INVESTIGATING INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH A SYMMETRICAL COMMUNICATION LENS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE IN SELECTED NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

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DEDICATION

Pat Jackson said, “Relationships are bottom-line, not profits. Employees are the organization, not management. One flows from the other.” The greatest relationship, though, is God reaching out to humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ. I dedicate this work to God, the greatest relationship initiator.

ABSTRACT

Several factors have the potential to negatively impact employee-organisation relationships (EORs) including acrimony between management and non-management employees. Relationship management scholarship describes organisation relationships precious and non-financial assets that need to be well managed by public relations or communication managers in order to maintain internal equilibrium and help organisations meet their objectives. The aim of this study was to establish whether the relationship management theory could provide insights into how better to manage internal relationships. The three stages of relationship management theory provided a framework to examine internal relationships: relationship antecedents; relationship cultivation methods and relationship outcomes. The study also applied selected constructs of the symmetrical communication framework. Five research questions informed this study: What are the existing relationship antecedents in non-profit organisations? How do internal publics in non-profit organisations construe existing relationship cultivation strategies? What is the PR/communication manager's role in managing internal relationships in non-profit organisations? How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships in non-profit organisations? Which factors, within the organisation boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships in non-profit organisations? The study adopted a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology. An exploratory qualitative research approach was used with a multiple case study of two conveniently selected non-profit organisations. Purposive sampling and snow-ball sampling were used to identify the 24 participants in this study. In-depth interviews were carried out using a modified instrument and the data analysed thematically. Data was presented using participant voices. The study findings identified several relationship antecedents including internal communication, organisation structure and trust. Results also suggest that communication managers were not tasked with managing internal relationships in the selected organisations. Power relations, organisation structure and leadership culture emerged as some of the factors affecting internal relationship outcomes. The study concludes that a participatory leadership culture and more open and symmetrical forms of internal communication enhance EOR quality as opposed to top down and asymmetrical communication. Among recommendations made was a more strategic approach to internal communication. A continuum model for studying internal relationships was proposed.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

EOR(s)	Employee-organisation relationship (s)
FBO	Faith-based organisations
IPR	Institute for Public Relations
NGO(s)	Nongovernmental organisation (s)
NPO(s)	Non-profit organisation (s)
OPR(s)	Organisation-public relationships
PR	Public relations
PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
PRSK	Public Relations Society of Kenya

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Asymmetrical communication: Organisations that practice asymmetrical communication commission research and develop mechanisms for two-way communication, but discourage open communication with publics (Grunig, 1984, 1992, 2009). The second research question sought to establish whether the internal communication in the two NPOs represented more asymmetrical or symmetrical communication.

Employee-organisation relationships: EORs refers to internal relationships Kim, (2007); Men & Stacks, (2014) and others. Rhee (2004; 2007) defined the EOR as "a connection or association between an organization and individual employees that necessitates repeated communication" (p. 11). In this study, the term is used interchangeably with internal relationships.

Internal communication: Spans both public relations and corporate communication. Board (2012) asserts that all organisation communication is a function of public relations, while Welch (2012) links effective internal communication to positive internal relationships particularly between management and employees and positive identification with the organisation. In this study, the term internal communication is used as a focal term to describe the symmetrical/asymmetrical divide.

Non-profit organisations: Kinzey (in Williams & Brunner, 2010) said that although the term, *non-profit* is difficult to define, it can best be termed as an organization that is more interested in promoting a public service objective as opposed to monetary gain.

Organisation public relationships: An overarching term increasingly used in literature in place of, or concurrently with the term relationship management. OPRs specifically refer to key external stakeholders of an organisation.

Public Relations: Broom & Sha's (2013) definition of public relations centralizes the importance of organizational relationships. They describe public relations as "…the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends…" (Broom & Sha, 2013, p. 2).

Public Relations Manager: In the context of this study, the individual to whom relationship management is entrusted as documented in literature. In this study, the terms, public relations manager and communication manager were used interchangeably.

Relationships: Relationships begin when organisations recognise that there are consequences that affect its publics and that behaviours of key publics too, have consequences for the organisation (Hon & Grunig, 1999). In early relationship management studies, Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997) attempted to define this concept as transactions and resource exchange between organisations. (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997).

Relationship antecedents: Kim (2007) defines antecedents as the first stage of the relationship framework, which identifies the phenomena that cause specific relationships between an organisation and its publics to develop. Perceptions, motives, needs, behaviors, are some of the common relationship antecendents (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000, p.16).

Relationship cultivation (maintenance) strategies: Organisations use diverse, mostly communication, relationship cultivation strategies to maintain strategic, healthy and effective relationships with their key publics (Ki & Hon, 2009; Grunig & Huang, 2000). Ki & Hon (2009) defined relationship cultivation strategies as: "…any organizational behavioral efforts that attempt to establish, cultivate, and sustain relationships with strategic publics (p. 5).

Relationship outcomes: Relationship cultivation strategies lead to certain relationship outcomes, also known as the consequences of, or measure of relationship quality (Ki & Hon, 2009).

Relationship management: Ledingham and Bruning (1998) proposed the following definition: "The state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity" (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, p. 62).

Strategic communication: Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Vercic, & Sriramesh, (2007) and Holtzhausen & Zerfass, (2015) post that communication is strategic when it aids the organisation fulfill its mission and when it is intentional (or planned). In this present study, relationship management is perceived by scholars as a product of strategic communication.

Symmetrical communication: Two-way symmetrical communication views communication in organisations as a strategic two-way process, where organisations, through research, negotiate, dialogue and listen to their important publics. Organisation communication tools may build in feedback mechanisms in order to listen to what publics are saying (Grunig, 1984, 1992; 2009; Grunig, L.A. & Grunig, J.E. 2000).

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1.0 CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Internal relationships are critical to the success and wellbeing of any organisation. Left to chance, negative influences have the potential to upset the equilibrium of the organisation and subsequently, it ability to meet fulfil its mission. Relationship management has been advanced as a way to understand, nurture and improve the quality of organizational relationships.

As a multidisciplinary term, relationship management traverses several fields including organisational communication, public relations (PR), interpersonal communication, corporate communication, management and social psychology. Increasingly, literature recognizes relationship management as a paradigm (Kunz, 1970) in public relations research. Academic interest on the subject was spurred by the strategic turn of communication studies (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, (2015) that began in the mid-1980s and has continued to gather momentum over the past three decades. As a focus of growing academic interest, relationship management is well documented within public relationship scholarship.

This chapter provides an introduction and in-depth background to this study by tracing the roots of relationship management in public relations scholarship and an overview of the relationship management paradigm in PR research. The discussion also presents an argument that recognizes the two inextricable arms of PR: relationship building and communication. It is from this premise that I built the argument for this study, while emphasising the critical role of employee-organisation relationships (EORs) in the life and well-being of organisations. Importantly, the chapter also gives presents the problem under study, the research questions that this study attempted to answer, its scope, rationale limitations and delimitations.

1.2 Background and Context to the Study

The concept of relationship management emerged from public relations research more than 30 years ago. Most of this initial research was carried out in the United States. A historical perspective of the growth of public relations provides an important background to the growth of relationship management since the two are inextricably linked. Initially, I begin by situating the public relations and relationship management in communication studies.

1.2.1 Situating the Study in Communication Studies

Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth (2009) trace the evolution of public relations through five distinct stages including: the rhetorician and press agentry tradition; journalistic and publicity tradition; persuasive communication campaign tradition and the relationship building and two-way communication tradition, where this study is premised. The professionalisation of PR in the West only happened in the early twentieth century, while scholarly work can be traced to the 1930s and earlier. Robert Craig cited in (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011) advanced seven communication traditions and proposed that each tradition advanced a distinct and critical understanding of communication. Historically, PR has been aligned to the rhetorical tradition of communication (Heath, 1992, 2001) a perspective shared by several other scholars including Ilhen, (2010); Heath & Oyvind (2018) and others. Rhetor was a well-established discipline in ancient Greece and Rome, where rhetoricians fostered persuasive skills to influence public opinion (Lattimore, et al. 2009).

More recently, PR has also been linked to the critical communication tradition (Toth & Heath, 1992); L'Etang & Pieczka, 2006); L'Etang, McKie, Snow & Xifra, (2015), particularly from scholars from Europe and South America who have, among other criticisms, questioned the organisation mainstay of prevailing public relations research arguing that contemporary public relations has taken a socio-cultural turn that ought to be reflected in contemporary PR research and practice.

Conceptually, PR has been described as an applied communication discipline (Botan & Taylor, 2004). Applied communication is a term used to describe communication scholarship that studies social issues with the aim or resolving them while making recommendations to address that social issue (Carmack, 2017). Relationship management has been recognized a critical way to demonstrate the value of public relations.

1.2.2 The International Context

Relationship management represents a paradigm in PR research. For over three decades, public relations scholars have shown a growing interest in the critical role of OPRs and the communication manager's role in managing those relationships that are critical to organisational success. This was largely influenced by the need to demonstrate the value of public relations in the organisation by linking PR activities and strategies to organisation mission. The development of the relationship management paradigm is also associated to the push for measurement and evaluation of PR efforts (McNamara, 2005, 2014) also called the strategic turn of public relations research and practice (Holtzhaussen & Zerfass, 2015).

Early PR texts were overwhelmingly focused on measuring communication outputs with little or no mention of relationship management. Broom, Casey & Ritchey (1997), who pioneered relationship management research, noted that although these texts were replete with the terms *mutual understanding* and *relationships*, they were narrowly focused on measuring public opinion. Subsequently, a growing body of public relations researchers began questioning whether measuring communication outputs was a true reflection of PR's effectiveness and its value.

Two fundamental questions have perturbed PR practitioners and researchers over the years are: How do public relations efforts help organisations fulfill their mission and objectives? How can public relations practitioners show their worth? (Moss, Newman & DeSanto, 2005). The notion that public relations effectiveness and worth could mainly be proven by measuring communication programmes was proffered as the answer to these two questions. This thinking prevails in much of public relations practice in the West and still commands a substantial body of research to date (Grunig, 2006; McNamara, 2005, 2014).

Repeated research on PR efforts showed that rather than measure communication outputs, PR practitioners needed to measure communication outcomes (Grunig, 2006; McNamara, 2014; 2015; Michaelson & Stacks, 2011). Relationship management gained considerable mention from several scholars most notably, Hon & Grunig (1999); Ledingham (2003); Grunig (2006); Ki & Hon (2007); Grunig & Huang (2000); Center & Jackson (1995, 2014) and others. In essence, these and other scholars reteiterated that organizational relationships should be measured quantitatively and investigated qualitatively as a way to demonstrate the value of PR in the organisation.

I agree with Rhee (2007), that OPRs are built and sustained by communication. Communication permeates the entire relationship building and maintenance process and therefore should be central to any study on OPRs. Consequently, this current study uses relationship management theory and symmetrical communication framework as the main theoretical frameworks.

Despite its proven importance in PR research and practice, organisation relationships are difficult to measure and OPR scholars have, over the years, struggled to measure and theorise this concept. To date there is no single unifying definition or measure of organization public relationships (Ledingham, 2003). As though this were not enough, researchers have developed a dizzying array of terminology to describe relationship management including: relationship management, organization-public relationships (OPR), the relational perspective and so on. In my study, I will use the three terms interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon.

The relationship management perspective advances the notion that PR balances the interests of organisations and publics through the management of OPRs. Within this perspective public relations is seen as "…the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Broom & Sha, 2013, p.2). Key seminal studies that propelled the relationship management paradigm to the fore included Ferguson, (1984), whose study shifted the prevailing thinking at the time when she re-conceptualised public relations as a management function wrenching it away from its roots in journalism. Early relationship management scholars included Broom, et.al., (1997; 2000); Huang ,(1998, 2001); Bruning & Ledingham, (1998;1999); Hon & Grunig, (1999; and Ledingham, (2003) among others, who among other things, advanced models to measure organizational relationships. Early relationship management studies at the time a quantitative bias.

The history of relationship management is somewhat perplexing because after Ferguson's ground-breaking study, where she suggested that relationships become the unit of analysis in public relations research, PR researchers were silent on the subject for nearly ten years. In addition to its interesting history, definitions and constructs of relationship management have evolved over time.

Huang (1998) was one of the first scholars to use the term organisation public relationships, which she defined as "the degree that the organization and its publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another" (p.12). Huang's definition captured two of the key concepts in OPR: trust and satisfaction. Trust continues to be a key variable of interest in relationship management studies and has attracted several studies. Key findings in this present study similarly underline the critical of trust is in employee organisation relationships.

Contemporaries of Huang (1998), Bruning & Ledingham (1999), defined OPR as the: "state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political, and/or cultural well-being of the other entity" (p. 160). Around the same period, Broom et al (2000) suggested that, "relationships consist of the transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organizations … and lead to mutual benefit, as well as mutual achievement" (Broom et al., 2000, p. 91). This definition implies the role of communication since transactions and matters of trust and satisfaction are essentially propelled through communicative acts.

Relationship management was precipitated by four relatively recent developments in the public relations (Ledingham, 2003). As stated previously, it was the pioneering work of Ferguson (1984) in a conference paper, where she articulated that relationships and not communication is central to public relations scholarship and practice that precipitated a conversation among scholars on relationship management. Other studies that followed suggested that relationships and not communication should be the unit of analysis.

A second major development was the reconceptualization of PR as a management function paving way for the PR management processes now commonplace in public relations management repertoire, where effective public relations management is construed as a process that begins with formative research and ends with evaluation research (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010). Effective relationship management, then, becomes a product of strategic communication (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015).

The third development was research that linked OPRs with relationship outcomes such as public attitudes, perceptions and behaviour. Loyalty measures became a key focus of scholarly research. Fourthly was the development of models to measure relationship antecedents, processes and consequences (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Grunig & Huang, 2000). This present study applied Grunig & Huang's three-stage framework for studying organisation relationships: relationship antecedents, relationship cultivation strategies and relationship outcomes. A review of scholarly work from African scholars reveals a paucity of studies on this subject.

1.2.3 The African Context

According to Mersham, Skinner and Rensburg (2011), a majority of the studies on Africa on communication management and public relations have been carried out by Western scholars. They called for a shift in this thinking and questioned whether it is possible to have an exclusively African paradigm of public relations and communication management research. Further, the limited literature on relationship management studies done in the continent is mostly from South Africa. A review of scholarly work revealed a more generalized focus on the practice of public relations in specific countries rather than studies specifically on relationships management.

A growing number of studies on relationship management recognise that organisation relationships, though critical to organisation success, cannot be measured in financial terms Botha & Waldt (2011). However, the scholars underscore that communication managers often have to demonstrate the value of their activities to the organisation in terms of return on investment (ROI).

Swart (2012) explored the challenges that PR professionals in South Africa face while building organisation-public relationships (OPRs) in a constantly shifting environment of economic instability, competition, globalization among other challenges calling for the PR professional to constantly adapt their roles to combat these challenges and hence, aid organisations' survival. In her study, Swart suggests that the move of PR to the relational perspective was born out of businesses' instinct to survive. She further claims that the relational perspective equally offers PR an important lifeline by underscoring its contribution to organisation objectives.

1.2.4 The Kenyan Context

Similar to the wider African context, literature demonstrates a paucity of studies on relationship management studies in Kenya. With the exception of a few studies, much research in Kenya focuses broadly on public relations practice in specific organisation contexts often with only a brief mention, if any, of relationship management.

While tracing the history of public relations in Kenya, Kiambi (2014) described how relationship management was used during the pre-independence period, where colonialists used propagandist communication strategies to build relationships with the local communities for the purposes of retaining power. In the same article, Kiambi also describes pre-colonial Kenya relationship building strategies, where warring communities periodically attempted to build damaged relationships with neighbouring communities after a period of hostilities. Relationship building strategies during times of crises such as cattle theft were employed where communities sought to re-establish equilibrium through restitutional acts.

A benchmarking study carried out by Kentice Tikolo, former Chair of the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) found that public relations practice in Kenya was still largely at the rudimentary stage of mostly marketing communication efforts. These are aimed at promoting products and services, branding and reputation building as opposed to more strategic communication management that focuses on research as a prelude to any public relations efforts (Tikolo, 2011). Persuasion models which represent a mostly one-way type of communication are geared to interest audiences in products and services, but not listen to what the publics are saying, much less build meaningful relationships with them.

Although the status survey was carried out several years ago and the sample size relatively small (61 participants) and therefore not generalizable to public relations practice in Kenya, it provides important insights into PR practice in Kenya. What has changed in PR practice since then? If PR practice in Kenya is still at the rudimentary press agentry stage, then it follows that relationship management (particularly with internal publics in NPOs) may not be a key focus of PR managers' efforts since it presents a more strategic approach to public relations practice.

A more recent status survey carried out by the Public Relations Society of Kenya, (PRSK, 2019) implies the relationship management function of public relations although not explicitly so. The study also used a rather small sample base of 108 PR practitioners in Kenya from the private, public and non-profit sectors against a population of over 3000 registered PR practitioners. Importantly, and in relation to this study, the study found that among the PR activities most engaged in by PR practitioners was media relations, internal communication and stakeholder relations. It was not clear from the study whether these stakeholders were primarily external or internal. This survey shows a marginal improvement in the practice of public relations in Kenya from the 2011 study.

In his article exploring whether there are any inherent differences between public relations and corporate communication practice in Kenya, Marube (2019) only makes a cursory mention about organisation relationships underscoring the fact that that although both fields recognise that relationships is at the core, the study of relationship management is largely lacking in Kenya.

1.3 An Overview of Nonprofit Organisations in Kenya

The two organisations that participated in this study are non-profit organisations (NPOs). One is a non-governmental organisation (NGO), while the other is a faith based organisation (FBO). FBOs draw their mission and values from their faith (Bielfeld & Suhs, 2013). NPOs in Kenya represent a significant economic factor. By 2000, the sector accounted for over US$200 million in expenditure, which translated into 2.5% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). In addition, the non-profit sector in Kenya employed about 2.1% of the economically active population. By 2005, NPOs numbered over 300,000 registering a three-fold increase from 1997 when the total number stood at slightly over 113,000, (Kanyinga & Mitullah, 2009).

NPOs are distinct in form and function given that they pursue a social mission as opposed to profit-making organisations that focus on profits as the bottom line. NPOs in Kenya fall into seven categories: self-help groups; womens' groups; youth groups; cooperatives; NGOs; foundations/trusts and unions. By 2005, the largest and fastest growing category was self-help groups with over 185,000 groups, followed by women's groups with over 135, 000 groups and youth groups with slightly over 11,000 at the time (Kanyinga & Mitullah, 2009). The number of NGOs grew from 5600 in 2008 to over 8000 by 2012. Significantly, by 2012 they injected over 80 billion shillings to the Kenyan economy (NGO bureau, 2019). However, despite their significant contribution to the economy, literature demonstrates that few if any studies have been carried out in Kenya on relationship management.

Key policy and legislative changes that inform the direction of this sector include devolution brought on by the Kenya 2010, the NGOs Co-ordination Act, No. 19 of 1990, NGOs policy paper (Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2006) and the Public Benefit Organisations (PBOs) Act, 2013 (NGO bureau, 2019).

NPOs in Kenya often have to compete with profit-making organisations to retain competent staff, which may prefer better paying corporate jobs. Cultivating relationships with prospective donors (Waters, 2008, 2009); communities (Penning, 2014) and other specialised publics becomes a core task of communication managers working in these organisations often because their survival depends on initiating and maintaining healthy organisation public relationships (OPRs). In addition, the role of EORs has not been adequately studied in NPOs (Williams & Brunner, 2010) and moreso in the African/Kenyan context as demonstrated by the limited literature on the subject discussed so far. This is a gap this study aimed to fill.

1.4 The Statement of the Problem

Prior to beginning this study I noted often acrimonious relationships between managers and non-management employees in my organisation over an extended period. This led to a period of low morale, high uncertainty and employee turnover especially of non-management employees at the time. Anecdotal evidence from individuals in other non-profit organisations identified similar challenges. It is important to point out that while the above context provided the impetus for the study, it is not the key focus of this research.

Initial literature review on the subject uncovered that relationship management was a suitable framework within which to carry out this study. Literature demonstrates that building relationships is at the heart of what PR/communication managers should do. The importance of organisation relationships is further underscored by the fact that several PR scholars centralize relationships in their definitions of public relations. Literature reviewed so far demonstrates that limited research on this subject has been undertaken in Africa and Kenya. Scholars have also noted a paucity of studies of relationship management in non-profit oganisations. A review of literature on the subject reveals that the majority of the studies on the subject focus more on organisation relationships with external stakeholders rather than internal publics.

The relationship management stages as postulated by Grunig & Huang (2000) allows researchers to deconstruct organisation relationships in order to understand them better and link this knowledge to organisation PR/communication managers who can then provide leadership and counsel on how to reconstruct organisation relationships that helps the organisation fulfil its mission.

1.5 The Aim of the Research

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore whether the relationship management stages could shed light on how internal relationships in non-profit organisations could be better managed. From a scholarly standpoint, this study also sought to fill a demonstrable gap in studies of this nature in Kenya. This study recognizes the confluence of internal (symmetrical) communication and the relationship management process, which is described fully in the following chapter. The study was guided by the following research questions.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the existing relationship antecedents in non-profit organisations?
2. How do internal publics in non-profit organisations construe existing relationship cultivation strategies?
3. What is the PR/communication manager’s role in managing internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
4. How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

5. Which factors, within organisation boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was confined to the relationship management theory and its explication in public relations literature and Grunig’s (1984, 1992, 2006) symmetrical (asymmetrical) communication framework.

1.7.1 Content Scope

This study did not examine relationship marketing, a related concept in marketing literature nor customer relationship management (CRM), which straddles both marketing and communication fields. Further, the scope of this study does not extend into human resource management, which shares similar terminology as this current study (Boxall, 2013).

Relationship management is a distinct subject in public relations research that is concerned with the study of organisation relationships at the centre of PR scholarship and practice, while relationship marketing and customer relationship management are narrowly focused on enhancing relationships with key constituents primarily to retain customers and increase sales.

1.7.2 Contextual Scope

This study focused on two NPOs in Nairobi: a large healthcare organisation and a faith based university. The research was confined to studying internal relationships and therefore any other publics were not included in this study. Also excluded from this study were employees from outsourced services who are not directly employed by either of the two organisations.

1.7.3 Methodological Scope

Relationship management literature reveals a quantitative bias, yet statistical measures neither give the reasons behind responses nor do they give insights into perceptions, preferences and suggestions from respondents, which was critical for my study. The qualitative measures that I used in this study were fundamental in eliciting the responses that were central to exploring the problem stated in this study and answering the research questions. Additionally, qualitative research is increasingly becoming critical in studies of this nature and contributes to both PR practice and research. I used semi-structured interviews with management and non-management staff in the two NPOs. Chapter three of this study details the research methodology of this study.

1.8 Rationale for the Study

Literature on relationship management reveals few studies have been carried out in the Kenyan context. Relationship management scholars have in the past decried the need to properly define and explicate the relationship management theory (Ledingham, 2003). Contributions in this debate from early and more contemporary researchers have proven beyond doubt that relationship management, and specifically EOR is worthy of further research.

My study was an attempt to bring this scholarly conversation that has been going on for three decades in the Western world to the African continent, and particularly, Kenya where studies on this subject are rare. In the course of reviewing the literature on this subject, I did not find any local studies related to this subject. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that despite its proven importance in public relations research and practice, relationship management is difficult to conceptualise and measure (Broom, et al., 1997).

It is possible, through this exploratory study, to uncover yet other significant findings about relationship antecendents, cultivation strategies and outcomes that would further inform relationship management theory. Since EORs have been understudied, the results of this study would contribute to literature on the subject in Kenya and by extension, Africa. Furthermore, results of this study will inform organisation top managers, communication and other managers on ways to enhance EORs within their respective organisations.

1.9 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Entry into organisations proved to be difficult. Several organisations that I visited were unwilling to allow me to carry out this study in their organisations and treated my overtures with suspicion. I came across a lack understanding and appreciation of the role research. The subject of OPRs and more specifically, EORs was particularly discomfiting for these organisations even where I used existing networks and key informants. However, I was able to successfully use a key informant in one of the organisations, while the other organisation is my workplace.

Hung (2005) pointed out that the sensitive nature this type of study may require more time than anticipated and repeated visits to organsations to gain organizational trust. McFadyen & Rankin (2016) explored the difficulties researchers face in accessing information from (organizational) gatekeepers and suggested early engagement as one of the strategies to successfully gaining entry into research sites.

A further limitation of this study is that while case studies are information rich, they are not generalizable. The relatively small sample size, which is a hallmark of qualitative enquiry means that the results of my study will not be generalizable to other organisations. However, it is anticipated that the data that this study will yield data that with contribute further to theory building. The comparative aspect of this study may compensate for the lack of generalizability of this study.

The delimitations that I set for this study as a researcher ensured that I was able to study a subject close to my heart and within a reasonable time frame. As mentioned earlier, this study is confined to EOR because employees are the most important stakeholders in any organisation and their actions have the potential to affect an organisation positively or negatively (Broom & Sha, 2013).

1.10 Summary

This chapter explored the background to relationship management highlighting its multidisciplinary nature. I discussed how the study of relationship management is relatively young, only 30 years old, yet it has become a paradigm in public relations research. I also emphasized the central role of communication in the study of relationship management. In addition, I described the problem under study demonstrating the importance of relationships in the organisation as emphasised in literature. I also advanced five research questions that informed this study, the rationale for my study and confined its scope to relationship management as it explicated in public relations literature. In this chapter, I also explained the study’s rationale, its significance, limitations and delimitations. The following chapter reviews literature on relationship management and related studies on this subject.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the subject of relationship management and symmetrical communication. Creswell (2014) asserts the importance of the literature review in sharing results of other studies and relating them to an ongoing dialogue on a given subject. In the following pages I also detailed the background and development of relationship management theory including key constructs of the theory. Related theories discussed in this chapter include dialogic communication and systems theory. The latter section of this chapter addressed the gap in employee-organisation relationship studies that this study sought to fill. The reviewed literature on EORs elucidated this and demonstrated the paucity of studies of this nature in the local context. Specific methodological gaps were addressed in the following chapter.

2.2 Relationship Management Theory

Prior to 1984, public relations practice was centred on the three tenets of product publicity, media relations and employee communication (Bruning, 2001). These three views had the effect of narrowly defining public relations within the mass communication sphere where PR practitioners were viewed principally as information conduits who were mainly concerned with getting their information to recipients rather than viewing them as equal partners in a communicative process, who value feedback and involvement. This thinking prevailed for several decades and resulted in volumes of literature, where scholars were concerned about measuring publicity, public opinion and PR programmes as a way of showing the worth of public relations to management. This move to make communication more strategic was at the centre of the growth of OPR studies.

Ferguson's content analysis of over 170 research abstracts of the *Public Relations Review*, a foremost journal of public relations research, found three main foci: social responsibility, issues management and public relationships. Her research further revealed that of the three subjects, public relationships showed the most potential for theory development and further research. Based on these findings she called for a shift in the central focus of public relations focus from mainly journalistic, mass communication driven processes and evaluations to, "public relationships" (Ferguson, 1984)

This watershed period in public relations research resulted in a paradigm shift from the measurement of communication outputs to the study of relationships and their critical importance in organizational growth and wellbeing. Spurred by this study, other scholars began to study public relationships. It was Broom, et al. (1997) who noted that literature at the time (including public relations texts and journals) did not offer definitions of relationship management precluding further theory development.

Historically, although public relations literature is replete with the term *relationships*, no attempt had been made to explain the concept more comprehensively or measure it. Center & Jackson (1995) were among the first scholars to assert the central role of relationships in public relations practice declaring that effective public relations is linked to positive organizational relationships. Prior to this, Ehling cautioned that despite the shift from influencing opinion to establishing and maintaining relationships, relationship management still remained a rather nebulous concept that needed to be properly defined and measured.

The dominant thread of OPR studies was reported by Ki and Shin (in Waymer & Heath, 2014), who discovered a growing number of publications using relationship management theory. Similarly, Huang and Zhang's (2013) meta-analysis of six leading PR journals found 40 articles using relationship management theory further confirming the centrality of relationships in PR scholarship. In fact, Waters, Bortree & Tindall (2013) refer to this subject as a "dominant thread" of PR inquiry.

2.3 Relationship Management Concepts

Early studies on relationship management focused more on relationship outcomes, with scholars advancing constructs to measure the quality of organisation relationships. Table 2.1 shows the development of relationship management theory and the constructs as suggested by different relationship management scholars.

Table 2.1: A Timeline Showing Various Models of Relationships Management Theory as Postulated by Key Scholars

Hung, 1997	**Ledingham & Bruning, 1998**	**Hon & Grunig 1999**	**Grunig & Huang, 2000**	**Kim, 2001**
Trust	Trust	Control mutuality	Relationship antecendents	Trust
Control mutuality	Openness	Trust	Relational cultivation strategies	Commitment
Relational commitment	Involvement	Satisfaction	Relationship outcomes	Community involvement
Relational satisfaction	Investment	Commitment		Reputation

Relational outcomes	Commitment	Exchange relationships		
		Communal relationships		

(Source: Author, 2016)

Hon & Grunig's (1999) measurement scale were found to be good measures of the perceptions of relationships and has been validated by several scholars including Kim (2001); Ki & Hon, (2007); Jo, Hon & Brunner, (2004), Seltzer 2007 and others. Grunig & Huang (2000) recast the original model and proposed that organisation relationships are best studied through three distinct stages: relationship antecedents; relationship cultivation strategies and relationship outcomes. In this newer model, they retained the relationship outcomes but expanded the understanding of the first two concepts. The model suggests relationship antecedents, cultivation strategies and outcomes are situational (Both & Waldt, 2010).

2.3.1 Relationship Antecedents

Relationship antecedents define the phenomenon that causes organizational relationships to begin or the "impetus" for a relationship to develop Ki (in Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015). Broom et. al (2000) and (Kim, 2007) suggested perceptions, motives, needs and behaviours that prefigure or cause relationships in the first place. Literature reveals that relationship antecedents has not attracted much research.

2.3.2 Relationship Cultivation Strategies

The second stage of relationship management is relationship cultivation strategies, which are mostly communication strategies designed to promote healthy OPRs and EORs. Relationship cultivation strategies were drawn from theories of interpersonal relationships, particularly from the scholarly work of Canary & Stafford (1991; 1994), Stafford & Canary (1994) and more recently, Canary & Yum (2016).

Grunig & Huang (2000) identified six cultivation strategies that produce positive outcomes:

1. Access refers to those available communication channels provided by the organisations and or publics to facilitate the communication.
2. Positivity describes attempts to make the interaction between the organisation and stakeholders enjoyable or satisfactory. A key element of this aspect is feedback. Ki and Hon (2009) described this feature as, “the degree to which strategic publics can benefit from the organization’s efforts to make the relationship more enjoyable” (Ki & Hon, 2009a, p. 246).
3. Openness is not a predictor of positive relationships. However, it is assumed that all organisation relationships require some openness (Ki & Hon, 2009).
4. Shared tasks is that relationship cultivation strategy where all parties in a relationship perform required tasks (Grunig & Hon, 1999). Further, it describes organisation and publics’ shared concern and desire to deal with organizational challenges (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Park & Rhee, 2010).
5. Networking refers to the organisation’s effort to form relationships with a particular public, which in the context of this study is employees.
6. Assurances is closely related to relational commitment, where the organisation demonstrates care for and commitment to the relationship.

Cultivating relationships with prospective donors (Waters, 2008, 2009); communities (Penning, 2014) and other specialized publics becomes a core task of PR managers working in non-profit organisations often because their survival depends on maintaining healthy organisation relationships with donors, volunteers and other key stakeholders. A study by Ki (2015) linked relationship cultivation strategies to strategic communication pointing out that both share commonalities key of which is the intentional effort to produce a (positive) outcome.

The relationship management role falls squarely in the hands of public relations managers (Welch, 2012). However, is this true of organisations in Kenya? Swart (2012) suggested that organisations increasingly recognise the importance of non-financial assets such as organizational relationships. She argued that to be effective, organisation relationships must be managed by the relationship expert/public relations manager. Among other responsibilities, this relationship expert should offer relationship management advice; provide expertise in relationship management including assigning requisite roles to line managers.

Interestingly, DeSanto & Moss (2002), while criticising the manager-technician typology of PR manager roles advanced by Dozier & Broom (1995), did not mention relationship management. However, a study by Moss & Green (2001) identified building relationships as one of the PR manager roles although it appears that their focus was on external rather than internal relationships. The lack of clarity about relationship building being an integral part of the PR manager's role is a glaring omission in literature and begs the question as to whether the PR manager's role is limited to relationship maintenance or if indeed it should span the entire spectrum of relationship management.

2.3.3 Relationship Outcomes

The third stage of the relationship management examines the quality or outcomes of relationships. Hung (1997) pioneered research in the area of relationship measurement when she identified trust, control mutuality, relational commitment, and relational satisfaction as relational outcomes. Intense research on measuring relationship outcomes (or the quality of relationships) followed Hung's study with Ledingham & Bruning (1998) advancing a five-dimensional scale drawing on concepts from other related fields including interpersonal communication and marketing. They proposed: trust, openness, involvement, investment and commitment as key relational outcomes to be measured.

In a different study, Huang, (2001) proposed a different model and adopted a cross-cultural multi-scale item that would be applicable to both Western and Eastern cultures. She included the construct of *face and favour* as understood in Eastern cultures. Kim (2001) also suggested a four-dimensional scale: trust; commitment; community involvement and reputation. These studies, so far, show the room for further development of theory. It was clear from Huang's (2001) study that the study of relationship management is adaptable, even across cultures, which becomes important for my study because this adaptability means that it can be used across cultures.

Grunig & Huang (2000) retained the original six-dimensional scale for measuring relationship outcomes (Hon & Grunig, 1999) in their explication of the three stage process of relationship management. The first three dimensions: control mutuality, trust and (relationship) satisfaction and commitment measure relationship outcomes, while the last two dimensions: exchange and communal relationships, measure relationship types.

Control mutuality is the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another and in the context of this present study: the perspectives of management and non-management employees. Not all relationships are balanced in terms of power distribution however stable relationships require that organizations and key publics each have some control over the other. An attempt by any party to gain control over the other party leads to dissatisfaction in the relationship.

Trust, is a key construct of the relationship management framework and has resulted in numerous studies. Trust is conceptualized as an organization doing what it says it would do by keeping its word (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, Ledingham, 2003). Closely related to this is *openness*, where the organization shares future plans with its members. An organization that is willing to do this is also involved in the welfare of the community (the community in this case being the significant publics of the organization including its employees) invests in it and is committed to its welfare.

Trust has three dimensions: *integrity*, which is the belief that the organisation is fair in its treatment of key constituents (in this context, its employees); *dependability* is the notion that organisations keep their word and *competence*, which is related to the latter concept and says an organization is able to do what it says it will do.

Satisfaction is the extent to which each party in the relationship is favourably disposed to the other in a relationship where benefits outweigh costs, while commitment is the extent to which either party is confident that the relationship is worth the effort and can be maintained. Two dimensions of commitment are *continuance commitment*, which refers to a certain line of action, and *affective commitment*, which is an emotional orientation. Holtzhausen & Fourie (2011) agree with this notion and say that in order to achieve commitment, organization strategy must be stakeholder-centred.

The other two constructs of Hon & Grunig's (1999) scale deal with relationship types appear not to have been retained in Grunig & Huang's (2000) model. Exchange relationships (closely related to Hunt & Grunig's (1984) and Grunig's (2009) concept of symmetrical communication, captures the notion of mutually beneficial relationships widely used in several PR definitions or win-win relationships in the language of management. Communal relationships suggest both parties in the relationship provide benefits to each other and value the welfare of the other party. Subsequent studies extracted the last two constructs: exchange and communal relationships from relationship outcomes to relationship types. In this present study, I applied all the constructs of relationship outcomes and subsumed the constructs of relationship types under outcomes.

Relationship type has attracted further scholarship. In his model, Ledingham (2003) suggested personal, professional and community relationship types. Hung's (2005) study of antecedents of relationships in selected companies in China and Taiwan uncovered additional relationship types including: covenantal (win-win) relationships; contractual;

symbiotic; manipulative and exploitative relationships. Exploitative relationships exist where one party takes advantage of another while covenantal relationships are characterized by reciprocity and open exchanges including criticism. Contractual relationships are similar to contracts between parties (Hung, 2005). It's not clear from Hung's (2005) study, the relationship between antecedents and relationship type.

Waters & Bortree (2012) measured the ways in which organization type influences OPRs using three different relationship types: non-profit organization-volunteer; retail-consumer; political party-member. The researcher extols the need for comparative studies in relationship management:

> "…to develop an understanding of the overarching nature of relationships that exist between organisations and publics, scholarship should compare how individuals evaluate multiple organization types. The current approach assumes that relationships are equal and that the findings of one study can influence the measurement of a vastly different relationship type. A non-comparative approach becomes problematic for those exploring strategies for cultivating and growing relationships (Waters & Bortree, 2012, p. 124).

Studies show that when organisations rank highly in relational outcomes, they engender the loyalty of key publics. High relationship scores have also been linked to consumer satisfaction in addition to loyalty (Ledingham, 2003). These measures, however, are suited to quantitative rather than qualitative studies.

Ledingham advanced Ferguson's (1984) suggestion that relationships and not communication should be used as a unit of analysis particularly when the focus of measure is communication outputs rather than outcomes, which is more strategic. Ledingham (2003) further said that relationship management is grounded in interpersonal relationship principles with guidelines for initiating, maintaining and improving relationships. When relationships are managed well, they lead to mutual understanding between organisations and stakeholders, which in this context are organization employees.

Rather than look at high or low scores, this study was more focused on participants' perceptions of EOR based on their observations, key management decisions and events that affected EORs. The symmetrical communication framework provided the secondary framework for this study because I sought to understand the perceptions of internal publics in the two organisations; particularly where it lies along the asymmetrical/symmetrical spectrum.

2.4 Symmetrical Communication

Internal communication is an important facet of relationship management that provides employees with critical information about their jobs, organisation, the work environment and of course, one another. L. A Grunig & J.E. Grunig (2002), described internal communication as a sub-discipline of communication that examines how people communicate in organisations both of which are multi-dimensional. Welch (2012) captured the central role of internal communication as it relates to this study:

> "Internal communication underpins organizational effectiveness since it contributes to positive internal relationships by enabling communication between senior managers and employees. Paradoxically, internal communication can also pose a threat to organizational relationships, as poor communication can be counter-productive. The potential benefits of internal communication rely on

> appropriate messages reaching employees in formats useful and acceptable to them…" p. 246

Effective internal communication facilitates a number of important internal processes such as build trust, create shared identity and motivate an engaged work force. While reiterating the importance of internal publics, Board (2012) suggested that successful internal communication strategies ought to employ symmetrical communication.

Grunig & Hunt, (1984) conceptualised a typology for studying public relations. These original four models represent an evolution of PR research from earlier communication rudimentary models of explaining communication to a more contemporary perspective. The press agentry and public information models represent the more traditional, one-way type of communication where organisations concentrate on sending information to stakeholders without much concern about feedback from them. One-way communication represents the more elementary understanding about how communication works and earlier communication models such Shannon and Weaver's *Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Shannon & Weaver, 1949) were based on one-way thinking that conceptualises communication as mostly used for manipulation and persuasive purposes. The feedback element was included in later models of communication.

The two-way asymmetrical model presents an improvement from the two earlier models, but proves to be relatively ineffective because the feedback is ignored by organizations. Organisations carry out research in order to find out what their stakeholder are thinking, however, they do not utilise it to facilitate understanding with their publics or to make internal changes.

The fourth model, the two-way symmetrical system, presents a better way of looking at communication. Organisations utilize the research they have carried out to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict, and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its public(s). “Two-way, symmetrical public relations uses research, listening, and dialogue to manage conflict and to cultivate relationships with both internal and external strategic publics more than one-way and asymmetrical communication” (Grunig, 2009).

Grunig (in Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) later expanded the two-way symmetrical model in his extensive study on excellent public relations, where he suggested that symmetrical communication presents the best way for an organization to get favourable results from internal publics. Symmetrical communication uses open communication, listening, feedback and positive reinforcement as relationship cultivation strategies. This study was keen to find out, from participants, whether these key aspects of symmetrical communication were present or absent in the relationship cultivation activities in the two study sites. Except for positive reinforcement, this study investigated the other aspects of symmetrical communication.

One of the ingredients of good organisation relationships is the concept of *being heard*, which is essentially what public relations practitioners ought to do for organisations – ensure that stakeholders concerns reach management ears and hearts and that management in a given organization is willing to make some internal changes to accommodate those concerns. The symmetrical communication concepts of listening and feedback (Grunig, 2002; 2006) become critical to this understanding and was a key focus of one of the research questions that guided this study. Broom & Sha (2013) argue that internal publics are the most important stakeholders of organisations even hinging the success or failure of the organisation on this public.

Perhaps this was behind Grunig's (2009) thinking when he lauded the potential of the new media (including organisations websites and social media platforms) in enhancing interactive and symmetrical or dialogic communication. However, research shows that despite the symmetrical nature of these online communication platforms, often they are used for pushing organisational messages and agenda to publics and therefore remain largely, one way channels.

Anani-Bossman (2022b), while lamenting the paucity of knowledge and understanding about PR practice in Ghana and by extension, Africa used a qualitative methodology of 22 face-to-face interviews from PR practitioners in the financial sector. The results demonstrate that PR in Ghana predominately uses two-way asymmetrical model. A different study (Anani-Bossman, 2022a) yielded similar findings. This study examined the roles of PR professionals in universities in Ghanan using the technician-manager typology postulated by (Dozier, 1995). The results of the study demonstrate that PR practice in Ghana is still predominanty technician oriented with limited managerial role. Further, the study found that PR practice is based on one-way communication.

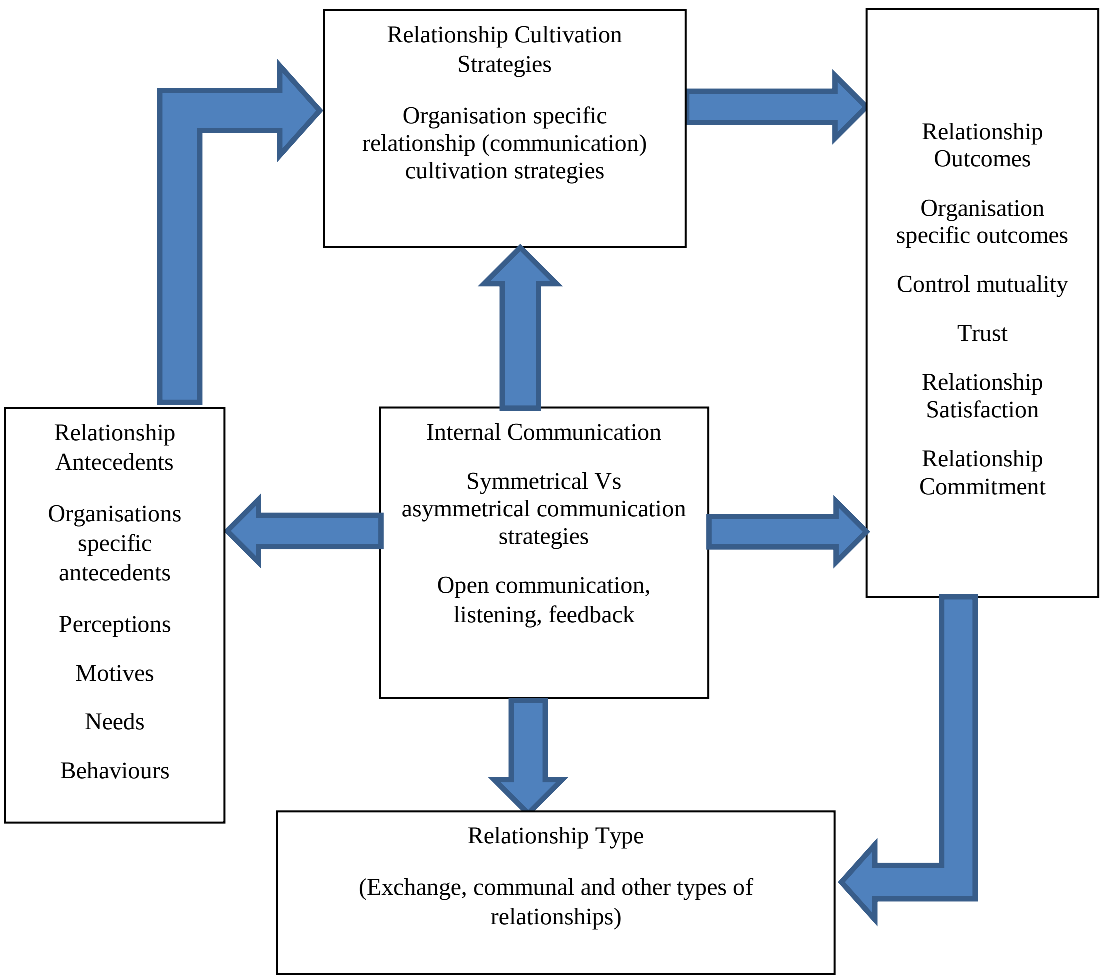
Grunig's symmetrical communication framework continues to be a dominant paradigm in public relations research although a growing number of scholars have challenged its basic assumptions including Brown (in Heath, 2010), who questions Grunig's attempt to link symmetry with his concept of excellence in public relations: "…symmetry's equilibrium amounts to nothing more than a mechanical perception of feedback from a mechanical source…" (Heath, 2010, p. 283). L'Etang, (2008) too criticized symmetry's post-positivist identification which appears to favour quantitative approaches in research.

For the purposes of this present study, besides relationship antecedents, I combined one construct of relationship cultivation strategy with three distinct aspects of symmetrical communication: access, open communication, listening and feedback.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, (Fig. 2:1) outlines the relationship management stages and the central role played by internal (symmetrical versus asymmetrical) communication. OPRs (and EORs) begin at the relationship antecedents stage and are managed through relationship cultivation (communication) strategies that are situational. These strategies may be symmetrical or asymmetrical. Similarly, the relationship outcomes (quality) and types are all factors (directly or indirectly) of internal communication. The framework also illustrates that there are other factors that affect relationship quality besides those identified in literature (Hon & Grunig, 1999). This conceptual framework presumes that internal communication permeates the entire relationship management process (Rhee, 2004; 2007).

Figure 2:1: Conceptual Framework



(Source: Author: 2019)

The role of communication in the study of OPRs cannot be emphasized enough. On this point, I must disagree with Ferguson (in Ledingham, 2003) and concur with Rhee's

(2004) perspective on the importance of communication in relationship building. In her study, she made this important observation:

> "The definitions suggested by public relations scholars thus far are either too broad or too narrow in scope or sometimes neglect the important component of communication in the relationship-building process. An OPR develops only after repeated communication takes place between the organization and publics" (Rhee, 2004, p. 9).

I believe that even with relationships as the key focus, it is not possible to study OPRs/EORs in the absence of communication. In the course of my study, the question, "Why study organisation relationships?" bothered me. Why are relationships organizational relationships important? Why is this study critical? Perhaps this question can best be answered by asking another: "What is the cost of ignoring or trifling with oganisation relationships? Phillips (2006) captured the importance of relationships describing them as precious and intangible assets that cannot be trifled with; a notion echoed by Botha & Waldt (2011) who described organisation relationships as non-financial assests.

Relationships, Phillips (2006) further said, aid organisations' wealth creation. Away from academia, organisation relationships are at the core of what makes up the organisation. Organisations are run by people and not systems. It is people who perform the various tasks that help these organisations succeed in fulfilling vision, mission and ultimately, meet the bottom line. It is people who drive sales, present proposals, team up to carry out tasks and so on. Following is a review of related theories that are related to, or have contributed to the development of relationship management.

2.6 Review of Related Theories

Public relations scholars have linked the development of organisation-public relationships with several other theoretical frameworks most notably, interpersonal communication; systems theory; dialogic communication amongst others. I confined myself to discuss the latter two although research indicates links with other fields outside of communication and public relations including, psychotherapy, social psychology and marketing. Importantly, this section of the study demonstrates why the relationship management theory was the best suited theory to inform this study.

Systems theory has also been linked to relationship management theory. Proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011) the theory was drawn from management studies, organization communication and was later applied to the cybernetic tradition of communication theory which posits that feedback makes information processes possible.

Systems form the core of cybernetic thinking and comprise sets of interacting parts and organisations as systems are part of larger systems forming a complex whole of interdependent parts. In this regard, an organization as a system exists in a dynamic environment that is adaptable to change (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). In addition, feedback loops (networks) connect the different parts of a complex system to each other. In various models, feedback loops are denoted by arrows that show the either positive or negative relationships of the interdependent parts (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Interestingly, some participants in this present study mentioned these loops (reporting lines, networks) when explaining their understanding of EORs in their respective organisations.

A systems perspective recognizes that organisations and their publics are mutually dependent and these interacting units keep responding and adjusting to pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain the goals stated (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2009, p. 188). The interacting units include the organisation and their stakeholders who include employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, and so on.

Systems theory in public relations provides a way to look at relationships in an organization and monitor them to ensure that they are beneficial through the boundary spanning role (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman & Toth, 2009) of the PR practitioner, who should be able to feel the pulse of organizational relationships. The theory is useful for monitoring organizational relationships, however it does not allow the PR manager to understand the nature of relationships or provide mechanisms for relationship cultivation.

Relationship management theory has also been linked to dialogic communication which was proposed by Kent & Taylor (2001), who extensively studied this concept tracing the roots of dialogue to a variety of disciplines including philosophy, rhetoric, psychology and relational communication (distinct from relationship management theory).

Scholars have recognized dialogue as one of the most ethical forms of communication and Martin Buber is considered by many as the father of modern dialogue through his classic work: *I and Thou* (Buber, n.d.). At the heart of Buber's treatise is the suggestion that dialogue involves an effort to value another individual; not viewing others as objects, *I-You*, but as equals, *I-Thou*. My study essentially asks: Do organisations value employees? Or do they view them as nothing more than cogs in a wheel to get the job done? Research on dialogue and relationship management also shows that both organisations and publics gain by participating in dialogue (Bruning, Dials, & Shirka, 2008). In this study they sought to explain the ways in which relationship attitudes and perceptions of dialogue affect organization outcomes.

Are there any inherent differences between relationship management, symmetrical communication and dialogic communication? Kent and Taylor (2001) suggest that although dialogic communication predates the symmetrical approach to public relations research, the relationship approach overshadowed research on dialogic PR. Part of the problem is that although the term dialogue has been present in public relations repertoire for decades, research to further explore and develop this theory has been wanting (Pieczka, 2010). Unfortunately, this disjointedness and lack of continuity in research with scholars pulling in different directions appears to be a major problem with much of contemporary public relations research.

So far, I have discussed the main communication theories that have been used to build relationship management theory or are in some way related to it. Relationship management theory provided the best framework to investigate the questions in this study. The three-stage relationship management process provides a way to deconstruct internal relationships in order to understand the motivations that causes them to be developed and how they can be better managed. In the following section, I reviewed related studies in relationship management theory before narrowing down to the key focus of this study, which is employee-organisation relationships in non-profit organisations.

2.7 Review of Related Studies

Relationship management has been variously labeled. However, there appears to be a general consensus amongst relationship scholars concerning two approaches to examining organization-public relationships. Bruning & Ledingham (2009) clarified the connection between the two approaches. In the first one, OPRs are studied as a distinct phenomenon from perceptions, where scholars examine how OPR exchanges or interactions define relationships, while the second approach links key publics attitudes about their relationships with their organisations to outcomes including satisfaction, intended behavior and respondent behavior, which is the approach that I took in this study. Most literature reviewed in this study appears to focus on one rather than all three approaches.

In their study of, Botha & Waldt (2010) sought to examine the impact of relationship antecedents on outcomes of strategic alliances against the efficacy of the three-stage model (Grunig & Huang, 2000). An electronic survey of 2500 people from a South African institute yielded a modest response of 154 and key findings showed that antecedents did not have a significant influence on outcomes. This contradicts other literature that indicates that relationship antecedents having a bearing on the following stages of relationship management. The purpose of my study, however, was not looking at relationships amongst variables.

In a different study, Seltzer & Zhang (2010) advanced the concept of citizen-(political) party relationships in their study on the interaction between relationship antecedents and maintenance strategies used by political parties in the United States. Further, this study was an attempt to move relationship management studies away from its seeming organisation mainstay. The researchers used a telephone survey of 508 respondents from a midsized city in the United States. Among other things, the results of this study were found to support a model for political organisation-public relationships (POPR) by identifying antecedents prior to POPR formation.

Literature demonstrates that there are limited studies on relationship antecedents. Kim's (2011) study explored the possible antecedents of internal relationships in organisations. This study focused on two variables: organisation structure and internal communication with organisation justice as a mediating factor. Kim (2011) described organisation structure as the different ways in which responsibility and power are assigned in the workplace.

In their study, Seltzer & Lee (2018) agreed that relationship antecedents have received limited scholarly attention and pointed out that the main problem lies in the "conceptual confusion" that sees scholars limit themselves to the organisation set-up. Other scholars have made similar observations earlier (Ki & Shin, 2015; Kim, 2007). Using an online survey of 514 adults in the US, Seltzer & Lee (2018) identified several relationship antecedents including social/cultural expectations and risk reduction as motives for OPRs. The importance of relationship antecedents is also underscored by the fact that they have implications for subsequent relationship stages.

In contrast, relationship cultivation strategies have been widely studied by several (especially Western) scholars including Bortree (2010; Levenshus, (2010); Waters, Tindall & Morton, (2010). Newer studies in the non-profit sector have suggested Kelly's (2001) concept of stewardship as an additional dimension of relationship cultivation (Waters, 2011; Waters & Bortree, 2013; Waters & Tindall, 2013; Pressgrove & McKeever, 2016) that predicts positive relationship outcomes. Stewardship describes the obligation that non-profit organisations have to be good stewards of the resources entrusted upon them by donor publics for public good.

Storie (2017) explored the confluence between relationship antecedents and relationship cultivation efforts in the realm of public diplomacy. The results of the study suggested newer relationship cultivation dimensions demonstrating the versatility of the subject.
In a more recent study, Huang, Lynn, Dong, Ni and Men (2022) focused on the effect of relational efforts on public engagement in two culturally diverse environments during the Covid-19 pandemic through a content analysis of companies' social media posts in China and US. A similar study carried out much earlier (Hung, 2004) had indeed discovered that culture indeed plays a role in how diverse groups perceive relationship cultivation. Although culture was not a focus on this study, leadership culture emerged as an important outcome of relationships in my study.

As a growing area of interest amongst PR scholars, Ki (2015) linked relationship cultivation strategies to strategic communication pointing out that both share some commonalities key of which is the intentional effort to produce an outcome. Earlier studies in relationship management also argued that relationship management was seen by scholars as one of the ways to show the worth of public relation.

Methodological approaches to OPR studies have over the years shown a quantitative bias. Dougall (2005) used a longitudinal analysis and case study method of major banks in Australia to find out the relationship-signaling statements between those banks and their activist publics while Jo, Hon & Brunner (2004) applied Hon & Grunig's (1999) six-dimension scale to measure organization public relationships in a large university in the United States. In fact the initial constructs of relationship management including those advanced by Hon & Grunig (1999); Bruning & Ledingham (1998)

In an early study designed to find out whether new technologies helped build organization-public relationships, Kent, Taylor and White (2003) hypothesized that watchdog organisations (activist groups) were less interested in responding to audience requests for information compared to membership organisations. Using randomly sampled organisations from the two organization types, they found out that membership organizations and watchdog organisations had different goals in setting up their websites. website features such as ease of interface, usefulness to key publics and return visit encouragement, which are key dialogic principles.

In a different study, Levenshus (2010) used the 2008 President Barack Obama online campaign strategy as a case study to show the potential of using online platforms as a participatory and grassroots empowering tool. The study explored two key questions: The first was how the Obama campaign used participatory Internet in grassroots organizing and secondly how campaign managers used the Internet to manage relationships with the grassroots public. Data was gathered qualitatively and one of the key findings of this study was that campaign managers successfully utilized well known online tools such as YouTube, Facebook and blogging to canvass online. These same tools and others developed also helped engage voters.

In Cho & Huh's study (2010), the researchers examined how major corporations in the US used corporate blogs to build and maintain relationships with various publics. Using the relationship management framework, the researchers employed a longitudinal content analysis over a two year period and found out that organisations that used this online tool were able to effectively maintain relationships with their publics. The study also showed that many organisations have been slow to harness this technology.

Literature on online strategies for building organization-public relationships shows the potential for this strategy. In an earlier study, Kent and Taylor (2001) proposed five characteristics of the dialogue framework: genuine, accurate, empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presentness, spirit of mutual equality and a supportive psychological climate (Kent and Taylor, 2001), while a later study, Kent and Taylor (in McAllister-Spooner, 2008) extended the dialogue framework to incorporate building relationships on the World Wide Web where the suggested that organisations. Interestingly, McAllister-Spooner's (2008) ten-year review of dialogic public relations in the World Wide Web yielded disappointing findings:

> …Web sites are very poorly used dialogic tools, and that organizational websites are effectively utilized for introductory level of relationship-building functions. They are easy to use, offer useful information, but they do not do the dialogic functions very well. Regardless of type, organizations do not seem to be fully utilizing the interactive potential of the Internet to build and maintain organization–public relationships. The findings also reveal that organizational and departmental factors are inhibiting the practitioners' ability to take full advantage of the interactive capacity of the Internet. The data supports past research showing that there is an inconsistency between what practitioners think is possible through the Internet, and what they are actually doing to facilitate relationship-building (McAllister-Spooner, 2008, p. 321).

This concurs with Grunig's (2009) findings which showed that organisations have not fully conceptualized symmetrical communication particularly on online platforms.

Today's business environment of technological advances and intense competition has resulted in an explosion of consumer studies in the business field and OPR (Bruning & Ledingham, 2009). Bruning, Castle & Schrepfer (2004) investigated the link between organization-public relationships and organizational outcomes of satisfaction evaluations and behavioral intent. The researchers further sought to determine members' suggestions on common interests and goals and thirdly, ways of enhancing mutual understanding and benefit for both members and organisations.

The increasingly challenging environment in the health industry, necessitates the application of relationship management principles (Wise, 2007). Further, the success of health industry professionals is often dependent on these relationships being mutually beneficial in order to realise their health goals. In the early days of conceptualizing relationship management theory, Lucarelli-Dimmick et al, 2000 (in Ledingham, 2003) developed a model for physician-patient relationships, which had implications for OPRs. In a different study, Rawlings (2008) used a survey instrument amongst 1200 employees in a large Canadian healthcare organization to measure the relationship between the variables trust in the organization and transparency using a transparency measurement that he developed earlier.

Trust has been studied as an important outcome of organization-public relationships rather than an antecendent of those relationships. (Chia, 2005), however argued that trust, as a major component of relationship management theory is difficult to measure and quantify. She argues that trust, an important variable in organisation-public relationships involves risk and vulnerability. Her qualitative study of several Australian PR practitioner-client relationships sought to understand the nature of these relationship in light of the trust variable. Key results of this study underscored the importance of trust, more specifically that trust is implicit in practitioner-client relationship; not instantaneous and understanding organization culture was essential in building a trust relationship (Chia, 2005).

Huang (2009) conducted a study to understand how public relations can mediate organizational conflict using OPR strategies. Although previous research failed to establish a direct causal link between an organisation's strategies and conflict resolution, Huang's (2009) study *did* underscore the worth of PR strategies in managing variables that lead to conflicts in organisations. The fact that effective relationship management strategies may play a role in mitigating conflict underscores its importance.

In their study, Ni and Wang (2011) sought to clarify the connection between uncertainty management and OPR outcomes. They used the anxiety and uncertainty management framework (AUM) to investigate the relationship between cultivation strategies and relationship outcomes in a sample of foreign university students in an American university.

Over the past three decades, OPR has been examined and reexamined as scholars attempt to further define and refine this theoretical framework and operationalize its variables. The sheer amount of literature on OPR studies from the West indicate that the relationship management is now a dominant paradigm in public relations research (Waters, et al., 2013). In the following section I discuss some of the criticisms by scholars of relationship management.

2.8 Criticisms of Relationship Management Theory

Among the body of scholars in public relations research are those who disagree with the study of relationship management. Stoker (2014) calls the study and practice of relationship management a paradox. In his view, the very term, managing relationships, is problematic. He questions how it is possible to manage a phenomenon that arises out of goodwill and that any attempt to do so is manipulative. In response to Stoker's (2014) concern, although OPRs are intangible, their impact (good or bad) is tangible. Managing relationships is at the centre of public relations enquiry. If organisation relationships are precious assets (Philips, 2006), then it goes to say that they should be managed, not to control or manipulate as Stoker (2014) suggests, but to ensure that they are working effectively, if anything, to enhance internal equilibrium in the organisation. This is also at the centre of systems theory that construes organisations as systems with different and interdependent units that should be managed rather than left to chance.

Chia (n.d.) asks whether the measurement of relationships is realistic. She contends that relationships may too complex to measure because they are subjective; include multiple interactions and interpretations and are dynamic rather than static. My study, however, is qualitative, which means that I am exploring the phenomenon and not measuring it. On the dynamic nature of OPR studies, scholars such as Dougall (2005) have demonstrated that relationships can be studied longitudinally leading to rich findings that prove valuable for both PR practice and research.

The fact that most OPR scholars agree that relationships are both difficult to define and measure is another criticism directed at this subject. In addition, and as pointed out earlier, scholars are yet to agree on a single definition of relationship management. In a recent article. However, the sheer body of literature that OPRs has generated over the years and the keen interest on the subject demonstrated by scholars shows that despite its obvious challenges and other criticisms, relationship management is worth studying.

Yang & Taylor (2014) challenged relationship management saying that it has been too narrowly focused on dyadic relationships with the organization at the centre. They say:

"This type of research has pursued a narrow understanding of relationships and neglected a broader understanding of how discourse shapes meaning and relationships…" (p. 1). Further, public relations research has long focused on relationships from a management standpoint seeking to answer the question about how organisations can better manage relationships. They argue that public relations discourse shape relationships and this discourse occurs in a variety of settings and is also facilitated through networks. These networks are ever growing especially with the constant introduction of new communication technologies. They propose studying organization relationships using a network ecology or the social networks of organisations, which again underscores cybernetic thinking in the study of organisational relationships.

Ledingham (2003) was the first to propose that relationship management be recognized as a general theory of public relations. For a long time public relations has derived theories from other fields including management; social psychology; interpersonal communication; organizational communication; and others. This was one of the reasons that L'Etang (2012), in her critical assessment of PR practice, called it (PR) an aspiring field that struggles to gain acceptance in organisation and society.

In explicating relationship management, Ledingham (2003) attempted to answer the most pressing issues being raised by critics. He strongly suggested that relationship management ought to be recognized as a general theory that holds together public relations inquiry. The importance of internal relationships cannot be emphasized enough. Cutlip et al (1994; 2009) argued that organizational success or failure is dependent on the quality of internal relationships. OPR studies have attracted immense interests amongst scholars from the West. However, many of these studies focus on external rather than internal relationships including: reputation (Yang & Grunig, 2005); satisfaction of consumers (Bruning & Ledingham, 2009; Bruning, Castle & Schrepfer, 2004); relationship outcomes and measurement (Botha & Waldt, 2010; Taylor & Doerfel, 2005); and trust as a key construct of interest (Huang & Guo, 2009) rather than EORs. The dearth of research in EORs, particularly in the NPO sector has been reported by several scholars. Except for the few studies cited earlier, scholarly research in Africa and by extension, Kenya on relationship management is also demonstrably lacking, a gap that this study sought to fill.

Questions, criticisms and disagreements are central to scholarship in any field. Theory building is an ongoing process of questioning, refining concepts and testing them in a variety of situations. Therefore, this should propel scholars toward studying this area in more depth and attempt to provide answers to questions raised about the subject of organisation public relationships. In the following section, I demonstrate the gap that this study sought to fill.

2.9 Employee-organisation Relationships: The Academic Gap

Employees have long been recognized as the most critical of organisation stakeholders (Grunig, 1992; Grunig et al., 2002; Kim & Rhee, 2011; Broom & Sha, 2013). While defining employee organisation relationships, scholars distinguish between EORs and OPRs Rhee (2007). OPRs refer to organizational relationships with external publics while EORs refers to internal publics. In defining an EOR, Rhee (2007) emphasized the central role played by communication: An EOR is, "…a connection or association between an organization and individual employees that necessitates repeated communication" (Rhee, 2007, p. 11). According to Shore, Taylor, Shapiro, Liden, Park and van Dyle (2004), an EOR is "an overarching term to describe the relationship between the employee and the organization" (Shore et al., 2004, p. 292).

Gillis (2017) described the employee-organisation relationship as, "a construct for examining the complex perceptions of both employees and employers/managers and their expectations of one another in the workplace…the study of the EOR enables scholars and professionals to analyse contributions of internal communications and organizational development practices on productivity, employee engagement, satisfactions and organizational trust…" (Gillis, 2017).

Rhee (2004) situates her study in the field of organizational communication highlighting the importance of *affective commitment* which is the degree of emotional attachment that employees have with their organisations that informs their decision to remain in the organization. She underscores the importance of building EORs as a necessary precursor to building relationships with external publics; in short, fulfilled employees often leads to fulfilled customers. In this regard, employees as ambassadors build organizational reputation.

In Ni's (2007) qualitative study of EORs in China, she interviewed 58 PR managers and employees in 22 different organisations to find out the nature and perceptions of EORs. By studying EORs from the perspectives of both organisations and employees, her study offered a more unbiased perspective of EORs in contrast to Hung's (2005) study, which focused solely on management perspectives. This current study also explored EORs from both management and non-management perspectives in the two study sites.

Employee-organisation relationships is a multidisciplinary terms that is shared with other fields besides public relations. In human resource literature EORs are linked to job performance, customer service quality and loyalty to the organisation (Kang & Sung, 2017). Further, the EOR has been described as a psychological contract between employee an employer Coyle-Shapiro & Shore, (2007); Tsui & Wang (2002) and involving obligations of reciprocation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) between two parties in social exchange studies.

In an earlier study, Kim (2007) pointed out that antecedents of relationships in organisations have also been little studied. She explored the possible antecedents for internal relationships in 31 purposively selected Korean organisations by combining constructs from organizational justice, internal communication and organizational communication. This study conclusively showed the potential for organizational structure and symmetrical communication to build internal relationships. None of the 31 Korean organisations sampled in Kim's study were NPOs, which underscores the importance this present research.

In a different study, Men and Stacks (2014) explored the role of authentic leadership in developing OPRs. This study is somewhat similar to the one carried out by Kim (2007) in that both examined the construct of symmetrical relationships as key factor. The researchers defined employee–organization relationship as, "…the degree to which an organization and its employees trust one another, agree on who has the rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to the other" (Men & Stacks, 2014, p. 307).

There is a consensus among PR and communication scholars that EOR is a neglected area of study in the whole relationship management milieu (Ni, 2007; 2009; Jo & Shim, 2005). Waters, et al. (2013) assessed the impact of stewardship on EORs and observed that greater involvement from employees and stewardship from employers had a positive impact on EOR assessment.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, scholarly work on relationship management in Africa is lacking. Akpabio (2009) in a review article acknowledged that Western PR research was moving toward relationship building and called for scholars in the continent to develop Africa-centric perspectives on the subject. Interestingly, the journal in which Akpabio's article was published, though dedicated public relations scholarship in Africa, did not contain a single article on relationship management.

Holtzhausen & Fourie (2011) sought to understand the nature of employer-employee relations in the troubled mining sector of South Africa through a case study of one of the leading mining organisations in the country. Their study revealed, amongst other things, that relationships between these two groups were based on exchange rather than communal relationships and were characterized by low levels of trust in the company at all levels.

The literature reviewed so far demonstrates that many organisation relationship studies focus on external publics. A significant number of the studies so far reviewed also focus on relationship cultivation strategies and relationship outcomes. Few of these studies examine internal relationships, moreso in non-profit organisations. This study becomes important on several fronts. First, it seeks to fill an academic gap in studies of this nature in the Africa/Kenyan context. Although some African scholars have made significant contributions on the subject, more studies are needed from the continent. Second, this study fills the gap in the approach to the study of EORs as several of the studies reviewed examine relationships with external publics. This, as demonstrated in the literature review, most scholars examine one or two aspects of the relationship management process. However, this study examines all three stages of the relationship management process. Fourth, in the past most studies on OPRs and EORs have demonstrated a quantitative bias. The qualitative design of this present study fills another gap in studies of this nature. Finally, this study examined perspectives of management and non-management employees. Several of the studies reviewed instead examine one public often yielding findings, which although rich, do not offer that comparative element. While this was not a comparative study per se, the perspectives from the two different groups yielded rich findings.

2.10 Summary

The multidisciplinary nature of relationship management is evident from the discussion in this chapter. This chapter also underscored the need for further research in employee-organisation relationships. Key discussions in this chapter were centred on relationship management theory, key constructs of this theory, antecedents of relationships, relationship outcomes and various applications of relationship management theory and the symmetrical/asymmetrical communication framework.

A highlight of this chapter was an indepth discussion of theories related to and those that have been used to build the relational perspective with a focus on employee-organisation relationships, which is the key concern for this study. I also demonstrated the gap in scholarly work that that this study sought to fill. In the following chapter, I discussed the philosophical assumptions that underpin this study and my research methodology. The chapter also introduces my research approach, describes the sampling strategy used and important ethical considerations in addition to other key methodological matters.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the previous two chapters by detailing the methodology that undergirds this work. Importantly, this study described is exploratory because it sought to investigate, understand and delve into a phenomenon that is often overlooked in PR practice. The nature of the problem under study informed my philosophical position as a researcher and this stance is evident throughout this chapter and indeed, in the entire study. The discussion began with a description of the study sites, followed by a discussion of the philosophical assumptions, research approach, method, sampling strategy, data generation and analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations as they applied to this study.

3.2 The Study Sites

My research focus was two non-profit organisations based in Nairobi County. One is a large healthcare organisation and the other a faith based university where I work. In light of the latter, I discussed my position as a researcher the measures I took as a researcher to combat researcher bias later in this chapter.

The healthcare organisation requested for anonymity in this study and was identified using the pseudonym *Amedicare*. A Google search showed that the name was not in use in the public domain at the time of the study. Amedicare has office and field based employees working on numerous health projects around the country that focus on a range of preventative and curative services including maternal and child health, malaria prevention, water and sanitation amongst others. Amedicare is part of a larger international governmental organization (INGO) based in Nairobi County.

The second organisation is a large faith-based university with campuses in Nairobi and Machakos counties. Faith based organisations (FBOs) draw their mission and values from their faith (Bielfeld & Suhs, 2013). A total of 11 individuals also representing management and non-management staff participated in the study. I work in the University so the question of anonymity though not practical, was respected in this study. This practice is acceptable in research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and well documented in several EOR studies Hung (2005); Kim (2007); Strandberg & Vigso (2016). Following is a discussion of the philosophical paradigm that guided this study.

3.3 Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical enquiry demonstrates that researchers hold varying positions concerning ontology and epistemology. Generally, scholars agree that despite these differences, any serious study must have an in depth discussion about the philosophical assumptions of the researcher and the attendant research approach, method, sampling techniques and data collection tools that follow these assumptions.

My ontological position was that of a relativist rather than a realist since my study was keen to find out the multiple realities of respondents to the subject of this study. Creswell, (2014) says that although philosophical ideas are virtually invisible in research, they influence research and must be identified because they explain why a researcher choses a qualitative, quantitative or mixed research design.

Chapter one of my study detailed my research interest including the problem under study. From an ontological viewpoint, my study investigated the lived experiences of organization managers and employees in regards to employee organisation relationships. The key questions in my study reflect a relativist ontology. Reality, in this regard is subjectively constructed by the participants in this study.

Ontological positions have attendant epistemological perspectives and Coe (2012) makes a distinction between the realist ontology (positivism), which presumes that knowledge about the world is achieved through direct observation and measurement. In contrast, relativist ontology holds that direct knowledge about reality is gained through subjective observation through a process of interpretation.

Epistemologically, the social constructivist worldview (interpretivism) lends itself to qualitative inquiry rather than quantitative. Social constructivists assume that people seek to understand the world subjectively drawing meaning from experience and through a process of interpretation. As an interpretivist, I was interested in the different ways that respondents in this study interpreted the world in which they live and work and the positive and negative influences in their workplaces that in turn affect the quality of relationships. In my research, participant views about the nature and their perceptions of employee organisations relationships in their organisations were sought.

In addition, my philosophical assumption guided my research including my role as a researcher, how I asked questions and sample size (which in qualitative research aims for depth rather than breadth). My assumptions also influenced the overall purpose of this study, which was to describe and explain situations (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) rather than to measure frequencies or generate numerical data as would be the case in a realist ontology and post-positivist epistemology.

3.4 Research Approach

Particular philosophical assumptions have attendant research methodologies, research design, approaches or strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2014). My study used a qualitative approach. Several OPR studies, however, have used a quantitative approach including, Bruning & Hatfield (2002); Jo, Hon & Brunner (2004); Dougall (2005); Taylor & Doerfel (2004); Rawlings (2008) Botha & Waldt (2010) and many others. Lee & Park (2013) used a mixed experimental design to determine websites and blogs that met the criteria of high interactivity.

Despite the fact that OPR studies appear to be overwhelmingly quantitative, there are a growing number of qualitative studies in relationship management. Qualitative studies have been a growing phenomenon since the 1990s and into the 21st century. This is true for researchers who are more concerned with deriving meaning from phenomenon and are more likely to opt for a qualitative approach rather than quantitative. As Patton (2002) noted, qualitative analysis typically comes from the field, where the subject under study "…can be observed, people interviewed and documents analysed…" (Patton, 2002, p.4). Based on this argument, my approach to this study as an interpretivist was therefore appropriate and this position also informed my research method.

3.5 Research Method: Case Study

Yin (2014) is one of the foremost scholars in case study research. In this volume, he defined case study and explains when this method is most applicable. Explanatory and exploratory case studies, he says, lend themselves to "what," "how," and "who," questions. I found his perspective especially helpful to my study particularly in clarifying and reviewing the study questions. Before I proceed, it is important to define a case.

The question about what constitutes a case has been well documented. "…. A case is a noun, a thing, an entity..." (Stouffer, 1941 in Stake, 2006, p.2). Stake says that cases may be managers, productions sites or training sessions but the functioning and activities of the case remains the key focus. In my study, the cases were management and non-management employees and the phenomenon or unit of analysis was relationships.

In a recent volume, Yin (2018) defined case study by dwelling on the focus of the case for instance, individuals, organisations, processes, and so on. Cases are common in qualitative enquiry and researchers decide whether to study single or multiple cases based on their particular interests (Stake, 2005). Through case study research I was able to dig deep into meanings, contexts and experiences of individuals in relation. Case study is a reflective work that requires extended time on site (Stake, 2005) and I have found this to be true of my study. Besides the limitations to this study mentioned in chapter one and highlighted again early in this chapter, case study is a rather slow process for the reasons mentioned by Stake (2005). I believe this is one of the limitations of this method.

Literature on case study research distinguishes among three types of case studies: the *instrinsic* case study aims to unravel the case's unique issues, using "thick description," and not theory building. *Instrumental* case studies provide insights into an issue in comparison to other cases. In *multiple* case studies the researcher chooses to investigate a phenomenon using a number of cases. These *collective* (or comparative) case studies may be carried out jointly or at different times. The two case studies in my study were carried out sequentially. The phenomenon under study in my research was employee-organisation relationships or internal relationships as guided by the research questions. Creswell (2013) suggests that selecting more than one case is beneficial to a study because the researcher is able to examine different perspectives of the problem.

OPR scholars have used both instrinsic and multiple case studies. Stake (2006) suggests among other things, that the cases in multiple case research should be similar in some respects. Both the organisations in my study are NPOs and the key focus of study in both sites are the employees. Further, Stake also makes this important observation:

> Qualitative case study was developed to study the experience of real cases operating in real situations. The case has an inside and an outside. Certain components lie within the system, within the boundaries of the case; certain features lie outside. A few of the outside features help define the contexts or environment of the case. The case researcher considers many features of the case. Some are selected to be studied. Only a few can be studied thoroughly. Because much of the important activity of the case is recognizably patterned, both coherence and sequence are sought. The researcher tries to capture the experience of that activity. He or she may be unable to draw a line marking where the case ends and where its environment begins, but boundedness, contexts, and experience are useful concepts for specifying the case (Stake, 1988 in Stake, 2006, p. 3).

The varying perceptions of the respondents of this study only added to the richness of the study. Stake (2006) pointed out the importance of limiting the scope of the case for a more indepth understanding and later, analysis of the case. However, in the field, I discovered that the factors outside the case were just as important as those inside and that it was difficult to blur the lines between the two, yet their effect on the cases was tangible.

3.6 Target Population

The population of this study are those individuals who work in non-profit organisations in this study, to which the results of this study may be transferred (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The population of interest in this study was management and non-management employees in the two organisations therefore the findings of this research are only generalizable within this context. At the time of the study, Amedicare had a population of about 300 employees, while the University had over 200 employees. For the purposes of this study, I omitted from the study, employees on short-term contracts who may not be able to give the data required for this study. The total population for both study sites was approximately 500 people.

Ackerman, Schmid, Rudolf, Seamans, Susukida, Mojtabai & Stuart (2019) stress the importance of ensuring that in describing the target population of a study, it is incumbent upon the researcher to describe the boundary criteria applied. Most employees in Amedicare, particularly programme staff, were on renewable long-term contracts of two or more years, often determined by specific project funding. However, some long serving employees including administrative staff and a few managers had served in the organisation longer than this. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in the following chapter provide details about employees in both organisations that were useful to this study. A heterogeneous target population participated in the study comprising top and middle level managers, supervisors, project team leaders, faculty, project officers and administrative employees. Other heterogeneous factors included gender, years of service and whether they were part of the decision-making caucus otherwise known as the dominant coalition in public relations repertoire. Considering that this study was examining internal relationships, this target population was best suited for this research.

3.7 Sampling Method

The sampling strategy was guided by my philosophical assumptions and the nature of this study. In chapter one of my study, I mentioned that the data that I sought was sensitive because it required management and non-management staff to discuss their perceptions of EOR in their respective organisations. In my limitations, I suggested that getting this information would be challenging hence my sampling strategy. Qualitative researchers have a wide range of non-probability sampling techniques to choose from including convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, dimensional sampling and snowball sampling. Sampling was carried out on two levels: at the organizational level and the actual participants in this study.

3.7.1 Non-probability Sampling

Case study research points towards non-probability sampling (Stake, 2006). Cohen et al., (2007) suggests non-probability sampling when a researcher decides to target a particular group of people, individuals or sites knowing that they do not represent the wider population. Furthermore, the purposeful selection of sites, individuals helps the researcher understand better the phenomenon under study and the research questions guiding the study (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, non-probability sampling affords the researcher access to the necessary group of people pertinent to the study. One major shortcoming of this method is that it can give a biased view of a phenomenon (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002).

3.7.1.1 Convenience Sampling

Out of the seven organisations approached to participate in this study, only two agreed to participate in this research. The prolonged period gathering data was further exacerbated due to the field-based nature of work in Amedicare, which meant that I had to wait until participants were available. Carrying out the interviews outside of Nairobi was untenable because I was not on study leave and still expected to fulfill my work obligations. Besides that my research permit confined my study to Nairobi County. Sampling criteria included the size of the organisations – both a relatively large. In fact, Amedicare is one of the largest NGOs in Kenya, while the University is one of the oldest in the country. In addition, both organisations have well developed and active communication departments. In view of the challenges mentioned the two organisations were conveniently selected due to the access they afforded to carry out this research.

3.7.1.2 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling, is a non-probability method used to recruit future participants from amongst those within reach (Casteel & Bridier, 2021) and those who may also be hard to reach or hard to ask (Sharma, 2017). Although organisation employees may not fit Sharma's (2017) description of at-risk populations, the potential for harm cannot be overlooked particularly for non-management participants in this case discussing their perspectives about organizational relationships (Hung, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Snowball sampling proved to be especially helpful in the Amedicare when some of the proposed respondents declined to be interviewed after initial introduction. My key informant introduced me to a number of managers. Once I secured interviews with them, they referred me to "future" participants, who subsequently introduced me to other participants. In this way I was able to recruit participants in this organisation.

3.7.1.3 Purposive Sampling

Also known as judgement sampling, purposive sampling involves the intentional selection of participants. I used purposive sampling for the University target population. Participants were selected because they bore the necessary characteristics that provided the answers to the questions of this study (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). As mentioned before these heterogeneous individuals provided a rich mixture of participants from different departments. Purposive sampling is a hallmark of qualitative designs (Patton, 2015) although results cannot be generalized.

3.8. Sample Size for Qualitative Research

There are fundamental differences between the types of data for quantitative research and qualitative research. While quantitative data looks at the relationship among variables and focuses on numerical data, qualitative data is focused on data richness exploring reasons and preferences of the phenomenon under study. Subsequently, this affects the question of sample size which cannot be predetermined Casteel & Bridier (2021) in qualitative designs. Rather qualitative researchers aim for data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015), where no new data is available and researcher should terminate the exercise. There are varying perspectives about how many participants are adequate for qualitative research. Kim (in Casteel & Bridier, 2021) reviewed 55 qualitative studies and found that 75% had samples sizes of 29 or less participants, while 60% of the studies had 20 or less participants. My study had 24 participants, who provided rich data which is described more fully in the following chapter and based on the existing literature on the subject, I presumed that this sample was adequate.

3.9 Data Generation Techniques and Processes

3.9.1 In-depth Interviews

In-depth face-to-face interviews were used with managers and non-management employees. Thomas (2011) suggests that multiple case study researchers choose between parallel (happening simultaneously) or sequential studies. Due to the limitations discussed earlier, my study was sequential and I attempted to follow the same trail for each case.

I modified J.E Grunig's (2011) qualitative tool for assessing relationships. Grunig developed this tool from his original survey instrument (Hon & Grunig, 1999). He asserts that this instrument can be used to assess relationships from the perspective of a manager or any other member in the organisation. He adds that qualitative methods are easier to assess than quantitative methods and facilitate useful comparisons on how two parties in an organisation view relationships; in the context of this study, managers and employees.

In the course of this study, I was privileged to have an email conversation with now retired Emeritus Professor James Grunig. In this conversation, we discussed his qualitative tool as I sought to understand how best it would fit into my study (Personal communication, 2017). I also informed him that I would modify his tool to suit my study purposes and in line with my research questions.

I used indepth interviews which Mears (in Arthur, Waring, Coe and Hedges, 2012) describes as: "…purposeful interactions in which an investigator attempts to learn what another person knows about a topic, to discover and record what that person has experienced, what he or she thinks and feels about it, and what significance or meaning it might have" (Mears, 2012, p. 170). This allowed me to journey into participants' perspectives about internal relationships and understand their experiences, which is a hallmark of the social constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm.

Bailey (2007) distinguishes among three types of interviews: unstructured, structured and semi structured interviews. Unstructured interviews are informal and should be carried out like conversations, where "…one can morph into another" (Bailey, 2007, p. 96). Unstructured interviews allows the researcher flexibility in the time taken per participant, the number of interviews carried out with a single participant, the order and number of questions participants are asked all of which may vary. Unlike unstructured interviews, structured interviews are carefully planned including the precise questions, order they are asked and even probe questions.

My study used semi-structured interviews, which gave me flexibility to adapt Grunig's (2011) qualitative tool to suit my study, while also giving me room to include my research interests. The same interview guide was used for both management and non-management employees, however I made important distinctions when asking questions depending on whether or not the respondents were in management. For example, one of the questions to management was: "In which specific ways does this organisation demonstrate concern for the welfare of employees?" When I asked the same question to non-management staff, I substituted the word "employees" with "you".

The interview guide was pre-tested prior to the actual data collection exercise among two PR officers in the public and private sector and a colleague. Changes were made to initial questions based on the responses. I also pared the number of questions in the interview guide in order to cut out repetitive questions.

Semi-structured interviews have several characteristics of interest to my study. First, they are conversational and target the researcher's interests, yet they have a structure that allowed me to explore several concepts of interest to my study (Bailey, 2007). Since they are not as standardized as structured interviews, they allowed me to vary the manner in which I began each interview usually with a general, non-threatening question such as: "What do you understand by the term employee organisations relationships?" Or, "Out of all the stakeholders in this organisation, which are ones are the most critical?"

Through this, I combined the concepts of active interviews suggested by Hung (2005) and Rubin & Rubin's (2012) concept of responsive interviewing, which allows the researcher to build a relationship with the interviewee in the course of data collection. Interview questions were phrased in order to capture the key research questions in this study, the key constructs of relationship management theory and Grunig's symmetrical (asymmetrical) communication framework and my research interests.

Initially, I had planned to carry out unobtrusive observation and document analysis as additional data collection tools. However, it became clear to me after visiting the two study sites, that the nature of work (mostly field based) and the physical structure of the organisation, would hamper any observation. Employees in both organisation sit in offices and not the modern open plan which would have facilitated unobtrusive observation.

An early request to one of the managers in the first study site, on whether I could carry out observation was declined. Although I made initial observation notes, it became clear in the course of my research that this method was untenable. This factor became a limitation to my research that I had not anticipated prior to carrying out the study and for this reason, I have taken pains to ensure the integrity of this study as discussed in the section on trustworthiness later in this chapter.

Consent was secured from each respondent prior to data collection. Participants confirmed consent by signing informed consent forms (see sample Appendix I).

Interviews were carried out using a recorder. Permission to record was sought from participants prior to recording.

An important aspect of my research was taking detailed field notes. Bailey (2007) suggests that qualitative researchers take chronological detailed field notes containing descriptions of observations and interactions made in the field. Before each interview, I noted any important observations, the environment of the interview and so on. These initial notes were made in a notebook, but I later transferred them to my computer into a more detailed, chronological and reflective diary. “Field notes serve as the repository for the important and even not-so-important data of field research. In addition, Bailey says, in the very act of writing them, you also “create data” (Bailey, 2007, p. 113). Thus far, I have described the data collection process. In the following section, I detail how I ensured the trustworthiness of my study.

In Amedicare I met with my key informant, who is a manager in the organisation, and explained the nature of my study. After our discussion, he wrote an email to selected individuals in the organisation requesting them to take part in this research. This email was also sent out to top management in the organisation, which in public relations terminology is known as the *dominant coalition*, where organizational policies are formed and decisions made (Broom & Sha, 2013). These managers introduced me to other managers and non-management employees as well.

I followed up this initial introduction with an email to the same individuals further explaining the nature of my study including details about the data collection method – in this case – face to face interviews. Initially about 20 individuals agreed to participate in the study, but finally only 13 participated. With these, I explained the proposed duration of the interviews and addressed matters of consent, confidentiality and anonymity. In this way, I was able to arrange for the actual interviews. After initial contact with participants, it took several weeks of back-and-forth emails before I gained trust and secured interviews with both management and non-management employees. In between the emails, I visited the organisation in order to familiarize myself with the physical structure, environment and where possible, to meet with potential study participants. The University is my workplace and identifying research participants was a relatively simple process. I have addressed the matter of researcher bias later in this chapter.

Recorded interviews were sent to my research assistant in Mp3 and M4A format via an encrypted cloud network which not only helped me save time but also provided a safe way to transmit the data. All interviews are stored in two micro SD cards and in my personal computer. The RA was instructed on matters of anonymity and to ensure that the information she received remained confidential.

Raw data from Amedicare amounted to over 220 double spaced pages of transcribed interviews and cumulatively, over 10 hours of interview time, while data from the University generated over nine hours of interview time and over 260 double spaced pages of transcribed interviews. In total, I had over 480 pages of transcribed interviews. All interview transcripts were printed and stored in a dedicated file.

3.10 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a tedious process of making sense out of massive amounts of data. A necessary prelude to data analysis is the researcher's duty to "monitor and report their own analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible" (Patton, 2002, p. 434). I also instructed the RA the importance of capturing important nuances such as silence and hesitation in the transcripts, which added to the richness of data.

A 45-minute interview generated approximately 16 double-spaced pages. Interviews in both study sites ranged between 30 minutes to over one hour. It is worth noting that some of the shortest interviews were with top managers who were very busy.

Earlier I had planned to analyse data using Nvivo. However, I made a decision to manually analyse data for two reasons. First, I believe that manual data analysis puts one in touch with the data (Bazeley, 2013). Second, there was little guarantee that the software would be available for use in my workplace and I was not prepared financially, to purchase the software for my use.

Bailey (2007) suggests a two-step process of coding and memoing. Coding involves analyzing a large amount of data into smaller segments to make it more manageable. In chapter four, I give a detailed account of the coding process that I used in this study. This step involves assigning labels to different items in this large data, while memoing is writing memos to oneself regarding the insights derived from the data. Data was presented using selected excerpts and quotes from participants (in vivo) or voices from the field. In this way important quotes were captured and where relevant, participants' non-verbal communication formed part of the presentation.

The general purpose of this study was exploratory because I sought to understand the intricacies of EORs in the selected organisations and anticipated that the results of this study would inform relationship management theory and PR practice. This study was guided by five research questions:

1. What are the existing relationship antecedents in non-profit organisations?
2. How do internal publics in non-profit organisations construe existing relationship cultivation strategies?
3. What is the PR/communication manager's role in managing internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
4. How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
5. Which factors, within the organisation boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

Bazeley (2013) suggested a data analysis technique that involves several processes that are not so much sequential as they are iterative and reflective. Initial data analysis is what she calls: "The read, reflect, play and explore strategies" (p. 102), which I explain in the following section. In the first step, Bazeley (2013) suggests reading through transcripts, notes or any other data source. She explains this process thus:

> A beginning task in analyzing an item of data is to build a sense of the whole, to capture the essential nature of what was being spoken of or observed, before you break down the detail within it…After an initial rapid reading, read more actively

> by paying attention to and thinking about, each element that is covered…" (p. 102).

While this process favours the researcher with ample time, I found her technique especially helpful because I'm naturally a reflective person. I also discovered that her strategy helped me to tame the rather daunting task of data analysis from the outset.

At the reflection stage, the researcher "saturates" the mind with a particular data item and processes the material. It involves writing reflectively in a journal or making brief memos to oneself about what the data is saying (Bazeley, 2013; Bailey, 2007). A researcher has the option of using post it notes or any other means of memoing.

Initially, I read each transcript while listening to the audio then using the comment option in Microsoft Word, I re-read the transcripts and wrote memos on the margins of the transcripts. These notes included questions about the data itself, any methodological questions that arose, initial codes, and so on. I also noted contradictions, inconsistencies, issues for further research, methodological inconsistencies, questions about relationship management theory and so on.

To deepen my analysis, I also made note of respondents' tone, facial expressions, peculiar or unique expressions and other non-verbal cues. I found that this initial process of read, reflect, play and explore actually was helpful in the early identification of codes and subsequent themes. This process immensely helped me significantly reduce the data analysis period. Throughout the data analysis stage, I read the transcripts several times each time becoming more familiar with the data and gleaning new insights from it.

As a precursor to data analysis proper, Bazeley (2013) suggests the play strategy which includes underlining important phrases, scribbling on the margins of transcripts to show relationships, while exploration involves identifying narratives in the participants' accounts of the phenomenon under study. In this regard, isolated statements, accounts and stories only help to build a narrative that informs the case studies. The exploration process includes taking note of metaphors used by participants, their use of culturally encoded terms, symbols or objects (Bazeley, 2013).

These symbols and expressions that emerged from the data are elucidated under the relevant codes and themes. The explore process involves and is further enhanced by constructing visual and tabular displays and making note of the contexts in which events occurred and is encouraged by other researchers including Miles, Huberman & Saldana. (2013), who underscore the importance data display as a critical part of the analysis process.

The decision to use a collective case study as opposed to intrinsic was deliberate. Collective studies hold several advantages to a study such as this one. First, they provide interesting data that serves to enrich the findings of any study that elicit further questions such as: Why are these (sites or publics) different or similar? This questioning deepens the exploration possibilities, which is advantageous in any study. Furthermore, comparisons sharpen observation of phenomena and enhance a study's capacity to generalize from the data, which is an added advantage for qualitative studies such as this current one (Bazeley, 2013).

In this current study data were compared within case and across the two cases. Comparisons were also observed and recorded across important demographics to this study particularly management versus non-management employees, years served in employment and other comparative aspects yielded by the data.

3.10.1 Developing Codes and Themes

Early in this research, I made a decision to use manual rather than computer aided coding as mentioned previously. Researchers document the obvious advantages of software aided coding over manual including facilitating the storage of data, locating and retrieving coded passages or combination of codes, although the software does not do the actual analysis for the researcher (Bazeley, 2007; 2013). However, manual coding puts the researcher more in touch with the data.

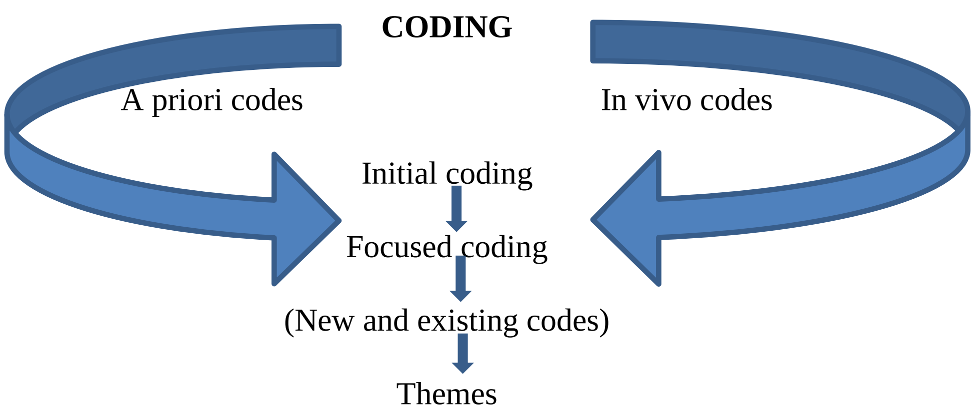
Coding began once this initial process of reading and sifting through the data was complete. Coding is a research term used in data analysis that refers to the process of, managing, locating, identifying, sifting, sorting and querying data." Bazeley (2013). Saldana (2013) describes coding as, "…a process that permits data to be segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation" (p. 9).

Codes range from descriptive (those describing actions, events, experiences), to those categorizing topics or issues. The latter provides a more interpretive and analytical process than the former. In this regard, coding provides the researcher with a means for making connections, framing and interpreting various data (Maxwell & Miller, 2008 in

Bazeley, 2013). The most identifiable coding steps reported by researchers are: initial or open coding followed by focused coding (Saldana, 2013).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the coding process that I followed from initial and focused coding, developing themes through the implications of the findings of this study on relationship management theory.

Figure 3:1: Developing Codes and Themes



Adapted from Saldana (2013)

The codes were outlined and elucidated under the relevant themes. These are presented in the following chapter. Saldana (2013) suggests a more elaborate coding process that includes using both categories and themes as part of focused coding. However, I did not see the need to include categories in addition to themes.

Bazeley (2013) suggests going beyond the mere labelling of codes and categories to microanalysis, which entails looking at how words were used, similarities and differences, incidences, objects, repeated expressions, how experience is variously described and so on. Analysis can be deepened by asking probing questions while looking at the data. Richards (in Bazaley, 2013) suggests: 1) What is interesting about this passage? 2) Why is it interesting? 3) Why am I interested in that? During the second (focused) coding cycle, I identified several themes under which the initial codes were placed. Further analysis reduced these initial codes although I also included sub codes to further clarify these codes.

This second cycle of coding further revealed that some codes fitted better under other research questions. This is hardly surprising given the nature of qualitative interviewing and data analysis. Saldana (2013) suggests that a research question alignment for coding as the better option for theses or dissertations such as this one because the researcher is able to harmonise findings with the relevant ontological and epistemological positions. Subsequently I used *a priori* which are theoretically driven and *in vivo* coding which allow the researcher to use the exact words of participants (Saldana, 2013; Bazeley, 2013). vivo codes allow the researcher to use exact words of participants as codes as illustrated in Fig. 4:1.

During focused coding, microanalysis, as suggested by Bazeley (2013), became critical in order to add to the richness of the study. Focused coding goes beyond labelling codes and their frequencies. In the context of this study, microanalysis involved observing similarities and differences, how specific words and phrases were used, unique participant expressions including verbal nuances, specific scenes, incidences, ideas, experiences and so on became integral aspects for analysis. Finally, the themes were drawn from the codes.

3.11 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers are careful to ensure that their research eliminates or at the very least reduces the chances of bias, which is one of the criticisms advanced by positivists. Epistemologically, the post positivist is concerned about objectivity and validity of data and data sources and applies rigorous measures while carrying out research to ensure the reliability of data and generalizability of findings.

However, the interpretivist uses a different set of rules to guard against researcher bias and spurious findings. The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative researched was first advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1985; 2005) to ensure the authenticity of qualitative research findings (Patton, 2002, 2015). Therefore, the term *credibility* is used for internal validity; *transferability* in the place of external validity and *dependability* in place of reliability and confirmability. Collectively, these criteria are termed as trustworthiness (Patton, 2002). In the following section, I describe the measures that I took to ensure the trustworthiness of my research.

3.11.1 Credibility

The concept of credibility in qualitative research corresponds to checking the internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility asks important questions such as, what steps did I take to ensure that my data was credible? Or how truthful are the findings? How can I, as a researcher, demonstrate that I was there when the study took place? I ensured the credibility of this study mainly through triangulation.

Triangulation

Triangulation is one of the measures used to ensure the credibility of qualitative research and literature distinguished among four types of triangulation: methods triangulation; triangulation of sources; analyst triangulation and theory or perspective triangulation

(Patton, 2002). I also compared the perspectives of the different sets of participants in this study, that is, management viewpoints and employee views in both organisations. Importantly, triangulation in this case, was not to ensure the study yields the same results, rather it was to test for the consistency of the findings (Patton, 2002). Besides, contradictory findings in qualitative research becomes part of the interesting findings that help explain phenomena under study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I also used triangulation of theory by using relationship management theory and the asymmetrical/symmetrical communication framework.

Combating Researcher Bias

Researcher bias was one of the issues that arose especially in regards to the second study site, which is my workplace. The decision to carry out research in this study site is well expounded under the limitations of the study in chapter one and early in this chapter. I ensured that none of the participants interviewed in my workplace were from my department. In addition, the interview guide used for this study was one modified from the original instrument developed by Grunig (2002). In his review paper on researcher bias, Chenail (2011) outlined various measures that qualitative researchers may take to ensure the trustworthiness of their research. These include avoiding value laden statements in the course of interviewing and limiting curiosity to discover what one doesn’t know. The fact that there was an existing instrument limited the chances of researcher bias.

Peer Debriefing

Another aspect of credibility used in this present study was peer debriefing. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined peer debriefing thus: "It is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytical sessions and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). I frequently discussed my work with peers, professors and other researchers and doctoral students including literature, data collection and my field experience. Their feedback helped me to get out of the box of my own thinking through objective and at times painful feedback.

3.11.2 Transferability

Other measures that I took to ensure the trustworthiness of my research was the use of *thick description* to add to the richness of a study (Bazaley, 2013). Although the term, thick description, was initially used in ethnography, it has become an important measure to ensure external validity of qualitative studies. The term was first coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz in 1973 and developed further by Gilbert Ryle. Ponterreto (2006) attempts to explain this complex term:

> Thick description refers to the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action (or behavior) within its particular context. The context can be within a smaller unit (such as a couple, a family, a work environment) or within a larger unit (such as one's village, a community, or general culture). Thick description accurately describes observed social actions and assigns purpose and intentionality to these actions, by way of the researcher's understanding and clear description of the context under which the social actions took place. Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turns leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the

> researchers and participants themselves, and for the report's intended readership. Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of versimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively "place" themselves within the research context" (Ponterreto, 2011, p. 543)

Thick description contrasts with thin description or a superficial account of field study and experience, which is undesirable for the qualitative researcher. I have gone into great detail particularly in this and subsequent chapters dealing with data analysis, discussion and recommendations.

3.11.3 Dependability

External audits involve having a researcher not involved in the research process examine both the process and product of the research study. The purpose is to evaluate the accuracy and evaluate whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data.

Code Recode Strategy

The code recode strategy is a process whereby the qualitative researcher codes the data more than once after allowing a reasonable time between the codings. The process increases the dependability of the data.

I coded the data a minimum of three times during the entire data analysis process. Initial coding was done while listening to the interviews. As I read the transcripts, I scribbled my initial thoughts using the memoing technique, on the margins of the soft copies. I also included initial thoughts and questions that arose about the data, participants, the theories used and the efficacy of the interview guide. After several weeks, I read the transcripts again and paid more attention to the emerging codes, for instance, repeated codes, emphases, peculiarities, metaphors used and so on. I made additional notes on the margins. Finally, I printed the transcripts and reviewed the original codes again.

3.11.4 Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is concerned principally with whether the research can be independently corroborated by other researchers and not just "figments of the inquirer's imagination…" (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). I kept a detailed audit trail throughout the data collection and analysis stages including decisions made throughout the data collection and analysis stages (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). In this thesis, I have kept detailed field notes, all raw data including interviews and transcripts, themes and codes are available for scrutiny. Detailed memos and field notes demonstrate key decisions made prior to, during and after data collection. A decision was made during the coding process to present the findings of my research to top management in the two organisations.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

Permission was sought from my university to carry out the research. Other permissions included a research permit from the government through the relevant ministry and from the two participating organisations. In addition, consent was secured from each participant prior to the interview and consent forms duly signed. Consent was also sought from the participants to record the interview sessions. Participants were also informed about the voluntariness of the research and were given the option to opt out of the study at any point during the data collection phase. Permissions and a sample written consent form are contained in the appendix.

Harm and Confidentiality

Rubin & Rubin (2012) assert that qualitative researchers should not publish material that would harm, embarrass individuals or put their jobs at risk and hence the added ethical measure of using pseudonyms as earlier mentioned. All participants were assured of confidentiality before the study and during data collection. Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned that respondents' confidentiality was secured through the use of pseudonyms. Specific study sites and individuals were not mentioned by name in this study.

In addition, all data collected was stored securely in both hard copy and digital form. Transcribed interviews were sent over a secure and encrypted Cloud network by my research assistant and stored securely in my PC and separately in two SD cards.

Plagiarism

As a researcher I endeavoured to guard the integrity of this work by to citing all academic sources. In addition, this thesis was passed through Turnitin in order to ensure that it met the similarity threshold.

3.12 Summary

In this chapter, I described my philosophical assumptions including ontology and epistemology. I have also described the methodology for my study, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, the critical question of trustworthiness and the ethical considerations I undertook for this study. Further, I described the measures that I took as a researcher to combat researcher bias and other measures that I took to address the limitations of this study including: In the following chapter I discussed the findings of this research.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I presented the data from the 24 interviews carried out in this study. Although data analysis involved an elaborate process of coding, re-coding and theming, only the overall themes are presented in this chapter. The themes are highlighted and are presented along with selected voices from the field.

In *Amedicare*, out of the 13 respondents, six were female and seven were male. Most of the participants were in management although not necessarily part of the dominant coalition. Managers with decision-making power were four, while three participants were in non-management positions. Except for the administrative staff, all other participants had tertiary level education.

The average duration of each interview was between 45-60 minutes. The cumulative duration for all interviews in this organisation was approximately ten hours as shown in table 4:1, which also includes other important details about the participants.

Table 4:1: Study site 1 Demographic Data and Indepth Interview Details

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Years in the organisation	Part of the dominant coalition	Interview Duration	Cummulative duration of interviews
AM_1	F	Project Manage ment	> 10	No	45:22	45:22
AM_2	F	Project Manage ment	< 5	No	56:36	101:58
AM_3	F	Senior manage ment	>5	Yes	39:28	140:86
AM_4	F	Senior manage ment	>10	Yes	52:47	193:33
AM_5	M	Team Leader	>5	No	28:15	221:48
AM_6	M	Senior manage	<10	Yes	55:04	276:52

		ment				
AM_7	F	Project management	>10	Yes	52:23	328:75
AM_8	M	CEO	>10	Yes	20:57	349:32
AM_9	M	Manager	>10	Yes	43:57	392:89
AM_{10}	M	HR Manager	<10	Yes	30:08	423.69
AM_{11}	F	Project officer	>7	No	74:25	497:94
AM_{12}	M	Admin	>26	No	44:24	542:18
AM_{13}	M	Admin	> 5	No	43:54	585:72
						10 hours 16 min

(Source: Author, 2018)

The second study site is a large private university, where I work. Although this single factor simplified data collection, I still encountered constraints including busy schedules, particularly with senior management. Despite the fact that I work there, I was still required to go through normal research permission protocols including securing permission from the academic division and human resource. Altogether, 11 people participated in this study site: seven were in non-management positions, while four were in management and part of the dominant coalition.

All participants in this organisation had tertiary level education. Since they were purposively sampled, I tried as much as possible to get a good mix of faculty, administrative and management employees. A decision was made early not to include support staff including those in security, cleaners and so on because these services are outsourced and therefore not direct employees of the University. Table 4:2 displays some demographic details from the University. Both study sites were in Nairobi for purposes of convenience as well as time and resource constraints. It was expected that these populations would provide a rich mix of processes, people, programmes and interactions (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Table 4:2: Study site 2: Participant Demographic Data and Indepth Interview Details

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Years worked	Part of the dominant coalition	Interview duration	Cummulative duration of interviews in minutes
U_1	M	Senior Management	>20	Yes	41:41	41:41
U_2	F	Team leader	<5	No	60:12	101:53
U_3	M	Senior Management	>5	Yes	60:01	161:54
U_4	F	Faculty	>10	No	60:05	221.59
U_5	F	Senior Management	<1	Yes	30:57	252:16
U_6	F	Administration	>5	No	60:09	312.25
U_7	M	Faculty	>10	No	34:52	346.77
U_8	F	Administration	>20	No	60:09	406:86
U_9	F	Faculty	>10	No	45:30	452:16
U_{10}	F	Administration	<10	No	44:04	496.20
U_{11}	F	Administration	<10	No	56:16	552.36
Total Time						**9 hours 20 min**

(Author, 2018)

Incorporated in this chapter is information from memos and field notes. Although this is not a comparative study, comparisons were made within case, between management and non-management perspectives and across the two study sites to add to the richness of the data. Data was presented using selected excerpts from participants' voices. The study was guided by five research questions:

1. What are the existing relationship antecedents in non-profit organisations?
2. How do internal publics in non-profit organisations construe existing relationship cultivation strategies?
3. What is the PR/communication manager's role in managing internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
4. How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
5. Which factors, within the organisation boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

I began each interview with non-threatening "grand tour" questions as suggested by Grunig (2002) designed to explore respondents' understanding of EORs. These responses are distinct from the research questions. I included them in the numbered list below due to the insights they gave on the subject. However, responses specific to the research questions are aligned against respective questions.

It became clear from the outset that it was difficult to draw the line between communication and relationships. About 40% of the study participants described relationships as interaction and in some instances and communication networks. One of the questions I asked all participants was who are the most important stakeholders in the organisation. External stakeholders came more readily to mind than employees.

4.2 Findings for RQ1: What are the existing relationship antecedents in non-profit organisations?

One of the questions I asked participants under this research question was whether they felt that they had a relationship with the organisation. The majority of participants said that they believe they have a relationship with their respective organisations. I then asked them to identify the relationship antecedents. Relationship antecedents are the reasons or motives that cause organisation relationships to begin. Some of the antecedents were common to both organisations.

4.2.1 Internal Communication as Antecedent

In Amedicare, AM_6, who is part of the dominant coalition, viewed communication as an antecedent to relationships, which points to the fact that internal communication is an important relationship antecedent.

> If there is no communication, then there is no relationship that can be built. Communication can either build or destroy relationships and I actually see a role in people who can effectively communicate and of course you have to consciously decide that you want to build a relationship across the employees. (AM_6)

This excerpt perhaps brings out the relationship between communication and EORs more pointedly. AM_6 also made another important observation about communication by emphasizing that it is first and foremost a skill that some may have while others may not.

> …People who are effective in communication and are conscious of communication can build a relationship, can do it in a much better way than those who are challenged in the way to communicate…(AM_6)

The same relationship antecedent was identified by respondents in the University, however it was expressed differently.

> …Relationships within an organization is the way we interact, the way we communicate, the way you see the other person. Because the way I see you

> determines how I communicate with you and how I relate with you. So if I have a negative perception concerning you, of course how I want to communicate to you, I may do it with attitude, negative of course, but if I perceive or if I have a good perception concerning you, then my communication with you will be much better…(U_8)

In their interactions, employees relate both formally or informally (personal communication) and may utilise established reporting lines or not. Participants who raised this issue mentioned the somewhat complex web of organisation relationships bringing to mind the concept of communication networks. However, it was clear that at times EORs go beyond the established networks so to speak, especially when it comes to the more informal communication which may not be work related.

Interpersonal communication was raised by a different participant who said that EORs requires interpersonal communication and people with requisite skills to establish and build EORs. To extend this idea further, some participants agreed that EORs are greatly aided by making deliberate efforts to get to know those one works with and understand them.

4.2.2 Organisation Mission and Core Values as Antecedent

About 40% of participants in Amedicare believe that their relationship with the organisation begins with the organisation mission. The importance of community was described by participants as part of the overall mission of the organisation. I noticed across management and non-management employees, that this was particularly important as illustrated below:

> …we put communities really at the centre of what we do as an oganisation…we work a lot with disadvantaged and marginalized communities. So it is a big thing, that we are able to make a difference…(AM_3)

A different participant spoke about working “towards a common goal” helping the community. The consistent mention of moving towards fulfilling organizational mission was mentioned quite frequently in this study site.

Another participant emphasised the importance of organisation’s mission by linking EORs to organizational reputation and brand:

> …so they need to reach more beneficiaries with quality healthcare and quality services. (This) would drive the organisation to strike a better relationship with employees…the people who do the work, who represent the community…so it is upon senior management to ensure that the staff represent them well…if the image is messed up out there, it would be so difficult for us to work…(AM_9)

Clarity of the organisation mission affects EORs because if people are not clear about how their work fits into the larger organisation, this negatively affects EORs. This brings in the aspect of “engagement” as brought up by one participant where she describes engagement as: “the way we work and where we are working.” Employee engagement was an important sub code under this current theme.

Participants in the University described the core values of the organisations as the common ground that causes relationships in the organisation to develop. .

4.2.2 Orientation Activities as Antecedent

Closely related to the previous theme is the perception that organisation orientation activities also called “onboarding” is where the EOR begins.

> I think the measures and even how the staff is inducted into the organisation, so when a new staff member joins, it’s how you’re introduced to different parts of the organisation and the team that you’ll be working with and getting to understand what these people are doing and this is how my role might relate to

> this other unit. So, I think that's one way that the organisation has...beginning to create some relationships (AM_1)

However, it was important to point out as one participant opined, that the orientation activities rarely go beyond the induction process which means that there is a gap in terms of building EORs. I discussed the implications of this gap in the recommendation section of this thesis in the following chapter.

In the University, one participant mentioned that EORs begin even before one is employed, progresses as one is inducted into the organisation and continues until one leaves.

4.2.3 Organisation Structure as Antecedent

Some participants in Amedicare such as AM_5 also said that the EOR is initiated at the organisation structure level where the clear reporting lines, vertically and horizontally provide the basis for a work relationship to begin and continue. In this regard, organisation structures and policies on interaction guide reporting relationships and employee behavior.

Interestingly, this theme also emerged in the University. In regards to organizational structure, one participant in middle level management said that structures are only as good as if they allow for two-way communication between employees and top management:

> …there is still the element of structures in place where voices can be heard whether you are looking at the bodies that are there for general staff or for management…I am looking at structures that enhance communication, structures that allow for ideas to be discussed or voices to be heard. I look at structures like

> having bodies or union where, I mean, general staff will meet or management will meet…(U_2)

4.2.4 Internal Relationships Begin at the Department/Project Level

About 15% of the participants in Amedicare said EORs begin at the department or project level. This has important implications for the team leader, project managers of different projects and their role in initiating and maintaining EORs.

> …Our organisation is vast, I can say it's mammoth…(the) "vastness of the organisation means it can take a long time for the organisation to come down and listen to what I have to say because of the diversity and the priorities in place…it takes time for the organisation to feel each and every person (AM_1)

She said that it was easier to discuss issues at the department/programme level rather than at organizational level which is very big. The department then becomes an important focal point to build EORs since issues employees face are articulated at the department level before being escalated to top management.

In an apparent contradiction, AM_2, pointed out that the organisation only initiated EORs when there was a crisis in the organisation:

> I would say that there is a reactionary type of response to building relationships usually when something is going wrong, that's when you get to see that ...or let's have this conversation. I don't see, maybe because I'm new, I don't see a deliberate effort (AM_2)

4.2.5 Work Roles and Relationships as Antecedent

AM_7 viewed internal relationships from the perspective of work roles. She defined EORs as working together.

> With my line manager… we can relate in different ways. The individual personality comes into play because we can relate on an individual level, but at

> the end of the day it's about the organisation, my role and the role of the people who report to me very much influences the way the relationships actually work.

Interdependence was well brought out by AM_{13}, one of the lower cadre employees, who believes that his role in the organisation is just as important as any other. He viewed his role as a messenger, as an important link between the donors and the communities the organisation serves.

AM_1 spoke about her leadership role as similar to the biblical Moses transcending programme management where she ensures that her team's issues are taken care of. She pointed out that a poor relationship with her team would negatively impact organizational reputation. EORs are build around work and work teams and the work includes writing proposals, attending conferences, meetings and so on, which provide a framework for relationships to flourish. This response blurs the lines between antecedents and relationship cultivation.

In the University, U_9 said *EORs* are interdependent and should foster co-existence since they are essentially about working relationships within departments and also at the larger organisation level. It was clear from both study sites that employees are critical for organizational success. The theme of working relationships which was quite strong with participants in the first study site was only marginally mentioned by participants in this study site.

4.2.6 Trust as Antecedent

Trust emerged is an important relationship antecendent in the University. U_1, who was part of senior management pointed out that trust is the basis for internal relationships. A relationship devoid of trust becomes difficult to initiate let alone build.

4.2.7 Organisation Type as Antecedent

The concept of organisation type as a relationship antecendent is not new in EOR studies, however in this study site, organisation type was articulated in relation to the expectations that employees have of a Christian organisation. One phrase that was mentioned by 30% of participants in the Universtity was, "…this being a Christian organisation…" This single phrase carried the weight of the high expectations from employees about how a Christian organisation ought to run.

> …when you say that you are of faith it means that every aspect of who you are and what you do cannot be looked at separate from your faith. In other words there should be no dichotomy between who you are and who you claim to be as a faith person, in this case a Christian, which means therefore that everything you do must be, must adhere so to speak with what you believe and what you profess as a Christian, which means therefore that to me it is not a matter of saying, I am here in a Christian institution, should I do these things?...So (our relationships) They should be guided by our Christian principles and the understanding of what the Word of God expects of us…(U_1)

This and other similar responses showed a dichotomy between expectations for how EORs should be in a Christian organisation versus the reality. U_1 further reiterated this point and underscored the importance of the Christian lifestyle in the organisation.

> …The remedy is if only we are true to who we claim to be. I see when you say that you are a Christian, being a Christian means a Christian life because Christianity is a lifestyle. Christianity is not a set of beliefs, is not a set of, you know, rules, guidelines and all that. It is really who we are in terms of who Christ has made us to be. And you see that is embedded within, when Jesus like for example talks about the Great Commandment, love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all that, and love your neighbour as yourself, that basically is the epitome of Christianity. It is love, and love is relationship. So if we are serious with our Christian faith, then that is to me where the beginning point is, which

> means therefore that for me I would say I think maybe we are not serious with being Christians… U_1

4.2.8 Organisational Leadership as Antecendent

That organizational leadership plays a critical role in building EORs is well documented in relationship management studies. This theme was captured well by U_3 in the following excerpt:

> …And the leadership is the one actually that is responsible of *(sic)* making sure that people relate in the way that it is going to bring productivity for the institution…. So there is a sense where the leadership as far as organizations are concerned plays the bigger role… So you could find there is maybe the CEO should be, as the higher task, the bigger task of now creating a big environment where all these relationships could be nurtured. The reason as to why the CEO comes in uniquely is because he is the vision bearer at the end of the day. So he is supposed to structure it in a way that it is going to tilt all the relationships under him to function or work towards the vision that he has for the university. So that you find our working relationship here is aimed at making Daystar University a great university in Africa…(U_3)

4.3 Findings for RQ2: How do internal publics in non-profit organisations construe existing relationship cultivation strategies?

Relationship cultivation activities are those deliberate efforts (mostly communication strategies) that organisations use in order to nurture OPRs, and in the context of this study, internal relationships. Among other questions, I asked participants to describe and give their perceptions about existing relationship cultivation strategies. Responses are described against the specific relationship cultivation construct of access. Responses from participants in the two organisations are juxtaposed in order make useful comparisons.

4.3.1 Access

Access refers to communication channels provided that are provided by the organisation to facilitate communication with (in this context) internal publics. Participants in

Amedicare identified several relationship cultivation activities. It is important to mention from the outset that some of these activities were as a result of the internal communication culture vertically (between management and employees) and horizontally (amongst employees).

Under this theme, participants identified several relationship cultivation strategies: 1) Orientation activities; 2) Monthly staff tea; 3) Face to face meetings; 4) Mediated communication including Skype, memos, emails, publications on the intranet; 5) End of year meetings; 6) Project progress reports and visits; and 7) Management visits, 8) Open door policy.

As expected in large organisations such as this one, internal communication was mostly mediated through emails, memos, phone calls and the intranet being the most common. Participants generally expressed appreciation for the various relationship cultivation strategies. Some of those highlighted were the monthly staff teas; open door policy, team building initiatives, celebrating birthdays among others.

The term "open door policy" was mentioned by 38 % of the participants in Amedicare as common practice among several managers that gives employees access to management. Open door policy was linked to yet distinct from management visits and was largely appreciated as a relationship cultivation strategy. Open door policy was described as a factor of positive leadership culture that was instituted by a past CEO and has since been embraced by many managers and organisation leaders.

> …I think senior management relates more with the top most managers than the rest of the staff. Because to us it would be very rare to actually engage the senior

> management. But one person that I have found very open is the last two country directors, the top managers of the organization have an open door policy which we didn't have before…(A_{11})

This relationship cultivation method was appreciated by non-management employees because it empowered them and embraced all employees regardless of position. However, AM_{12}, a lower cadre employee however pointed out that "…the door was not entirely open…" depending on the manager. Open door was also identified as an important avenue to address issues.

Team building was described more of a reactive rather than proactive measure:

> …I would say that there is a reactionary type of response to building relationships usually when something is going wrong, that's when you get to see that or, let's have a conversation…I don't see a deliberate effort, like let's have staff lunches or let's do things together…(AM_2)

Participants expressed an appreciation and a desire for more face-to-face (FTF) communication of which one form is management visits. There was stark contrast between management and non-management perspectives. AM_6, a senior manager identified management visits as one way to walk around, observe, see and listen to people. $AM_{8,}$ another senior manager, also highlighted the importance of informal field visits as a way of showing concern for employees' welfare.

In contrast, one non-management participant opined that based on past experience, management visits were at times, regarded with suspicion and fear:

> …. Sometimes when you see senior management meeting or calling you for a meeting you know it is maybe something bad is going to happen. That's how we see it, which to me it should not be like that. We think, now, because the last time we were called for a senior management meeting is when we were being told people are being laid off. So when you hear about them, it has to be a crisis to be managed. So to me that one I don't, I think it should be so, we should be engaging on a daily, often, frequent communication to a point when you call us for a

> meeting we don't see it as a disaster or something bad is about to happen. You can even call us for a good... (AM_{11})

The above response, I believe was as a result of several extenuating factors including the fact that this particular department had recently undergone a retrenchment exercise that adversely affected EORs. The participant talked about the fear of management visits or meetings because she linked these efforts to bad news. Subsequently, she suggested that management visits and meetings not only be convened to give bad news but also to share good news.

Management visits, while not a requirement in organisations and this one was no exception, are an important way to connect with employees and build EORs. But they are also dependent on individual personalities of those in management. This is where organizational leadership comes in as the entity that sets organizational culture. I discussed this in the next chapter, where effective organizational leadership and the resultant organizational culture set the stage for EORs and the effects trickle down to the rest of the staff.

Internal communication channels were also identified as some of the ways that organisation builds EORs. Newsletters, intranet and other internal publications were mentioned by participants as one of the ways that employees hear from management. Newsletters were especially appreciated as a channel to highlight the activities of little known programmes. Evidently donor funded organisations operate in a fluid and often uncertain environment where funding is not always assured. One participant saw his role as an important mediator between the community the organisation serves and the donor and this became an important relationship antecendent. He also implies the importance of stewarding the resources entrusted to the organisation by the donors.

> So we are the kind of mediators. The donor will release money to the small or the poor people through Amedicare. So we have to get that money and exercise what the donor wants to the community. And after doing whatever the donor likes or wants, the community will communicate back to the donor whether the intention or the money which was being released, whether it took part or it has done an impact to the community. (AM_{13})

AM_4 made the important observation that in comparison to profit making organisations, nonprofits do not invest as much in building internal relationships. In this regard efforts to build EORs are perceived as subject do donor funding, where NPOs may find it difficult to defend relationship cultivation activities in their budget lines. Although she also mentioned a culture of laxity in nonprofit organisations, it was not clear whether this was linked to the perceived minimal effort placed on EORs.

Participants in the University outlined several relationship cultivation activities including: 1) VC Tea, Family Day; 2) department retreats; 3)staff meetings; 4) Friday dress down policy; 5) branded T-shirts and diaries, which build a sense of ownership with the organisation.

The two activities singled out by the majority of the participants were the Vice Chancellor Tea and Fun day. The Vice Chancellor Tea was an activity that brought together employees and the senior management including the Vice Chancellor for fellowship and informal gathering around tea. A question and answer session formed part of this strategy. This relationship cultivation strategy was initiated several years ago although it was not clear to participants at the time of the study, whether it still existed.

The other frequently mentioned cultivation activity was the *Funday* or as some participants chose to call it, the social event; a team building activity that was meant to draw people together. The University initiated this event where, University employees (including management and students) got together on a weekend for fun and sports. Again, it was not clear to participants at the time of the study, whether this event was ongoing. Over 30% of the participants at the University mentioned that these two activities are inconsistent and sporadic. U_4 was not sure what name was given to this activity but summed up her thoughts as follows:

> Well, it was fun, but I think we don't have to have a hit and run, we need consistency. We need to buy in people. It was good beginning though. We should not have stopped we should have continued. (U_4)

U_6 shared a similar perspective about the two events.

> First of all it was only sold to us ... we see it on email and it is students who communicate. ... I am not sure...No one wants to spend there on Saturday. *(Laughs)* And then unfortunately half of the staff there were 40 years and above. Who wants to go and play with children, you know? *(Laughs)* (It was) not really marketed well and *(silence)* probably it is not custom made…(U_6)

This response pointed towards a greater need for involvement of employees in relationship cultivation efforts. This and other responses about these cultivation activities points towards the need for more strategic communication that is informed by research. Interestingly, U_6 included the established culture of visiting the bereaved as a relationship cultivation activity. From this response it was clear that welfare activities inadvertently become a relationship cultivation effort that tips the EOR scale one way or the other depending on how the effort was perceived.

Some of the participants mentioned that the Fun day lost its desired impact because of the perception that employees were required to attend as opposed to it being a voluntary event. Power relations became evident in the following response:

> You must come and participate. I think the idea in itself was a good idea and it helped people to bond. I have also seen, I think both the students and the staff and faculty let go for a while and you know, had a bit of fun together. And I think that is a good way of helping people to come together…I am not sure. It is the gesture itself I find good, but it doesn't seem to be well received by most people. They stand around looking uneasy, wondering, you know, why did they have to come. (U_9)

U_{10} and U_8, while sharing the similar sentiments, took it further by saying that cultivation activities may not work where EORs are damaged.

> …The heart of the people is not there…for me that is a holiday. I sit at home and wash my things. And if people are coming to attend, they will attend it physically on *(sic)* body, after eating they start looking at the time.

Some participants, while appreciating the relationship cultivation efforts were not sure about the envisioned objectives. I also thought it was curious that participants called the event by different names: We Are One; social event; Fun Day. Why the difference? Was this part of the lack of clarity? Or, as U_6 above pointed out, could it be that the event was not well marketed? It would appear that there assumptions made by management about employees' involvement in these activities.

...what is the objective of a Vice Chancellor's Tea? Is it that I see a human face of the top leadership? Is it that it is communicated to me where we are heading? What exactly is the objective? I don't think the objective has been clear. I think maybe there needs to be a memo that is clear that the objective, even as you attend this, the objective of this is to interact with the vice chancellor and you know, yeah. Because I may just come to have the tea, say hey to the people I know and then leave. But what is the overall objective? I think that personally, maybe I am the one who hasn't understood it. (U_2)

U_2 raised the issue of poor communication. The assumption that people knew or would understand and appreciate cultivation efforts without adequate information was a hurdle for management. The question then becomes, what was the communication to employees regarding the VC Tea for instance?

4.4 Findings for RQ3: What is the communication manager's role in managing employee-organisation relationships?

Given the importance of internal relationships, one of the questions that I asked was: Who is responsible for managing employee-organisation relationships? The responses below reveal that most participants felt that the role belonged to the human resource manager and not the PR/Communication Manager.

In Amedicare, it became apparent early in the study that the communication manager role was relegated to dealing with external publics, organisation branding and media relations. Although the Communication Manager in this organisation declined to participate in this research, it was clear from all the other participants what her role was neither strategic (informed by research) nor did it include EOR cultivation. Instead, participants reported that publicity, preparing speeches for organisation occasions, marketing the organisation to external publics and media relations, which points to a technician role rather than strategic role.

Nearly all participants declared that the custodian of EORs was the human resource (HR) manager. These participants saw the HR role extending beyond hiring, firing, "onboarding" (orientation) activities and capacity development to that of building EORs.

Participants, however, were unable to articulate how relationship building ought to be carried by the HR manager.

This gap in understanding was evident in the responses given about the perceived role of HR in building and nurturing EORs. One participant said that HR contact with employees rarely went beyond induction activities, while another said that HR was not proactive about EORs except in crisis situations.

Other participants said that the role of building and maintaining EORs should be carried out by top management, while a number also said that it was everybody's role to build EORs.

These responses hold important implications for both PR theory and practice. One of the questions that arose from this discussion is the apparent contradiction, especially between HR and PR roles. Where do the two roles converge and how could they work together? What are the important distinctions between the two roles in in organisations specifically in regards to internal communication and EORs?

Similarly, in the University was the belief by participants that the role of building and nurturing EORs lies with the HR department based on the perception that since HR deals with the "human aspect" or work, then it follows that the role of the department extends to EORs and internal communication.

> …I think for me the biggest stakeholder that I feel needs to be in charge of that is the human resource department because there will always be suspicion between management and general staff. So a human resource department is supposed to create a platform. Management focus will be on leadership. They may not really

> focus on people. And people ideally may fear whatever comes down from management. But I would put the biggest burden on the HR department when it comes to ensuring that, you know, there is smooth communication between, and trying to create that trust because that trust cannot always be there in so many organizations, but when HR has a firm hand on how things need to be done, then I believe that a lot of progress can be made. Because HR ideally deals with the human aspect of the workplace…(U_2)

Other participants said the role of building EORs lay with management including middle level (that is, heads of departments, deans and other team leaders).

> … it all begins at the top leadership because organizations thrive and fall on leadership. So the top part, what the top leadership demonstrates is what will be cascaded to the operational levels of management, the supervisors and the way down to the shop floor. So if that is not demonstrated at the top it will play in the middle, all the way to the bottom. And therefore I would say the responsibility lies with the top leadership, starting with the CEO…(U_5)

Approximately 20% of the participants said that the role of building and nurturing EORs falls with the communication/public relations department and this can be credited to the fact that they have both studied public relations and understood where this role should fall. U_7 noted the tension between HR and PR in regards to this stating that

> …Ok, maybe the application here is such that relationships or corporate affairs deals more with external publics or e.g. students, sponsors, they tend to focus more on that. But I guess there's a way to bring in public relations and play that role but I guess there also needs to be a kind of agreement that we know where does HR stop and where does public relations department pick… (U_7)

4.5 Findings for RQ4: How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships?

Over 80% of the participants from both study sites indicated that there is little if any distinction between internal communication and internal relationships.

Symmetrical communication uses open communication, listening, feedback and positive reinforcement. This present research explored the first three aspects and participants responses from the two organisations are discussed below.

4.5.1 Open Communication

Earlier in the chapter and under the first research question, I mentioned that several participants equated EORs with communication. Further to that important discussion was theme of open communication. Participants talked about an existing communication policy in the organisation that encouraged open communication. Participants gave varying, and at times, conflicting responses, describing internal communication as one way, two-way, open and top-down. Following were some of the participants' voices on this subject.

AM_6, a member of the dominant coalition generally described communication as open and two-way, which he credited to the HR and not communication department.

> …HR is important because the policy and the push for open door and the push for open conversation, at some point, most likely was advised by HR. Having a robust HR system, in my opinion is a plus in helping employee relations and seeing the value in that and having a robust HR to develop the policy and then the physical things, the meetings and all that… I would like to see employees eh raising more issues. Something is not working very well. Raise them more. They come. They come, but once in a while. Issues in terms of this is not working, but also issues in terms of we can achieve more … I would like to see more coming from employees. It could be a walk in. It happens once in a while, but I think I would want to see that happen. It could come in terms of an email…

The above excerpt raised several important questions. What is the role of the communication manager in regards to managing internal relationships? This question is answered in the responses from participants under the fourth research questions. Another question raised from the above excerpt is: If communication is open and bolstered by open door policy as described in the next code, why don't employees exploit those avenues? Could there be power relations issues or were the parameters of "open communication" unclear to employees?

Another participant, AM_5, who is a team leader, but not part of the dominant coalition also described open communication as key to nurturing EORs.

> …Since we have a very open communication, then employees really feel uneasy to communicate this. I haven't seen any communication coming in form of a threat and then people are like fearing ... those kind of communication where a new employee has been brought onboard, there is communication to everybody. It really makes people feel, so I have been introduced to all this. And that one again we will have staff meetings, communication is very open, staff are given a chance that if any of you would wish to say. And so communication really is very open within the organization…(AM_5)

In contrast to the above positive views of internal communication, AM_2, who is also in management described communication as top-down and especially inadequate in communicating decisions affecting employees work. She gave an example of arbitrary top-management decision that affected her team's ability to work effectively.

AM_4, who is part of the dominant coalition, raised the issue of engagement saying that at times unpopular decisions must be made by management and that it is not always possible to engage employees. The use of the term "engagement" forms part of the discussion with a separate research question because it was clear that the word has various interpretations in this current study. Employee engagement is a growing area of study in employee communication studies that has a bearing on OPRs and EORs.

Another manager, while describing open communication, described it as a factor of organisation culture. She also recognised the important place of the informal grapevine avenue of internal communication.

> …So the communication, well, I would say, it is open. It is relatively open. Our culture here is quite relaxed. We also have of course, as any other organization, a lot of formal and informal channels of communication. So I can say generally, I wouldn't say there is restriction, there is free flow of information. But then of course there is also the grape vine that exists *(*LAUGHS*)* which is very healthy… Of course it may start through the grape vine but you see eventually there is that formal communication that comes out, and that then also sort of puts people at ease and you understand… (AM_3)

The formal channels of communication come in to confirm or disconfirm what is in the grapevine. Earlier in this discussion, non-management employees mentioned anonymous notes as drawing management attention about issues they were facing.

AM_5 said that the practice of open communication and open door policy as shown in the following excerpt, builds EORs and breaks down the barriers between management and non-management employees.

> If I want to go and see any senior person I don't have to book an appointment, I just walk in and have a discussion. Very open for discussion. At one point I found there was something I needed to discuss with the CEO. I just went and told the secretary, I wish to see the CEO. And I went in. He welcomed me very openly, we had a discussion and then just went out. Few directors there. So I think it is quite very cordial in terms of ... But again I need to say that in just any organization people have different, let me call them personalities. There are some people may be who feel that those are high levels and we don't want to ... But every time I have even seen we have meetings ... the group CEO actually says, take it easy. If you want to come to my office, feel free to come to my office. I think there is a very cordial relationship between the other staff and also the senior management (AM_5)

The grapevine provided a way for employees to discuss e.g. management decisions or organisation policies, while the anonymous notes afforded a non-threatening way to raise issues affecting EORs such as a difficult supervisor, fraud, or any other issues that employees were afraid to raise in a more public forum and using established internal communication avenues. The fact that employees could raise issues in any of the established channels, AM_3 said was an indication of an open communication culture in the organisation. AM_{11}, another non-management employee positively linked open communication to improved performance especially along non-management employees.

Perceptions about internal communication at the University yielded different responses. Over 60% of the participants described internal communication as one way or top down pointing towards asymmetrical rather than symmetrical communication.

> I think for me I would look at it more as dissemination of information, getting information out to the entire community. Most of the communications we get are on email. That is why the less formal meetings like the teas can be used for some of those communications. But most of the times it will be a memo, an attachment that has information that needs to be disseminated and of course when management meets then at a department meeting the manager will report what was discussed in the meeting. Is it collaborative? To a certain extent. Can it be better? Yes it can. And I think now there are technology, there are forums that we can use to promote more two way communication between management and staff (U_2)

The word “dissemination” in itself denotes one-way communication.The use of tout Grunig’s (Hunt & Grunig, 1984) older model of internal communication. The excerpt above and the one below portrayed little room for interaction in existing internal communication platforms, in this case, email. Similar sentiments were echoed by other participants in the University.

> The communication tends to not invite dialogue. It mostly informs. And here I am talking about communication that is between the management and the community. I am not talking about one on one. It tends to inform, it doesn’t invite dialogue or questions …the way it is packaged. (U_9)

U_3 opined that the manner in which internal communication was structured at times resulted in speculation, misinformation and miscommunication.

> …I think that's a structure that needs to be well managed so that at least everybody is made aware of what is happening, because communication is intended to inform. If for example there are decisions that are taken, say, by management, they should be communicated effectively. But you see again sometimes if you don't have an effective channel of communication, that gives room for all manner of speculation and sometimes even misinformation or miscommunication. Of course there has been an effort to ensure that through the corporate affairs communication is made on issues that relate to whether it is management decisions and things like those…(U_3)

> …The way you get an email to tell you, this is going to be the orientation program, just to notify you on that. There is no forum where maybe staff is allowed to discuss and say, how can we do orientation better? Or maybe this department wants to do this in a different way. So it is always about just being notified about things…(U_{11})

> …we have a tradition where we have information being passed from uh the top leadership, the management, which comes through what we call uh fortnightly, production of *Infospot*. It's an internal newsletter that has communication that kind of gives people what is happening. Sometimes it could just be programmes, but sometimes it has uh who has joined the University. Who has left the University and what is the University is doing. I guess …so communication is critical to enabling the employees to understand where the organisation is going and certain changes within the organisation. And many times when communication is not taking place, when there is no communication, then, there would be room for people to speculate doing uhh grapevine, rumours. And kind of speculating on what is happening. I think it's healthy to have information or communication between the organisation and the employees. I would think that we can even take it further by having a channel where the employees can also communicate to the organisation, because I think what Infospot does, it is a management communicating down tool to employees, but there is no avenue or channel through which the employees can respond or even give feedback to such. There is the clusters of people who are allowed to communicate to the entire community, but if you have any information, you need to go through certain people to get to relay that information. Which is actually curtailing flow of information and I think that is negative… (U_{10})

The above responses were consistent across management and non-management participants, where there was a consensus about the information gap in internal communication channels in this study site. One participant mentioned one incident she recalled, where there was open communication, when the CEO gave employees a brief on some of the challenges the organisation was facing and asked people to pray. This one incident was also mentioned by other participants as an example of the importance of open communication regardless of whether the information was negative or positive. Both management and non-management staff pointed out that part of the problem with internal communication in this organisation was the communication channels. In order not to break this thought, next I present participant's assessment about the existing feedback channels.

Nearly 50% of the participants indicated that internal communication is often inadequate and incomplete. Among other things, inadequate communication foments mistrust and leads to speculation.

> Sometimes there is need to have a history or to have more details sent out to employees before even a memo is sent. I think a memo should just firm up what has already been discussed, especially for crucial matters. It may not apply to everything, that will not be practical, but there needs to be some of, preparing the landing space for the communication to come out, which is very key it being a communications specialist that's very key when it comes to communication because it only determines whether the communication is received…(U_2)

> …communication is critical to enabling the employees to understand where the organisation is going and certain changes within the organisation. And many times when communication is not taking place, when there is no communication, then, there would be room for people to speculate doing uhh grapevine, rumours. And kind of speculating on what is happening (U_7)

Most participants mentioned that communication was inadequate during the student boycott that took place recently.

> …I think we lack a lot of information as staff or forums where we can interact freely and get information about what is going on in the university, what is our direction or what is happening. A good case in point is the strike that happened

> last semester, and staff were in the dark about many things. It was like students had more information than the staff. And then even the staff were not getting any information from the organization ... the organization's position on these things. What are you supposed to say or even communicate to our clients? So it was coming in very late when now there was a crisis meeting that was called for. So I think if there were forums for us to communicate and inform us, then it would really have helped us. I think we don't have a way in which we deliberately communicate with staff, and even just bring the staff together to interact… (U_{11})

It appears, from responses of participants, that the communication gaps mentioned under the previous code were an aspect of organisation culture, which was discussed more fully under the third research question as a factor that negatively affects EORs. However, participants identified other aspects of internal communication that have become part of organisation culture. Several participants spoke of a poor reading culture in the organisation, where at times, people neither read not respond to emails, which in turn affects work relationships.

Several participants also raised the importance of effective internal communication to facilitate work, which in turn affects work relationships. Some participants articulated the importance of clarity and etiquette in internal communication as having an impact on EORs.

> …But my communication with you should be able to clearly leave you with proper understanding of what you are supposed to do. So at the end of the day does it guide you? Does it enable you to perform your duties successfully? Because I can also communicate with you in a way that you don't understand what you are supposed to do. At the end of the day you are failing because you lack clarity or you lack proper understanding of what you are supposed to do. If somebody deliberately withdraws that information from you, then they have other intentions. But somebody who is interested in your performance and is key with seeing success as far as the institution is concerned, then will communicate properly so that you will also understand what you are supposed to do...at the end of the day that affects a lot of things; performance, productivity, efficiency. Because for example we have people who are confrontational in their communication … (U_3)

Participants made several suggestions about how the relationship cultivation activities and internal communication may be improved. Over half of the participants said the cultivation efforts should be better communicated and more regular as opposed to being sporadic. Besides this, relationship cultivation efforts should be explained and as one participant said, management should involve employees in decision making about those efforts. Participants outlined the importance of internal communication as a tool that facilitates work and work relations (the converse of this being true). Others highlighted the fact that communication is a learned skills as opposed to being innate. Internal communication was further described as an element of organisation culture, which was negatively described as sporadic and contradictory. These perspectives had a bearing the fifth research question which explores relationship outcomes.

Over 40% of the participants appreciated department retreats as a way to build EORs, but were unsure whether they would continue. General staff meetings were also isolated as another means of building EORs rather than meeting when things were going wrong. Generally there was an appreciated of FTF meetings. Other suggestions for change in regard to relationship cultivation strategies are outlined below:

The objective of the VC Tea should be clearly communicated to employees, be consistent and allow more interaction. There was the suggestion that employees could send questions ahead of the event to facilitate adequate time for response.

Another suggestion was that relationship cultivation strategies be honed at the department level before moving to the larger organisation. Department meetings and retreats were singled out as effective strategies in that regard. One participant mentioned that the previous Christmas retreats of the earlier years have been replaced by the more impersonal Christmas voucher in recent year and even that is not guaranteed.

U_1 suggested of management, "… to be a servant. Be like Jesus. Go to where people are. Pick them up and grow with them…" which was a direct reference to one of the core values of the University, servant leadership.

U_{11} suggested more staff meetings to create inter-departmental rapport as the cure for fragmented relationships because, in her opinion, employees in different departments rarely interact. Several participants suggested more forums for employees to be involved in decision making.

4.5.2 Feedback: Listening and Voice

Feedback is an important aspect of symmetrical communication particularly the constructs of listening and voice. In Amedicare AM_{11} compared best practices in other organisations with Amedicare pointing out that the latter should embrace symmetrical communication practices that gives voice to employees at all levels of the organisation. Importantly, she said that Amedicare does not have a forum for employees to raise issues with management as other organisations do, in this inspite of the established feedback mechanisms discussed earlier and highlighted by other participants.

> …let's say for example, if our director is managing us and maybe we are not working well, but because our director is the top most, we would have nowhere to go, to give our grievances for example, or even acknowledge this director as the best performing or very supportive. There is no that forum to actually share that kind of information. So to me if HR would do, like there are other organizations I have seen who do such people relations, they have like a tool where they send…they use a tool (anonymous) where they find out about how is your work, what is working and what is totally not working…(AM_{11})

One of the crucial aspects of feedback to (especially) management communication or raising issues was anonymity and this was raised by both management and non-management employees. Participants evaluated some the formal feedback channels in the organisation.

The suggestion box was identified by several participants as one crucial way for employees to give feedback to management. However, its effectiveness is brought into question judging from the responses below.

> There is this box. It is somewhere around the security office. I don't know...You know sometimes we have staff tea, and it is supposed to be opened around that time, just before people go for the staff meeting. And sometimes it doesn't have anything. But people tend not to use it. People tend to be more towards sending anonymous emails or anonymous tips, you know and dropping it under somebody's door, you get in and find it... (AM_4)

AM_4 mentioned the feedback channels and also the informal (preferred) channels for feedback devised by employees such as anonymous notes slipped under the door raising a grievance especially about ones immediate supervisor.

The fact that she was unsure where the suggestion box was situated brought into question its usefulness as a feedback mechanism including the fact that she also jokingly suggested that it should be situated in a more private place where people could use it in relative privacy.

AM_{12}, who is in non-management expressed dissatisfaction with how the Box was used during staff meetings, while making suggestions on how it could be improved as a feedback tool. I asked him to describe some of the issues that employees raise through suggestion books and how effective this avenue was.

> …Some will write about salaries, promotions that some are not given out fairly – yes - and salaries. ..It helps but the only problem with that avenue is that the person who opens it is not a junior person, it must be a senior person. So when they are going through these contents, maybe some sensitive issues they don't bring them out. LAUGHS DERISIVELY.…They do editing. They cannot bring everything because sometimes they are attacked directly. We are told not to mention names, but sometimes some people get so annoyed that they write the names. ..Yes. It is not very open, it is selective. Even if it were you, you cannot open a box if you see something against you AM_{12}

As a follow up question to this response, I asked AM_{12} to give suggestions on how the suggestion box could be better utilized.

> The way it should be done, me I am thinking and I had even said it, when opening this box, we should have about three people. Junior staff, middle class and maybe senior so that these things are put on the table. Then you go through them one by one. So if none is mentioned, you go and mention. But if you give it to one person, automatically *hautasikia* (you will not hear about it)… AM_{12}

AM_{12} raised the issue of trust and openness. Besides suggesting that the process should be participatory, he brought out the perceived mistrust of this feedback tool. The fact that employees feared raising issues pointed to the secondary code of power relations which was discussed more fully under the third research question, as a factor negatively affecting EORs.

The hotline was introduced by the new (at the time of the study) Group CEO. Generally appreciated by several participants, the hotline provides a channel for employees at all levels to report fraud or other pressing issues and grievances that need management attention in a "safe" and anonymous way. Participants said that this avenue demonstrated management trust in employees particularly because it was not under direct management control.

At the University, although there was an appreciation of internal communication channels, particularly the newsletter, there was a consensus among employees that at the time of the study, there are no channels to raise issues. U_7 pointed out that email feedback from employees was curtailed at some point and only designated individuals who had the mandate to speak to the entire organisation via email. Although participants said that newsletter has no feedback mechanism, I established that the channel has indeed a feedback channel, where each story has a link that allows readers to respond to a story. Another discrepancy that I noted with this channel was that participants were unsure about the frequency of this newsletter.

Unlike the first study site, participants in this study site did not mention suggestion box although I established that it exists. According to the Corporate Affairs manager, the VC Tea discussed earlier was also a feedback tool.

Participants also mentioned the inadequacy of the question and answer session of the VC Tea, which they viewed as tightly controlled thereby curtailing any feedback. Unlike the first study site, participants in this site did not mention any informal channels that they used to give feedback to management.

Effective internal communication, among other things, is giving voice to employees. Listening and voice are two sides of the same coin and directly related to feedback mentioned in the previous section. Most participants linked listening with some of the arbitrary decisions that have been made by management illustrating management inability of unwillingness to engage employees on decisions made.

4.6 Findings for RQ5: Which factors, within the organizational boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships?

This research question explored relationship outcomes or the quality of internal relationships in the context of this study. I asked participants to describe the factors that affect internal relationships and then probed for specific relationship outcomes as advanced in Grunig & Huang's (2000) model. These are control mutuality; trust; commitment; satisfaction; communal relationships and exchange relationships. Following are voices from the field from Amedicare.

4.6.1 Effective Organizational Leadership Culture Improves Relationship Quality

Participants in this study site made continuous reference to good or effective organizational leadership, often singling out specific leaders in the organisation who had a positive impact on the organisation particularly through policies introduced and perceived fairness. What became clear in this overriding theme was that effective organizational leadership leads to good EORs and ultimately benefits the enterprise. The converse of this is true as is evidenced from a similar theme brought out in the second study site. Following are the codes under this theme and selected voices from the field.

Participants talked about a history of organizational leadership that was positive and helped steer the organisation in the right direction especially in regard to employee welfare leading to effective EORs. Some views from management including top leadership underscore this theme.

> … He just walks in and says hi. If you meet him in the corridor you can have an informal chat. There is a lot of team building exercise where you find programme

> leadership is organizing team building exercise, may be for a whole day, after may be a review meeting, they just have that bonding exercise. So those are there. Whenever there is, somebody is bereaved, you see that organization is represented. You know they come to bereave with you, when happy moments like weddings they come (AM_{10})

The organisation CEO also gave his views on organizational leadership in the following excerpt:

> … To build a culture where, you know, that it's a safe place to work in. Working in a safe place or working in a place where there's no witch hunting. Working in a place whereby things are fair. You get it? …The other role is uh, as an arbitrator. Initially, in my leadership, I would shy away from conflicts. When I sense a conflict, I don't wait. I tell the director in charge, handle it. If I still hear it, I say come we need to talk about it. I arbitrate. You just need to walk to a place and know here there's negative energy after talking to people for half an hour. To keep things positive. find programme leadership is organizing team building exercise, may be for a whole day, after may be a review meeting, they just have that bonding exercise. So those are there. Whenever there is, somebody is bereaved, you see that organization is represented. You know they come to bereave with you, when happy moments like weddings they come. (AM_8)

The above excerpt underscores the link between effective organizational leadership and trust; the ability to engender trust. Although the CEO spoke hypothetically, he was making the case for good EORs and setting a positive organizational leadership culture by demonstrating goodwill through various relationship cultivation activities thereby helping employees see that the organisation is a safe place in which to work. He also brought out the role of organizational leadership or any other manager as arbiter.

The following views from non-management employees partly corroborate management perspectives but also contradict them. Participants spoke about contrasting leadership practices that at times leads to manipulative relationships, but also practices that discourage the latter by dealing squarely with conflict matters among employees.

> It really enhances the kind of relationships and people will feel empowered, that you can be able to walk, because we are all a team and actually anybody within,

> you know the team is strong at its weakest point. So as long people feel like we can access this CEO, we can access any member of the senior management team, it becomes very easy for the people to relate. And when people have issues it become very easy to have a discussion with any senior manager. (AM_5)

> …I think me what I have seen is that we have different ways of leadership. So you will find that he (A SPECIFIC MANAGER) listens to very few individuals who they can interact with freely but not others. But you find that these ones once they are closer to the boss they start also despising others.
> Secondly, you will find that the boss needs to know about … some junior staff when they want to be noticed, they tend to be reporting their colleagues to their bosses maybe negatively. If you do something small the boss will have to know because somebody will take it there. So that also spoils relationships because once you have heard that so and so is doing this, you will start now avoiding this person. But there are some bosses who do not entertain that. I talk to somebody about you, when he sees us together he will call us. Okay, you remember when you told me so and so is doing this? He is here, he can now defend himself (AM_{12})

Related to the above excerpt was the perspective from another employee who also spoke about managers who “throw employees under the bus” when there is trouble, which was a contrast to good team leadership.

4.6.2 Negative Leadership Culture Negatively Impacts the Quality of EORs

Participants in the University described the negative impact of negative leadership culture. About 54% of the participants in this study site mentioned management privilege as a factor that led to negative relationship outcomes.

Among other things, non-management employees mentioned privileged and aloof management. They contrasted this management behaviour with the concept of servant leadership, which is one of the core values of the University. U_8 likened this to a cold war where top management portrayed lack of goodwill and used unkind words that damaged internal relationships

Other participants, U_9 and U_4 described an inaccessible management steeped in traditional; a more formal organisation culture that highlighted the divide between top management and employees. U_9 contrasted the behaviour of immediate supervisors compared to top management.

> …I feel at the lower levels, our supervisors are very hands on. They invite discussion. They want your participation, they want your honest opinion, and they consider, decision making at their level is made taking into consideration everything that everyone has to say. At the larger organization level, I feel it is not just about the recent problems that were there, it is just on an ongoing basis, I am sorry to use this word, but I feel there is a bit of high handedness. (U_9)

> … I don't know whether it is because they are locked in their offices or it is because of the work they do. I have never understood. They are not very outgoing with the employees. And so you find that majority, especially now this is me, I was telling somebody somewhere if I know that I am going to do something which will make me meet or be anywhere around the CEO, I will not do that thing. It doesn't matter, even if it is very good… (U_4)

U_4 in her response brings out the aspect of fear of top management – power relations. She also raised the issue of management privilege.

> … Ideally, every single person in an organization is an important stakeholder, every single one, because you are there by the virtue of what you contribute…. I think the management considers themselves far much better, important than, and by the way even looking at it from our, you see every organization has a core business and the support which is the support. So as we have the core and the support. Because the core is basically what the organization exists to do, but then you need the support to facilitate the delivery of whatever you are supposed to do. Now, if you look at this, the support seems to give themselves more weight, and that's because majority of the top is made up from the support side, not from the core side… U_4

There was a tendency for participants to compare the past organisation leadership more favourably than the present (at the time of the study). Still in relation to the current theme, U_6 used the term *big man syndrome* to further explain management aloofness, also extending it to other middle level managers. She spoke about feeling demeaned by some of her supervisors. This response, again, raises the concept of power relations.

> … Big man syndrome. (LAUGHS). I have noticed there is a lot of that in here. There is this ...doctor thing you have to treat him in a certain way. I fear you, we cannot relate. I can't be open with you if I am faced with something because you probably live in the leafy suburbs, I come from this other side of Uhuru Highway. If my *matatus* (public service vehicle) were on strike I cannot afford an Uber…
> I believe there is a difference between fear and respect. And you do not command respect. You don't ask for it forcefully, you earn it. In my previous workplace, I was working in a small organization, field based, so we could probably relate with our bosses…there was a lot of openness and togetherness… (U_6)

The so-called, *big man syndrome* invariably has a negative effect at the department level and across the entire organisation. Power relations was raised under this research question as it was in the previous research question. Fear was raised by non-management employees including U_6, above, who spoke about her fear of those who portray the big man syndrome. Fear of those who demand to be addressed by the title, "Doctor."

Fear was also raised by U_8, who spoke of the fear of reprisals for missing the weekly Chapel meeting. U_9 pointed out that people were more comfortable raising issues at the departmental level than at the organisation level. U_8 also mentioned how one is at the mercy of their supervisor during performance appraisal, which was perceived as unfair.

In response to the fear of reprisals, one of the top managers spoke about the advantage of collective power in raising issues with management.

> … employees have power but also the employer has power because you see employees usually come to drive or to maximize shareholder value. So really, the people, the power they have is in what they can deliver and what they bring to the organization. That is why people resign. But they have more power collectively than individually, to be able to speak abot something that probably the employer doesn't want changed. They can only use the power of numbers as a collective group but probably not individually…(U_5)

U_9 also pointed out that management should encourage a professional work culture in this organisation, which in her view was not evident. She also said that the organisation core values of excellence, transformation and servant leadership should be evident in the organisation and leadership culture.

> …I feel that the culture should be shaped by the people at the top. They are the embodiment of that culture They are the ones that would have an idea of where is this organization going and what kind of organization culture we should foster in this organization so that people can be able to pull together and work towards the goal. So for me I feel that at my own little level, there are some things that I can do that impact the direct relationship I have with others, for example with my students, with my supervisors, with my direct contacts. Otherwise I feel that at the organizational level, if how we all are going to engage is going to be consistent, someone needs to shape and show us from the top…(U_9)

U_8, a long serving employee in this organisation spoke about the past with a sense of nostalgia, where organizational leadership at the time was the main factor in creating a communal culture or "family" as the participant earlier said, where long serving employees saw the University as home. OPR scholars have documented that relationships change over time. Each successive leadership in an organisation brought about a leadership culture that permeated the organisation. She also mentioned about a single event that changed EORs at the time – a retrenchment that saw a significant number of employees sent home. This indicates that EORs can be studied around critical organizational events in order to mitigate the negative effects of such events.

4.6.3 Open Performance Appraisal Leads to Positive Relationship Outcomes

EORs are guided by structures and one of these structures is performance appraisal. Both management and non-management participants brought out performance appraisal as a positive way to build EORs.

> There is performance appraisal at the end of the year. You know, at the end of the year we set performance targets and that really dictates how, what the staff should be doing. Of course it is well aligned to the job description. So you know when you come here what you are supposed to be doing and you are given a leeway to do it, and of course if you land into trouble you need any support, then there is that way of one can come in and say this is what I mean. And the element of the performance based appraisal, that's a very formal, it is a formal way of ensuring that employees are clear on their expectation and that is understood around, even with the people they are reporting to, the people they are accountable to, and all that. So I think that is still a very strong way of building the relationship. (AM_4)

The practice in Amedicare of rewarding performance was appreciated as resulting in positive relationship outcomes. Participants also appreciated that the appraisal is open.

> …We have 360 appraisal, whereby even as an employee you can be able also to rate your supervisor and have that candid discussion…It is a very open process. Very open process….The best thing about appraisal is not really to try to pin down people that didn't perform well ... So you need to have people ... on themselves. And so then don't really have feelings because at the end of it is just general feedback that you will get (AM_5)

The KPIs (key performance indicators) aid EORs by giving clarity to one's role in the organisation and expected deliverables within specific projects. The fact that there is no ambiguity in the KPIs becomes a positive aspect that aids EORs in this organisation.

Participants also inadvertently mentioned negative relationship outcomes and the reasons behind them. The retrenchment that took place prior to when this study was done and negatively impacted internal relationships.

4.6.4 Organisational Crisis Negatively Impacts the Quality of EORs

The theme of retrenchment was mentioned by virtually all participants in Amedicare regardless of position. Predictably, management views of the exercise were more positive than non-management views. However, there was a consensus from all participants that this exercise should have been better handled.

The uncertainty of donor funding was linked to the responses under this theme. The following response showed support for the exercise from management and a contradictory view from non-management participants.

> …And of course a number of people had to lose their jobs. And it was those kind of necessary things that really have to be done. And of course you do not expect staff to talk positively about such a thing. But you see as management, there are things you just have to get done. You get? Because you are looking at the future of the organization, you are looking at the broader vision. But probably the people who are at the lower level, they are probably looking at, you know people are different, you know the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are those who are looking at, my job now. But there are those at that high level you are looking at, I may not be here next week or next year but I would like to leave an organization that is stable, sustainable, you know, all those things. But then there are things that we are looking at and saying, if we go this way, it looks like Amedicare is going to be extinct in the next two weeks, and I don't want to be part of that. So there are things that really have to be done. (AM_4)

> …There were some decisions to close down some programmes. So of course you know that doesn't go down well with people especially those who have been in the system for very long because they are like, how? But you see the reality is, we don't have money to run the programs, then we need to rethink and redesign in a way that is sustainable. So of course it caught a lot of people off guard and they were like, oh so ... Unfortunately some people had to go home… (AM_3)

> …One time we were restructuring and we had to release about 20. We were trying to take advantage of economies of scale so we merged support services…It's not easy to go through such a process...we tried our best to manage. It's always a difficult one we can work to improve on…(AM_6)

It was interesting to note the management metaphors used to describe the retrenchment: necessary; economies of scale and releasing people. Non-management staff viewed the exercise as unfair regardless of whether or not it was necessary. They used the metaphors of unfair; unjustified;

> …In my opinion it wasn't justified to send a whole team home. It could have been cleaner but not...they just shut it down so it had consequences. But the other one was communication. They were also thrown from one to another, no one was taking responsibility to tell them so they were seeking answers and they were not getting an audience. So I think human resources really failed and top management really failed. Because, these are things, you don't know how people take these

> things they can get suicidal. So yes, maybe a decision was made for whatever reason, but eh the disengagement should have been there in a gradual process should have explained...coz I think they had a meeting and the person delivering the message was very abrupt and they really didn't give people answers coz even now if you look at the finances, yes they've gone down, but not to the extent of sending everyone home because now we're hiring ($AM_{2)}$ (LAUGHS OUT LOUD)

The need for change management was also raised by a different participant but also the importance of flagging a serious organisational problem such as a looming retrenchment to give people time to adjust. The uncertainty of donor funding emerged again.

> … we were told to take our leave and leave with immediate effect. Like the letter came today and you should not report, you apply your leave and go immediately. …we refused to go… If you have leave days take them immediately, like toka (LEAVE). To me, we raised concerns about that because we were saying, as much as we are leaving, we would like to leave well so that nobody calls you to ask you where the reports are, for example. Because if I abandon my desk and leave and somebody else comes in, how will they be able to track? There is no hand over, there is nothing. We were able to call for a meeting with the Country Director and we were listened to and given time not to go for a leave immediately. …They were saying lack of funds. So to me I am like, even if it is lack of funds, you didn't know this six months ago? Because if you knew six months ago and you would have told me, then I would have been ready for any decision. ($AM_{11)}$

> …what is happening in *Amedicare* is that we're going through a transition, where donors are not bringing in money. So we're seeing most of our colleagues going home. So we've had a flock of people going home. So there's been a lot of tension coz that people are not talking about coz you're not sure when your bread will be cut off, know what I mean? You find people go away when they are so sorrowful. It's not yet their time to go, but that's the way it is…Yeah. I think it's also an insecurity component that interferes also with how we relate. Coz you do not know what time you're going... (AM_1)

Similarly, at the time of this study, the University was also in the throes of a crisis - a student led boycott that led to the closure of the University for a period. Most participants mentioned the boycott as a single event that stood out in the organisation's timeline. I noticed the variety of expressions used to describe this phenomenon: the boycott;

standoff; strike. Some referred to it rather discreetly by using euphemisms such as “the event.” Some participants like U_6 opined that the strike had both negative and positive impact. On the one hand was that the crisis has forced management to begin listening to issues raised by employees. On the negative side, the boycott also negatively impacted employee output and trust.

> …the strike shocked a lot of people because they didn’t see that coming. Because also it is a Christian organization and we even have parents who bring their kids here because of that fact, hoping that it actually ... I believe we have a good name out there… So we probably need to keep pushing. So for I think even the strike was good because now even as employees if you raise something that can be done, I am actually seeing change… (U_6)

> … And I think it is also if you look at the laxity when it comes to the way the employees are working. I mean, if the management doesn’t take the lead, what output do you get from an employee? ... just looking at the laxity with which things have been done, the output...(U_2)

> … in this boycott even staff were supporting…Why? Because even them their issues are not addressed. You raise the issues, they are not addressed. Remember the earlier one was 2013 or 2014? They are the same issues that were raised and they were not still addressed…So we continue with the same thing just because number one when you raise them, sometimes they are shut down. Other times you are told, that one we are addressing it. And it is not being addressed. You see? … of course they pay attention when you put more pressure, like the last one (IN REFERENCE TO THE STRIKE). Now they are paying attention… (U_4)

4.6.5 Erosion of Mission and Core Values Negatively Impacts EOR Outcomes

Participants at the University spoke about what they perceived as the gradual erosion of the core values of the organisation, which negatively impacted internal relationships. Specifically, participants talked about their expectations from a Christian organisation versus the reality. I noticed the repetition of the phrase, “…this being a Christian organisation… by more than 50% of the participants. This concern was raised across management and non-management participatants.

U_2 pointed out that the core values, which should bring the organisation together are no longer practiced. She attributed this to lack of professionalism among other things. Both U_8 and U_{11} attributed the loss of the core values – and by extension the mission of the organisation to top management's singular focus on the bottom line.

> …I think then what is happening is that we are moving away from our vision and mission. Because in as much as we are here to produce professionals managers and all that, we also want them to have a holistic view of things, we want them to, because there is no point of again a very good manager and you can't work with people, you are not able to socialize well with people, you are not able to interact or you don't have any of these other soft skills that can assist you to do that. So it is like now we are all consumed in the bottom line…(U_{11})

In addition, U_{11} raised the reputation among significant internal publics; in this case, students. U_8 also raised a similar concern when the mentioned that the erosion of these core values had a negative effect with external publics as well. U_1 spoke extensively about the desired core value of servant leadership, which he believed was critical to engaging employees and building EORs.

> …But you see we all have a task to play. So it is for me now to go down and to engage, and to talk and to open myself. And once you do that then you create these barriers of boss and that kind of a thing. According to me that should not be. You know it is the kind of thing that Jesus talked about in terms of servant attitude. You know, that even though He was the Lord He went to his disciples and told them, wait a minute. I am your teacher, I am your Lord but I am actually serving you, when He washed his disciples' feet. That's basically what He displayed. And to me that is what we should take.

I asked him what servant leadership meant in the context of employee organisation relationships and how it is practiced in the organisation. Following was his response.

> I think what it is supposed to mean is that whereas I am the leader, whereas I am the one who is, maybe superior to use that term within the structure, rather than

> demanding service I go and render service. In other words I am leading but I am serving ... servant leadership. And when it comes to relationships then it means that I am the one who should be engaging those who are either reporting to me or those whom I work with, at all levels look at them as co-workers, relate with them as co-workers…we are human beings and when we talk about our work, you cannot separate your work from who you are in terms of your family or other related aspects of life. You know, which means therefore you need to look at life from a wholistic point of view so that we are able to relate with each other at that point. That to me is what servant leadership and what we as an institution should be actually targeting. (U_{1})

EORs are negatively impacted by perceived *unchristian behavior.* I grouped other factors affecting EORs under this theme, which is an extension of the current theme. Several issues were raised by over 40% of the participants and include: witch-hunting; sabotage, unhealthy competition; tribalism and favouritism. U_8 mentioned that this negative behavior also affects external stakeholders and has a negative impact on organisation reputation.

4.6.6 Organisation Physical Structure Either Aids or Impedes EORs Outcomes

At times organisations' physical structure impedes effective EORs. The theme was raised by a number of participants in Amedicare one of whom expressed a preference for open plan work stations rather than individual offices.

> …I would prefer if this (MOTIONS TOWARD THE TEA TABLE AND TEA ITEMS) was out there (POINTS TO THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HIS OFFICE). I would have met with some of my colleagues and we would have said *hi* and interacted a bit and most likely we would have shared something that makes us connect more. That's just a simple example but so critical. Otherwise, I'm locked here taking tea. Why have an open door policy, but you see am not creating an opportunity to interact with my colleagues, not my staff. Not my staff. It could be also lateral but it could move direction with whoever you take coffee with and it's so important in terms of enhancing employee relationships. It's just a simple example, but very important… (AM_6)

AM_1 gave a different perspective of organizational structure and how organisation type (in this case NGO) need a less rigid structure in order to work effectively.

> …Structures are good because they give you a framework with which to work. When they're rigid you know like I always tell people, it's different when you work in an industry, and when you work with an NGO that deals with social life. For an industry, it has to be rigid (MOTIONED WITH HER FINGERS) or it has to be perfect... (AM_1)

The following themes are apriori meaning that they were derived from the constructs of Hon & Grunig's (1999) relationship outcomes. Responses from both organisations are described accordingly under these themes.

4.6.7 Control Mutuality

Amedicare

Control mutuality explores, in this context, whether or not employees have a say in the organisation for instance in decision-making and development of policies. There were contrasting views between management and non-management employees on one level and across different programmes, depending on the leadership in respective programmes.

Several participants mentioned involvement. Involvement is not a construct of Hon & Grunig's (1999) relationship management framework. One of the most lauded aspects on involvement mentioned by several participants was involvement in the organisation's strategic plan, where employees of different cadres got together with management to chart the way forward.

> …Like now we were developing a corporate strategy for the next five years and the process was quite involving. First of all there was a team put together to lead the process. So this team went round interviewing staff and what they expect.
> Staff felt they are involved in developing the strategy documents, their views are taken into consideration however divergent they may be. So that I think it helps to build the relationships with staff. (AM_9)

Another manager was of the opinion that involvement of employees in organizational decision making is not always practical.

> You know sometimes the management just has to take the lead. Sometimes you just have to make some decisions and then, you know, really bring them back. I know of course we keep saying bottom approach, but it is not always every time that it works. Sometimes you just have to craft it and take it to the people. Like currently we are also working on our corporate strategy, and it has, I would say been an involving process but I would say a lot of work done at higher level because we really have to fill in, we have to get everything right, not necessarily giving so much to the lower level, apart from maybe the questionnaire that was circulated and the like…(AM_4)

Non-management employees were of the opinion that they ought to be involved in decisions made about their welfare such as the choice of medical service provider.

> …I don't feel like I have a control. Most of the things are made up, not us. But if you share your idea, you know the ideas the ones that may be sometimes may make their decisions, and you have first of all to share with your manager or your supervisor. If they feel that it can be beneficial to their organization, that's when they will take it up…Let's say something like insurance. We are supposed to use in our health as an employee. Okay, we can say they do it fairly, even choosing the insurance per companies. Even if sometimes the insurance companies being used are not good in terms of communication. In terms of picking the insurance, us as the employees we are not involved. The person who is supposed to pick the insurance is the HR…(AM_9)

> ...The rest of us we are just subject to the policy, but it starts right at the Board although when they give a consultant to work we'll be asked as staff just to fill a questionnaire. Apart from the questionnaire then maybe I would say that is the participation, but it's variable. I would say minimal in terms of policy contributions. But it's already structured. Good. Bad. Most of all it's just structured for you to pick. An open ended question would be the better. But at the end of the day there's always an elite who determines what must be done… (AM_1)

The following response brought out the issue of power relations in regard to unilateral management decisions that affect employee's ability to work effectively.

> There's no room for engagement. So, the other day they needed space, the clinic needed space. So we just got an email we're moving you guys… coz I have a parking next and ...so there's no engagement. You're just told this is happening.
> It's discouraging. It's discouraging. Mmm. So sometimes I put up a fight, I'm like, I don't have energy. LAUGHS. Coz sometimes you're told this is the CEO's project. So we're aligning ourselves to it. You didn't employ me to be a yes person. I *do* speak out. The other ones don't. So I don't think I'm a favourite (LAUGHS). For the others I find them quiet. So that's why I say, I don't know whether people fear talking...(AM_2)

University

The majority of the participants said that employees have no say in management decisions in this organisation. Following are selected participant voices on this theme.

> …A glaring one would be sometimes we go for meetings and we raise these issues because in a meeting that's where, it is a communication venue. So you communicate and you raise issues. And in any place where you raise issues people leave that place with expectations that these issues are being raised to the probably even if not the right people, people look and channel them to the right people and therefore people leave with the expectations that we have raised it, so we expect action, and then that action is not forthcoming year in, year out, it creates disharmony. And we have seen that. Then we have also seen decisions being made and then communication follows…(U_9)

The above participant, describes ineffective communication that leads to disharmony especially as a result of unilateral management decisions. As faculty, she also pointed out that decisions affecting the work of faculty are often not consultative resulting in actions that actually impede effective work as in the case above. This correlates to the issue raised earlier by a different faculty member as a factor that negatively affects EORs.

Under this theme, some participants said that organizational structures may aid or impede EORs. Although less than 20% raised this matter, I thought this theme was significant for two reasons. One, it corresponds to a similar theme raised by participants in the first study site. Two, the way structures was used here was not necessarily the lines of authority, but those organisation policies or frameworks that allow the free flow of ideas among employees.

> …Personally I will think that it is everyone who is involved in both the mission and the vision of the organization, whether it is someone in management or it is someone who is being supervised, or someone in management. I think many times we misinterpret that term, stakeholders, to mean the people who make the big decisions up there. Does everyone in my own department feel that their contribution is valued? I don't think so. So I would think this is not unique to other departments. So at the end of the day you still come to the organization culture, what does the top management do to ensure that even the people at the lower levels feel that their contributions are valued. So I still think there is quite a lot of work to be done… (U_2)

U_2 links organisation decision making to organisation culture and by extension, the leadership culture in this organisation. She also brings in the role of internal employee bodies that should facilitate the decision-making process and make it more consultative such as staff unions. She said the existing staff bodies do not necessarily lead to participatory decision making as would be desired. U_7 raised the issue of lack of participation on matters affecting employee welfare and how that also affects trust.

> … There are issues where you would say that I wish that was done better. I would think of the recent medical scheme for staff where it was agreed at the management level and then communicated down. There was concern about the service providers being of some different religious setting. These are people who are going to access records of members of staff and their families and that can be exposing the organisation to people you do not know how they may actually use that information, negatively. That may also raise concerns among members of staff. That affects relationships where you feeling the organisation is not being responsible enough in guarding and protecting us as employees…(U_7)

Some management participants expressed similar sentiments as non-management participants on the same matter reiterating that decision making should be more participatory. This lack of meaningful involvement negatively affects EORs.

U_6 and U_2, both young mothers, pointed out the management decision to reduce maternity cover, yet the organisation has a significant number of young employees with young families. Participants mentioned that such decisions should be more consultative and not unilateral as it was. One manager, U_5 said that line managers out to cascade top management decisions to their teams and cascade back concerns from the teams back up.

U_9 said that decision making is more meaningful at the department level rather than at the top level of the organisation and she linked this to the “highhandedness” or top management in the organisation. The majority of the participants described top-down decision making that foments dissatisfaction and mistrust.

4.6.8 Trust versus Mistrust Outcomes

Amedicare

Trust explores fair or unfair practices in organisations. From the outset trust was mentioned early in the study which demonstrates the importance of this construct. In fact, trust permeates the entire relationship management process.

Trust was articulated in various ways by participants in Amedicare including:

1. Knowing your back is covered by other colleagues or even by one’s immediate supervisor;
2. Being dependable
3. Open salary scale

The following themes emerged from participants’ responses. Once more, there were significant differences in the responses of management and non- management participants on the one hand and also across the two study sites. Voice and power relations emerged again as they did in earlier research questions. It was raised by 46% of the participants and from their responses it was linked to a management decision by a past manager, who made significant changes in the organisation to improve employee welfare. This single factor significantly raised trust levels especially among non-management employees as the following responses. Both management and non-management participants agreed that this was fair thereby building trust. One long serving non-management employee contrasts the period before and after the harmonization crediting this move to the leadership at the time.

> …Your security is taken care of. Like now, not like before, we had somebody here (PREVIOUS COUNTRY DIRECTOR), but she left. She came, she worked here for one year and she came up with a very good suggestion, with a very good policy, that Amedicare vehicles should not be driven beyond 6.00 p.m. or earlier than 6.00 a.m. And once you have come from *safari* (JOURNEY) maybe on a weekend, you are travelling on a weekend, then you are given taxi to pick you and to drop you. I have to get *matatu* (PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE) in the morning. So some of us used to be mugged on the way to work. So we talked to her, we told her this ... And she came up with it. If you are going somewhere early than six, you will be sent a taxi to pick you. So we have seen those changes… (AM_{12})

This same CEO was also credited with harmonizing staff benefits includng per diems for field staff, which helped build EORs.

> … The insurance was also increased. So you can have your people admitted. At least the amount was increased. It used to be so small so that even if you are admitted may be for a month, then the whole money is gone…That time we knew there is equality now in Amedicare. Apart from salaries which is different, but when it comes to these otherother ways of making Amedicare move, things are alright. When I go out with the Country Director, where he sleeps is where I sleep. And the same for lunch, dinner, the same. So we see we are now part and parcel of them...(AM_{12})

Some participants also raised the issue of fair employee disciplinary processes, which was perceived as an open process and therefore engendered trust.

> There are times when an employee is caught in a compromising situation, where it may call for disciplinary action and at times you're at the mercy of those people at the disciplinary committee. But I have seen in most instances that the committee is open and at times the judgement saves the employee. It's not done because of bias. It's done in a more, openness. Most of the time when people are taking to disciplinary committee. It's quite open. I've participated in some. But everybody comes up with their own judgment. By the time somebody is receiving the judgment, it's not ...it's something you did wrong. For me I feel those kind of committees, they're rich in terms of uh. Employees can ran somewhere and know their issues will be heard. Yes, some might go home, some might stay. It's just like the jury when they decide, they have decided depending on how the employee represents themselves… (AM_1)

One manager reiterated the above point by saying that disciplinary issues are run by committees and not individuals making it more transparent. The following code was raised by a first level management participant. Although she was the only one who mentioned this, I included it because of its significance to this present study particularly in regards to comparing management and non-management perspectives. Organisation policies, she said, do not define trust. Rather, one way to build EORs particularly with supervisees is through empathy. In her opinion, employees, more often than not, are merely cogs in a wheel. She pointed out that although organisation structure defines reporting lines and to an extent, relationships, it is important to show concern for employees and go beyond the confines of structure and convenience.

> …But not forgetting that umm at times relationships can be structured in terms of organisation's policy, but there is a place where it's beyond policy. Ah coz policy, can define confidentiality, but, it cannot really define trust. So how do you build trust with your employees ahh vis a vis carry out the project objective and I think that is where at times the link lacks. Where you find maybe your superiors they don't have the trust mechanism, they're not open to situations, they're not open to just listening to personal views. Because what I've realised even among my staff like if a staff has a problem at home, they come to work and you just see things are not right

AM_1 pointed out the disconnect between building trust with employees and fulfilling organisational objectives. Employees, she said, should not be treated as cogs in the wheel to get the job done. The following codes and excerpts illustrate what participants perceived as unfair still under the theme of trust.

> …The other example that I can think is there has been a more organised way of clustering people's roles. It's not just about my title is x, but what is my responsibility in terms of how big a team do I manage, how big a budget do I have - am I controlling and am responsible for? What geographical location am I so, that defines what your job group is as opposed to before where you have the same titles, salaries, yet within that you have different levels of responsibility. (AM_3)

Unfairness, she said, has to do with disparity between the amount of responsibility in proportion to the job group and hence, remuneration. She blamed this on the lack of clarity about those roles. Similar sentiments were shared by some non-management participants who pointed out the unfairness of employee appreciation on the one hand and the apparent selective growth opportunities.

> …I want to grow. I want to move to the other level and it has taken time. And I feel like I am not heard enough. So I have to emphasize more. And sometimes, yes, I go and face the managers or the people who are involved and the kind of feedback I am getting is they have a chance but I have to wait…(AM_{13})

> …Salaries we always say it is not fair. The gap is too big. That gap is too big.
> Secondly, some of us who have been here for long, although they look at somebody's papers, but sometimes they forget experience. Somebody comes in and is given a big salary, but they should also think, so and so has been here and has been helping us a lot. They also put him somewhere nearer. That gap is there. So that sometimes, it kills the morale of staff…(AM_{12})

The retrenchment mentioned earlier in this section stood out as one major factor that adversely affected EORs in this organisation. Under this code it was also a reason for employee mistrust of management decisions. AM_{11} explains one aspect of retrenchment, but also raises what she referred to as a selective process of employee appreciation that was perceived to be subjective rather than based on policy. From her examples, it appeared those targeted were longer serving employees.

> … She had reached sixty five years of age. But she was pretty strong and very good in coordinating the outreach services. The other one who I've seen here are twenty eight years, thirty, but their laying off was very not well done, because you are given a very short notice, there is no acknowledgement. … A few people are valued. Like there was somebody who left who was like a secretary. But she was taken even out for dinner by the senior management in a very big hotel. Other people who have left for a very long time were even given a voucher of like sixty thousand to go and buy yourself a gift. Why is this one left out? Was it because she was in a lower position? I think it is done on an individual basis. (AM_{11})

This is somewhat contradictory because earlier, the same participant mentioned a rewarding system that was fair and participatory; and this was corroborated by management participants. She introduces the issue of rank and appears to be pointing out a disparity in appreciating employees that does not favour those in lower positions.

Another issue that under this theme was conflict between the country and regional offices which are housed in two separate compounds. The reason behind this conflict was the perception that HQ employees have better remuneration and facilities than do Kenya Country Office employees. In the course of carrying out other interviews I sought to find out (with some prompting), whether this was significant issue with others in the organisation. One manager used a strong metaphor to describe HQ referring to it as the *White House.* I asked her why she used this term and whether there were any significant differences between the Kenya Country Office and HQ.

Yet for other participants, HQ was a source of pride where they mentioned because it is the only nonprofit organisation with headquarters in Africa. Other participants mentioned that the headquarters was an important brand and bolsters the image of the organisation. The following theme captures satisfaction versus dissatisfaction outcomes.

University

The trust construct of Hon & Grunig's (1999) theory was a running theme throughout this study. The quote below captures participants' views on trust in relation to this study.

> … my ideal would be that there needs to be a trusting relationship, there needs to be, the employee needs to have a high level of trust that management has their best interests at heart. I think there is really a (SILENCE) there is really to a large extent no trust, not so much confidence in management. I mean, and this has been out in the domain… (U_2)

Trust is the basis for any organizational relationship. Under the first research question, trust was raised as an important relationship antecedent. It was clear from responses across the board there the EOR was characterized by low levels of trust and high levels of mistrust of management. Participants reported more trust at the department level than with top management and that EORs were mostly characterized by suspicion. Management decisions and bureaucracy particularly in regard to decisions on employee welfare led to mistrust.

The majority of participants highlighted the student strike that negatively impacted the "trust structures" of the organisation, but also that trust has been continuously broken between employer and employee over the years.

Other aspects of trust raised by participants were based on the question where I asked them what they perceived as fair and unfair in regards to EORs. Most of these issues have already been raised under some of the themes already discussed here.

Participants also raised employee welfare provisions such as equitable and timely pay; benefits such as university fee waiver for some employees and dependents as affecting trust. Participants also raised some issues that constitute unfairness including unfair management practices, which was discussed under a different theme; the fact that some employees don't work as they should; management unfairness in keeping contract staff for long without reviewing their terms of employment; unfair management decisions in regards to disciplinary issues; unprofessional management behavior and skewed performance appraisal.

> … Where I have seen they treat employees unfairly is in the appraisals. There is a lot of unfairness in the appraisals because those appraisals are very skewed, very skewed. They reward the non-core rather than the core. So that is unfairness…(U_4)

The issue of core versus non-core activities is a reference to teaching, recognized as the main business of the University, while support services and staff were referred to us non-core.

4.6.9 Commitment Versus Lack of Commitment Outcomes

Commitment explores whether the organisation is perceived to want to maintain a long term relationship with its employees. Participants mentioned the organisation's practice of talent retention. NGOs such as this one normally hire staff for the duration of a particular project and, of course, the funding cycle. Participants who raised this issue reported that the organisation demonstrates commitment to employees when they retain employees beyond the project life cycle.

> …For a long time in some parts of the organisation it was, your 5 years are over and goodbye. But over the years I've seen shifts – okay this is coming to an end, you have one more year, you put in a bid for another project that this staff could fit in. Let's not let them go. Let's transition them because then you lose a lot of institutional memories and that commitment to your staff, it doesn't ...they've also worked things that they didn't know before so it would also be a good way of promoting and therefore retaining them and therefore building the relationships that has also changed over the years and that's one of the things we're currently looking to grow people internally as long as there's an opportunity you've proved yourself. Investing in people so that when an opportunity comes up – you're not just investing in them because there's an opportunity...so you're prepping the next leaders of the organisation…(AM)

Commitment of employees to the organisation was described in that often when working on projects, they go beyond the call of duty without expecting anything in return. The organisation's commitment to employees was also demonstrated through, among other things, opportunities to further one's education. Employees were also largely committed to the organisation brand, which evokes feelings of pride. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the commitment to the organisation's mission was an aspect brought out by most participants.

The organisation's commitment to its employees is further demonstrated through the various welfare provisions including medical insurance, loan facilities, fair remuneration, regular performance appraisals, and as one employee said, a "good send off package" when one dies.

One observation that I made in the process of analyzing this data, was that the constructs of commitment and satisfaction were somewhat synonymous in that when participants talked about the commitment of the organisation, or their commitment to the same, it was also a satisfaction measure. This has implications for the theory that will be discussed in the next chapter.

University

The organisation shows commitment to its employees through a number of ways including, capacity development, study leave; promotions to mention some. One participant mentioned that the spiritual nourishment in the form of weekly Chapel services shows the organisation's commitment to employees. This contradicts an earlier sentiment, where a different participant said that the latter was a cause for mistrust.

Employee commitment, according to a top manager, is demonstrated in that they believe in the vision and mission of the University. However, this also contradicts employee perspectives mentioned earlier, most of who pointed out the erosion of the core values of the organisation.

Commitment was also expressed in a curious manner where participants in both organisations had the tendency to use personal pronouns "they" or "we" when referring to the organisation. Generally, those in top management and long serving employees had a greater affinity toward the organisation as seen in their use of the term "we" in reference to the organisation. Those who used the term "they" did not have an affinity to the organisation because they were unhappy with the organisation or had only served there for less than ten years. This was discussed more fully under the third research question.

4.6.10 Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Outcomes Attributed to Various Factors

Amedicare

Several participants said that satisfaction outcomes are most visible by longevity in the organisation pointing out that some employees have remained in the organisation for many years. Some of the participants in this study have served in this organisation for over ten years and one participant, over 20 although in some cases the length of years in the organisation was due to the commitment to the organisation mission and in some cases, lack of qualifications as mentioned by one manager.

Other satisfaction outcomes mentioned by some participants was the growth opportunities afforded by the organisation. At least 30% of the participants mentioned moving from relatively low positions such as project officer to their current management positions. This is a contradiction to earlier sentiments expressed by some participants who felt the growth process favours some and not others. The AM_{10} manager pointed out that job growth was dependent on a number of factors including decision immediate supervisors and availability of funding rather than HR processes.

Other reasons for satisfaction raised were the existing staff welfare provisions including medical insurance; remuneration as mentioned earlier and the satisfaction derived from impacting the community, which is linked to the strong sense of mission pointed out under the first research question.

Dissatisfaction outcomes result from a number of factors including, lack of incentives from nonprofit organisations compared to profit making organisations; the fact that job growth decisions are made at the department level; dissatisfaction with management engagement with non-management employees. Some participants even pointed salary disparities, nepotism and favouritism as factors that negatively affect EORs in this organisation.

I asked on manager how employees demonstrate satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the EOR and here is what he had to say:

> …there's an element of uncertainty when dealing with human beings. You'll never please everybody… One is the issue of (working) in an organisation that is constrained of funds. We may not be able to offer an annual salary increase, the salient benefits, we're not able to give the best in terms of medical...There are those who feel that traveling, the work environment isn't as good as where they

> came from...Then also those in terms of those who are satisfied, you can see it by the level of engagement. You'll see that they are actively engaged. You'll see this from their output. In terms of innovations. You can see this from teamwork. You can see that from team spirit, ...there are those also who are slightly engaged...then there are those who are full of negativity. Not engaged at all. They are not engaged but highly disengaged…(AM_{10})

The following discussion sums up this section, where participants, gave suggestions about how EORs in this organisation could be improved. I grouped these points under the following theme and illustrated selected codes with voices from the field.

University

I noted a big correlation between trust, satisfaction/dissatisfaction and commitment outcomes. This has implications for the theory, which I discussed further in the following chapter. Participants expressed satisfaction with remuneration and welfare benefits provided by the organisation. Satisfaction is demonstrated long serving employees. In this study, the longest serving employee has been in the organisation for over 20 years. The majority of participants have been in the organisation for between five and ten years. One participant contradicted this claim and said that the turnover in the organisation was high, particularly with the younger workforce.

> …a bigger percentage of people who are being hired are very good in the market place; very young, very versatile, very energetic, very ambitious, and there is a risk in hiring that kind of person. The risk is that you have to do everything you can to keep them, especially the performing ones. So if you fall short in that area, in creating an environment or an organization that matches that good person you have gotten, there is a higher likelihood that they will go. And if you do not appreciate a good person, because people will go but we should celebrate when the people who are not leaving the organization go because that is not a growth. But when you lose the people who have the potential to grow the organization, I think that is the biggest challenge. So we are hiring the best now, I mean for those at least that we're hiring the right way, but are we creating an environment that we have an organization culture, a professional landing for them? Because I mean, I have had people who have joined after me and have left, and they were very good people. So we can easily say it is not us, it is the people, but another organization will welcome them gladly…(U_2)

Satisfaction also comes from an appreciation of the benefits including health insurance, the brand reputation and being associated with the good name of the University, timely pay and so one. Some participants said that satisfaction is mediated by a number of factors such as one's immediate supervisor, while another said the age of the workforce. I asked participants how employees demonstrate satisfaction with the organisation.

> … Yes and no. The yes depends with where you are working in the office. The no also depends with who your boss is… (U_8)

> … the degree of complaints is what will tell you whether they are satisfied or not satisfied. When you look at employee satisfaction, many times people think it is money but it is not money. It is what motivates every person. And many times there is a point you reach, people reach and an extra shilling or an extra dollar doesn't add value. It doesn't add them happiness. Yeah. So they begin to look at the bigger things. You know when you look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs. They begin to look at, I want to actualize myself. It is that extra opportunity to train, to earn an additional degree, for me it is my child to go to school, it is the employee benefits. For another person, and again this varies with age, for the younger workforce they will be looking at opportunities to earn more money, to get some benefits like go to school, but earn more. Money is more important to the younger workforce, but the older workforce you find it is probably medical covers and ability to invest…(U_5)

Satisfaction also comes when some management decisions are clarified to employees. Employee dissatisfaction stems from a number of factors already mentioned in this study including the feeling that the organisation does not care about employees, contract employment, which was seen as unfair. Some participants pointed out career stagnation for non-faculty employees, mother unfriendly policies and unilateral decisions made by management concerning staff welfare. Other issues raised here was the cessation of salary reviews with no explanation and the lack of transparency by the organisation leadership at the time of the study.

> … they will recognize people who have been with them for quite some time, even give you some token and a certificate. It looks like, so my commitment is appreciated. That is one way of they value…(U_{10})

> … In our department let me say it has been a big struggle because somehow our department is seen as extra curriculum, it doesn't add to the bottom line so much, but it takes away from the bottom line. *(laughs)* The ones who are called the spendthrifts of the University, we are not adding money to it we are just taking away because disciplinary is our department, sports is under our department, counseling is also there…(U_{11})

4.6.11 Emerging Relationship Types

Hon & Grunig (1999) identified communal and exchange relationships. It was possible in this study to determine relationship type based on the responses given by the participants who described strong communal relationships as well as exchange relationships. Communal relationships emerged from participants' perspectives of specific (management) decisions.

Amedicare

Communal Relationships Through Welfare Provisions

The management decision to harmonise benefits (per diem, medical) gave a sense of equality to all staff regardless of rank. All participants mentioned the appreciation of other welfare provisions such as medical insurance, saving, support during difficult times like bereavement and celebrations during the birth of children and weddings. Concern for the security of field staff also portrays communal relationships as explained by the following two participants.

> …We have a team of security because some of the places we work are risky. The existence of that department to be able to advise and you have to get security clearance to go to different places and they'll tell you okay or maybe this place is not safe to go at this time. Especially now that we're going into an election, there are places we're not going to go. It will be under escort or some kind of measures

> to ensure that you're ok and people are aware that you are there and if there is anything, how do we get them out of there. When there was eh a war that broke out in South Sudan, we send a plane to go and take people out of there. There is a tool (communication tree?) where management checks to see that everyone is okay and accounted for when something happens

Exchange Relationships that Focus on the Bottom Line

Although staff is valued beyond the bottom line, the element of exchange relationships was also present where some participants said that relationship by managers with non-management employees was only work related. Although one top manager said that employees are valued beyond the bottom line, several other management and non-management participants described the EOR as mainly an exchange relationship.

> …the organisation has to get the best from you. They would actually suck out the best from you for their own good. In terms of exchange, yes. They'll put in a display of what they expect you to do in exchange for you to bring on board what they require. I think for me I would take the two they have to get what they want from you and at times you may not a say… (AM_1)

> …It's a blend of both…we're moving towards social enterprises. For us to be sustainable. Social enterprise is where you have communal good and at the same time you're looking at sustainability. For example when you have some subsidised packages for the community and then the profits is ploughed back ….We have a combination of both, communal and exchange…

Related to the above theme, participants also mentioned symbiotic, mutually beneficial, mutually satisfactory and contractual relationship that recognizes a give and take between the organisation and employees.

> …I'm not an expert in that area but there is the formal one, that is the contractual relationships whereby we have a contract and spell the expectations of course that is there, it is required by law. And then we have the psychological contract – psychological relationship which is built on trust. Basically on trust. It's foundation is built on trust. Where I'm valued in this place where I am and this is a place where I can grow. I'm recognised and I'm not just a statistic. To me that's how I look at it… (AM_8)

The concept of cogs in a wheel came up with one participant in the first study site, who expressed her concern that the EORs often don't to go beyond work. AM_1, asked: "…is there anything apart from work that brings us together?" That employees are valued in relation to their work output points more towards an exchange or contractual type of relationship.

Fragmented Relationships

One interesting relationship type that was raised by several participants was fragmented relationships occasioned by the fragmented nature of departments that operate independently of each other leaving little room for meeting at the organisation-wide level.

> … it's a very big organisation and it's difficult to say how the others are so I would speak from the experience of this particular department. And I think that also tells you something else, if the departments don't know what others do I don't see that communicated very well. Many people don't know what we do. Don't know where we sit. There's a lot of fragmentation….Top management is supposed to have that movement towards cohesiveness, but also middle level management, maybe get to have exchange, or get to showcase what people do, so that would be an issue that would be from the top to middle level. The problem is that managers don't know what each other do, sometimes you're working in the same county and you're surprised to find your colleague there...the programmes don't talk to each other as they should...(AM_2)

Although the relationship cultivation strategies identified earlier should mitigate this fragmentation, there appears to be a gap perhaps because the teas were infrequent and they didn't give adequate time for cross departmental interaction.

AM_{11} raised the same theme of fragmentation from a different perspective. She said that well-funded programmes tend to isolate themselves leaving the less endowed programmes' employees feeling forgotten and not part of the big picture so to speak.

She brought out the notion that different programmes ought to know how other programs are faring in order to bring a sense of unity in the organisation rather than fragmentation. WI mentions that top management recognized that this was a problem and has taken steps to mitigate this by encouraging employees to visit other departments. Departments should welcome those from different programmes rather than guarding their turf so to speak:

> …Nowadays, let's say starting this year or last year, our CEO emphasized on not working, okay, working in silos. So you are not supposed to do that. If another person from a different department wants to come and see what you guys are doing or want to share, or would like to read on their proposal or budgets, you have to share…(AM_{12})

According to AM_{12}, EORs ought to begin at the department level before they can succeed organisation wide. Therefore encouraging this cross pollination, so to speak, is a good step toward cultivating EOR.

Cordial Relationships as Prevailing Relationship Type

Nearly 50% of the participants mentioned cordial relationships. This was an interesting finding considering that there was no prompting on my part towards this. However, cordial was variously described and in some cases indicated more of an exchange relationship. Below, I indicate each instance that the term was used and how participants perceived this relationship type.

Cordial relationships as respect; being civil to one another

> … Where there's respect, where you respect people. You respect boundaries. They deliver. They perform. We may not be buddies. As Peter Drucker said, you don't have to be friends to work together... (AM_8)

> …You don't always have to like each other but you maintain a civil relationship. Because of course there are differences...It's difficult to describe because it's a big organisation and you can't really ...because there are difference...good or bad. Of course there are differences within the organisation. But we haven't seen people fighting each other or you know so I would say its cordial...(AM_3)

Cordial relationships engender mutual support

> …The main reason to me is that everybody needs a success and for you to succeed you must have people who can support you. So you have to make sure that the relationship between you and these people is cordial for you to succeed…(AM_{12})

Cordial relationships as facilitated by open communication and open door policy

> …I will say the relationship is very cordial in that you can be able to meet any senior ... member in the corridor and just say hi. If I want to go and see any senior person I don't have to book an appointment, I just walk in and have a discussion. Very open for discussion. At one point I found there was something I needed to discuss with the CEO. I just went and told the secretary, I wish to see the CEO. And I went in…(AM_5)

Cordial relationships means it's warm, there's open door policy (AM_2)

Cordial relationships as facilitative, based on trust

> It is good. It is generally cordial, it is open, it is facilitative, it is, would I say enjoyable depending on how you look at it. Because it is always a pleasure working where you are given the space ... And it is a relationship based on trust and confidence within the staff that we have. It is also quite professional…(AM_4)

Following are the findings for the second study site under this research question. I described participants' views under the two relationship types contained in Hon & Grunig's (1999) theory and emerging relationship types.

University

Communal Versus Exchange Relationship

Participants' responses under this theme revealed an equal number of those who believed that EORs in this organisation are more communal than exchange. Communal relationships are based their response on the welfare benefits provided by the organisation and already mentioned under the previous research question. Those welfare aspects highlighted here including: support for those employees bereaved. Some participants who are part of faculty, however felt that important staff welfare issues are not prioritized such as housing and PhD studies.

U_5 believes that all relationships begin as contractual before developing into communal.

> … It is an exchange. There is what an employee is bringing on board and there is what they are taking from the employer. So they enter into a relationship. But then other relationships will develop. While after the journey begins with the organization, you find it is the communal. Now, what we call job fit will speak into how other relationships will be formed. Job fit is, you know there are employees who come in at the exchange relationship level but in terms of job fit, within where they are deployed they don't quite fit in and they are likely to choose to leave. Either they will not fit in either with the job or with their supervisors or their colleagues. Then they choose to leave. But there is also the communal thing. For those that fit, they develop a very strong relationship with others, either within their work unit or even within the larger organization. And then that may become actually quite important. For this organization I think the communal relationship is very strong…(U_5)

U_7 says the prevailing EOR type is contractual as defined by the performance contracts, which all employees sign and that the communal aspect is dying off. SB described more of a symbiotic (exchange) relationship, where "…we meet one another's bottom line." She also said that the over focus on the bottom line defines an exchange rather than communal relationship. U_2 said that employees are valued for their contribution to the growth of the organisation pointing to more of an exchange relationship.

U_9 believes the relationship type is a natural result of the organisation culture, which in her words is, "formal, traditional, with rigid terms of engagement…" U_4 concurred

> … for me, my interaction with the top management is very formal and I am not very sure I have been, I have had a lot of interaction informally with the top. Number one because the top are there and we are here. The top, I am not very sure, this maybe my perception, and sorry, I am an extremist, so I need to just say that…(U_4)

U_{11} who is in middle level management and has served the organisation less than ten years said that the organisation's relationship with employees did not go beyond the bottom line as she explains:

> … I think they will have a relationship with you as far as it relates to your work and maybe what they will try and do, they will support you so that you can be more efficient in your work. So I think for them it is to maximize your efficiency at work. It is about the bottom line…I think it is the tragedy of all organizations. They have to think about the bottom line, they have to think about how efficient they can be and so in a sense they are, most of the times reduced to working robots other than having that very social, free, kind of atmosphere... U_{11}

U_{10} described unhealthy EORs due to the contradictory behavior of management such as the poor implementation of policies mentioned under the previous research question. Professional relationships, as described by U_{11}, is when one does what one was employed to do. U_6, U_8 and U_2 talked about unprofessional relationships, where existing structures and policies are not followed and where employees do not work effectively.

> …And that is very sad because I believe that as Christians, it should be seen of us that we are more professional than those who are not Christians. We have to set that pace. So the culture is not a very professional culture. And why I would say that is I look at it in a form of service delivery and I have heard someone say before that do not turn away if you are able to help him or her. Do we have that attitude? Do we have an attitude of come back tomorrow?.. I will say that whether it is the PR or the HR department, there is need to be some clear guidelines on professional work ethics. I cannot really blame the staff because that clearly has been defined in the organization culture, which also boils down to why we may be having a higher turn over. If you get a good person from outside who is not able to adapt, there is a higher likelihood that they will go…(U_2)

U_1, who is part of top management and the dominant coalition spoke about mediocrity, extending the code of unprofessionalism that is mentioned by U_2 above.

> …Even when it comes for example say to grading, that is one thing that us lecturers we don't like. It is too much. Sometimes we don't even want to actually go through them and ensure that you know, so we just do mediocre work. That's the kind of thing I am talking about. And I think once you are in that environment

> you find that somebody is not doing what they are supposed to do and maybe you, you are serious with your work. Then you find that it will affect relationships because somebody will start asking, why is it that I am the only one who is doing this and others are not doing it. And you see with that then, you find that there is a negative aspect of relationships. But of course on the positive note you find that there are those who are serious in terms of their work…(U_1)

Lack of professionalism was raised variously by several participants in different contexts such as U_9, who raised it in the context of core versus non core activities where non core functions were seen as privileged, but not necessarily as hard working as core employees.

Fragmented Relationships

U_1 and U_{11} described fragmented relationships due to the growth of the organisation over the years and when different departments are not aware of each other' activities.

Unlike the first study site, there were not many suggestions for change coming from this study site. But participants expressed hope for the future; that things will get better.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings for the four research questions that guided this study. By comparing the codes and themes yielded by this study, I was able to establish marked similarities in participants' responses notwithstanding that they represented different organisations. In addition to noting comparisons within case and across the two cases, I also compared participants' responses in relation to important demographics including position in the organisation, the time they have worked in the organisation and so on. Appendix III of this document summarises the themes yielded from the data. In the next chapter, I discussed the implications of these findings for academia, the profession and practice of PR and the implications for relationship management theory.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study explored employee-organisation relationships in two conveniently sampled non-profit organisations in Nairobi, Kenya using Grunig & Huang's (2000) relationship management theory and Grunig's (2002) symmetrical communication framework. Effective relationship management is part of the move toward demonstrating the worth of public relations. The discussions of the findings of the study in this chapter confirm and times, disconfirm existing literature on the subject. This research was informed by five research questions:

1. What are the existing relationship antecedents in non-profit organisations?
2. How do internal publics in non-profit organisations construe existing relationship cultivation strategies?
3. What is the PR/communication manager's role in managing internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
4. How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships in non-profit organisations?
5. Which factors, within the organisation boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

5.2 Summary of the Key Findings and Discussion

In the following pages I discuss key findings from this study against each of the five research questions that informed this study. I especially highlighted the findings that were common to the two NPOs and those that provided new insights into relationship management theory and the implications of these for public relations practice.

5.2.1 RQ1: Which relationship antecedents were identified by internal publics in non-profit organisations?

The participants in this study identified nine relationship antecedents. Despite the fact that the results of qualitative studies are not generalizable, it was noted that some of these relationship antecedents were common to both organisations.

1. Internal communication as antecedent
2. Organisation mission and core values as antecedent
3. Organisation orientation activities as antecedent
4. Organisation structure as antecedent
5. EORs begin at the department level
6. Work and work roles as antecedent
7. Trust as antecedent
8. Organisation type as antecedent
9. Organisation leadership as antecedent

Participants in both organisations recognized the importance of internal communication as a necessary precursor to any relationship. The importance of internal communication confirms Rhee's (2004; 2007) assertion, mentioned in the review of literature in this current study, where she pointed out that the study of EORs is inextricable from communication. Internal communication becomes a precursor to develop EORs. Participants also mentioned the importance of

Participants also mentioned organisation structure as providing the basis for an OPR to begin. They described reporting lines bringing to mind Yang & Taylor's (2014) study, where the authors suggested that organisation relationships can be studied using a network ecology. Communication networks also denote the lines of authority in an organisation regardless of whether the organisation structure is hierarchical or organic (more participatory). Importantly, participants suggested that organisation structures ought to encourage symmetrical communication which underscores the need for more organic organisation structure. Kim's (2007) study similarly identified internal communication and organisations structure as antecendents, which confirms the findings of this study. Another common relationship antecedent was work roles. Internal relationships are built around work and working teams. This context provides the impetus for an OPR to begin and be sustained.

Relationship antecedents becomes an important context for PR/communication managers to gather intelligence, so to speak, in an effort of improve EORs. This intelligence becomes critical particularly if the organisation is going through a crisis. This study suggests that constant monitoring of EORs should be part of the PR/communication manager responsibilities. This study was able to uncover relationship antecedents some of which have been confirmed by other studies as mentioned and antecedents that are new or provide new knowledge. The fact that relationship antecedents are situational means that there are probably as many as there are organisations. The dynamic nature of organizational relationships also means that they change over time and may not remain static.

5.2.2 RQ2: How do internal publics construe existing relationship cultivation strategies in non-profit organisations?

Managers and non-management staff in both organisations agreed that employees are critical stakeholders, but only after they were prompted. For most participants other publics including community, media, government and clients came more readily to mind than did internal publics. Relationship cultivation strategies are mostly communication strategies used to maintain organisation relationships. While appreciating existing relationship cultivation efforts that afforded non-management employees access to senior management, participants critiqued these avenues and gave suggestions for improvement.

Among the key findings under this question, participants suggested that they would appreciate greater involvement in the development of cultivation activities. In particular, employees in the University raised the critical question of developing relationship cultivation strategies that have clear objectives, are sustainable, participatory and engender trust. Similarly, Amedicare participants also suggested that relationship cultivation efforts should invite dialogue.

Waters, Bortree & Tindall (2013) suggested that employees are not only the most critical of the organisation stakeholders, but also its loudest critics. Consequently, and as Rhee

(2004) postulates, when employers develop positive relationships with employees, the latter external publics are more likely to develop positive OPRs. The findings of this research confirm these perspectives and the fact that positive EORs develop where symmetrical cultivation strategies are used to build EORs.

The literature reviewed in this study (Levenshus, 2010; Grunig, 2009; demonstrates the critical role played by online relationship cultivation strategies in enhancing organisation relationships since by their nature, these strategies invite dialogue. Based on responses from participants in this study, neither of the organisations used online strategies as a means to engage its employees. Several participants mentioned engagement saying that relationship cultivation strategies ought to engage employees. Engagement studies, which span corporate communication and HR (Eldor & Vigod-Gadot (2016) fields is a growing phenomenon in PR literature as evidenced from several studies including Johnston (2014) and Men (2015).

Another key issue that emerged in relation to relationship cultivation strategies was the importance of employee voice and the freedom to raise issues in a threat free environment. In this regard the distinction between this relationship cultivation strategies and internal communication becomes blurred.

5.2.3 RQ3: How do internal communication practices (symmetrical or asymmetrical) influence internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

This present study brought to fore the importance of effective internal communication mechanisms that are trusted and have effective feedback mechanism. In their extended study of excellence in public relations, Grunig, J. E. & Grunig, L.A (2000); Grunig (2006) pointed out the value of listening to stakeholder voices as one of the hallmarks of excellent public relations. Effective feedback mechanisms give voice to employee issues and in the absence of these, employees device their own ways of raising issues. Several relational scholars have turned their attention to listening as an important construct in OPRs. Scholarly work on voice includes Edwards (2018) and Mears, Oetzal, Torres, Derkaust & Ginossar (2001), who explored employees from a subaltern perspective.

Open communication or openness emerged as an important factor in aiding internal relationships as documented by Grunig & Huang (2000) and a concept of Grunig's (1992, 2002, 2006) symmetrical framework and Ledingham & Bruning's (1998) relationship management framework. Symmetrical communication uses open communication, listening, feedback and positive reinforcement as relationship cultivation strategies. Except for positive reinforcement, which was not a key focus of my study, the three other cultivation strategies were corroborated in my study. Listening is a growing area of interest among relationship scholars including Bodie (2013); McNamara (2015) Gordon (2011), Yeomans, (2016) and others. Furthermore, symmetrical communication helps employees feel like they are heard regardless of their lack of power (Ni, 2007). Besides, employees' perceptions of symmetrical communication has implications for relationship outcomes.

It also emerged from this study that internal communication is a learned skill pointing toward the need for capacity development in this area. Further, internal communication is a product of organizational leadership culture but also an important relationship antecendent. Some participants also expressed the desire for more face-to-face (FTF) and participatory communication with top management particularly on critical matters affecting employee matters as opposed to the more traditional top-down measures that negatively impact EORs. Mishra & Boynton (IPR, n.d.) reported in their study employees' preference for face to face communication with direct supervisors resulting in more engaged employees, while Grunig (2006) pointed out that transformative rather than autocratic organizational leadership is a key feature of excellence in organisations. Importantly, the findings of this study point towards preference for a more participative culture bolstered by more dialogic forms of internal communication.

The fluid nature of organizational relationships means that they may shift horizontally along the spectrum of asymmetrical to symmetrical. It was clear from this present study, that the symmetrical/asymmetrical divide of internal communication and relationship cultivation strategies are too rigid to capture some of nuances of internal relationships perhaps due to the changeable nature of human relational and communicative behavior, which was one of the criticisms directed at the symmetrical framework (L'Etang, 2008) and brought out in the literature review section of this paper.

5.2.4 RQ4: What is the communication manager's role in managing employee-organisation relationships in non-profit organisations?

In both organisations, the role of facilitating internal relationships was perceived as outside that of the respective PR/communication managers. Rather, respondents reported that they (communication managers) deal mainly with external publics, image building, publicity and marketing activities pointing towards non-strategic communication roles. Importantly, most participants understood this role to fall under the human resource manager, while only a few participants said this role falls under the CEO and other top leadership organs of organisations. Less than 20% of participants in both organisations said this role lies with the PR/communication manager. A close questioning of those revealed that they had tertiary level training in public relations.

It was clear from both organisations that the role of the PR/communication manager was not strategic. This became apparent with the obvious internal communication gap in both study sites, which became even more apparent when the two organisations separately had to deal with crises. This finding is clearly linked to the perennial call for strategic public relations/communication management of which relationship management is a core feature and this is well documented in literature including Center & Jackson, (1995; 2014); McNamara, 2014), which I raised in the literature section of this thesis.

Significantly, this finding raised a subject that is not well documented in PR literature, which acknowledges that PR professionals are concerned about the encroachment of other fields into their territory, principally, human resource and marketers. Literature on this subject is scant although Lauzen (1991, 1992) broached on the subject and used the terms “imperialistic” and “encroachment” to describe the phenomenon where marketers and human resource personnel were more likely than others to invade PR territory, a phenomenon she attributes to PR practitioners who, in her opinion, cede ground to these other professions. More recently, Garcia (2016) raised a similar concern suggesting that corporate communication, a field that was carved out of public relations was "kidnapping" public relations.

Interestingly, in a round table discussion at my workplace, on the state of the PR field in Kenya, six PR professionals from the public and private sector conceded that PR practitioners are not as visible or aggressive in the organisation as their marketing counterparts (Personal communication, November 30, 2018). Further, PR/communication managers, unlike other line managers in organisations often fail to give figures (numbers) to show the worth of public relations. It was curious how this present study confirms the perpetual thorn in the flesh of public relations practice; that of showing the value of public relations in the business set up.

The tension between PR and related marketing was captured in a recent study carried out by Anani-Bossman & Obeng (2022), who sought the perspectives of Ghanian PR and marketing professionals on the friction between the two professions. Encroachment into the PR field is still a concern today and warrants further investigation.

The issue of encroachment is one of the key factors driving the Institute of Public Relations and Communication (IPRC) bill proposed by the Public Relations Society of Kenya, which among other things seeks to professionalise PR practice in Kenya through legislature (PRSK, 2018). One of the measures the Society suggests is to lock out those who have no formal training in PR from practicing in the field.

On the contrary, public relations research has also been criticized for extending itself into other fields without firming up its own theoretical grounding as Duhring (2015) and other scholars have pointed out. The discussion is not new and has been a concern for a growing number of PR scholars including L'Etang (2012). This finding of this present research therefore extends what has been discussed in literature.

The encroachment of the human resource function into the PR/communication territory means PR practitioners need to have a bigger voice and greater public engagement in the public sphere about the still misunderstood role of PR in the organisations and society. In larger economies (and organisations) there appears to be a greater appreciation for this role with some organisations in the West even dedicating the role of internal relations to a specific individual. It is debatable, though, whether organisations would be willing to include additional resources to expand existing PR departments to accommodate additional personnel.

5.2.5 RQ5: Which factors, within the organizational boundaries, shape the quality of internal relationships in non-profit organisations?

Non-management participants in the two study sites generally expressed varying levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with internal communication and other relationship cultivation measures; however the level of satisfaction to dissatisfaction was dependent on various extenuating factors described under the third research question including work environment, leadership culture, and organisation leaders' handling of crisis.

The findings of this study also underscore Moon & Rhee's (2013) assertion that more studies need to explore the negative dimensions of OPR and in this case, EORs. The negative factors affecting EOR quality far outweighed the positive in this present study.

In this chapter, I have only discussed those that were common across the two study sites, or unusual. These included power relations; uncertainty; negative management behavior and leadership culture to mention a few.

Power relations (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009) emerged as a theme in both organisations, but was more pronounced so in the University, where employees feared raising issues that they were unhappy about or wanted clarified; a situation further exacerbated by the perceived lack of effective and trusted feedback mechanisms. The issue of power relations in the workplace thrusts relationship management studies and by extension public relations research into the still unfamiliar territory of Marxian and Freirean thought or the critical tradition of communication theory. The findings of this study, then, marginally confirms the growing shift from the largely organizational mainstay of public relations research and the, so called, prevailing “Grunigian paradigm” (Duhring, 2015) which is consistent with the socio-cultural turn of public relations research proposed by a growing body of scholars including Roper, (2005); L’Etang (2012); Edwards & Hodges (2011) among others.

The nature of the organisation was another key finding that was frequently mentioned by participants in both study sites in the context of mission. In Amedicare, the uncertainty of donor funding became a distinguishing factor determining organisation type. In addition was the question about whether non-profit organisations could justify relationship maintenance strategies in their budget to donors.

For the University, organisation type mostly revolved around employee expectations of a Christian organisation versus the reality on the ground. Participants pointed out the contradictory behavior amongst management and employees alike when it came to upholding the Christian values espoused by the core values of the organisation. This finding is in tandem with desirable PR practice as outlined in several of the resolutions of the World Public Relations Forum of 2012, where practitioners resolved that, among other things, PR and communication managers were mandated to define and maintain organisations' character and values.

Management privilege and aloofness was identified as one of the factors negatively affecting EORs. These findings were in sharp contrast to McCowan's study (2014), who reported open communication, transformative leadership traits and positive spirituality as key factors in enhancing EORs in her study. Men (2014) talked about the need for authentic organisational leadership. Leadership studies in relation to OPR/EOR has also attracted a fair amount of scholarship in recent years including Dunst, Bruder & Hamby (2018); McCowan (2014); Mikkelson, York & Arritola (2015) among others.

Trust emerged in both organisations as an important relationship antecedent and outcome. Trust moderates the EOR either way depending on the level of trust or mistrust. In the two organisations, management decisions and the separate crises both organisations faced struck at the core of the trust structures in both organisations. The need for change communication (Neills, 2018) was raised as a way of either preventing or better handling organizational crises and other such organizational upheavals in the future.

Trust has been a key area of focus for relationship management scholars over the years including Chia (2005), Rawlins (2008); Paine (2013) and Jiang (2016) and the findings of this present study similarly underscore its importance. The negative outcomes of mistrust has also been a focus of scholarly interest. In his study, Shen (2017) proposed *distrust* as an additional dimension of OPR quality in addition to the Hon & Grunig's (1999), four existing dimensions of control mutuality, trust, commitment and satisfaction. Distrust, in this case, is not the opposite of trust, but a distinct quality that expresses the fear partners in a relationship experience about the other's intentions and conduct.

The Edelman (2018) Trust Barometer indicates growing levels of distrust globally particularly at the governmental set up. Between 2017 and 2018, the media was identified as the least trusted entity. That aside, I fault these findings for not having proper African representation except for South Africa. I linked the findings on trust to an important remark made by a middle level manager in the University, where she mentioned that organizational leadership behavior that elicit trust or mistrust and work environment as significant factors in attracting and retaining competent employees, many of whom are millennials.

Organisation culture emerged as one of the major factors affecting relationship quality. In this study, organisation culture is a product of organisation mission and core values and organizational leadership. In his classic volume on organizational culture and leadership, Schein (2010) explored the importance of organizational culture pointing out that organisation leadership and culture were "intertwined" (p. xi). He underscored the important role organizational leaders play as purveyors of organizational culture, whether positive or dysfunctional.

The type of organizational leadership tips the EOR outcomes scale one way or the other as this study has proven. Participants in the Amedicare described an open and engaging leadership culture concerned about employees' welfare, while in the University, participants described an aloof, privileged management in direct contradiction to the core values of the organisation. Effective organizational leadership (caring, benevolent, open) culture improves EORs as opposed to ineffective leadership (uncaring, closed, privileged) that has negative consequences. Both trickle down to the rest of the organisation. The impact of organizational leadership culture on the relationship outcomes between management and employees corroborates other studies including Men (2010; 2014), who spoke about the importance of authentic leadership. Men & Stacks (2014) linked strategic organizational leadership to better EOR outcomes and engaged (Lemon & Palenchar, 2018; Vercic & Poloski, 2017; Men, 2015) employees.

Most non-management participants Amedicare spoke of specific present and past positive organisational leadership that propelled the organisation forward and resulted in overall satisfaction and commitment outcomes in contrast to the second study site. On the other hand, negative leadership culture and management privilege came out strongly as a factor negatively impacting EORs in the second study site. Participants reported management privilege, autocratic behavior and aloof senior management that contradicts one of the core values of the organisation of *servant leadership*.

In my study, I found that Hon & Grunig's (1999; n.d.) relationship outcome concepts of commitment and satisfaction are related and at times it was difficult to draw the line between the two. It is not clear to me at this point whether other researchers have made similar observations.

There are probably as many relationship types as there are organisations. Most EORs begin as an exchange or contractual relationship before they move to communal relationships. Ni's (2007) study found that of all relationship types, contractual relationships were a more salient feature in EORs. In this present study, I found the factors that determine relationship type include organisation size, management decision, commitment and satisfaction outcomes. Cordial relationships was the most prevalent relationship type in the first study site, while unprofessional relationships was identified as the prevailing relationship type in the second study site. Both study sites identified fragmented relationships as a product of organisation size and physical structure, which undermine effective EOR building across different departments.

5.3 Conclusions

The intangible and dynamic nature of relationships render them difficult to measure quantitatively (Chia, 2005). However, the qualitative design of this study has yielded rich findings that advance knowledge about relationship management in an African/Kenyan context. The findings of this study will also be useful for PR practice in Kenyan non-profit organisations. Furthermore, it makes a marginal contribution to OPR/EOR studies in the continent.

Relationship antecedents becomes an important place for the PR/communication manager to begin the relationship management process. This intelligence becomes critical in understanding where, if any intervention would be needed to enhance internal relationships. The findings of this study point towards the constant need to have a pulse on internal relationships in addition to other tasks.

It was abundantly clear from this study that more attention needs to be paid to internal relationships and internal communication as an important antecedent of EORs. Far too many organisations in Kenya, including the ones under study, relegate PR and the PR/communication manager to a technician role, rendering an otherwise robust and important function to one of publicity seeking and a marketing communication role. This is in contrast to existing literature that defines the PR manager as the communication (Welch, 2012) and relationship (Swart, 2012) expert who is charged with the task of advising top management on building better EORs and OPRs. Of concern was one of the findings of this study that showed the perception that relationship management is more of a human resource rather than public relations function. Indeed, participants in both organisations reported that the PR managers in their respective organisations were more focused on external rather than internal publics.

This study explored the relationship management stages, while the majority of studies reviewed only look at one or a combination of two aspects of the process. The limitation of the approach that I used was that some research questions yielded more depth than others. For instance, although this study was able to uncover several relationship antecedents, further research would yield more indepth findings on this construct besides merely identifying those antecedents.

The study confirmed that indeed communication permeates the entire relationship management process as evidenced by participants' responses where aspects of symmetrical communication kept emerging. Thus the theme of internal communication (symmetrical versus asymmetrical) permeated all three stages of relationship management. The central role of internal communication informs my thesis.

One metaphor that comes to my mind is a wind vane that moves depending on the direction and force of the wind. Similarly any organizational occurrence or behavior and so on affects internal relationships. Based on this current discussion I propose viewing employee-organisation relationships as a continuum.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

5.4.1 EORs as a Continuum

The dynamic nature of EORs means that they cannot be described in the rather rigid terms suggested in the existing relationship management and symmetrical communication models. For example in my study participants reported symmetrical communication, but also top-down that were dependent especially on relationship cultivation strategies and organisation leadership culture. Further, participants in this study expressed various levels of commitment, satisfaction depending on various factors, but particularly organisation leadership.

In my view, EORs should be viewed as a continuum moving between the two extremes of positive EORs to negative EORs. For the latter, I have modified Moon & Rhee’s (2013) concept of negative organisation public relationships (NOPR) to NEORs or negative EORs. This model (Figure 5.1) combines relationship cultivation strategies and outcomes as reported in my study. However, it does not include relationship antecendents. The model vests much responsibility on top management and PR/communication managers. Literature discussed so far demonstrates their role is critical in building and maintaining EORs although, in reality, other factors beyond their control may also influence EOR outcomes.

The proposed model was constructed using some of the key findings from participants in the two study sites and elements of Grunig & Huang’s (2000) relationship management stages, and Grunig’s (2002) constructs of symmetrical communication. At the centre of the model is the PR/communication manager’s boundary spanning role that requires them to constantly monitor the communication and by extension, relationships of organisations in order to mitigate any factors that would negatively impact internal relationships. Their action or inaction is critical in mitigating those factors. In the model, the nature of internal communication, as it moves along the symmetrical/asymmetrical divide yields certain relationship outcomes and subsequently relationship types.

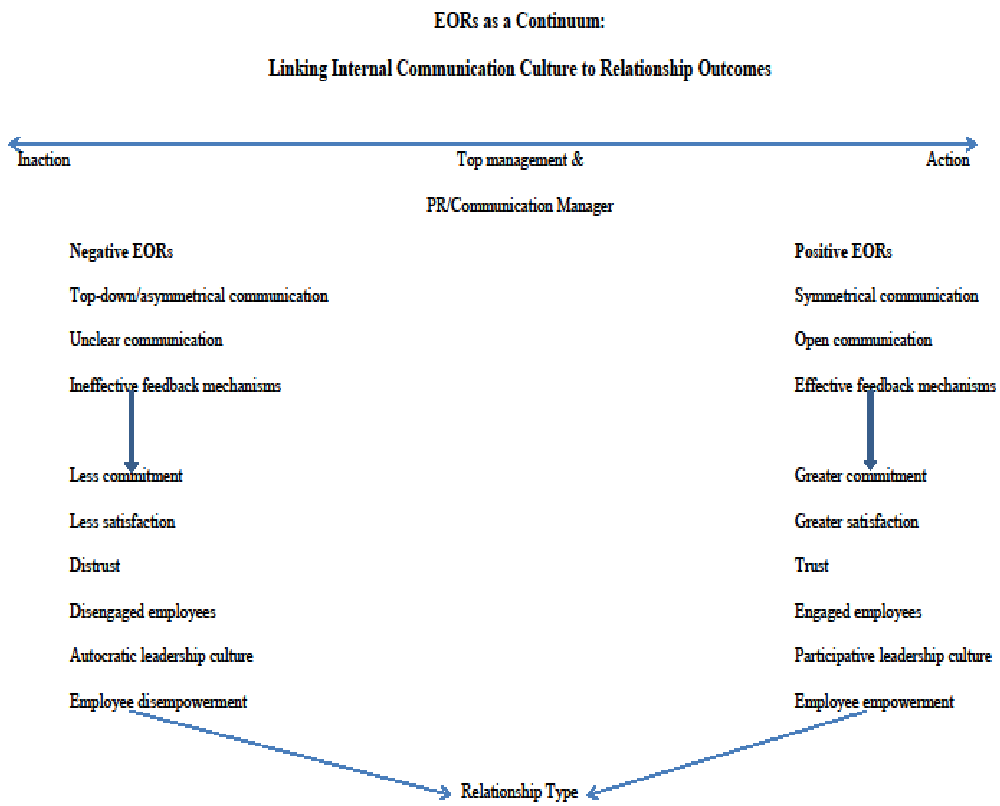


Figure 5:1 EOR as a Continuum (Author, 2020)

5.5 Recommendations for Communication/PR Practice

1. There needs to be a better understanding in organisations about the critical role of relationship management. Organisations managers need to hire PR/communication professionals who are trained. This is one of the critical issues that the IPRAC Bill sought to address. A more strategic approach to PR and communication in organisations would also clearly delineate and distinguish it from the human resource function. An overwhelming majority of participants in

both study sites said that relationship management belongs in the human resource domain. Having more trained PR personnel, who understand this strategic role and with support from top management is critical in ensuring this happens. While distinguishing the two roles, organisations also need to focus on how the two roles can play a complimentary role rather than a competitive one.

2. PR/communication managers in non-profit organisations ought to play a greater role in the development of relationship cultivation strategies. Besides the tradition media platforms used by NPOs, communication managers need to explore other relationship cultivation strategies that encourage dialogue between employers and employees. This calls for periodic evaluation of existing relationship cultivation strategies to determine if they are still relevant on the one hand, but also to determine if they are able to engage employees in dialogue. Although this study was not investigating the relationships among variables, quantitative studies reviewed have consistently shown that relationship cultivation strategies that encourage dialogue lead to more positive EOR outcomes. Positive EORs are more likely to lead to positive OPRs with external publics.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

1. EORs may be studied in relation to events that impact the organisation such as a crisis or organizational change that happens over a period in order to get a perspective of how these EORs are affected and better to manage change. The two organisations in this research each had crises: retrenchment and student unrest both of which had far reaching negative impact on EORs particularly in relation to how these crises were handled by management. This study was not able to

explore this factor adequately. What about other crises? For instance, how have internal relationship in Kenyan NPOs changed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. More EOR studies on listening and voice should be encouraged and from a critical perspective. The findings of this study yielded power relations as a major theme. Perhaps studying from a subaltern perspective or as suggested by Mears et al. (2001), who used muted group theory in their study of EORs, where the employees are the muted group.

3. The question about encroachment of other fields, particularly marketing and human resource into public relations manager's territory also warrants further investigation especially from the African/Kenyan context. Are there empirical arguments that would support, for instance, the merging of PR and marketing roles as some have suggested?

4. Relationship management studies in Kenya would benefit from comparative studies, for example a comparative study between public and non-profit sectors or the private and non-profit sectors. This present study only examined internal relationships in the non-profit sector.

5.7 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the key findings of this study and made important recommendations for relationship management theory particularly with the new model that I proposed. Based on the findings of this study and the discussion, I made several recommendations for public relations practice and for future research. The versatility of the relationship management stages makes it adaptable to contexts both within and outside the organisation context. Organisation relationships are dynamic, which means that much has changed in the two organisations since I began my study. As expected, these changes were not captured in this study. However, the findings of this study will add a much needed voice on the subject of relationship management in the African context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Julie Gitau. I am a doctoral student at Moi University, Nairobi Campus. I am carrying out a research on relationship management in selected organisations in Nairobi County.

Purpose of research

The aim of this research is to find out the nature of relationship management for employees in your organisation and specific strategies used to enhance employee-organisation relationships.

Type of research intervention

This research involves participating in a face-to-face interview with me at an agreed on date and time. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

Duration

The face-to-face interview should take 45 minutes to an hour. There is a possibility that I may need additional information and would require another interview with you at a different date.

Risks

Although there are no inherent risks in the actual exercise, if you feel that some questions are too personal or would any way harm you, you are free to excuse yourself from the exercise.

Benefits

There may be no direct benefits to you, however, the information that you provide will help me to understand and take steps to enhance employee-organisation relationships.

Reimbursments

There are no reimbursements for this exercise.

Confidentiality

This research is confidential. You will not be required to share write your name anywhere on any paper or any retrieval system. At no point during the research exercise will you be asked to identify yourself.

Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Signature of Participant:

Day/month/year:

APPENDIX II: INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name of organisation:

Designation of interviewee:

Date/time of interview:

Venue of interview:

Duration of interview:

Introduce yourself to the respondent. Remind participant that you will use a tape recorder for the interview and secure permission first.

1. Who are the most important stakeholders in this organisation? [If employees not mentioned, probe]
2. What comes to your mind when you think about employees of this organization?
3. Do you think that you have a relationship with this organisation? [For management: Do you think that employees have a relationship with this organisation?] Probe: Why? Why not?
4. Who is responsible for maintaining EORs in this organisation?
5. What are some of the reasons (motives, needs) that prompts this organisation to establish relationships with you? [If management: with its employees?]
6. Describe some of the strategies that this organisation uses in order to initiate and build relationships with its you/employees?
7. What is your assessment of these relationship cultivation strategies used to build EORs? [Probe suggestions for change].

8. How would you describe the communication between this organisation and its employees? [Probe for open communication, voice, listening, feedback mechanisms, symmetrical versus asymmetrical communication]
9. How does internal communication influence the nature of relationships developed between employees and this organisation?
10. Describe the factors that affect internal relationships.
11. Control mutuality

    Would you describe how this organisation demonsrates attentiveness to what employees say? Can you provide any examples to demonstrate this? To what extent do you feel employees have control over what the organisation does (decisions, policies, etc)?
12. Trust

    Would you describe anything that the organisation has done to treat you fairly? [Management: to treat employees fairly, justly or vice versa?] Probe: How is this demonstrated? In which specific ways has this organisation demonstrated that it has the ability to do what it says it will do?

13. Commitment

    Would you give examples that suggest that the organisation wants to maintain a long-term relationship with you? [Management: its employees?]

14. Satisfaction

    How do employees in this organisation demonstrate that they are satisfied with the relationship that they have with this organisation? How is dissatisfaction demonstrated?

15. Communal relationships

    In which specific ways does this organisation demonstrate concern for the welfare of its employees? Probe: Does it expect/not expect anything in return?

16. Exchange relationships

    Do you believe that this organisation develops relationships while expecting/not expecting something in return? Probe: Explain and give examples.

17. Besides communal and exchange relationships, which other relationship types do you recognise in your organisation?

APPENDIX III: APPROVAL TO COLLECT DATA

amref
health africa

Amref Health Africa in Kenya

January 23, 2019

To:

Julie Gatheni Gitau

P O Box 47481-00100

Nairobi.

Dear Julie

Re: Approval to Collect Data for Doctorate

Congratulations on the completion of your thesis. As an organisation, we were glad to facilitate this process by allowing you to carry out several face to face interviews amongst our staff for your study titled: *The role of internal communication in shaping employee organisation relationships: A comparative study of two non-profit organisations in Nairobi, Kenya.*

We acknowledge that you received clearance from both NACOSTI and Moi University to carry out the study as per the documents that you availed to us.

As agreed, we request that you keep Amref Health Africa anonymous in your reports or publications. In addition, we ask that you share your findings with us as these would be helpful in improving our internal processes.

Best wishes on the journey ahead as you work toward the completion of your doctorate.

Yours sincerely,

Samuel Muhula
Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Manager
Amref Health Africa in Kenya
Tel: 0721958734
Email: Samuel.muhula@amref.org

P O Box 30125 00100 Nairobi Tel: 254 - 020 699 4000 Fax: +254 020 6002531 www.amref.org

Winner of the Gates Award for Global Health

APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH LETTER FROM DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY

DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY

Athi River Campus

Nairobi Campus

www.daystar.ac.ke

8th March 2018

Ms. Julie Muraya,
C/O Daystar University,
P.O. Box 44400-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Julie,

Re: Research on the role of internal communication in shaping employee-organization relationships: A comparative analysis of two non-profit organizations in Nairobi, Kenya

Your email dated 8th January 2018 on the above subject refers. I give consent for you to approach the necessary respondents to participate in the research project entitled '**the role of internal communication in shaping employee-organization relationships: A comparative analysis of two non-profit organizations in Nairobi, Kenya.**' I have read the project information statement explaining the purpose of the research project and understand that:

1. The role of the university is voluntary and that the undersigned may decide to withdraw university's participation at any time without penalty.
2. Specific respondents will be invited to participate. Permission will be sought from them.
3. Only those who consent will participate in the project.
4. All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence.
5. Participants' names will not be used and individual participants will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
6. The university will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.
7. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
8. You have obtained approval from Kenyan government through NCST.
9. A report of the findings will be made available to the university.

Sincerely,

Prof. Bernard Boyo,
Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs

APPENDIX V: RESEARCH LETTER FROM MOI UNIVERSITY

MOI UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL COORDINATOR
NAIROBI CAMPUS

Tel: (053) 43152
Fax. (053) 43153

P.O Box 62056 00200
NAIROBI
KENYA

MU/NRB/SHRD/SA/01

13th December 2016

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
Utalii House
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT
JULIE GATHONI GITAU SHRD/DHPIL/15/14

This is to confirm that the above named is a postgraduate student of Moi University, School of Human Resource Development, Department of Communication Studies. The student is pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Communication Studies course offered at Nairobi campus.

The student successfully defended her proposal and is due to proceed for her research data collection.

The title of her research – **"The role of internal communication in shaping employee-organisation relationships: A comparative analysis of two organisations in Nairobi, Kenya".**

Ms. Gitau is in the process of obtaining a research permit to enable her visit the identified research centers. The University shall highly appreciate any assistance accorded to her.

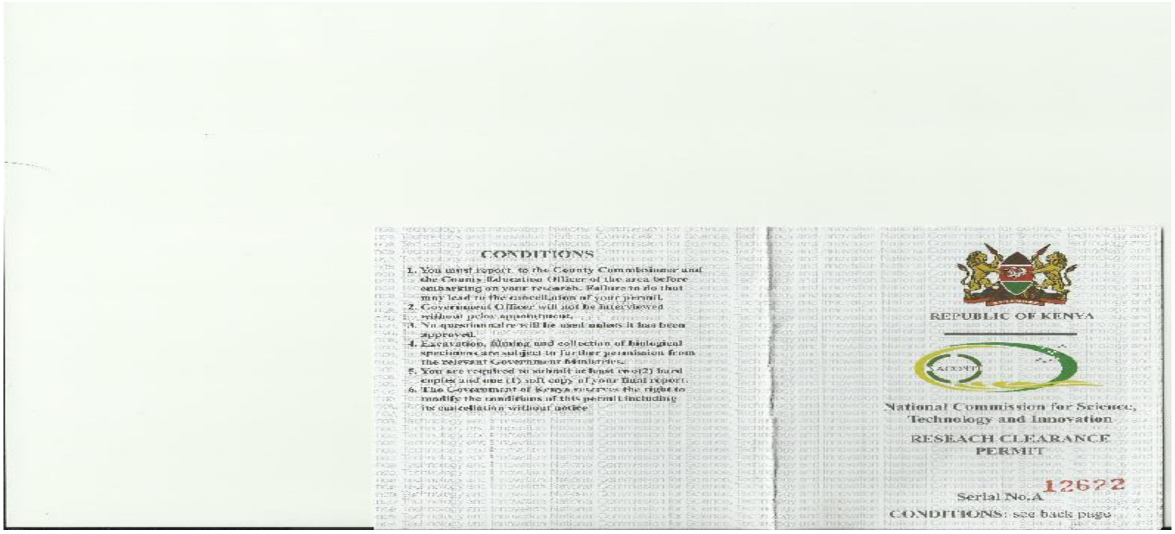
Yours faithfully,

Gachewahui

S. GACHEWA
COORDINATOR, SHRD.
NAIROBI CAMPUS

COORDINATOR
SCHOOL OF HUMAN
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
NAIROBI CAMPUS

APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH PERMIT



CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

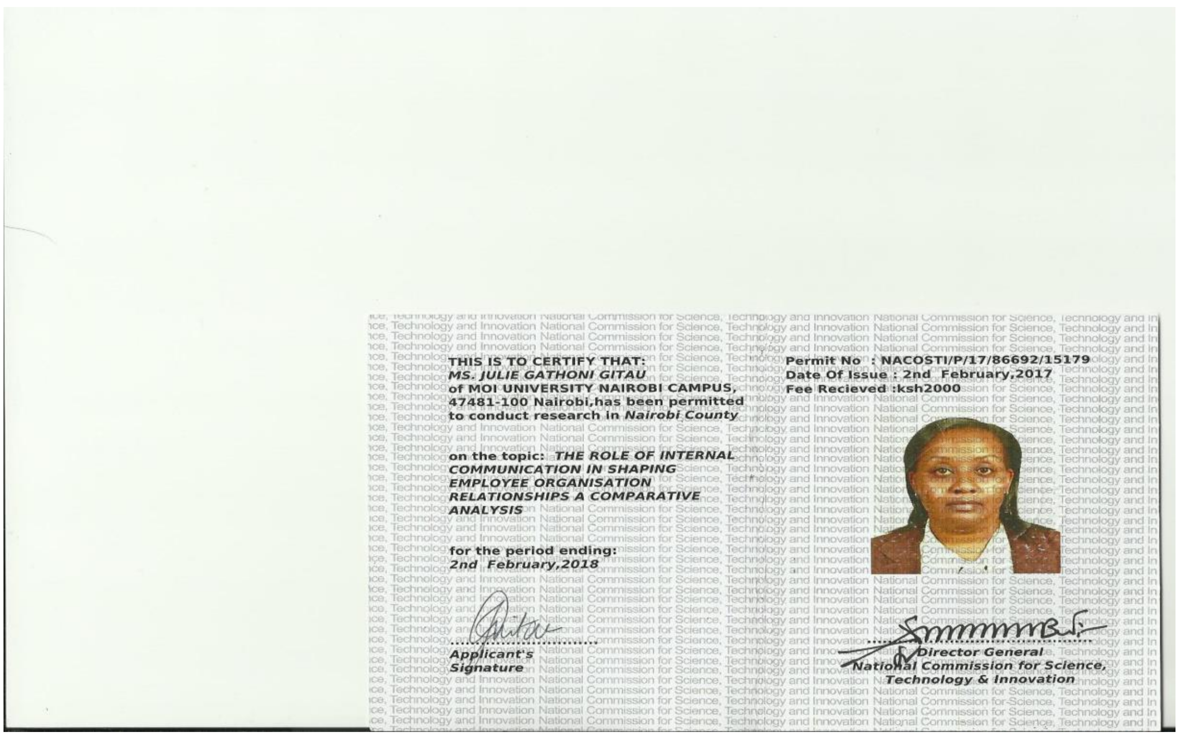
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

RESEACH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No.A 12672

CONDITIONS: see back page



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. JULIE GATHONI GITAU
of MOI UNIVERSITY NAIROBI CAMPUS, 47481-100 Nairobi,has been permitted to conduct research in *Nairobi County*

on the topic: *THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN SHAPING EMPLOYEE ORGANISATION RELATIONSHIPS A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS*

for the period ending:
2nd February,2018

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/86692/15179
Date Of Issue : 2nd February,2017
Fee Recieved :ksh2000

Applicant's Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

APPENDIX VII: SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW

Date: 21/3/2017 Designation:

Time: 45’52” Pseudonym: DI

What comes to your mind when you think about relationships? Organisation relationships?

Ah for me its actually reporting...I look at reporting and how I relate to those that I work with. The vertical...the arrow direction might be different. It can be horizontal or vertical. That is how I look at it. And the other thing what are the policies that are in place and how we’re supposed to interact and the interaction thing is where now we’re maybe you guide me in terms of definition. Is it the personal interaction or is it the organisational interaction in terms of where you have policies in HR, policies in how they’re supposed to carry out the activities...

For us it’s more of the visibility in terms of the activities we carry out, but I don’t if we’re to talk about the relationship within the organisation or what the public sees?

Within AMREF. It’s about how we work as an organisation to be able to fulfil our purpose and our mission within AMREF and its structured in a very interesting way...where we have starting from the cleaner and it goes all the way till our Hq. Coz we’re the only organisation that has its HQ in Africa . For us it’s a scenario where you, how do I relate to the cleaner? How do I relate to my peers or those below me. And then how do I relate to the management above and how it escalates to the next level.

We have an appraisal system on how we’re supposed to carry out our activities and basically what happens...like as for me I’m in a managerial position. I have people who report to me, so how I relate with them also is very crucial. I use my ... basically from a biblical perspective where the story of Moses when he was able to lead the children of...when he was given power by Pharaoh to take care of the kingdom and one of the things that he realised was that the Israelites, they were hungry. So the first thing he did was to give them food so that they were able to work. How can I work with my team so that their issues are taken care of? How can I make work with my team so that they are satisfied by themselves. Their issues are taken care of before we can march together to achieve the goal. Because if we have bad relationship within my faculty, then outside there it will be revealed

So you're looking at relationships from the perspective of how internal relationships has a direct bearing on external relationships?

I feel it does. For instance if we have relationship with my team. We cannot communicate let's say we have our own personal issues so when you go outside there it's actually reflecting. People can actually pick it up and see there is a problem. So basically what we do is for our project is basically advocacy. For us we have meetings constantly. You see like now that's why we made sure we have a board room because we have to be at par with each and everything that we're doing. If I have to leave AMREF I'm meeting the Governor, I should pass the same information to someone reporting to me. So we have to be at par in everything we know...what is happening out there that you need to know. How can you work with it? How we are meeting with journalists what are we supposed to say? So for me relationships is making each and everything familiar to each and every person is quite key.

Do you believe you have a relationship with this organisation?

Umm. Short pause. Yes and sometimes I would put a no. Umm our organisation is vast, I can say it's mammoth. It's very big (how big?). The whole of Amedicare, I would say we are about 700 employees, nationally, regionally (wow). But in Kenya, we're more than 300 hundred. So if I need very quick reaction (SNAPS FINGERS) ..it can take a long time for the management to come down and listen to what I have to say because of the diversity and the priorities in place. So like now I'm meeting the media and they feel we should have a website; we should have, a, b, c, d...we should start putting our issues on the website. The issues to do with accountability towards the government. That in itself it is good, but when you go to the management it may not be a priority. So I think because of the vastness and the reporting time, I think it takes time for the management to feel each and every person in the organisation.

So do you believe that if the organisation was smaller that would be easier, or do other things come into play?

Ummm. Smaller organisations? Yeah. I feel it would be easier. Like now I would walk into my manager's office and report an issue, but for, if it's a small organisations but even the structures are limited. But if it's a big one, like now if I wanted to report something I would go to our programme manager of who he has to communicate to the country director. So if it is something that needed a quick reaction, I cannot bypass my immediate supervisor. And I feel that by the time the message reaches the target person, I feel that maybe it's altered. It gets there very late, or I don't get the feedback as the way I expected...I mean, the horse's mouth thing. It kind of disappears because at times of the structures that are there. So yes, the structures are there you can report within the structures, but at times when you have some urgent concerns that need to be addressed it takes time.

How critical are relationships with your key stakeholders in this organisation? (QUESTION UNCLEAR). How critical are they in your own words (ahh within the organisation? *Your stakeholders outside the organisation and within the organisation. How critical are relationships with important stakeholders for this organisation?*

For me I can say it's important because it brings about the issue...let's say you're a stakeholder outside it brings about the issue of partnerships for us to be able to achieve our goals coz you know as AMREF working within health. We cannot push an agenda as AMREF. We have to get our partners involved. How do we communicate and work with them is quite important because if we're not ready to share our budgets. we're not ready to share our mission and vision in the organisation then there's nowhere we're going. But once we have that we have that mission relationship, that that organisation is very significant to us, then the kind of relationship that we have with them is quite significant in terms of even asking MOUs so that we're able to know how we're going to communicate. How we share different activities...which parts of the budget are we sharing with them. Other stakeholders are very critical especially when it comes to implementation.

Now for employees it's quite important because, if my staff today refuse to come to work, then I would not be able to achieve my goals. The other thing is if my staff is interfered whichever way within their social spheres or whatever social structures within their lifestyle, then it actually interferes with our work. So I think depending on how you put the stakeholders, I feel each and every person plays a critical role. Each and every stakeholder plays a critical role in the overall objective. But not forgetting that umm at times relationships can be structured in terms of organisation's policy, but there is a place where it's beyond policy. Ah coz policy, yes can define confidentiality, but, it cannot really define trust. So how do you build trust with your employees ahh vis a vis carry out the project objective and I think that is where at times the link lacks.

Where you find maybe your superiors they don't have the trust mechanism, they're not open to situations, they're not open to just listening to personal views. Because what I've realised even among my staff like if a staff has a problem at home, they come to work and you just see things are not right (YOU'RE ABLE TO NOTICE THERE'S A PROBLEM?) Yes coz I've really let it open where we can discuss so if they don't solve that problem, like most of the time when they say I can't handle this because my child is sick so the first to them, can you hand over you're work solve the issue at home and come back. At times you find in management that open space is not there. People, I've gotten to interact with the system and what I've noticed is that when a employee dies, like we've just had the death of an employee last month, you realise relationships at work are very critical. When staff cannot appear in the fundraising for a staff then you ask yourself, is it only work that brings us here? When staff cannot go to your funeral and everyone says, I've sent my money but I don't need to be there, their presence is not important. Then I think, there are so many things that you need to ask ourselves when you sit at particular levels ...in terms of relationships... So for me again, it's just a learning sphere of respecting the stakeholders, but also pushing it to the next level. That yes there are policies, but move above the policies.

You've brought something very important. In public relations literature the role of managing relationships actually squarely lies with the PR or communications manager. But you've brought out the critical aspect that as long as you're in management, then you're playing that role without reaching out to the person possibly whose role it should be.

And for us, like in Amedicare, we have a communication network, where we have umm. Like for instance, I cannot communicate to a Netherlands office, I have to pass through the programmes manager. So we have key people who are in specific areas who are supposed to do communications. Like the media? We are meeting with the media in a different perspective now in essence they are creating awareness on our policies, but if the media wanted to record anything about AMEDICARE specifically, then there is a specific person who does that (LIKE A SPOKESPERSON?). A communications manager. So again when you're talking about stakeholders, maybe the media wanted to talk to me and am in Kitui, but they have to come to AMEDICARE, seek permission (FROM THE COMMUNICATION'S MANAGER?) Yes. (AHH). Then come to the field. You can't lose a lot, then you might gain but the structures hinder the kind of relationship that you're supposed to have

DO YOU THINK STRUCTURES ARE IMPORTANT? IS THERE A PLACE FOR STRUCTURES?)

For me coming from a social perspective, that's the other thing, structures are good when you look at particular theories, but at times, they have to be easy. Structures are good because they give you a framework with which to work with. When they're rigid you know like I always tell people, it's different when you work in an industry, and when you work with an NGO that deals with social life. For an industry, it has to be rigid (MOTIONED WITH HER FINGERS) or it has to be perfect. If you are manufacturing the door for a car, that is what you do. But for me somebody might walk in, I don't do HIV, but they need advice on HIV, so I have to understand the sphere around health. So somebody walks in with diabetes, how can I refer them to a better organisation. But you find in some places it's so strict. Like now with us the media. As much as they're supposed to communicate with our communications office, but now they have to come to us because we're the ones who have the product that they need to bring outside there. Structures are important but I don't think they have to be very rigid.

So, I think I'll come back to a question you've already answered. Who, in your opinion is responsible for maintaining organisation relationships within. Is there somebody with that responsibility, in your opinion?

For us, I would look at the Country Director. Because that is where, we can say he is the core of the organisation. Umm, for me that would be the most important person to do that. Because the other people when you look at the HR communications, they cannot make umm. There are certain things they would be able to approve, let me say approve, but everybody would look at the Country Director for the final approval. For me, I would feel the core person is the Country Director.

How would you describe the relationship between employees and this organisation? I talked about you personally but now when you look at employees, especially from a management perspective, and you're looking at employees, how would you describe that relationship?

Maybe if you gave me structures like good, bad…Although currently, what is happening in AMEDICARE is that we're going through a transition, where donors are not bringing in money. So we're seeing most of our colleagues going home. So we've had a flock of people going home. So there's been a lot of tension coz that people are not talking about coz you're not sure when your bread will be cut off, know what I mean? So for me I would say it's good, but again it becomes challenging when it comes the funding that we get. Coz, yes you're relationship can be good, but you find that when it comes to the funding you're cut off, so you find that relationships they are not good. You find people go away when they are so sorrowful. It's not yet their time to go, but that's the way it is…Coz you do not know what time you're going. If Trump woke up today and says he is cutting USAID funding and it's passed. Sincerely, no ARVs.

It was during the elections because people did not know. You know everybody thought Hillary would win. That was the idea. With Hillary, people thought, the policies would be soft. If you look at whatever she was selling to the voters, Africa we were at a good position. But when we looked at Trump, we thought that Trump would not get even nearer. So when the tables turned and Trump took over, I think the first crisis for us is are we going to get the US funding? (YES). Indeed since his time, we've no seen any hindrance apart from the gap funding where now the issues of abortion and family planning will be interefered with, yet they are key.

Even when the Brexit, coz it contributes to the EU funding when it comes to us, global funding through EU direct. When Britain pulled out also we have to be alarmed so because what will happen to the funding. That means it has to be squeezed. It does interfere. It does interfere.

When you think about these organisations, what are some of the reasons that prompts organisations to establish relationships with its employees? What are the motives? What are the needs?

I think one key one is for us our mission is better health for Africa. So for us that is key. Is that all the staff must know the vision must know the mission to be able to get there and I think that is key for any organisation. Number one. Number two, the structures. How are we going to communicate vertically, horizontally and downwards, in terms of meeting that objective? Number three, the policies which are also within the structures. How can issues be addressed all round. So I think those are the key things.

So what measures does the organisation take to initiate and build these relationships?

I know we have issues like team building that is on the other side when things are not working out. We have meetings to be able to streamline those issues.

So are you saying you have meetings where people openly speak without any fear?

Limited. (THAT'S RARE). It's always limited. There's always that conscious part and I think in Africa we really need to work on that. We even sit in the political field. Even the media they were saying if it's something against Uhuru we will not air it. So it's something that we really need to work at. Where people are open, they can express themselves without being victimised. So I cannot say that it's excellent, it's somewhere between good and somewhere there

Are there ways of feedback? If i wanted to say something, i may not be able to say it in a meeting because i don't know. Are there ways that employees can give feedback?

We do have a hotline. Where it's umm (DRUMS FINGERS ON DESK EMPHATICALLY). The hotline goes straight to South Africa. Where if I wanted to report an issue whether work or fraud issues, you send mail and you give your evidence. It's anonymous so from there the management can pick. We have umm suggestion boxes within AMREF, which is only opened by one specific person. It's not a key that is with HR or anyone. It's a specific person which the board has left who controls the suggestion box.

Do people use them?

Yes. Umm, apparently they do. There are people who write anonymous letters, but the hotline was introduced by the new group...we have a new group CEO, he introduced the hotline. Issues which you want management to address.

We have programme meetings, whereby for us who are in maternal health, we can meet all managers and discuss the issues and then ah through the programme manager it is directed to senior management. We also have a senior management team in AMREF, which reports on issues that is coming from staff from below when they have their monthly meetings.

How would you describe communication between the organisation and employees?

I cannot say excellent, the structures are there for us to communicate. But it's a communication within defined issues, like I cannot go and about like my child who is terminally ill at home. You can't, because basically, you're here to achieve a target. So, it's well defined, but it doesn't look at the social component of that might interfere or it doesn't look at other components outside there that may interfere with the workers as they come to work. But I can say it's good in terms of the fact that the structures are there and how the information should be formatted, how it should go to a specific person.

How does communication influence the type of relationships that this organisation has with its employees? When you think of how communication is done. You can think of the whole range. Emails, memos, meetings, anywhere where information is being given and received. How does it affect, ah, the type of relationship that is formed?

Okay, for me from my perspective I would say if you use a lot of memos and, or humans once you have the policy in place when they understand the policies and the mail and they understand the mail, and that's good enough communication, but for you take it to the next level, is where you have a one to one with your employees. And I think that should now be encouraged more in Amedicare, where we have a one to one with senior managers and one to one among ourselves as employees. So, yes the emails are good but again, for me I receive more than 20 emails in a day so there are those ones which you prioritise. So even if the HR wanted to pass something I may not...so again, I feel face to face, one to one is important in addition to the emailing and I think that one also brings the employees closer to the system. Because the emails it makes you to be a robot there's no personal values. So what I think, the structures are there, they're good, but for me I feel what we lack most is the face to face interaction.

Control mutuality talks about the amount of control one feels they have in an organisation. And how is it demonstrated by the organisation?

I think good. Whenever you raise an issue it will be addressed. Again depending on the issue that is raised. *What are some of the common issues that are raised?* For us, aah you know, sorry to say, the last staff meeting we had was last year October or November and we just had the next one last, this week on Monday. So you can realise there's been a major gap on employees raising issues in addition to management handling the issues raised on the hotline. So it has taken three or four months. So I cannot say good, I cannot say excellent, I'd give it a good. If I have a concern that I need to raise, I'll go to the HRM or to my manager, they can address it there. Something that involves a big mass, it takes a long time for it to be addressed.

How do employees in this organisation demonstrate that they have a sense of control over, say, decisions or policies made?

I would say minimal, because most of the time organisation policies are within a particular sphere. Not for everyone to participate or give their contribution. Most of the people are just subject to the policy umm in terms of policies, but in terms of policies I would say very little.

At what time are policies done?

Very top. At the Board. The rest of us we are just subject to the policy, but it starts right at the Board although when they give a consultant to work we'll be asked as staff just to fill a questionnaire. Apart from the questionnaire, then maybe I would say that is the participation...but it's variable. I would say minimal in terms of policy contributions.

Tell me more about this questionnaire

It's already structured - Good. Bad – for you just to pick. Most of all it's just structured for you to pick. An open ended question would be the one. I...But at the end of the day there's always an elite who determine what must be done ahh the direction.

Would you describe anything this organisation has done to treat staff fairly and in so doing, engender trust? What are some of the things that are done?

That's the hardest question. Umm. Aiee! There are times when an employee is caught in a compromising situation, where it may call for disciplinary action and at times you're at the mercy of those people at the disciplinary committee. But I have seen in most instances that the committee is open and at times the judgement saves the employee. It's not done because of bias. It's done in a more, openness. (*So it's subjective?*). Most of the time when people are taking to disciplinary committee. It's quite open. I've participated in some. But everybody comes up with their own judgment. By the time somebody is receiving the judgment, it's not ...it's something you did wrong. For me I feel those kind of committees, they're rich in terms of uh. Employees can ran somewhere and know their issues will be heard. Yes, some might go home, some might stay. It's just like the jury when they decide, they have decided depending on how the employee represents themselves.

What does fairness mean to you? How does the organisation show fairness?

...Staff who are terminally sick...fall sick like cancer patients. The manager would be slightly would compromise is some way. The policy says that you can miss work for one month and you get your full salary and then after that you get half, then after that there's termination in the third or fourth month. But this is overlooked. I think we've had a driver who had cancer, flown here and there, but he's still here. Issues like when a staff – mostly fraud issues, sometimes so aggressive. Fraud is fraud, but at times the sentences are too harsh. Maybe you had a fraud issue and you were thrown out and so when you come for a letter, the management states what you did. Or the management might call that other organisation to warn them about the person. This is going overboard coz in life we make mistakes, and people learn out of their mistakes, but I think that some individuals take it too far.

We're going to look at commitment. We're in the tail end of what I'm doing. When you think of the word commitment, what are some of the examples that you can forgive that suggest that this organisation wants to maintain a long term relationship with its employees?

Commitment. I would say in contracting? For us it's two years. We don't have permanent. We're all two years contracted, but you're sure of it being renewed depending on the project that you're in. Like for me it's five years. I'm sure for the next two years I have a job. That is one. The other thing is having to do with the SACCO. We have an AMEDICARE SACCO. So we're able to take loans here. We have guarantors are among ourselves. The other thing is that we have a University. They can sponsor you for education. We also have a package for education for short term courses within and outside the country. Umm. Some things that can make you prolong your stay. It's also the name AMEDICARE and what it sells out there. And also the policies within Amedicare. I've interacted with my friends who have gone to other organisations...they would want to come back. *Is there room to come back*? Yes if there is another funding and there's an advert outside. There some organisations that are very strict. Like some, you use your computer between 8.00 and 4.30pm. For us we have policies, but they're not that strict. We're allowed to go for studies, like for me am studying so there's some certain fairness that makes people to stay. I'm now doing my 14th year. There are people who've done 32 years. I joined in 2004. So I cannot say it's that bad. It's not as strict as other organisations.

What about satisfaction? Do you believe employees are satisfied with the organisation? Then again I think you may find descriptions kind of overlap.

It's cuts across. Satisfaction in terms of salaries. For me I can't complain. If you compare with other organisations, Amedicare pays well. I can't complain as such. In terms of communication it tends to be minimal when it comes to the core. in the structures...it takes a while to communicate with him... before we actually hear from him. So that communication takes long because of the structures along the way. I think also the offers we're given at work like hospital insurance cover, we have all these covers around.

I think welfare you have talked about. There's a question I have on welfare and I think you mentioned that when somebody is sick, when somebody dies. What other aspects of welfare.

We have a staff welfare we contribute 300 shillings per month. It's not mandatory. So in case there is a deceased in your family or a birth, there is an amount you receive from welfare. We used to have choirs at work, they died. We used to have football teams, they died. Team building but not for everyone. Exercises are done within projects not all round Amedicare. And then again it depends on the donor funding. They may not be comfortable funding for team building take that money back to the community .

Do you believe this organisation develops relationships with its employees expecting something in return? Or not expecting something in return?

Expecting something in return. Yes. For them to achieve their purpose. I'd find it weird if they didn't have something in return. Like for free? No. I would find it weird. Yes, it's always that theres is something to reach out for. There is something they need you to return and for Amedicare it is to achieve the goal.

In PR literature there are different types of relationships. Exchange relationships, exploitative relationships, manipulative relationships, and they use all kind of descriptive words to explain the type of relationship. There's even communal relationships. Consensual relationships. Contextual relationships. When you think of this organisation, what words, if you were to give that relationship a name. What word would you give it?

You mean one word? I would give more of exchange. I would think of exploratory, but not in a negative way, just to link it to the exchange one, where the organisation has to get the best from you. They would actually suck out the best from you for their own good. In terms of exchange, yes. They'll put in a display of what they expect you to do in exchange for you to bring on board what they require. I think for me I would take the two they have to get what they want from you and at times you may not a say.