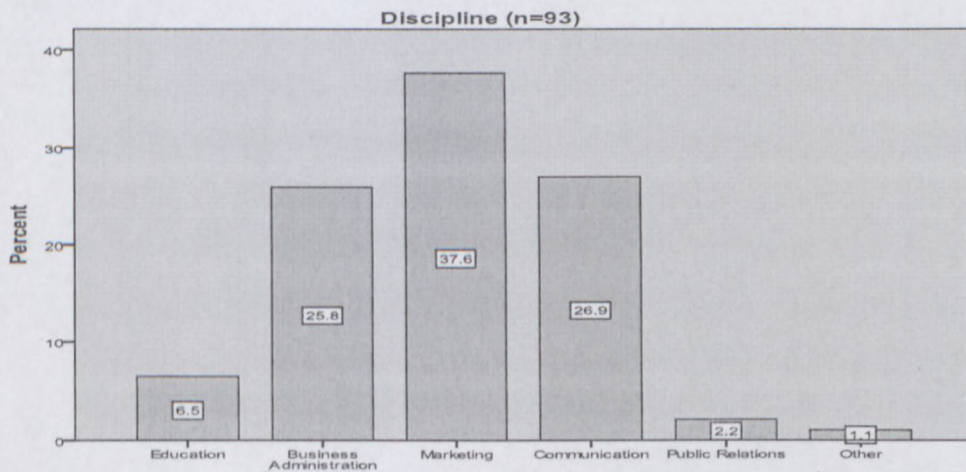


Figure 5.6: Respondents' education discipline.

According to Figure 5.6 the highest number of respondents, 37.6 percent, received their qualifications in Marketing followed by Communication with 26.9 percent which is close to the number of respondents who qualified in Business administration with 25.8 percent. The lowest number of respondents, which constitute 2.2 percent, qualified in Public Relations. Those who qualified in Education constitute account for 6.5 percent. However, none of the respondents qualified in Applied Science and only one respondent indicated accounting as the discipline in the "other" option provided. The low rate of qualification in Public Relations could be attributed to the fact that the practice of public relations in Rwanda is still in its embryonic stage, as the National Public Relations Association was only established in 2008. This is further confirmed by the fact that none of the Rwandan universities offer a degree in Public Relations.

### 5.3.1.7 Question 7: How many staff in respondents' institutions?

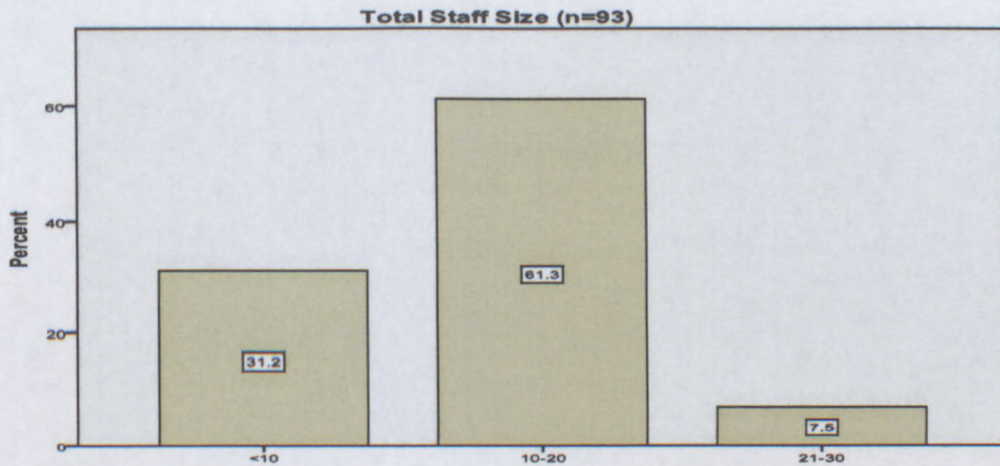


Figure 5.7: Staff size in the institutions

Respondents were required to provide the number of male and female staff in their respective departments/institutions and to select the response which corresponds to the option specified. Five options were presented, namely: 1= <10, 2= 10-20, 3= 21-30, 4= 31-40 and 5= >40. The emphasis was placed on identifying the total number of staff employed within the institution regardless of their gender. However, it was found that all respondents provided the number of male and female staff in their departments. Figure 5.7 shows that 61.3 percent of the organisations had a staff total of between 10 and 20 in their public relations or communication departments. This is followed by 31.2 percent with a total a staff contingent of less than 10. The results show that only 7.5 percent of the respondents' organisations had a staff contingent of between 21 and 30 staff. The results show that none of the participating institutions had over 30 total staff size.

### 5.3.1.8 Staff size vs type of institution

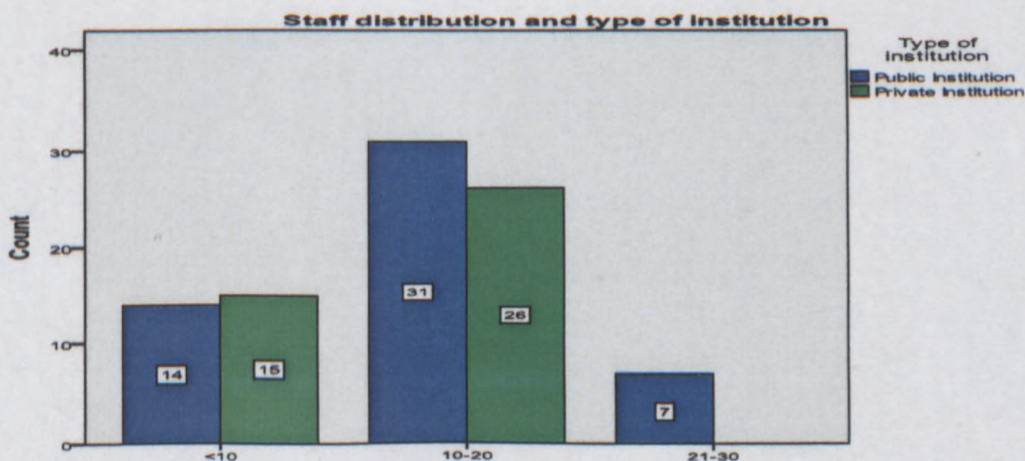


Figure 5.8: Staff size Vs type of institutions

In the previous figure, it shows that the number of staff in public relations departments in both public and private institutions fall between 10 and 20. However, it appears that public relations is more practiced in public institutions than private ones, as the highest number of staff in public institutions constitute to 31 percent compared to 26 percent. The survey results indicate that the summation of all staff regardless of gender was 1133; using gender breakdown females were 37.5 percent against 62.4 percent male staff. These findings confirm those of Van Heerden (2004:169) who indicated that African public relations practice is mostly occupied by males.

**5.3.1.9 Question 8: How many years have you worked in the public relations industry?**

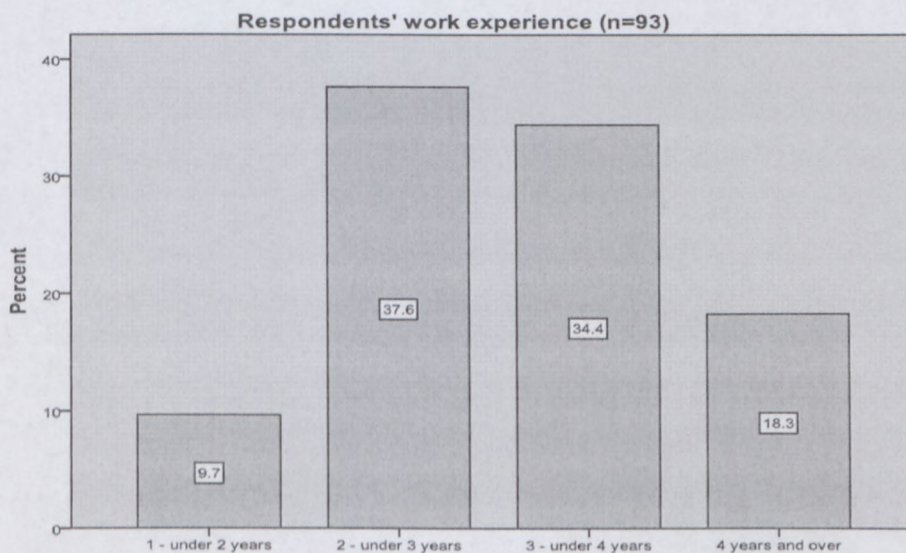


Figure 5.9 Respondents' work experience

Respondents were required to indicate their experience in the public relations industry. Five options were presented, these include: less than 1 year, 1 – under 2 years, 2 - under 3 years, 3 - under 4 years and 4 years and over. The results of the study show that the highest number of respondents 37.6 percent has been working in the industry for 3 years or less. 34.4 percent of respondents have been in the industry between 3 and 4 years and 18.3 percent have 4 years of experience or more. The lowest number of respondents, 9.7 percent has worked for less than 2 years. There was no respondent with less than 1 year experience. Majority of the respondents, 90.3 percent have more than two years experience in the industry.

**5.3.1.10 Question 9: What is your gross monthly income?**

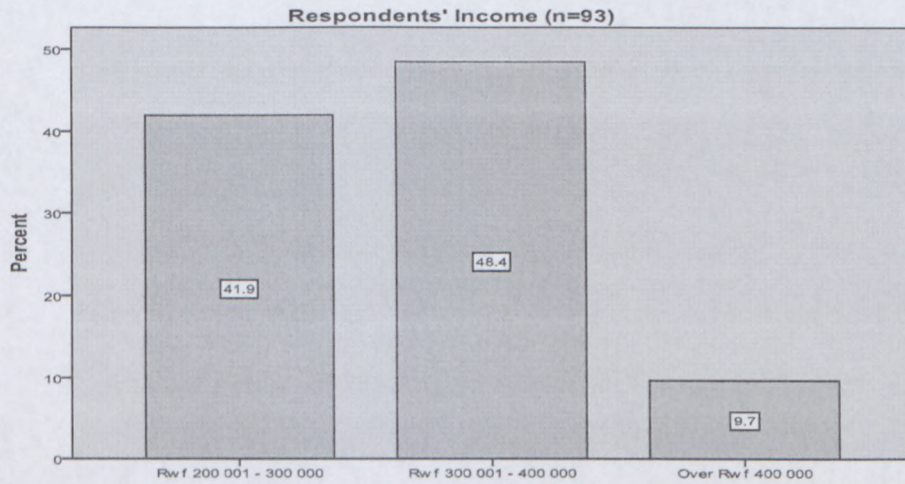


Figure 5.10 Respondents' income range

In identifying the salary range of the Rwandan public relations industry, the highest percentage of respondents, 48.4 percent, earn between Rwf 300 001 and 400 000. This range is followed by the Rwf 200 001 - 300 000 range earned by 41.9 percent of the respondents. The lowest number of respondents, 9.7 percent earn over Rwf 400 000 and none of the respondents earn below Rwf 200 000. This status of salary is determined by many factors, including the individual's education level, years of experience, job title and gender as depicted in the following tables.

**Table 5.4: Comparison of income and qualification (n=93)**

Income	Qualification					Total
	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Honours Degree	Masters Degree	
Rwf 200 001 - 300 000	14	16	6	3	0	39
Rwf 300 001 - 400 000	9	23	9	3	1	45
Over Rwf 400 000	1	1	3	3	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>93</b>

According to the data in the above table, the higher the level of education, the higher the income. Other factors, such as work experience influence this assumption. Among 41.9 percent respondents who earn the income range of between Rwf 200 001 and 300 000, 92.3 percent of them possess a Certificate, a Diploma and a Bachelor degree while only 7.6 percent respondents in this income range possessed Honours degree.

**Table 5.5: Comparison of gender and income (n=93)**

Income	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Rwf 200 001 - 300 000	21	18	39
Rwf 300 001 - 400 000	32	13	45
Over Rwf 400 000	9	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>93</b>

The results show that more male respondents compared to the number of female respondents earn between Rwf 300 001-400 000. The results also indicate that no female earn over Rwf 400 000. It is evident that the higher the income level (salary), the lower the number of females. Based on these results, one can derive that:

- the number of female respondents is lower compared to that of males
- the majority of female respondents are married compared to males
- the majority of female respondents have an under graduate level qualification.

**Table 5.6: Comparison of gender, income and experience (n=93)**

Gender	Income	Experience				Total
		1 - under 2 years	2 - under 3 years	3 - under 4 years	4 years and over	
Male	Rwf 200 001 - 300 000	4	11	5	1	21
	Rwf 300 001 - 400 000	0	10	13	9	32
	Over Rwf 400 000	4	3	0	2	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>62</b>
Female	Rwf 200 001 - 300 000	0	8	8	2	18
	Rwf 300 001 - 400 000	1	3	6	3	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>

Should one overlook the qualification factor, the discrepancy in salary is presented by the results, as males and females with the same number of experience (under 2 years) do not get the same income. The results indicate that 4 of the 9 male respondents earn over Rwf 400 000 while none of the females in the study earn in that income bracket (column 2). In the category of 2 to under 3 years experience, 8 females compared to 11 males earn between Rwf 200 001 and 300 000, 3 females compared to 10 males earn between Rwf 300 001 and 400 000, and zero females compared to 3 males earn over Rwf 400 000. The last column shows that in total 41 males earn over Rwf 300 000 while only 13 females get paid over Rwf

300 000. Based on these findings it can be concluded that females earn less income compared to males within the same experience categories.

### 5.3.1.11 Question 10: What is your current job title in your organisation?

**Table 5.7: Respondents' Job title (n=93)**

Job titles	Frequency	Percent
1. Accounts executive	1	1.1
2. Administrator	15	16.1
3. Communication Director	11	11.8
4. Communication Officer	18	19.4
5. Development Officer	7	7.5
6. Head of marketing	2	2.2
7. Marketing & Communication Director	15	16.1
8. Marketing and communication officer	1	1.1
9. Marketing manager	1	1.1
10. Marketing officer	2	2.2
11. PR coordinator	5	5.4
12. PR Director	1	1.1
13. Public relations officer	1	1.1
14. Relationship Manager	7	7.5
15. Sales & Advertising Manager	6	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5.7 presents the job titles as provided by the respondents. A number of different job titles are usually given to public relations staff. These 15 job titles have been identified by the respondents with the most frequent being the Communication officer rated by 19.4 percent and the least frequent as Accounts executive, Marketing and Communication officer, Marketing manager, PR Director and Public Relations officer with 1.1 percent. The second most frequent job titles among the respondents were Administrators as well as Marketing & Communication Directors each with a rating of 16.1 percent.

**Table 5.8: Comparison between gender, Job title and income (n=93)**

Gender		Income			Total	
		Rwf 200 001 - 300 000	Rwf 300 001 - 400 000	Over Rwf 400 000		
<b>Male</b>	<b>Job title</b>	Sales & Advertising Manager	6	0	0	<b>6</b>
		Accounts executive	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
		Administrator	11	0	0	<b>11</b>
		Communication Director	0	11	0	<b>11</b>
		Communication officer	3	8	3	<b>14</b>
		Head of Marketing	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
		Marketing &Communication Director	0	5	0	<b>5</b>
		Marketing and communication officer	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
		Marketing manager	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
		Marketing officer	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
		P R coordinator	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
		PR Director	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
		Public relations officer	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
		Relationship manager	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>62</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Job title</b>	Administrator	4	0	
		Communication officer	1	3		<b>4</b>
		Development officer	5	2		<b>7</b>
		Marketing &Communication Director	5	5		<b>10</b>
		P R coordinator	1	1		<b>2</b>
		Relationship manager	2	2		<b>4</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>31</b>

The representation in Table 5.8 shows that there are 11 male Administrators and 4 female Administrators who earn the same income of less than Rwf 300 000 (column 2). However, upon reviewing the salary earnings for Communication Officers, Marketing & Communication Directors, PR coordinators and Relationship managers, there is a slightly different income distribution among male and female respondents. The results indicate that 17.7 percent male Communication officers compared to 12.9 percent female Communication officers earn the income of less than Rwf 400 000. This is not a grave, as the total number of female respondents for this study is less than males. This study shows that no female respondent earned the salary of above Rwf 400 000.

**5.3.1.12 Question 11: Do you perform any of the following activities on a daily basis?**

The question focused on the tasks performed by public relations officials. The intent of this question is to assess whether female public relations practitioners can do it all even when promoted in the positions of higher responsibilities, unlike male practitioners who usually delegate (Wylie & Gills 2001:424). Furthermore, this question allowed the researcher to assess the level of professionalism offered by female practitioners based on their responsibilities. The statements will be presented in the following table and the overall remark will follow.

**5.3.2: Statements relating to the tasks performed by the respondents**

**Table 5.9: Tasks performed by the respondents (n=93)**

Statements	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1. Supervising the work of others	41	44.1%	52	55.9%
2. Conducting research	43	46.2%	50	53.8%
3. Planning public Relations programs	32	34.4%	61	65.6%
4. Managing public relations programs	39	41.9%	54	58.1%
5. Making communication policy decisions	44	47.3%	49	52.7%
6. Implementing decisions made by others	49	52.7%	44	47.3%
7. Implementing new programs	60	64.5%	33	35.5%
8. Planning and implementing events	60	64.5%	33	35.5%
9. Planning and managing budgets	18	19.4%	75	80.6%
10. Writing, editing, producing messages	41	44.1%	52	55.9%
11. Disseminating messages	44	47.3%	49	52.7%
12. Evaluating program results	61	65.6%	32	34.4%
13. Making media contacts	52	55.9%	41	44.1%
14. Meeting with clients	39	41.9%	54	58.1%
15. Handling correspondence	48	51.6%	45	48.4%
16. Making business calls	59	63.4%	34	36.6%
17. Counselling management	38	40.9%	55	59.1%

The study indicates that, from the option presented, the most common tasks performed by public relations professionals are handling correspondence, implementing decisions made by others, making media contacts, making business calls, planning and implementing events, implementing new programs and evaluating program results. The results for these tasks range from 51.6 percent to 65.6 percent. However, it was found that 80.6 percent of the

respondents do not either plan or manage a budget. Tasks which are not often carried out by Rwandan public relations practitioners include; supervising the work of others, planning public relations programs, managing public relations programs, writing, editing, producing messages, meeting with clients and counselling management with percentages ranging from 55.9 percent to 80.6 percent. The results of this question are further explored to identify the contributions of female practitioners in the Rwandan public relations industry. This leads to further analysis using gender, job title and task cross tabulation as presented in the following tables. Each task will be cross referenced against all job titles provided by the respondents and their gender. Concluding the section will be overall observation.

**Table 5.10: Statement 1: Supervising the work of others (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	1	1.6%	1	3.2%
Communication Director	2	3.2%	-	-
Communication officer	12	19.3%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	1	3.2%
Head of marketing	2	3.2%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	-	-	8	25.8%
Marketing and communication officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	1	1.6%	-	-
PR coordinator	-	-	1	3.2%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	1	3.2%
Sales & Advertising Manager	2	3.2%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>51.6%</b>

Table 5.10 indicates that Account executives, whether male or female, do not supervise others' work (row 2). The results show that 19.3 percent, which are male Communication officers are mostly involved in supervising others' work. Whereas 25.8 percent Female Marketing & Communication directors constitute the majority (25.8 percent) with regards to supervising the work of others. The overall observation is that only less than a half of male respondents (40.3 percent) participate in supervision compared to 51.6 percent of female respondents who participate in supervision as part of their work.

**Table 5.11: Statement 2: Conducting research (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	5	8%	1	3.2%
Communication Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Communication officer	8	12.9%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	1	3.2%
Head of marketing	2	3.2%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	1	1.6%	8	25.8%
Marketing and communication officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	2	3.2%	-	-
PR coordinator	-	-	1	3.2%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Sales & Advertising Manager	4	6.4%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48.3%</b>

According to Table 5.11 research is not given priority in Rwandan public relations practice, as less than 50 percent of both males and females do conduct research i.e. 45.1 percent males and 48.3 percent females. The results also indicate that male Administrators and female Marketing & Communication directors constitute the majority for being involved in undertaking research. According to Skinner, Von Essen & Mersham (2001:10) research is an important function of public relations. It involves the gathering of information about public opinion, trends, emerging issues, political climate, media coverage, concerns of consumer and environmental special-interest groups (Skinner *et al.* 2001: 10). Furthermore, Grunig & Hunt (1984:91) emphasised that research should be focussed on by public relations staff.

**Table 5.12: Statement 3: Planning public relations programs (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	3	4.8%	-	-
Communication Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Communication officer	8	12.9%	3	9.6%
Development officer	-	-	2	6.4%
Head of marketing	-	-	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	-	-	6	19.3%
Marketing and communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	-	-	1	3.2%
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	2	3.2%	2	6.4%
Sales & Advertising Manager	2	3.2%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>45.1%</b>

Table 5.12 shows that a low rate of practitioners are involved in planning public relations programs as only 29 percent males and 45.1 percent females indicate that planning public relations programs are part of their job. Moreover, it was found that Accounts executives, Head of Marketing department, Marketing and Communication officers, marketing officers and Public Relations directors are not involved in this activity at all. However Wilcox, Ault & Agee (1995:7) indicated that being involved with planning and implementing the organisation's efforts to influence or change public behaviour in the organisation's favour is important. According to these authors, it is vital that all public relations managers have planning knowledge and use it throughout their daily operations. Grunig & Hunt (1984:91) emphasised that communication managers should plan and manage organisation's public relations programs and make sound communication policy decisions for the organisation.

**Table 5.13: Statement 4: Managing public relations programs (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	3	4.8%	1	3.2%
Communication Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Communication officer	12	19.3%	3	9.6%
Development officer	-	-	2	6.4%
Head of marketing	-	-	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	-	-	6	19.3%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	1	1.6%	-	-
PR coordinator	-	-	1	3.2%
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	2	3.2%	3	9.6%
Sales & Advertising Manager	2	3.2%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>51.6 %</b>

The study show that managing public relations programs does not form part of the duties performed by Account executives, Heads of Marketing department, Marketing & Communication officers and Public Relations directors. It was found that male communication officers (19.3 percent) are more involved in managing public relations programs compared to females (9.6 percent). Smith (2002:1) states that management skills are very crucial to public relations in terms of personnel, budgets and action programs. Even though, public relations practitioners find themselves operating in both technical and managerial roles. The current unstable economic environment and future advancement calls for more skills on the management side than technical. According to Smith (2002:1) future practitioners will need to understand research and planning, should know how to make

strategic choices from many tactical choices and they will need to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of any program undertaken.

**Table 5.14: Statement 5: Making communication policy decisions (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	6	9.6%	1	3.2
Communication Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Communication officer	10	16.1%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	1	3.2%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	2	3.2%	3	9.6%
Marketing & communication officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	1	1.6%	-	-
PR coordinator	1	1.6%	1	3.2%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	2	3.2%	1	3.2%
Sales & Advertising Manager	5	8%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>53.2%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35.4%</b>

The results presented in Table 5.14 show that Account executives are not involved in any communication policy decisions in the organisation. It is also shown that most females are not involved in making communication policy decisions as only 35.4 percent of the female respondents indicated that they participate in this activity compared to 53.2 percent male respondents who participate in the decision making processes. This situation was supported by Moss, Warnaby & Newman (2000:278) who, through public relations role studies have found that there is a tendency for females to be relegated to technical roles rather than being involved in decision making positions. O'Neil (2003:156) also comment that women who are placed in the technician role and are found on the lower ranks of the organisational hierarchy, doing regular tasks such as writing and editing while men are elevated to the managerial role that involves company policy and senior management counselling.

**Table 5.15: Statement 6: Implementing decisions made by others (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	1	1.6%	-	-
Administrator	5	8%	3	9.6%
Communication Director	10	16.1%	-	-
Communication officer	3	4.8%	1	3.2%
Development officer	-	-	5	16.1%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	4	6.4%	7	22.5%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	-	-	-	-
Marketing officer	1	1.6%	-	-
PR coordinator	3	4.8%	1	3.2%
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	2	6.4
Sales & Advertising Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61.2%</b>

Table 5.15 present findings that 61.2 percent females do implement others' decisions which confirms the situation in the previous table about participation in the decision making process. Since most females are not involved in decision making processes, they are more likely to implement others' decisions. However, the results indicate that Marketing & Communication officers, Marketing managers, Public Relations directors and public relations officers are not part of this activity whether male or female.

**Table 5.16: Statement 7: Implementing new programs (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	1	1.6%	-	-
Administrator	5	8%	1	3.2%
Communication Director	10	16.1%	-	-
Communication officer	10	16.1%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	5	16.1%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	3	4.8%	3	9.6%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	1	1.6%	-	-
PR coordinator	3	4.8%	2	6.4%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	3	4.8%	4	12.9%
Sales & Advertising Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61.2%</b>

According to Table 2.16, the results indicate that 66.1 percent male respondents are involved in the implementation of new programs in their organisations and is mostly performed by Communication directors (16.1 percent) and Communication officers (16.1 percent). The results show that 61.2 percent of female respondents compared to the 66.1 percent of male respondents are responsible for implementing new programmes.

**Table 5.17: Statement 8: Planning and implementing events (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	3	4.8%	3	9.6%
Communication Director	10	16.1%	-	-
Communication officer	9	14.5%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	6	19.3%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	1	1.6%	8	25.8%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	1	1.6%	-	-
PR coordinator	1	1.6%	2	6.4%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	3	9.6%
Sales & Advertising Manager	4	6.4%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>83.8%</b>

Table 5.17 shows that 83.8 percent of female respondents indicated to have planned and implemented events while 54.8 percent male respondents have done so. The information in Table 5.17 confirms that females are mostly employed in public relations because they are good communicators and they get on well with most of the people. Aldoory & Toth, (2002:112) earlier indicated that in most cases, females have got what it takes in public relations especially in communication, which is a crucial component of public relations.

**Table 5.18: Statement 9: Planning and managing budgets (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	1	1.6%	-	-
Administrator	3	4.8%	2	6.4%
Communication Director	2	3.2%	-	-
Communication officer	2	3.2%	-	-
Development officer	-	-	-	-
Head of marketing	-	-	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	1	1.6%	2	6.4%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	2	3.2%	-	-
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	-	-	1	3.2%
Sales & Advertising Manager	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16.1%</b>

As presented in Table 5.18 only 37 percent (total row) respondents indicated that they are involved in planning and managing budgets. The rate is low in female respondents as only 16.1 percent females are involved in this activity. The results could be influenced by the fact that many organisations have a dedicated finance department who regulates and manages the budgets for organisational activities.

**Table 5.19: Statement 10: Writing, editing, producing messages (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	3	4.8%	4	12.9%
Communication Director	-	-	-	-
Communication officer	3	4.8%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	7	22.5%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	1	1.6%	10	32.2%
Marketing & communication officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing Manager	-	-	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	1	1.6%	2	6.4%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	9.6%
Relationship Manager	-	-	3	
Sales & Advertising Manager	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>96.7%</b>

In Table 5.19 it is evident that a staggering majority of 96.7 percent of female respondents are involved in writing, editing and producing messages, compared to 17.7 percent of male

respondents. Even though Treadwell (2005:7) emphasises that writing, editing and production are crucial functions of public relations. The information from Table 5.24 and 5.29 confirm that women perform mostly technical rather than managerial roles in public relations (Aldoory & Toth, 2002:112). Treadwell (2005:7) suggest that public relations practitioners should be adept at writing news releases, newsletters, correspondence, reports, booklets, text, radio and television copy, film scripts, trade papers, magazine articles, corporate advertisements, product information and technical material which applies to all practitioners regardless of gender. Furthermore, practitioners should be involved in editing special publications, employee newsletters, shareholders reports and other communication directed at internal and external stakeholders (Skinner, 2000:12). Production involves creating messages using multimedia familiarity and skills including art, photography and design of brochures, booklets, reports, corporate advertisements, occasional publications, recording and editing audio and videotapes as well as preparing audio-visual presentations (Koekemoer, Bird, Blem, Duckles, Skinner & Van Der Westhuizen, 1998: 351).

**Table 5.20: Statement 11: Disseminating messages (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	3	4.8%	4	12.9%
Communication Director	-	-	-	-
Communication officer	5	8.1%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	7	22.5%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	3	4.8%	9	29%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	-	-	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	1	1.6%	2	6.4%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	3	9.6
Sales & Advertising Manager	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>93.5%</b>

The results in Table 5.20 indicate that 93.5 percent females compared to a low 24.1 percent males are responsible for disseminating messages. This confirms that females are primarily assigned to technical duties. Females are restricted to lower level ranks of the corporate ladder, dealing with technical activities while men enjoy more challenging positions. Both male and female Account executives, Communication directors, Marketing & Communication officers, Marketing managers, Marketing officers, Sales & Advertising managers and Public Relations officers do not participate in this activity.

**Table 5.21: Statement 12: Evaluating program results (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	1	1.6%	-	-
Administrator	7	11.2%	3	9.6%
Communication Director	9	14.5%	-	-
Communication officer	10	16.1%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	7	22.5%
Head of marketing	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	2	3.2%	8	25.8%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	-	-	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	2	3.2%	2	6.4%
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Relationship Manager	-	-	3	9.6%
Sales & Advertising Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>87%</b>

Table 5.21 indicate that 87 percent females compared to 54.8 percent males are responsible for evaluating program results. The results show that the majority of female respondents who participate in evaluating program results are the Marketing & Communication directors and Development officers. The male respondents are also involved in this activity as results indicate that Administrators, Communication directors and Communication officers are more involved in this activity compared to other job title holders. The clear observation is that Marketing & Communication officers, Marketing managers, Marketing officers and Public Relations directors are not involved in the evaluation of results at all.

**Table 5.22: Statement 13: Making media contacts (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	1	1.6%	-	-
Administrator	5	8%	4	12.9%
Communication Director	9	14.5%	-	-
Communication officer	9	14.5%	2	6.4%
Development officer	-	-	5	16.1%
Head of marketing	-	-	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	3		7	22.5%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	-	-	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	1	1.6%	2	6.4
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	2	3.2	1	3.2
Sales & Advertising Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>67.7%</b>

The results in Table 5.22 indicate that among the female respondents, 67.7 percent make media contacts while 50 percent of the male respondents indicated the same position. The results show that mostly male Communication directors and officers (14.5 percent) as well as Administrators (8 percent) participate in making contacts with the media. With regards to female respondents, Development officers and Marketing & Communication officers seem to be the ones that are more involved with making media contact. Both male and female Heads of marketing, Marketing & Communication officers, Marketing managers, Marketing officers, Public Relations directors and Public Relations officers are not involved in making media contact as the data from the above table shows. According to Grunig & Hunt (1984:91) media relations displays a two way symmetrical role whereby contact with media should be maintained and keep internal staff in the organisation informed about what the media are doing.

**Table 5.23: Statement 14: Meeting with clients (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	2	3.2%	2	6.4%
Communication Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Communication officer	10	16.1%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	3	9.6%
Head of marketing	2	3.2%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	-	-	5	16.1%
Marketing & communication officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	2	3.2%	-	-
PR coordinator	2	3.2%	-	-
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	1	3.2%
Sales & Advertising Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38.7%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48.3%</b>

Concerning the activity of meeting with clients, the results presented in Table 5.23 are low in both genders. The results show that less than a half of all the respondents, 38.7 percent males and 48.3 percent females, meet the clients. According to Wilcox *et al.* (1995:7) there must be a strong collaboration between public relations staff and clients as there is a need to address clients' problems or even contacting the latter to make them aware of the company's programs which may affect clients.

**Table 5.24: Statement 15: Handling correspondence (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	1	1.6%	-	-
Administrator	4	6.4%	4	12.9%
Communication Director	4	6.4%	-	-
Communication officer	1	1.6%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	7	22.5%
Head of marketing	-	-	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	2	3.2%	10	32.2%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	-	-	-	-
PR coordinator	2	3.2%	2	6.4%
PR Director	-	-	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	4	12.9%
Sales & Advertising Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results in Table 5.24 show that all (100 percent) the female respondents are involved in handling correspondence compared to only 27.4 percent of male respondents. This information combined with that of Table 5.6 and Table 5.11 confirms that women are still hired for mostly technical roles rather than managerial roles in the public relations industry (Aldoory & Toth, 2002:112). However, on the flip side, the authors state that women are good at communication skills and this may be why they are more involved in this activity, as well as other technical activities.

**Table 5.25: Statement 16: Making business calls (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	4	6.4%	4	12.9%
Communication Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Communication officer	9	14.5%	4	12.9%
Development officer	-	-	7	22.5%
Head of marketing	2	3.2%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	3	4.8%	10	32.2%
Marketing & communication officer	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing Manager	-	-	-	-
Marketing officer	2	3.2%	-	-
PR coordinator	1	1.6%	2	6.4%
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	1	1.6%	3	9.6%
Sales & Advertising Manager	4	6.4%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>96.7%</b>

Table 5.25 perpetuates that the notion that females are held back from higher positions and are only hired for technical rather than decision making positions. The results show that 96.7 percent of the female respondents are engaged in phone calls compared to 46.7 percent of male respondents. It is most prominent in female Marketing and Communication officers and Development officers.

**Table 5.26: Statement 17: Counselling management (n=93)**

Job title	Males out of 62 (Yes)	Percent	Females out of 31 (yes)	Percent
Accounts executive	-	-	-	-
Administrator	4	6.4%	1	3.2%
Communication Director	2	3.2%	-	-
Communication officer	9	14.5%	3	9.6%
Development officer	-	-	3	9.6%
Head of marketing	2	3.2%	-	-
Marketing & Communication Director	-	-	2	6.4%
Marketing & communication officer	-	-	-	-
Marketing Manager	1	1.6%	-	-
Marketing officer	2	3.2%	-	-
PR coordinator	3	4.8%	-	-
PR Director	1	1.6%	-	-
Public Relations Officer	-	-	-	-
Relationship Manager	2	3.2%	1	3.2%
Sales & Advertising Manager	2	3.2%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32.2%</b>

Counselling management is part of public relations officials' job (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:91). However, in Table 5.26 it shows that both male and female respondents are not very involved in this activity. The results indicate that less than 50% of either gender (45 percent males and 32.2 percent females) do not do counselling management as part of their job. Apart from counselling management, Grunig & Hunt advised communication managers and other key public relations staff to use research in order to make sound decisions based on facts (Grunig & Hunt, 1984:91). O'Neil (2003:156) on the other hand emphasises that mostly men are elevated into managerial roles that involves making company policy and senior management counselling while women are in routine technical tasks. The information presented in Table 5.10 to Table 5.26 regarding the tasks of public relations staff in this study, is the conclusion of O'Neil's findings.

**Table 5.27: Tasks mostly handled by respondents (n=93)**

Tasks	Females out of 31	%	Males out of 62	%
1.Supervising the work of others	16	51.6%		
2.Managing public relations programs	16	51.6%		
3.Implementing decisions made by others	19	61.2%		
4.Implementing new programs	19	61.2%	41	66.1%
5.Planning and implementing events	26	83.8%	34	54.8%
6.Writing, editing, producing messages	30	96.7%		
7.Disseminating messages	29	93.4%		
8.Evaluating program results	27	87%	34	54.8%
9.Making media contacts	21	67.7%	31	50%
10.Handling correspondence	31	100%		
11.Making business calls	30	96.7%		
12.Making communication policy decisions			33	53.2%

In reference to the previous evidence presented, the activities handled by public relations practitioners, the results show that in most of the cases women do it all. This is supported by the fact that in Table 5.27 between 51.6 percent and 100 percent of female respondents indicated that they are involved in each of 11 activities, while only between 50 percent and 66.1 percent males are involved in only five activities. In this study, only people in managerial positions in public relations positions were approached and the results shows that apart from being a manager, a female practitioner is highly involved in technical activities compared to the male practitioner. It also shows that female practitioners have a lot to offer in the industry as far as professionalism is concerned as they have both managerial and technical skills.

### **5.3.3: Likert Scale questions**

The following statements were intended to obtain information pertaining to the gender gap in salaries and promotions. Furthermore, through this information the status of female public relations practitioners in Rwanda will be established. Respondents were requested to select their response to each of the statements made by strongly agreeing (1), agreeing (2) or disagreeing (4) and strongly disagreeing (5) with the statements. The neutral option was also provided and coded (3) for the responses that do not fall in other options provided. A brief interpretation will follow each figure.

**Statement 1: Opportunities for advancement like education and training in Rwandan public relations practice are the same, regardless of gender. (n=93)**

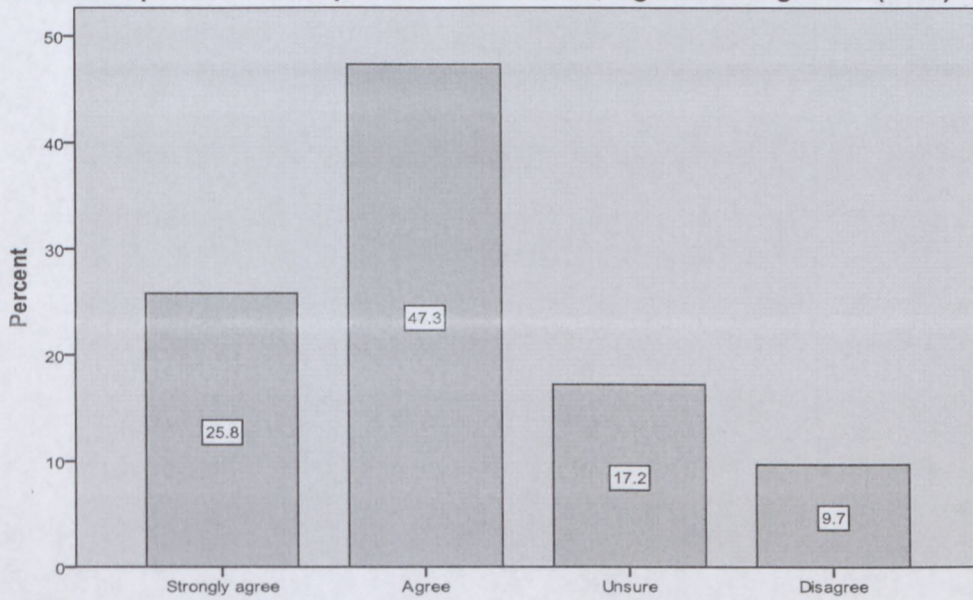


Figure 5.11 Respondents' opinions about advancement opportunities vs gender

The figure indicate that 47.3 percent of the respondents agree that opportunities for advancement in the Rwandan public relations industry are the same regardless of gender while only 9.7 percent disagree with the statement. 25.8 percent strongly agree with the statement whereas 17.2 percent neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

**Statement 2: The glass ceiling exists for Rwandan female PR practitioners (n=93)**

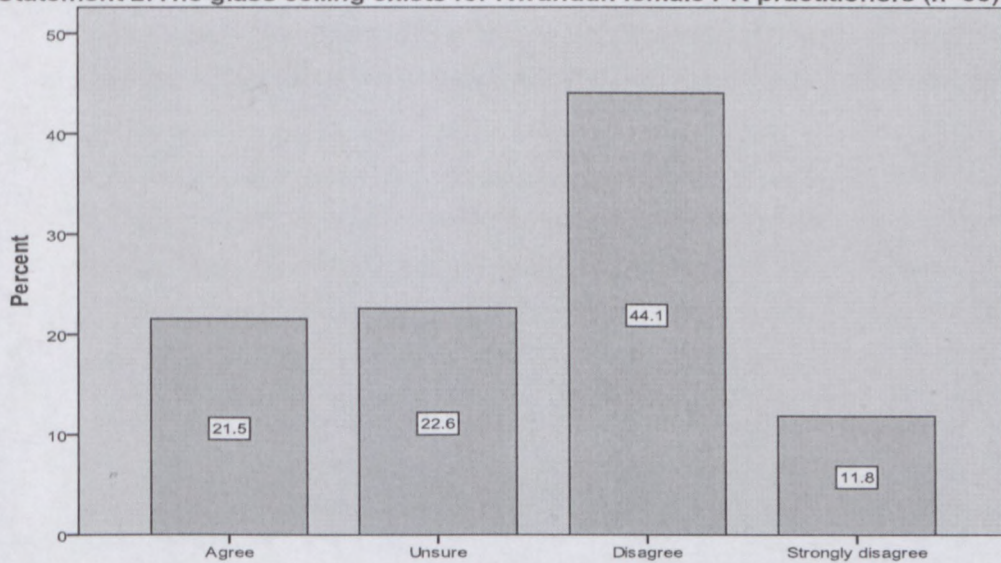


Figure 5.12 Respondents' opinions regarding the existence of glass ceiling

Respondents were asked if glass ceiling exist for Rwandan female public relations practitioners and the majority of respondents, 55.9 percent, denied that glass ceiling exists in Rwandan public relations practice while 21.6 percent agreed that it is present and 22.6 percent neither denied nor agreed with the statement.

**Statement 3: Balance between work and family responsibilities for female public relations practitioners should be taken into consideration by the company's culture (n=93)**

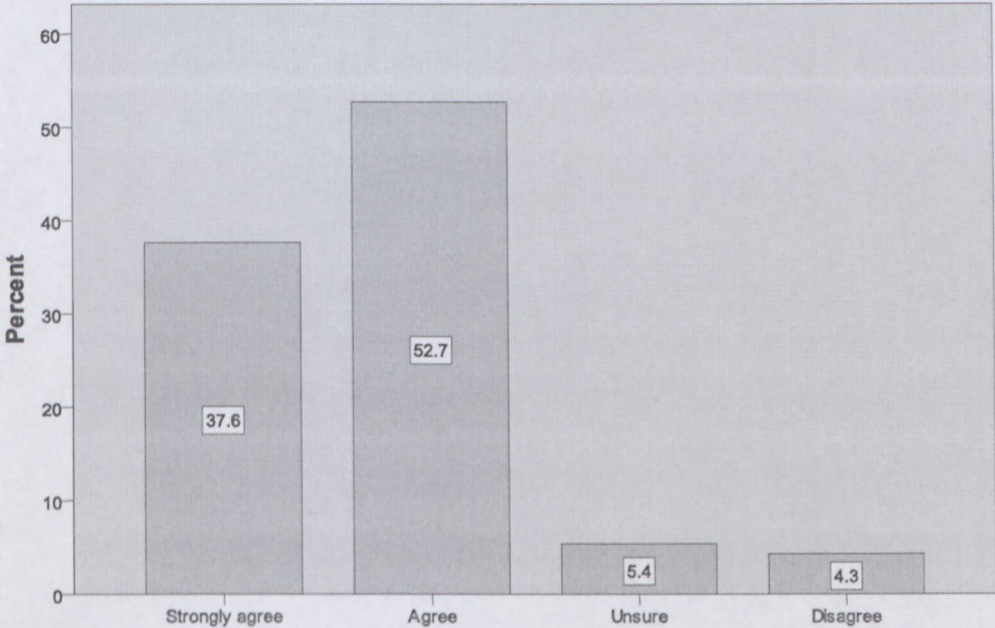


Figure 5.13. Respondents' opinions about consideration of balance between work & family by management

This statement sought to explore whether managers are willing to take into consideration the many responsibilities attached to female working mothers, while formulating company policies. The results showed that 37.6 percent of the respondents strongly agree that organisational culture should consider the various roles of the female professional. A further 52.7 percent of the respondents supported the statement while only 4.3 percent deemed it unnecessary to support working females through the company's culture. The results indicate that the highest number of respondents, which constitute 90.3 percent, support the idea.

**Statement 4: Female public relations practitioners are paid a comparable salary to their male counterparts for doing the same work in your institution/department. (n=93)**

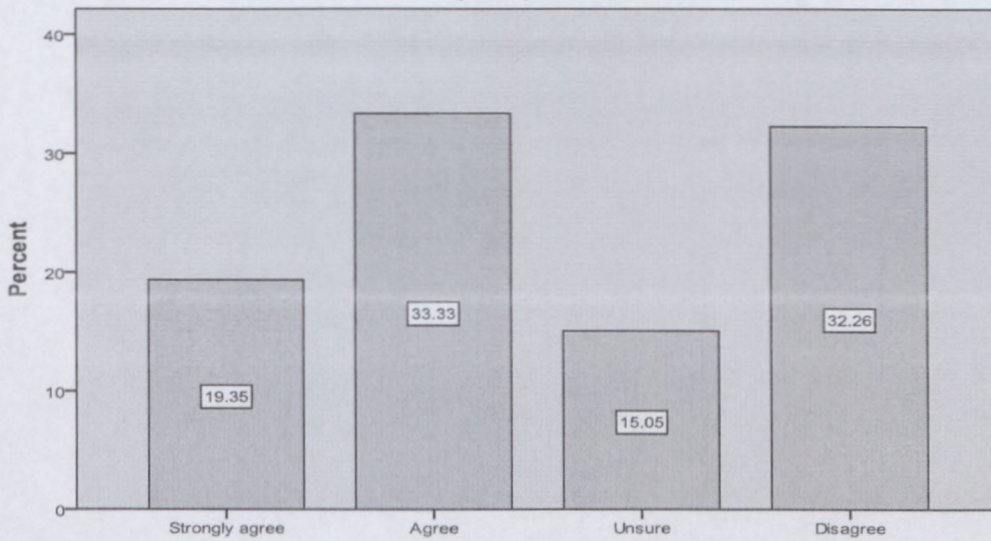


Figure 5.14 Respondents' opinions about salary gap

Respondents indicated that females practitioners are being paid as the same their male counterparts as 19.4 percent strongly agreed with the statement while 33.3 percent simply agreed. However the number of respondents who indicated that there is a discrepancy in salary between males and females cannot be ignored as it is a significant 32.3 percent. Moreover 15 percent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the existence of pay gap between males and females.

**Statement 5: Men dominate positions of power in Rwandan public relations practice. (n=93)**

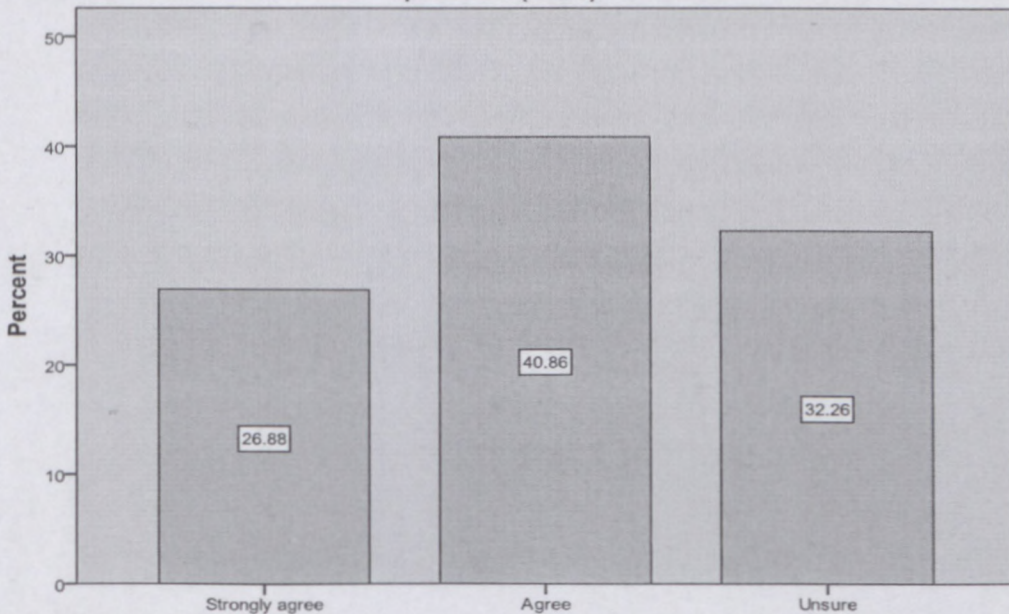


Figure 5.15 Respondents' opinions about gender managerial gap

The results indicate that mostly males are found in managerial positions in Rwandan public relations compared females. The results further show that 26.8 percent of the respondents strongly agree that men dominate positions of power in Rwandan public relations while 40.8 percent simply agree with the statement. None of the respondents disagreed with the statement and a total of 67.6 percent of the respondents agree with the statement.

**Statement 6: Women are more likely to be found in technician roles rather than managerial roles in Rwandan public relations practice. (n=93)**

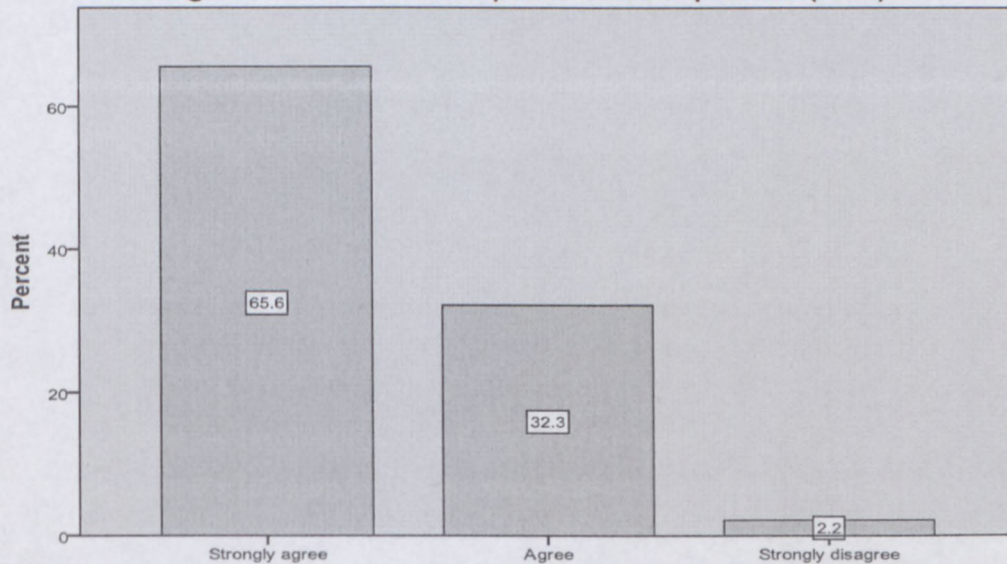


Figure 5.16 Respondents' opinions regarding the position of women in PR (Manager vs Technician)

Based on the findings discussed earlier in Tables 5.29; 5.30; 5.34 and 5.35, the information in Figure 5.16 presents concluding evidence of what happens in the industry regarding the position of women. The results show that 65.6 percent of respondents strongly agree that women are found in technician positions rather than managerial roles in Rwandan public relations. Furthermore, 32.3 percent agrees with the statement, which constitutes a majority of 97.9 percent who are in agreement with the statement. Only 2.2 percent disagree with the statement regarding the position of women in Rwandan public relations industry. According to Aldoory & Toth (2002:112) this information is true not only in Rwandan public relations but also elsewhere in the public relations practice worldwide. This emphasise that the position or professional status of women in the public relations industry is at the lower level compared to men, in the organisation worldwide.

**Statement 7. Education and on-job training opportunities are equally offered to both males and females to help females reach managerial positions in public relations practice in Rwanda. (n=93)**

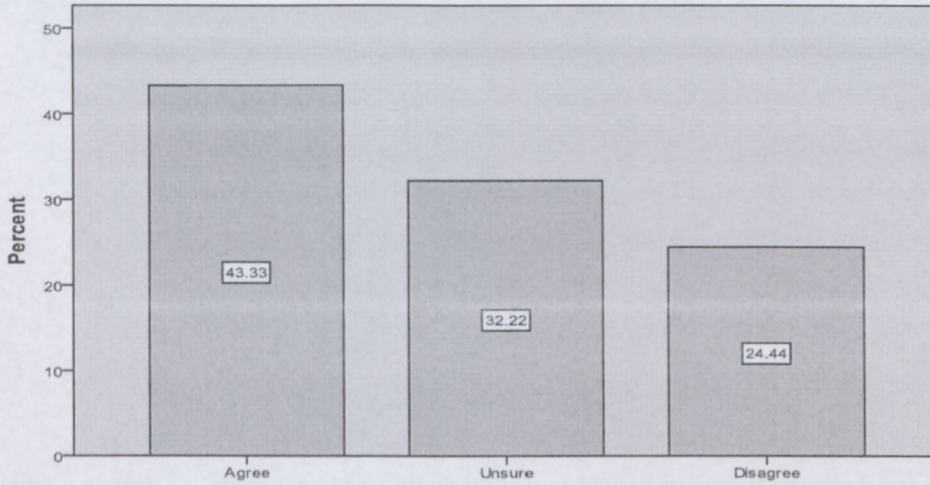


Figure 5.17 Respondents' opinions about on job training and gender

The results in Statement 7 indicate that females are offered possible support to help them move up the corporate ladder, it shows they don't get there even when they are highly qualified (see Figure 5.16). It was found that 43.3 percent of the respondents agree that education and on the job training opportunities help females to move up the corporate ladder, whereas 24.4 percent disagreed and 32.2 percent were unsure about the statement. The options strongly agree and strongly disagree were not chosen by respondents in this statement.

**Statement 8: Women and men are equally respected in Rwandan public relations practice especially in your institution. (n=93)**

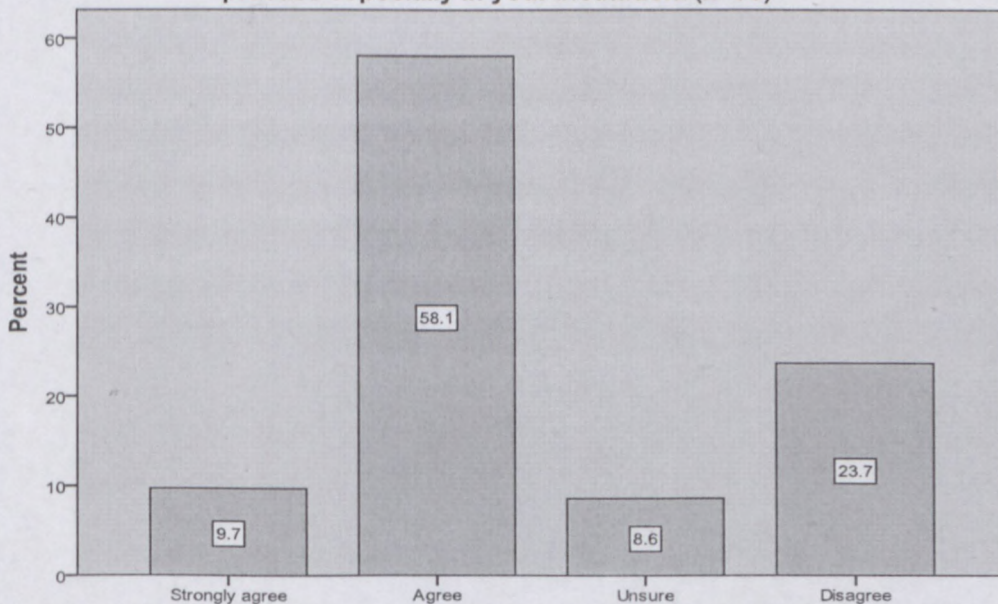


Figure 5.18 Respondents' opinions about respect vs gender

More than a half of the respondents, 58 percent, agreed that men and women are equally respected in Rwandan public relations practice. This statement compares to the literature reviewed in chapter three; Rwanda has taken a considerable step in empowering women as Rwanda is in top global ranking countries for female legislative representation. In the 2008 election, women earned 56 percent of seats in the parliament (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:6). However, there is 23.7 percent who disagreed with the statement which could be an indicator that the legacies of an imbalance in gender roles in the Rwandan culture are still evident to some extent.

**Gender discrimination doesn't exist in Rwandan public relations practice (n=93).**

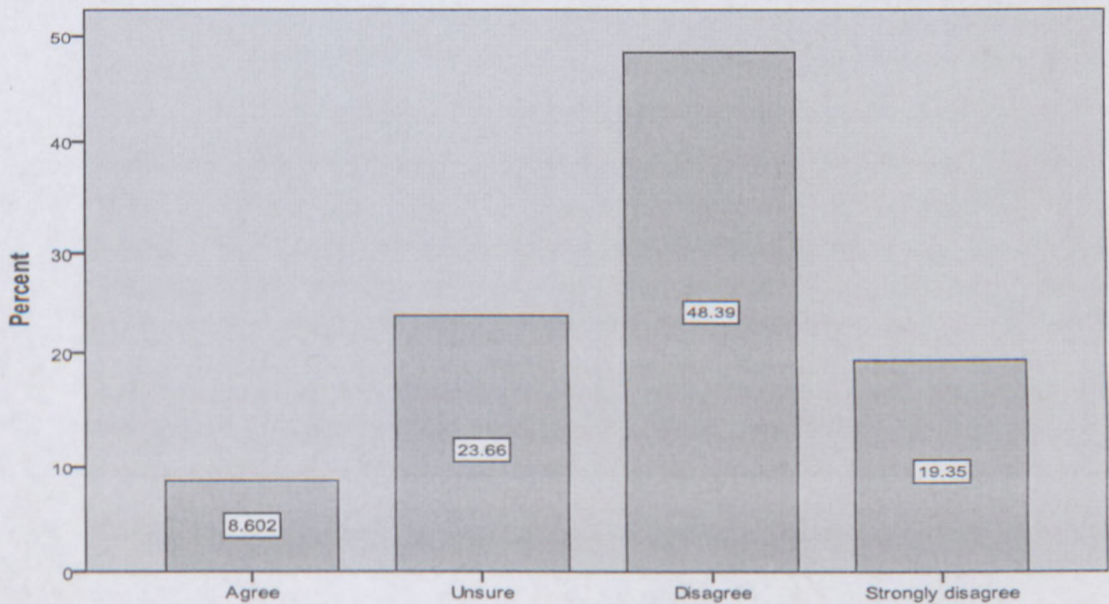


Figure 5.19 Respondents' opinions regarding gender discrimination

The results show that gender discrimination still exist in Rwandan public relations practice as the majority (48.4 percent) of the respondents have indicated this. In addition, 19.3 percent respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that gender discrimination does not exist. This statement is clarified in more detail when the number of respondents who agree that it exists was combined; this resulted into a majority of 67.7 percent. A total of 23.7 percent are not sure if gender discrimination exists or not, a minority of only 8.6 percent indicated that it does not exist in Rwandan public relations practice.

**Statement 10: Female public relations practitioners deserve more recognition from their supervisors than their male counterparts due to conflicting responsibilities of work and family commitments. (n=93)**



Figure 5.20 Respondents' opinions about support towards a working mother

The responses indicate that respondents are in support of this statement. Results show that 33.3 percent of the respondents strongly agree and 54.8 percent agree that females deserve special recognition from their managers as they have more responsibilities compared to those of their male colleagues. A minority of only 9.7 percent disagreed with the statement. According to Uwineza & Pearson (2009:5) the deep respect for motherhood in pre-colonial Rwanda protected and promoted women and the results of Figure 5.20 show that such respect still exist to some extent.

**Statement 11: Female public relations practitioners are more likely to be promoted in your department than their male counterparts (n=93)**

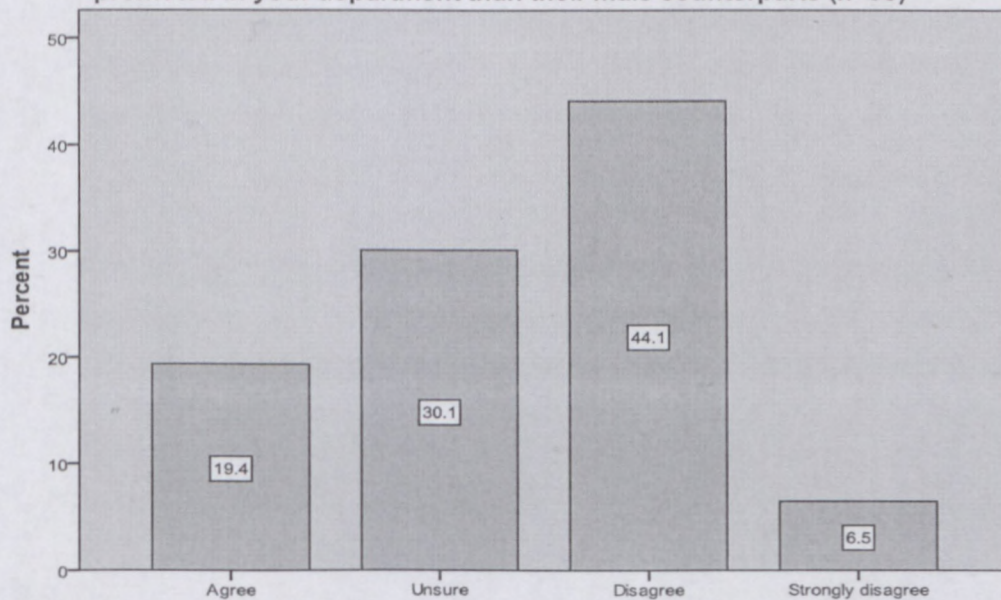


Figure 5.21 Respondents' opinions regarding promotion and gender

Promotion of women in public relations has been found problematic as 44 percent of the respondents agreed that they would not promote females instead of males and disagreed with the statement. The results further indicate that 30 percent of respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Only 19.4 percent of respondents agree that women are likely to be promoted more than men in Rwandan public relations practice.

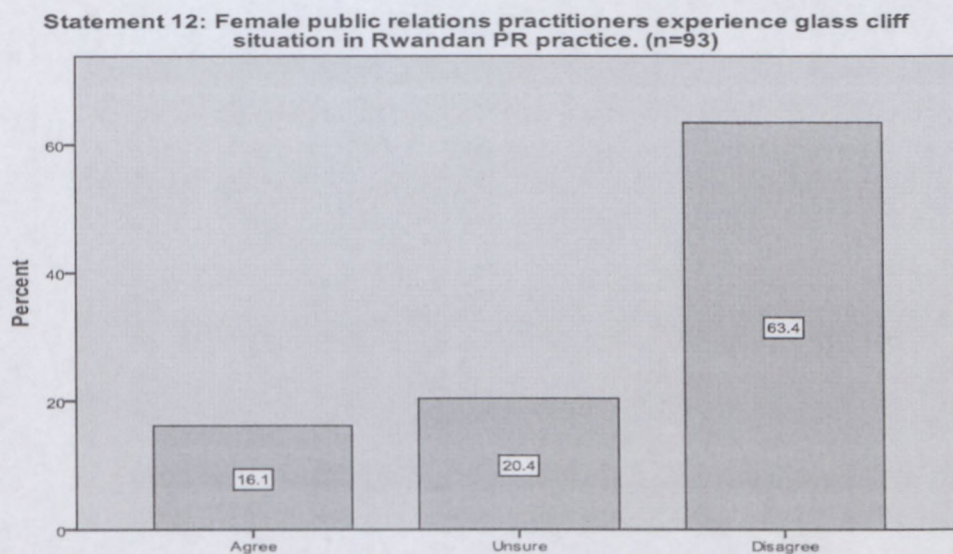


Figure 5.22 Respondents' opinions about the existence of glass cliff against females practitioners

As discussed in chapter one, glass cliff is a situation whereby someone has been promoted into a risky, difficult job where the chances of failure are higher (Connolly, 2004). It is more likely to happen just to show the world that women are also promoted but not everybody can see the motive behind. In Figure 5.22 respondents have indicated that it is not the case in the Rwandan public relations industry. The results indicate that 63.4 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that glass cliff exists in Rwanda, compared to 16 percent who agree to the existence of glass cliff. The results further show that 20.4 percent respondents were not sure about the statement.

**Statement 13: Top management view male public relations practitioners as better qualified to be promoted to top positions than female practitioners in your institution. (n=93)**

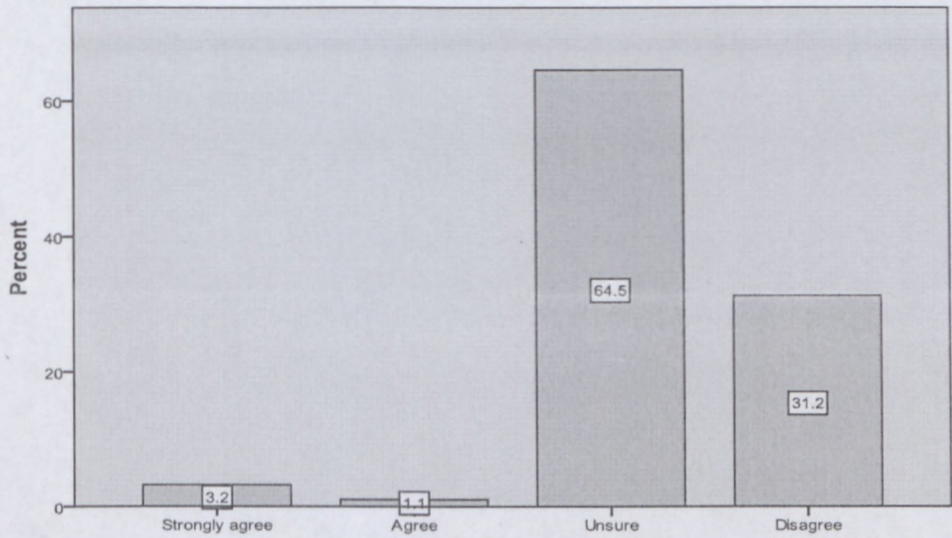


Figure 5.23 Managers' views regarding who to promote

The majority of respondents, which constitute 64.5 percent, are not sure about the statement whereas 31.2 percent disagree with the statement. This, however, does not mean that females have green lights when it comes to promotion as 3.2 percent and 1 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that males are viewed as best qualified for any promotion. The 64.5 percentage of neutral respondents indicate that there is a low number of respondents who agree or disagree.

**Statement 14: Female PR practitioners receive more encouragement than their male counterparts from their seniors to undertake training in your organisation/department. (n=93)**

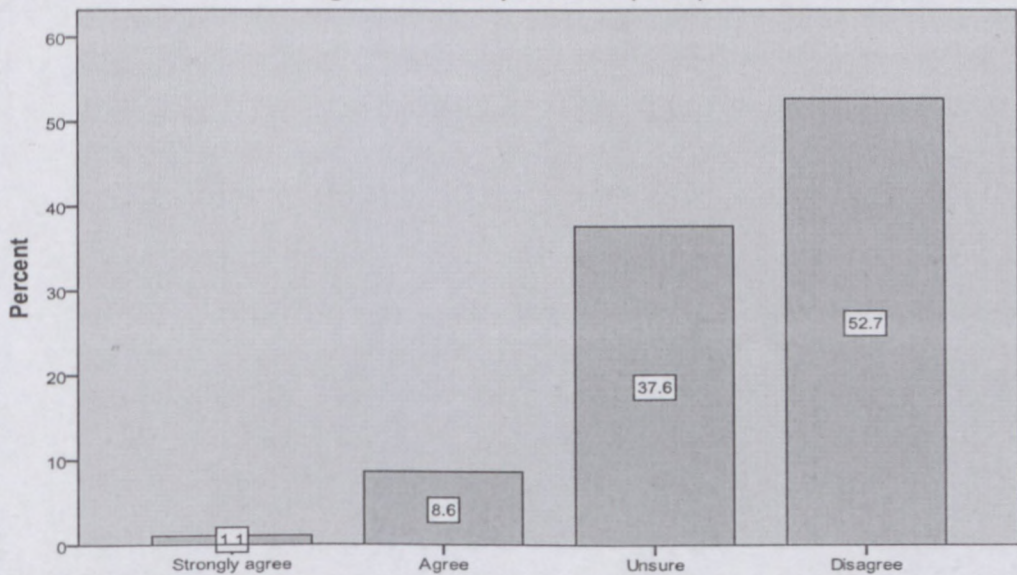


Figure 5.24 Respondents' opinions about encouragement to female practitioners

The results indicate that more than a half of the respondents, 52.7 percent, see no need for females particularly to take up training as this is clearly expressed by this study. In addition, 37.6 percent are neutral about the statement, while the lowest percentages of 8.6 percent agree and 1 percent strongly agrees with the statement.

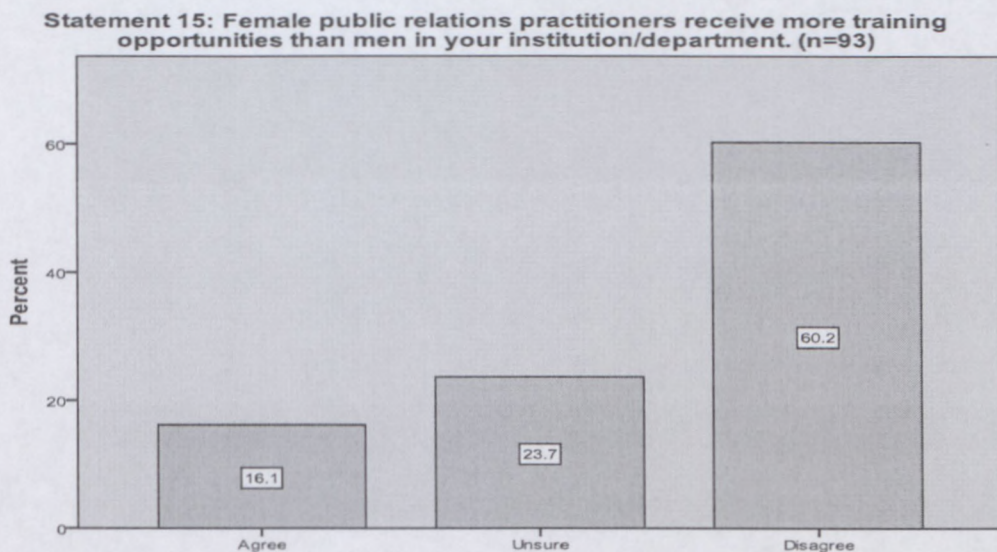


Figure 5.25 Respondents' opinions about training opportunities

A majority of 60.2 percent of the respondents disagreed that females receive more training opportunities compared to male employees. The results show that a low 16.1 percent of respondents agree with the statement. Twenty seven point seven (23.7) percent of respondents are not decided about the statement.

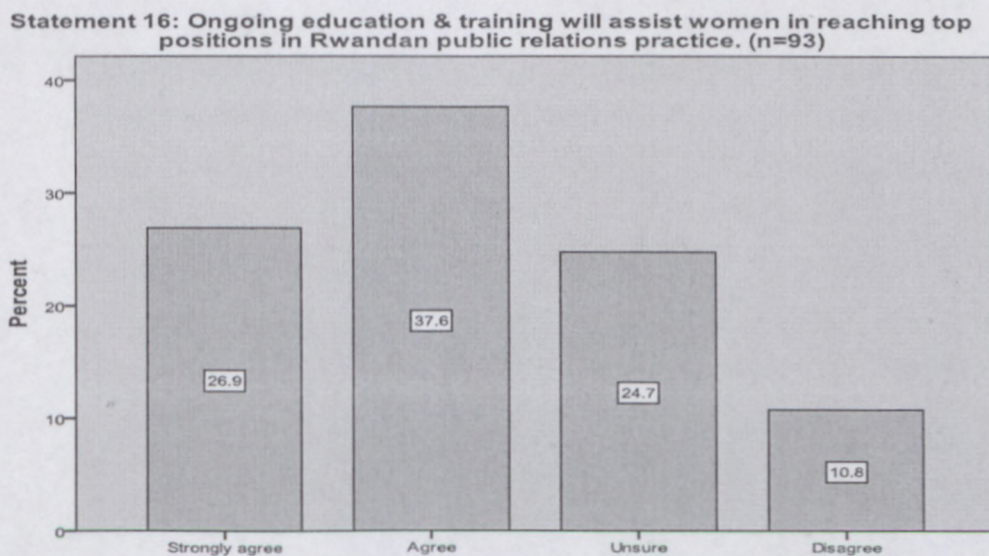


Figure 5.26 Respondents' opinions about education, training and women advancement into management

The results indicate that the majority of responses constitute to 64.5 percent who agree that education and training in public relations can assist women in reaching managerial positions. The results are comprised of 37.6 percent of the respondents who agree and 26.9 percent who strongly agree to the statement. Only 10.8 percent were undecided.

**Statement 17: Female PR practitioners show the same degree of professionalism as their male counterparts in your institution/department. (n=93)**

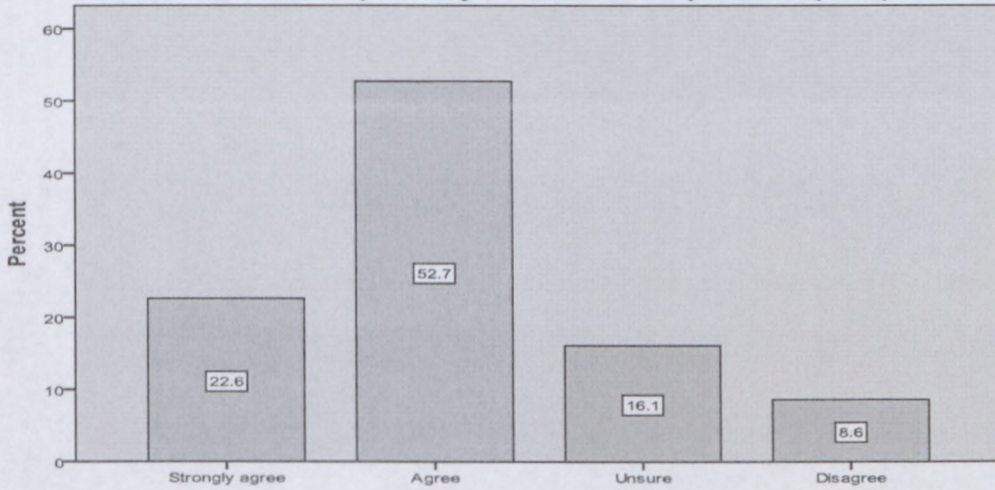


Figure 5.27 Respondents' opinions regarding the degree of professionalism and female practitioners

According to Figure 5.27, the majority of respondents, 52.7 percent, indicate that female public relations practitioners show the same degree of professionalism as their male colleagues. A total of 22.6 percent strongly agree with the statement. With managers being the target respondents in this study, it becomes even simpler to report about the skills of their employees as the latter report to management. However, 8.8 percent indicated that they do not agree with the statement while 16.1 percent were neutral.

**Statement 18: Sexual harassment still exist in Rwandan work places(n=93)**

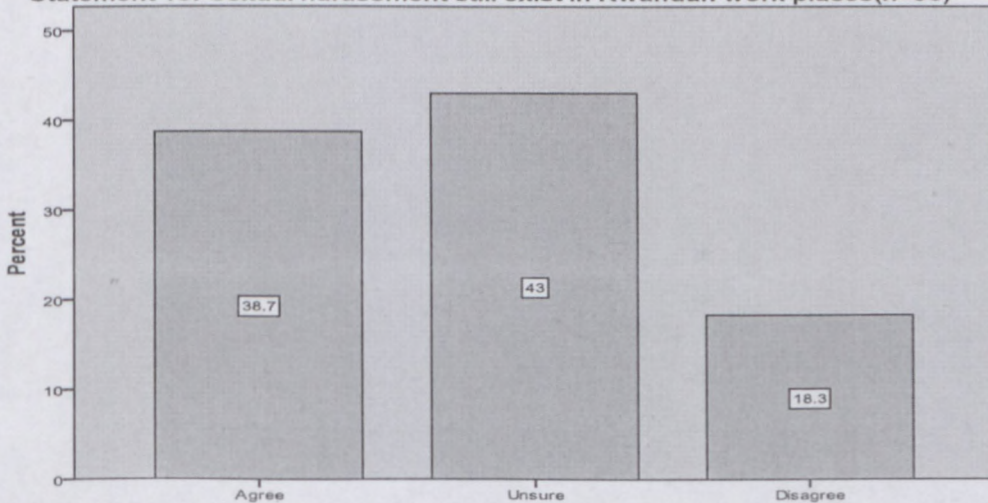


Figure 5.28 Respondents' opinions regarding the existence of sexual harassment

In this Statement, respondents were required to express the extent of their opinions regarding the existence of sexual harassment in Rwandan public relations practice. None of the respondents strongly agreed or disagreed with the statement but the number of respondents who simply agreed that sexual harassment exists is significant. The results show that 38.7 percent agreed with the statement while 18.3 percent disagreed. However, the highest number of respondents, 43 percent, were undecided about the statement.

**Statement 19: Programmes like part-time work option, telecommuting, job-sharing to help female practitioners balance work and family responsibilities are embedded in your institutional culture. (n=93)**

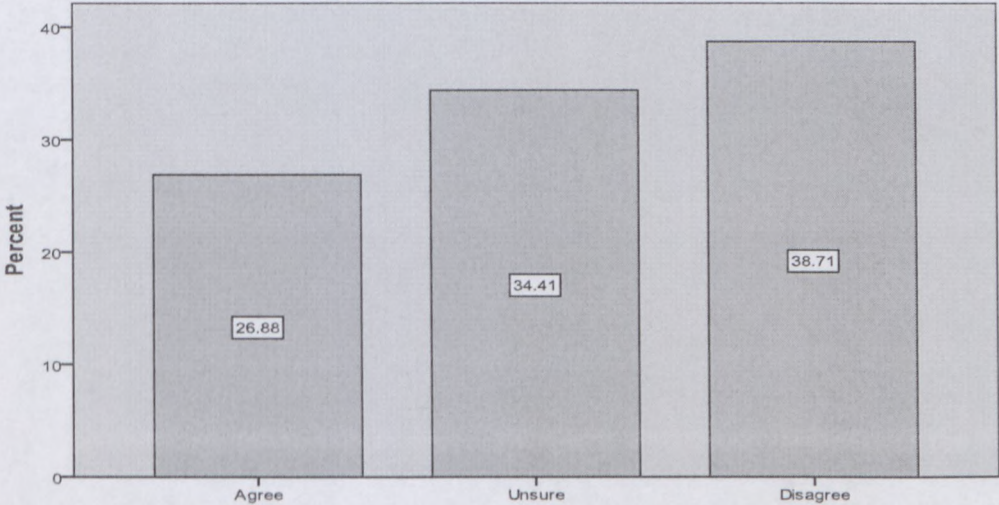


Figure 5.29 Respondents' opinions about the existence of family friendly policies in the organisation

According to Brief & Weiss (2002:280) family friendly policies and practices in any organisation are important to both employers and employees as they contribute to employees' productivity and gives management time to focus on other more important things than just supervising their staff. The results in Figure 5.29 show that most organisations, 38.7 percent (36) does not agree with the idea of embedding such practices in the organisation's rules, regulations and values. A total of 34.4 percent of the respondents were not sure about the use of such practices while only 26.9 percent agreed with the statement.

**Statement 20: Female public relations practitioners are able to balance work and family responsibilities more efficiently than their male counterparts. (n=93)**

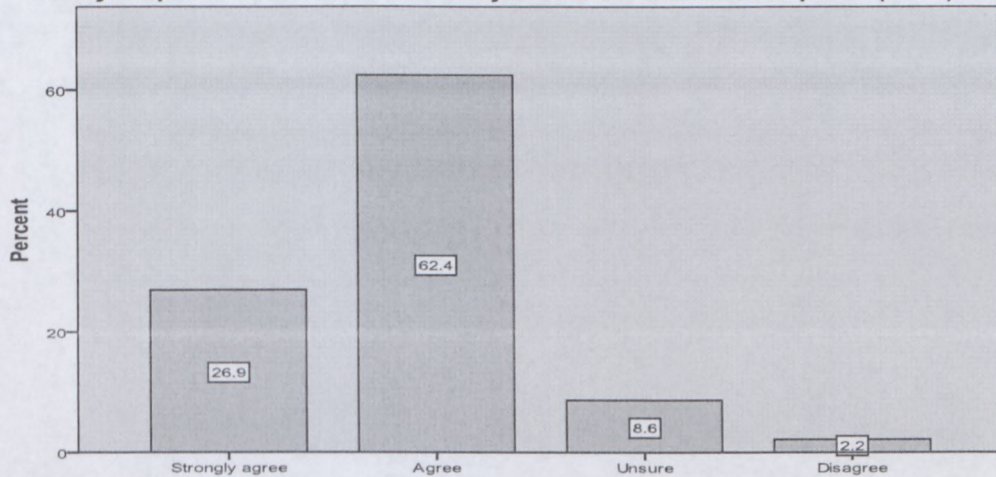


Figure 5.30 Respondents' opinions about efficiency in balancing work & family vs. gender

Being able to balance work and family responsibilities is a challenging task which requires time management skills and other innate skills (Haslett, Geis & Carter, 1992:29). It is believed that women are good at that even better than men as the results in Figure 5.30 confirm this notion. The total majority of respondents are in agreement with the Statement. This result is comprised of 62.4 percent who strongly agree and 26.9 percent who agree. A minority of 2.2 percent disagreed while 8.8 percent of respondents are unsure about the statement.

**Statement 21: Female public relations practitioners are as satisfied with their pay as their male counterparts in your institution/department. (n=93)**

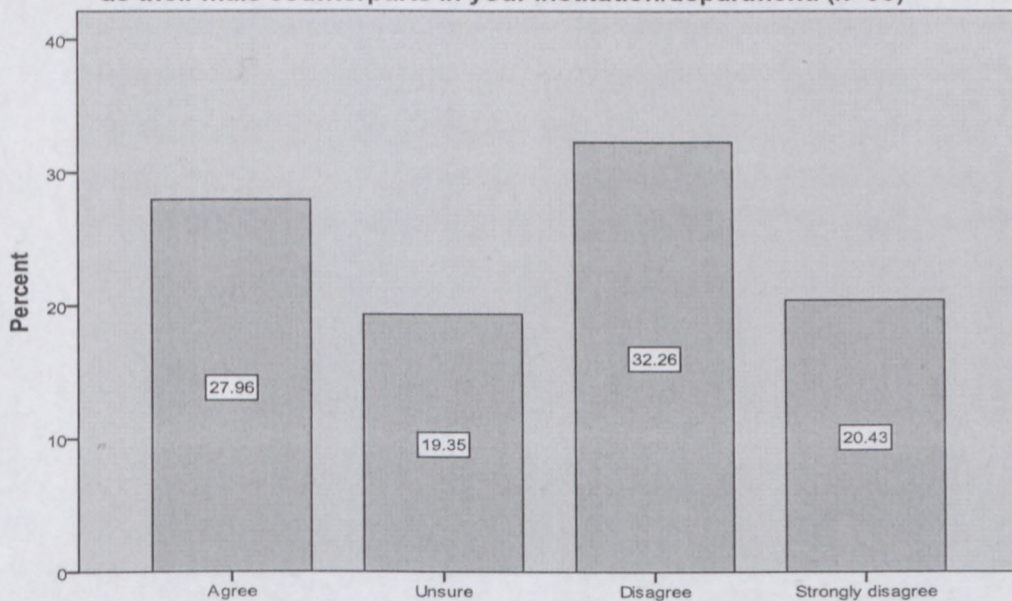


Figure 5.31 Respondents' opinions about pay satisfaction and gender

Salary gap in public relations is a debatable issue. The results in Figure 5.31 show and confirm this issue, as 32.2 percent and 20.4 percent of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the statement that female practitioners are as satisfied with their pay as their male counterparts. A total of 27.9 percent agree that females are as satisfied with their pay as their male colleagues and 19.3 percent were unsure about this statement.

**Statement 22: The gender stereotypes of seeing a woman as "a child, mother or sex object" exist in Rwandan Public Relations practice. (n=93)**

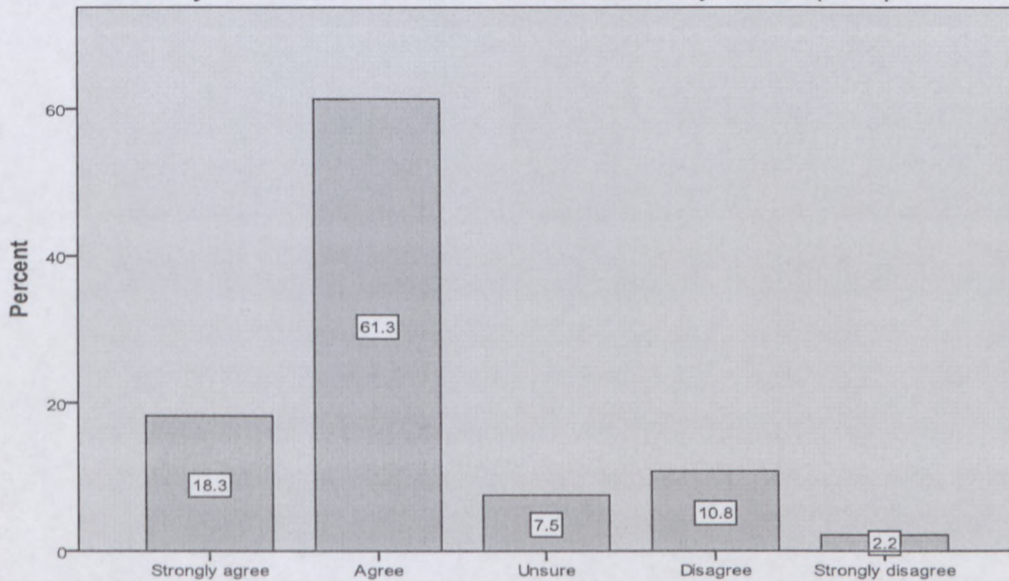


Figure 5.32 Respondents' opinions about the existence of gender stereotypes

Gender roles in traditional Rwanda were structured around a domestic division of labour that allowed women considerable independence in their roles, as child bearers and food producers, and this determined their status (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:8). According to Uwineza & Pearson (2009:10) Rwandan culture placed great importance on marriage, as married women were no longer permitted to act as girls like climbing trees, milking cows, in order to gain special respect in society. Even though some Rwandan cultural practices recognised and respected women, others subordinated them within a patriarchal system of authority which is considered to be the root of some gender stereotypes like seeing a woman as "a mother". The results in Figure 5.32 confirm that such gender stereotypes still exist, as 61.3 percent of the respondents agree to this. The majority of respondents, 79.6 percent, agreed that gender stereotypes exist in Rwandan public relations practice. Only 13 percent disagreed with the statement.

### 5.3.4. A discussion of additional notes & comments from respondents.

In an attempt to obtain some in-depth perceptions from the respondents, the researcher provided an opportunity for additional comments on the questionnaire. The respondents could express their views on what they deemed important to be noted in this study. Though, the majority of respondents, 82.8 percent did not contribute comments, some information was received from a few respondents. The analysis of the comments aided the researcher in understanding the perceptions some managers have of their female employees in the Rwandan public relations industry. A total of 17.2 percent of respondents have expressed comments and Table 5.60 provides a summary of these.

**Table 5.28 Additional notes & comments from respondents (n=93)**

Ref	Comments	Frequencies
1	Females deal with a lot of issues both at home and at work and they should be supported by both the employer and the husband.	1
2	Part time work option, telecommuting, job sharing to help female practitioners balance work and family responsibilities should be emphasised in any organisation.	1
3	Promotion in my company is based on merit not someone's gender	1
4	There is no need to compete with men rather we must complement and respect each other	1
5	Times have changed and so should the culture, in our country many women head their families because of the wars & genocide hence women should be respected and empowered to survive in the current times.	1
6	I don't mind getting paid less than my male colleague because our culture says that a man is the head of the family and nobody can change that.	1
7	After having a baby some women feel like nothing else matters even their jobs hence I cannot take that risk to let females manage my company unless they are co-managers which doubles my expenses	4
8	Females don't like many responsibilities at work, they don't like to be leaders due to cultural reasons they would rather perform much at home.	1
9	Females take advantage of affirmative action and do not work hard which leads to their poverty vulnerabilities.	1
10	Being in possession of high qualifications doesn't help as long as you are a woman, you only get promoted if you can handle pressure better than a man otherwise men are always the best candidates for higher positions	1
11	Women are good for office administration work like filing, writing and handling phone calls, so they should be placed in those positions and get paid a good salary.	1
12	women are more committed to housework and family more than anything else	1
13	Women underestimate themselves and there is nothing to do for them if they are not willing to take the first step to prove their abilities.	1

With reference to comment 8,9 and 13, respondents were accusing women of not taking responsibilities even when given the opportunity (refer to comment 8, 9 and 13). Other comments were about women themselves who feel like they will always be regarded as minors, as the Rwandan indigenous culture emphasises that women must be 100 percent

involved in childrearing and food preparation. This includes the cleanliness of their homes (refer to comment 12). Comments emphasise that women should not be involved in office work and if this should happen, they should be involved in office management tasks like writing messages, handling calls rather than managerial roles (refer to comments 7 and 11). The results show that only 29.4 percent of the comments (1 to 5) were supporting women in terms of appropriate training and skills development. In order to meet the current demanding times whereby women have become heads of their families, especially in Rwanda after war and genocide, women need to be equipped with the right skills to take on original men's responsibilities (ADB, 2008:3).

#### **5.4. Summary**

This chapter presented and analysed the results from the questionnaire of this study. The emphasis of this chapter has been on presenting the data gathered through respondents' answers leading towards possible solutions. Specifically, the chapter provided details pertaining to the research questions regarding the professional status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners in public as well as private institutions. The data has been presented in a way to assist the researcher to achieve the objectives of this study as stated in chapter one. The results were presented in four major parts; demographic characteristics, questions relating to the tasks carried out by respondents, statements regarding promotion, salary and status of females in the profession and finally open additional notes and comments from respondents. The data gathered from this study provides valuable information and insight into the holistic public relations industry including the Rwandan public relations industry. Chapter six provided an in-depth discussion of the data, recommendations, study limitations, proposed further research areas and conclusions thereof.

## **CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this study, the main findings were reported in chapter five. This final chapter concludes the study through discussion of the findings and presentation of the recommendations for the research. The findings are discussed according to the research questions and objectives as documented in chapter one of the study, the literature reviewed in chapter two and three as well as the findings presented in chapter five. A discussion of the recommendations follows which leads to the conclusions of this study. Finally, the chapter discusses limitations of the research, as well as further areas for future research and the chapter ends with a general summary of the study.

### **6.2 Discussion of findings**

This section identifies the main findings of the study; it also presents a link between the current findings and those of the related studies. The study used online survey of questionnaires as the method of capturing data. According to Zikmund (2000:66) survey is the most common method of generating primary data especially for a research without much previous literature. The overall response rate of email respondents was 38 percent, taking into consideration of the embryonic stage of the public relations industry in Rwanda. Despite the embryonic stage of Rwandan public relations industry, Booyesen (2003:129) explained that in general email surveys generate low response rate. The data collected were analysed according to the research methodology presented in chapter four and findings sought to address the questions mentioned in the previous sub-section. In addition to the questions, the researcher wanted to gain more insight in what is happening in the Rwandan public relations industry as it is still considered new. Hence, the researcher sought to satisfy the curiosity, gain better understanding, and test the feasibility of undertaking a more broad study in the same industry and to pave the way for other researchers who are interested in similar studies.

#### **6.2.1 Findings relating to respondents' demographic information**

The majority of respondents in this study were male which constituted 66.7 percent compared to 33.3 percent females. The majority of the respondents were aged between 41 and 50 years (57 percent). This does not correspond to other current studies though; which assert that in public relations females constitute more than 70 percent of professionals worldwide (Cameron *et al.* 2008:76; Aldoory & Toth, 2002:124; Toth & Hon, 2001; Chafe, 1972:533). However, this study was targeting public relations or communication managers,

as Wilcox & Cameron (2006:35); Holton, (2000:151); Stone & McKee (2000:67) revealed in their studies females are mostly employed in technical positions rather than managerial ones, hence a small number of female participants in this study. Additionally, regarding the age group issue, it was found out that most practitioners were aged over 40 years. The reason for this is that most of people who are currently working in the industry had their qualifications in other disciplines rather than public relations and were trained in the public relations field to provide the services and with experience they are considered as the pioneers in the industry. It was also found that none of the Rwandan universities currently offer public relations degrees and this hinders the profession's development.

The majority of respondents, 56 percent, were married followed by widowed respondents which constitute 21.5 percent. Both cases correspond to the Rwandan History and indigenous culture whereby married people are given more respect in the society (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009:6). In addition, it is not strange that the majority of respondents are married, as the age group that most of them fall in is 41 to 50 which is appropriate for their status. Concerning widowers, Rwanda has gone through a lot of wars and massacres which finally lead to 1994 Genocide, whereby most of men were killed, jailed or fled the country and females had to take over from most of male duties.

The respondents in this research fall in two categories as the researcher targeted public and private institutions. It was found that most respondents, 55.9 percent, were from public institutions while the rest was from private. The findings show that 74.3 percent of the respondents had a tertiary education, which can lead to the conclusion that the respondents who participated in this research were educated, the majority of respondents, 88.2 percent, had an undergraduate qualification (Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor degree). The higher the qualification, the fewer the respondents especially for females, as none of female respondents had a Masters degree.

### **6.2.2. The extent of existence of glass ceiling problem against female public relations practitioners within the Rwandan public relations practice**

According to Jamali *et al.* (2005:587) the glass ceiling is the limitation which is not directly apparent and usually an unwritten and unofficial policy that prevents women and minorities from advancing in various careers. To some degree, it is hidden behind socio cultural practices whereby the role of women in a given society is just being mothers and home carers (Jamali *et al.* 2005:587). According to the results of this study, even though the respondents clearly indicated that glass ceiling does not exist in Rwandan public relations practice (55.9 percent), it is still debatable as to why there are still a few females in managerial positions. The research has indicated that only few females respondents had postgraduate

degree (6.4 percent of female respondents), most female respondents were married (64.5 percent of female respondents). Based on these findings, some factors lead to the underrepresentation of women in management positions in the Rwandan case. A total of 61 respondents indicated that gender discrimination in public relations exist to some extent and might be hindering females from reaching top positions in the industry.

Furthermore, based on the statistics of females in managerial positions (female respondents in this study) across both types of institutions, it is evident that glass ceiling exists. The results indicated that out of 93 respondents, only 31 were females (see Figure 5.2) which is different from other public relations studies carried out elsewhere confirming that the industry is being feminised (Toth & Aldoory, 2001).

According to international labour organisation quoted by Business Women's Network (2003), women make up a considerable percentage (40 percent) of labour force worldwide, but those in managerial positions do not even reach 20 percent. Considering the views of respondents in this study on the issue regarding promoting a deserving female despite all the conflicting responsibilities of women in general, it is clear that glass ceiling against women in the industry still prevails as most of the respondents pointed it out (see Figure 5.21).

### **6.2.3. The contribution of education towards female promotion in management positions in Rwandan public relations practice**

According to Coates (1998) women's education plays an important role in determining who they become in terms of leadership. Employers are nowadays more concerned with their employees' qualification to determine who is climbing to the top. However, according to Eagar (1996:33) women may be interested in furthering their education but funding is becoming an issue even though some organisations offer paid education as part of the employment parcel. With this, organisations' cultures need to provide all the support to employees to encourage the latter to continue learning.

Most of the female respondents in this study (80 percent) had an undergraduate qualification. This is a very critical condition because one might say that it is the reason why they are not highly presented in management positions. Even though the government of Rwanda is doing its best to make women equal participants towards the country's development through women's empowerment, the majority of respondents (44 percent) did not agree with this, as they indicated that they would rather promote men instead of women. Through their additional comments, respondents indicated that women mostly care about their families than their careers and this would harm the business unless they are co-managers which in turn increase expenses to the company.

On the other hand, however, education and ongoing training were deemed vital to female practitioners by respondents to be playing role in females' well being. A total of 64.5 percent of the respondents emphasised that females must earn their respects and well being through education as they (females) portray the same degree of professionalism with males in the industry, if educated (see Figure 5.27).

#### **6.2.4. Are female practitioners receiving the same quantity of status, power and respect as their male counterparts?**

Even though female respondents in this study proved to be less qualified than men, some of them hold the same positions as their male colleagues but do not get the same pay. All female respondents are found in the income range of Rwf 200 001 and 400 000 while nine male respondents earn over Rwf 400 000 with six of them having the same position as females. This is one point which proves that female practitioners are not treated the same as their male colleagues in the industry.

Concerning the pay gap issue, Toth & Grunig's (1993:68) study confirms that women are being paid less for doing the same job or even more compared to their male counterparts in public relations industry. Moreover, female practitioners are doing it all which is, executing both technical and managerial functions for less pay than their male counterparts. The findings of the present study are a conclusion of these authors' findings. It was found that 52.6 percent (49 out of 93) respondents do not agree with the statement which says that female practitioners are equally satisfied with their pay as their male colleagues. Furthermore, 44 percent of respondents (managers) do not believe in promoting women in their institutions (see Figure 5.21). This implies that managers do not value male and female employees the same, due to some reasons like those mentioned in the comments that respondents identified in the questionnaire. Some of them emphasised that after having a family, females' career do not matter anymore and females were accused that they don't like to be leaders and that they always underestimate themselves.

Another important finding is that men occupy most of the higher positions in Rwandan public relations practice. A total of 67.6 percent (63 out of 93) respondents agreed to this statement and none of the respondents (managers) disagreed. These findings are concluded by the other one relating to the existence of gender discrimination in the practice identified by Davidson & Cooper (1992). These authors confirmed that there is still a pay gap between men and women in the industry (Davidson & Cooper, 1992:6). The authors revealed that this pay gap is due to various reasons including:

- Gender stereotype
- Job segregation,

- Inappropriate vocational guidance and training,
- Poor union support,
- Fragile legislation,
- Household and work conflicts,
- Discriminating practices within organisation's culture
- Poor child care provisions to working mothers

In this study, the majority of respondents, 65.6 percent agreed that gender discrimination do exist in Rwandan public relations practice. It is identified that where gender discrimination exists in the workplace, it is in favour of one gender at the expense of the other and as such there is no assumption that both males and females are treated the same in the workplace.

### **6.2.5 How does Rwandan institutional culture assist female practitioners to balance work and family responsibilities?**

Institutional culture need to address the issues relating to the diversity in the workplace which has both negative and positive effects to the institution depending on the way it is managed (Grimes & Richard 2003:8). The institution can benefit from new perspectives, increased creativity in case diversity is well managed and an increased conflict, as well as shrink in effectiveness in case it is not. In order to manage issues relating to diversity, the company must take into consideration family commitment of its employees. The results of this study indicate that female practitioners in Rwandan public relations industry do it all as Toth & Grunig's (1993:68) discussed it in their study. Despite being in management positions, all female respondents carry out technical tasks (see Table 5.27). It was also found that most of female respondents were married (family responsibility), in addition, taking into consideration the tasks mostly handled by public relations practitioners (see Table 5.27), it is clear that almost 100 percent of female respondents are actively involved in 11 activities while just over 50 percent of male respondents are involved in only 5 activities. On the other hand, when it comes to income, males are more represented in higher income range than females.

Based on the above findings, one can conclude that Rwandan institutional culture does not take into consideration the hardships of a working mother, the majority of respondents (90.3 percent) recommended that balance between work and family responsibilities especially for working mothers should be considered when company rules and regulations are produced. This statement is also supported by the fact that 67.7 percent respondents indicated that women and men are equally respected in the Rwandan public relations practice.

Furthermore, 49 respondents (managers) disagreed with instituting family friendly policies, like encouraging mostly female employees than males to undertake more training in the

organisation, in order to improve on their jobs input and promotion opportunities. This was emphasised by 60.2 percent of respondents who disagreed with the statement that female employees receive more training opportunities than men in the respondents' institutions. It was found that family friendly policies which help females balance work and family responsibilities like part-time option, telecommuting and the like, are only embedded in 25 respondents' institutions. Despite all that, female practitioners proved to be good at balancing work and family responsibilities more efficiently than men in the eyes of their managers, which might be the reason why the latter do not hurry to change company rules and regulations in favour of female employees. In a study carried out by Akande (1994) it was found that most of female employees are not happy with organisational structures, which do not support them with regard to their independence and self-esteem. In turn, employees' dissatisfaction brings about negative consequences on the company including the reduction of company's profitability and performance (Akande, 1994).

### **6.2.6 Gender stereotypes in Rwandan public relations industry**

As indicated in the literature of chapter 2 and 3, gender stereotype may harm the society in which it exists. The results of this study indicated that the highest majority of respondents (79.6 percent) believed that gender stereotype do exist in Rwandan public relations practice. According to the findings, Rwandan female practitioners are stereotyped as mother, sex object or a child. According to the literature reviewed, this situation limits women's ambitions to express their capabilities in the career (Wood, 2001:245; Jefremovas, 1991:382). As a result, women's percentage continues to be low across the public relations industry and their economic status continues to be vulnerable in general.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

- For Rwandan public relations industry to succeed in the long term, public relations education should be emphasised by local universities. This is vital, because the results of this study indicate that people who are currently working in the industry are hardly qualified in public relations and most of them are in the age group of 41 to 50. Taking into consideration of Rwandan life expectancy (57 years) the industry may suffer in the long term due to shortage of qualified personnel.
- The private sector is recommended to open up and invest in more public relations agencies as they will contribute to the enhancement of customer care in Rwandan companies.

- Day care facilities for children are of great help to working mothers to ease possible personal barrier regarding family responsibilities, which may hinder them from handling their work life efficiently.
- Public relations activities in the organisations should be appropriately planned, monitored and managed to ensure that they do not conflict with marketing, advertising and publicity as each of them has its specific functions within the organisation.

## 6.4 Conclusions

The findings reveal that the trend of feminisation in Rwandan public relations industry is not on the same pace as the one in the industry worldwide. Even though they are the minority in the industry, however, their professionalism was found to be incontestable by their direct managers across both types of institutions (see Figure 5.27). Furthermore, there is an understandable gap between men's and women's pay in the Rwandan public relations industry. In terms of responsibilities, there is no balance between technical and managerial tasks among both genders. Women practitioners are doing it all, which confirms with global findings that women are over represented in the technician role and underrepresented in the managerial one. This also confirms the existence of gender stereotype and discrimination as promotion of female professionals continues to be an issue in some organisations. According to the respondents, some Rwandan institutions appear to be lacking some supporting instruments towards female employees namely, on job training, child care facility and flexible work conditions. Furthermore, most of Rwandan females in the industry do not value education as a bridge to climb the corporate ladder, due to the legacies of indigenous culture which valued men more than women with reference to leadership, lack of funds and conflicting responsibilities. According to the research conducted by Basil (1972:78) the majority of respondents agreed that a man is a better investment for management training than a woman due to men's higher stability in the labour force than women. Through analysis of findings, it seems that a majority of respondents believe that female public relations practitioners are treated equally to their male counterparts in terms of power, responsibility, status, respect and promotion (see Figures 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.18, 5.27). It is apparent that public relations in Rwanda is still not known by many as the response rate was very low (38 percent). However this was expected since only 2.2 percent of respondents in this study hold qualifications in public relations.

## **6.5 Limitations of the study**

Finding information about Rwandan public industry was one of the biggest challenges in this study. The researcher had to rely on other studies conducted elsewhere, like USA, UK and Canada in order to understand the theories behind public relations development and practice. Nonetheless, it was one of the objectives of the study to pave way for future researchers through generation of a secondary source of information. To satisfy the researcher's curiosity about the unexploited study area, was also a motivating factor to the researcher. Furthermore, to find the right respondents was another limitation because many Rwandan institutions do not have public relations departments yet. The definition of sample frame also placed a limitation on this study, as many of the sample units did not have email addresses.

## **6.6 Further research areas**

Future studies are highly encouraged in the Rwandan public relations field. A development of a model that will enable men and women public relations practitioners to be treated equally is one of the critical subjects for further research. The researcher found that there are not enough academic studies done in this field despite the increasing importance of public relations in organisations.

Another area that future studies need to engage in is evaluating the implementation of gender promotion laws and its efforts in various organisations. Whether gender promotion laws are not only in theories, in some organisation it is still a subject of study.

## **6.7 Summary**

This study investigated the professional status of Rwandan female public relations practitioners in both public and private institutions and the manager's view was sought. The study used a structured questionnaire to obtain information from the respondents in public relations and communication departments. This report commenced by introducing and defining the problem under study, including the objectives and significance. A review of literature was discussed in chapters two and chapter three. The literature identified theories and models related to public relations as well as its historical development globally. Issues concerning public relations practice, principles as well as the status of women in the industry were discussed. The literature also presented a review on the differences between public relations and other related fields like marketing and journalism. Issues on public relations governing bodies and ethical conduct were also presented. Finally, the report presents some barriers faced by female practitioners in the public relations industry which includes socio cultural, corporate, structural, sexual harassment and glass ceiling among others.

Chapter three drew a specific emphasis on Rwandan public relations industry. The primary discussion was on the public relations practice and gender issues in Rwanda. As a country that had civil wars and genocide, which destroyed the economic base and lives, this chapter tried to brief readers on the role that women played in the aftermath of genocide; this led to the revision of certain laws including the national constitution in order to uproot women who were initially not taken into consideration as capable Rwandans. This chapter also placed a specific emphasis on the barriers that Rwandan females encounter, which include mostly gender based violence. Lastly, the chapter looked at the launching of Rwandan Public Relations Association (PRAR).

The methodology used in this study was described in chapter four, which include the methods and techniques to collect and analyse the data. Specific emphasis was given to the design and administration of the survey including the design and size of the sample. The study results were presented and discussed in chapter five, which is divided into four sections. Section one discusses the responses regarding demographic characteristics of respondents, while section two discusses questions pertaining to the roles and activities performed by public relations practitioners. The third section presents statements which sought respondents' feelings about the issues revolving the professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwanda. Additional comments provided by respondents are also found in this chapter. The data are presented in both table and graphic formats, as deemed necessary, and statistics were expressed in both absolute figures and percentages.

Finally, chapter six discussed the research findings and drew conclusions related to these findings. Recommendations to various stakeholders are presented in this chapter as well. Also discussed in this chapter were the limitations of the study as well as disclosing further areas for possible future research.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF INFORMATICS AND DESIGN

MTech: Public Relations Management

**Research Topic:** *The professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan Public and Private Institutions: A manager's perspective.*

This research is being carried out for academic purposes as part of the requirements for the completion of a masters' degree. The objectives of the research are: to determine the status of female practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions as regards to professional status in the industry. The study aims at finding out the level of professionalism among Rwandan female Public Relations practitioners from managers' point of view within public and private institutions as well as the challenges they face in their workplaces.

You have been selected to respond to this questionnaire by the fact that you hold a senior Public Relations position in your company. Your contribution is highly appreciated in order to ascertain your perspectives towards the level of professionalism among Rwandan female Public Relations practitioners.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Responses are strictly Confidential and anonymous. Please respond honestly to ensure the validity of the results.

#### Instructions

- The person who answer this questionnaire must be a Male/Female holding a senior PR or communication position in the institution
- Please mark an 'X' in the block that you wish to select your response to that question unless detailed answer is required.
- Should you wish to add a comment on this research, please add it in the space provided on the question 23.
- Please email the completed questionnaire on or before the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 on the researcher's address below.

All enquiries regarding this research and questionnaire may be addressed to:

Regine Mutimukeye (Researcher)  
Tel: +27 72 46 52 395 / +250785002853  
E-mail: [204220548@cput.ac.za](mailto:204220548@cput.ac.za)/  
[mutiregin@yahoo.fr](mailto:mutiregin@yahoo.fr)

Ms Deidre Porthen (Supervisor)

Email: [porthend@cput.ac.za](mailto:porthend@cput.ac.za)

Your valuable time and input to make this research possible is highly appreciated.

**PART I**

Please place an "X" in the appropriate box and type in the answer on question 9 of this part.

6. Respondent age.

= 20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	> 60

7. Respondent gender:

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

8. Respondent marital status

Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed

9. What type of institution is your institution?

Public institution	
Private institution	
Other (please specify)	

10. What qualification do you hold?

Certificate	
Diploma	
Bachelors degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
PHD	
Other (please specify)	

11. In what educational discipline have you received your qualification?

Education	
Business Administration	
Marketing	
Communication	
Public relations	
Applied science	
Other (Please specify)	

7. How many staff in your Public Relations department? Please put an "X" in the appropriate box in the "total " row.

	Less than 10	10-20	21-30	31-40	Over 40
Males					
Females					
Total					

8. How many years have you worked in the public relations industry?

Less than 1 year	1 To under 2 years	2- under 3 years	3- under 4 years	4 years and over

9. What is your gross monthly income?

Below Rwf 100 000	
Rwf 100 001-200 000	
Rwf 200 001- 300 000	

Rwf 300 001- 400 000	
Over Rwf 400 000	

10. What is your current job title in your organisation?

.....

11. Do you perform any the following activities on a daily basis?

Activities	Yes	No
1. supervising the work of others		
2. conducting Research		
3. planning public Relations programs		
4. managing public relations programs		
5. making communication policy decisions		
6. implementing decisions made by others		
7. implementing new programs		
8. planning and implementing events		
9. planning and managing budgets		
10. writing, editing, producing messages		
11. disseminating messages		
12. evaluating program results		
13. making media contacts		
14. meeting with clients		
15. handling correspondence		
16. making business calls		
17. counselling management		

**PART II**

- Please Use the scale provided to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.
- The scale consists of five variables; **strongly agree(1), agree(2), unsure(3), disagree(4)and strongly disagree(5)**
- Place an “X” in the box which corresponds to your perception about the statement
- Please respond to all statements.

Statements	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Unsure (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
1. Opportunities for advancement like education and training in Rwandan public relations practice are the same, regardless of gender.					
2.The glass ceiling(situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is stopped at a lower level because of some form of discrimination) exists for Rwandan female public relations practitioners					
3. Balance between work and family responsibilities for female public relations practitioners should be taken into consideration by the company's culture.					
4. Female public relations practitioners are paid a comparable salary to their male counterparts for doing the same work in your institution/department.					
5. Men dominate positions of power in Rwandan public relations practice.					
6. Women are more likely to be found in technician roles (writing, editing, handling correspondence etc.) rather than managerial roles in Rwandan public relations practice.					
7. Education and on-job training opportunities are equally offered to both males and females to help females reach managerial positions in public relations practice in Rwanda.					
8. Women and men are equally respected in Rwandan public relations practice especially in your institution.					
9. Gender discrimination doesn't exist in Rwandan public relations practice.					
10. Female public relations practitioners deserve more recognition from their supervisors than their male counterparts due to conflicting responsibilities of work and family commitments.					
11. Female public relations practitioners are more likely to be promoted in your department than their male counterparts.					
12. Female public relations practitioners experience glass cliff situation (to					

promote somebody in a risky position in order to watch him/her failing) in Rwandan PR practice.					
13. Top management view male public relations practitioners as better qualified to be promoted to top positions than female practitioners in your institution.					
14. Female public relations practitioners receive more encouragement than their male counterparts from their seniors to undertake training in your organisation/department.					
15. Female public relations practitioners receive more training opportunities than men in your institution/department.					
16. Ongoing education & training will assist women in reaching top positions in Rwandan public relations practice.					
17. Female public relations practitioners show the same degree of professionalism as their male counterparts in your institution/department.					
18. Sexual harassment still exist in Rwandan work places.					
19. Programmes like part-time work option, telecommuting, job-sharing to help female practitioners balance work and family responsibilities are embedded in your institutional culture.					
20. Female public relations practitioners are able to balance work and family responsibilities more efficiently than their male counterparts.					
21. Female public relations practitioners are as satisfied with their pay as their male counterparts in your institution/department.					
22. The gender stereotypes of seeing a woman as "a child, mother or sex object" exist in Rwandan Public Relations practice.					

23. Please use the following box to provide any other comment that you would like to add to the above information.

If you would like the feedback on this research, please write your email address below:

.....

THANK YOU

## Appendix B: Ethical clearance letter.

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



### GENDER MONITORING OFFICE

December 04, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

#### RE: RESEARCH CONSENT AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE

After reading the information presented in the application letter, supporting documents and the research proposal about a study to be conducted by **Ms Regine Mutimukye** from the Faculty of Informatics and Design, Department of Public Relations Management at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa.

I have realized that the intention of this research is for academic purposes. I am also aware that the researcher will send questionnaires to heads of public relations departments both public and private institutions in Rwanda to gain their views about the subject under study. I was further informed that respondents' participation is voluntary. I am indeed aware that this letter is to serve for the compliance with ethics clearance at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in regards with the researcher's thesis on "*The professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan Public and Private Institutions: A manager's perspective*".

Having also been informed that if I have any comments or concerns relating to this research, I may contact the following: Ms Deidre Porthen (the supervisor), on +27 (0)21 460 3296 or [porthend@cpu.ac.za](mailto:porthend@cpu.ac.za) and Regine Mutimukye (the researcher) on +27 (0) 724 652 395 or [mutiregin@yahoo.fr](mailto:mutiregin@yahoo.fr).

I, hereby, grant an ethics approval and give my consent to Ms Regine Mutimukye (student no: 204220548) for research activities related to the MTech: Public Relations Management at the Cape Peninsula university of Technology.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aquiline'.

Mrs Aquiline NIWEMFURA

Executive Secretary

Tel: +250 722 268 505, Kigali – Remera, Global house building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor

## Appendix C: Editing certificate

Rwanda Tourism University College

P.O Box 350

Kigali-Rwanda

Email: [onandre@yahoo.com](mailto:onandre@yahoo.com)

Tel: + 250782744885

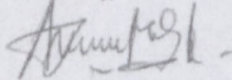
12th December 2011

RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

### **GRAMMARIAN CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that I, Andrew Nyanyuki Onsongo, (Bachelors of Arts Education; English and Literature; MA Applied Linguistics) have proofread the research thesis entitled 'The professional status of female public relations practitioners in Rwandan public and private institutions: a manager's perspective.' The focus was placed on grammatical and structural errors. The text was found readable. However, minor corrections regarding grammar, punctuation as well as sentence structuring were advised to the concerned candidate to make the changes.

Yours Sincerely,



Andrew Nyanyuki Onsongo

Lecturer, English department

## Appendix D: Additional comments from respondents as per SPSS raw data

Comments	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No comment	77	82.8	82.8	82.8
1. After having a baby some women feel like nothing else matters even their jobs hence I cannot take that risk to let females manage my company unless they are co-managers which doubles my expenses.	4	4.3	4.3	87.1
2. Being in possession of high qualifications doesn't help as long as you are a woman. You only get promoted if you can handle pressure better than a man otherwise men are always the best candidate for higher positions	1	1.1	1.1	88.2
3. Females deal with a lot of issues both at home and at work and they should be supported both by the employer and the husband.	1	1.1	1.1	89.2
4. Females don't like many responsibilities at work, they don't like to be leaders due to cultural reasons they would rather perform much at home.	1	1.1	1.1	90.3
5. Females take advantage of affirmative action and do not work hard which leads to their poverty vulnerabilities.	1	1.1	1.1	91.4
6. I don't mind getting paid less than my male colleague because our culture says that a man is the head of the family and nobody can change that.	1	1.1	1.1	92.5
7. Part time work option, telecommuting, job sharing to help female practitioners balance work and family responsibilities should be emphasized in any organisation	1	1.1	1.1	93.5
8. Promotion in my company is based on merit not someone's gender	1	1.1	1.1	94.6
9. There is no need to compete with men rather we must complement and respect each other	1	1.1	1.1	95.7

<p>10. Times have changed and so should the culture, in our country many women head their families because of the wars &amp; genocide hence women should be respected and empowered to survive in the current times.</p>	1	1.1	1.1	96.8
<p>11. Women are good for office administration work like filing, writing and handling phone calls, so they should be placed in those positions and get paid a good salary.</p>	1	1.1	1.1	97.8
<p>12. women are more committed to housework and family more than anything else</p>	1	1.1	1.1	98.9
<p>13. Women underestimate themselves and there is nothing to do for them if they are not willing to take the first step to prove their abilities.</p>	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
<p><b>Total</b></p>	<b>93</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

CAPE PENINSULA  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

