



GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN CORPORATE REPUTATION
AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF THE GHANA POLICE**

SERVICE –ACCRA

BY

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CANDIDATES' DECLARATION

I declare that this academic paper is the result of my original research and that no part of it has been presented for any other purpose in any University. However, all sources of borrowed materials have been duly acknowledged.

DECLARATION

I declare that the preparation and the presentation of this study were in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the study laid down guidelines by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

Name: Dr Isaac Tandoh, APR

Sign:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Isaac Tandoh', is written on a light green rectangular background.

Date: 9/21/2020

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to God Almighty. It has been His continuous grace that has brought me thus far. The journey has not been easy but for His mercies, I am here with a grateful heart.

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

Public Relations as defined by The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) is “about reputation- The result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you. Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, to earn understanding and support and influence opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.” (CIPR, 2015) Public Relations is a strategic communication process companies, individuals, and organizations employ to build mutually beneficial relationships with their publics. (Pahwa, 2020). The activities of organizations would eventually create their reputation. Irrespective of the nature of an organization, whether governmental or non-governmental, commercial or noncommercial, to reach organizational objectives, good attention must be paid to reputation. Favourable organizational reputation aids organizational path to acceptance by stakeholders. Organizations operating in very difficult environments where ethics are held high, all other things being equal, need to build and sustain a favourable corporate reputation. (Pahwa, 2020). Argenti and Druckemiller (2004) is of the view that organizations increasingly recognize the importance of corporate reputation to achieve organizational goals. There are many recent examples of organizations whose leadership and business practice behaviours have destroyed their reputation all around the world. When this happens, it affects the organization and its products or services. Furthermore, it reduces the trust and confidence that the public has in that particular institution. Pahwa 2020, believes that it takes up to 4 to 7 years to overcome a negative reputation. This makes it very difficult to correct and bring back an organizations reputation to glory. Truth be told, a favourable organizational reputation does not occur by chance, but through consistent hard work,

persistence and dedication towards effective implementation of an identified well-structured strategic plan. It has to do with leadership, management, and organizational operations, the quality of products and services and continuously strengthening relationships with stakeholders. It is also connected to communication activities and feedback mechanisms.

The Ghana Police Service (GPS) as a public sector organization (PSOs) under the ministry of interior is a major agent in ensuring social order and enforcement of the law in Ghana. The police administration follows a regimental chain of command, structured in hierarchical order with regional, divisional and district headquarters together with all other departments and units stationed nationwide, reporting to the national the Police headquarters. The Inspector-General of Police heads the Ghana Police Service and reports to the Minister of the Interior. The Police Service in Ghana is defined and empowered by the Police Service Act 1970 (Act 350), this Act is one of the most significant pieces of legislation governing the Ghana Police Service (GPS), delineating into details several aspects of its administrative control. The Act sets out the functions of the police organization as follows: It shall be the duty of the Police Service to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders, and to maintain public order and the safety of persons and property. Also, this organization is tasked to collaborate with the public to combat crime, paying special attention to domestic violence amongst women etc. Over the years, the reputation of the service has become very critical in our national discourse. In many times, their reputation has been standing on a porous rock. Many studies have indicated that trust in the service has not been encouraging. The public believes that the Ghana Police Service is a corrupt institution. Due to that, the Police leadership over the years has employed several public relations activities in attempts to salvage the situation and build a good reputation for the service. While the public accepted the need for an efficient and friendly service and was in certain instances welcoming of the services

provided by the Police, there is still an underlying sense of mistrust and discomfort. The unfavourable reputation of the police over the years is borne out of the many expectations of the public in the Service.

1.1 Problem Statement

As the Police Service plays a critical role in defending and upholding the security of Ghana, it is recognized as a field, which invites rigorous discussions and assessments. The expectation of the public on daily basis about the quality of service by the Ghana Police Service keeps rising. The Afrobarometer report released in December 2019 by the Center for Democratic Development shows that among key institutions in Ghana, the Police Service is the most corrupt institution. The report indicates that 57% of the public perceives that the Police is the most corrupt institution. From the findings of the study, the majority of the public claim that at some point, they have paid money as bribes to Police officers to avoid prosecution or facing the rigours of the law. Some others also state that nepotism and political interference affects the quality of work by the Police. However, the report states that 2019 Afrobarometer findings are better off as compared to that of 2017. The results indicate a slight decline in the perceived corruption of the Police Service in Ghana. The challenge of the study is that the scope. Over the years, we have seen the police engaging the public in their pursuit of improving their service quality and public trust. Currently, there is no extensive literature to show how public service like the Ghana Police Service has employed Public Relations activities to manage its reputation and public perception. Afrobarometer report (2019) did not delve into how the negative public perception of the Police Service has reduced comparatively. The study focused only the public perception about the police and how it has improved. Also, Cha & Kim (2010), a study which was conducted in Korea focused on the relationship between corporate communications and organizational image and reputation

management but does not address the role that public relations play. This study aims at broadening the scope and finding out why the public perceives the Police Service as corrupt and further identifies how the Police have engaged the public in their pursuit towards enhancing their reputation and managing public perception. The study further delves into the challenges that the Ghana Police Service as an organization in their efforts to develop and maintain a favourable corporate reputation and public perception. It also looks at how the Police Service can rebrand to and what they intend to do in the future to ensure that the Ghana Police Service does not remain the most corrupt public institution in future surveys but improve on their reputation and public perception.

1.2 Objectives of the study

Main Objective

- The main objective of the topic is to help assess the role played by public relations in managing the public perception of the Ghana Police Service- Accra.

Specific Objectives

Other objectives of the study are

- To assess the public perception of police in Ghana
- To identify public relations activities of Ghana Police Service towards enhancing corporate reputation and public perception.
- To find out the challenges or gaps of the Ghana Polices Service in managing public perception and corporate image.

- To find out how the Police Service can rebrand to improve the relationship with its publics.

1.3 Research Questions

Main Question

- What is the public perception of the Police Service in Ghana?

Other Questions

- What are the public relations activities of the Ghana Police Service towards enhancing corporate reputation and public image?
- What are the challenges that the Ghana Polices Service encounters that hinders the management of public perception and their corporate reputation?
- How can the Police rebrand itself to improve mutual relationships with its publics?

1.4 Significance of the study

Management is a fundamental building block for total service delivery in organizations today. By assessing the role of public relations in corporate reputation and public perception management, the study would help provide evidence to the effectiveness of the role played by public relations in corporate reputation as a management function. Since the Ghana Police Service is perceived as the most corrupt public institution in Ghana, this study after completion could be used as a guide to enhance the current discourse by providing a further and better explanation as to why the public sees the Police as the most corrupt. It would help the police to interpret their public relations strengths and weaknesses, and provide information to assist in the planning and implementation of corrective strategies. It would also add to the existing literature on the research problem and provide additional knowledge. As many writers and researchers have produced materials on this

subject previously, this study would delve into and describe the subject as it is currently. This study will make recommendations based on the outcome. Organizations management can refer to this study in their discourse considering how key public institutions can employ public relations in the management of corporate reputation and public perception. The researcher would also make recommendations on future areas of study to enrich the ongoing discussion on the subject.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to assess the role of public relations in corporate image and perception management. It uses the Ghana Police Service as a case study. The paper's objectives have been clearly stated in line with the research problem, which this study aims to help understand. The methodology and rationale for the study have been well explained to aid in a better understanding of the entire paper. The next chapter will seek to delve into the literature review. It would be made up of opinions, thoughts, and study of researchers, authors, public relations experts amongst other professionals. The chapter would also seek to discuss the various theories that underpin the topic of this paper.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Conceptual Review

What is Public Relations?

In 1987, the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) provides a definition of public relations, which is still used. They defined public relations as planned and continuous efforts by organizations to establish and maintain goodwill and understanding between an organization and its publics (Skandari, 2004). Public Relations is the art and social science of the intra and extra link between an organization and its publics. Public Relations affect almost everyone. That is to say that we individually practice public relations in one way or another as we go about our daily activities. During the past few decades, public relations have become very relevant in every facet of our lives particularly in organizational and business settings. While marketing and sales have as their primary objective of selling of an organization's products, public relations aim to sell the organization itself by creating a favourable image in the minds of its stakeholders. Out of this is borne a variety of activities that are basic and practicable to the public relations perspective. Lube & Puth (2002) further maintains that public relations practitioners are involved in a variety of functions, which include research. As part of the primary steps in conducting a project, information and intelligence gathering is a prerequisite. There are some basic questions, which require answers. They may include, who are the key publics, their opinions, and attitudes? What is their interest? Which groups or persons are concerned enough to act? This involves putting together information about public opinion, trends, emerging issues, political climate, media coverage, concerns of

consumer and environmental special-interest groups, and so forth, and to plan programs responsive to all these situations. According to Cutlip, Center & Broom (2000) research also includes monitoring programme implementation and assessing programme impact to evaluate programme effectiveness. It also includes strategic planning. The situation and the data needed to be formed into a strategy. This involves asking; where are we now? How did we get here? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? Wilcox, Cameron, Ault & Agee (2004) reinforces that essentially planning and advising means collaborating with management or clients in the problem-solving process. They may have a role in the implementation and at least, will need to explain it to their staff. People in the organization need to be informed about the plan and their roles in it. The plan must be carried out. Messages or appeals are sent to the various publics involved: activities or actions are staged; feedback must be interpreted, and everyone must be kept informed as the project unfolds. Cutlip et al. (2000) state that public relations practitioners could handle a variety of functions ranging from media conferences, conventions and exhibitions, to open-house days, anniversary celebrations, fund-raising events, contests, award programs and sponsorships. Public relations practitioners should be adept at writing news releases, newsletters, correspondence, reports, booklets, texts, radio and television copy, film scripts, trade papers and magazine articles, corporate advertisements, product information, and technical material. (Seitel 2004). Skinner et al. (2004) postulate that the process of gathering information enables organizations to plan programs in response to the public and problem situations, to monitor their effectiveness during implementation and evaluate their overall impact. Cutlip et al. (2000) state that public relations in organizations can often be traced back to unintended and humble beginnings. It can begin with someone simply answering letters from customers or members; with someone writing annual reports, handling visitors, conducting tours, or even someone arranging the annual meeting. They

reinforce that public relations in organizations are the category that covers the routine of daily exchange of information to manage all corporate communication.

2.2 Definition of corporate image and reputation

Corporate image is defined as the overall estimation in which its publics through their perception of an organization hold a company's past. (Fombrun, 1996) Barich & Kotler (1991) also defines corporate image as the overall impression made on the minds of the public about an organization. Corporate image as also defined by Villanova, Zinkhan & Hyman (2000) is an overall perception of an organization held by its publics. The corporate image includes information and inference about the company as an employee, employer, customer, community, and supplier and as a corporate citizen. Since an organization's corporate image affects stakeholders' behaviour, they strive to develop and manage their image for many reasons

Corporate reputation is a concept with exceptional multidisciplinary richness, which brought about an increase in the number of scholars researching corporate reputation as well as growing sophistication in the definition of corporate reputation. Fombrun & Shanley (1990) defines reputation as the overall perception of a company, what it stands for, what it is associated with and what individuals may expect when choosing their products or services. Corporate reputation essentially relates to – competition or comparing a company to its rivals. Corporate reputation represents a company's status among employees and external stakeholders compared to its rivals (Fombrun 2001). Corporate reputation affects the behaviour of an organization and influences the organization's relevance, survival, growth and profitability (Oghojafor,2007). Corporate reputation is directly related to the corporate identity of a company and it is interpreted as an organization's goals and values that create a sense of belonging among company's stakeholders (George et al., 2012). In the corporate world, reputation is seen as a major element of an

organizations success. It is a collective representation of multiple constituencies' images of a company built up over time (Argenti & Druckemiller, 2004). It is also linked to the organizations' identity, performance and the way others respond to its behaviour. It is imperative to note that reputation is a collective representation' of images and perceptions, not a self-promoted message. It involves relationships with all stakeholders and it is gained, maintained and enhanced or detracted for overtime.

2.4 Corporate Image and Reputation of Police in Ghana

The British Colonial government in 1821 introduced policing in Ghana. Traditional authorities such as chiefs before the British Authorities organized policing, to carry out legal functions in their communities (Aning, 2004). Presently, the Ghana Police Service has several departments, which makes up the service. The Police Service is headed by the Inspector General of Police who is appointed by the President in consultation with the Council of State. Ghana Police Service has suffered a lot of negativity among the public. It is general knowledge that the Police do not duly follow the laws and regulations governing their professional work to enforce the law and protect individual lives. Ghanaians still believe the Police Service is the most corrupt institution in Ghana, according to the 2019 Global Corruption Barometer. The report notes that Fifty-Nine percent (59%) of Ghanaians feel this way, with judges and magistrates viewed as the second most corrupt institution by Thirty-Eight percent (38%) of Ghanaians. The survey was executed by Afrobarometer in 34 countries and covered 47,105 adults between 2016 and 2018. Out of the top ten institutions surveyed, with police, judges and magistrates, Ghanaians feel they have become less corrupt over the last four years. The Police were viewed as corrupt by Sixty-Four (64%) percent of Ghanaians in 2015. Thirty-three (33%) percent of Ghanaians feel corruption has increased in the last 12 months while Thirty-Six percent (36%) say corruption has decreased in the

last 12 months. The police is the institution that the largest number of citizens report bribing to access their services. Among those who had contact with key public services during the previous year, four (4) in ten (10) say they paid a bribe to avoid problems with the police by Forty-Two (42%) or to obtain police assistance by Thirty-Nine (39%).

2.5 Public Relations tools/ activities used to manage Corporate Reputation and Public Opinion

Public Relations practitioners in an organization in pursuit of managing its reputation and image employ several tools or activities. By using proven public relations tools and activities, an organization can promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards the business that will help convert interested consumers into customers. Public Relations tools are very cost-effective, and often give you a greater degree of control than more broadly targeted advertising campaigns. Bates (2010) outlines some tools or activities that are normally used by organizations:

2.5.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

This strategy helps a company to be socially accountable to itself and all its stakeholders. A corporate social responsibility organization is conscious of the kind of impact they are having on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental. Through Corporate Social Responsibility programs and efforts, organizations can extend some benefits to society while enhancing their organizational reputation and image. Corporate Social Responsibility is good for the organization as well as the community where it operates. These activities can also help build a stronger bond between employees and corporations and boost employee morale (Bates, 2010)

2.5.2 Media Relations

Media Relations simply refers to a beneficial relationship between journalists and public relations professionals bounded by mutual benefits. Ordinarily, the media attaches serious commitment in providing news to its publics. Reporters incur the cost and spend more efforts and time gathering information to write groundbreaking stories. However, working with public relations professionals cuts down on time, sources, credibility amongst others. Public relations practitioners benefit from media relations generally because it may secure some free publicity, guaranteed airtime or space and promotion for the organization they represent. By using media as a promotional tool, the organization can then reach a larger audience at a relatively low cost. Media strategies focus on circulating messages through media channels to manage how the media portray the organization. Your media tools might include releasing media statements and fact sheets, offering on-site media tours to encourage journalists to report positive messages about the organizations, and using social media to get the attention of journalists and track journalists who report in your market (Bates, 2010).

2.5.4 Social Media Engagements

Using social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter allows organizations to follow and be followed by the public, manage issues by responding quickly to criticisms or negative reports, and increase exposure for the business brand. The use of social media by organizations to reach their publics has increased more so in recent times. Social media makes it possible to bypass the mainstream media to directly get in touch with your publics, to connect and build a relationship with them to keep a favourable image on top of their mind. Public Relations and Social Media must be aligned and synchronized as both public relations and social media can be used to build and maintain trust (Bates, 2010)

2.5.5 Newsletters

One strategic technique public relations practitioners use to promote their organizations and its works is through print or emailed newsletters. It serves as a platform to communicate with stakeholders and keep them informed. A well-written newsletter offers information of value to your publics and can be used to deepen your connections with stakeholders and reflect your business comparatively, a newsletter is a cost-effective medium for building relationships and maintaining regular contact the publics of an organization. (Bates, 2010)

2.5.6 Brochures and Catalogues

Properly designed brochures, which carry well-packaged information, can attract attention and further give confidence in your brand, and help drive the public to the website. Brochures or catalogues can help keep the public thinking about your organization by focusing on the facts that make your company stand out. This will help in building the identity of your organization. Brochures are an important tool, which can give your publics a lot of information about your organization such as the vision and mission of the organization. Carefully designing a clear and concise message in your brochure can help contribute to building the company's reputation. (Bates, 2010).

2.5.7 Events

Mostly, organizations come up with events. These events are mostly special occasions such as product launch, trade shows, media soiree, entertainment shows, public education etc. Hosting an event creates opportunities to gain exposure for organizations. It helps to share information as well as sensitize your publics. Organizations must endeavour to make accurate information reaches all

stakeholders. Also, speaking at events where key publics are gathered gives you a platform to position your organization and build a favourable reputation (Bates, 2010) (Bates, 2010)

2.5.9 Sponsorships

Financially or in-kind supporting of events, groups or forms of charity courses can be termed as sponsorships. Mostly, the organization provides support systems to areas such as entertainment, education, health etc. Sponsorships are good for organizations. Supporting a not-for-profit cause can help build feelings of goodwill and loyalty towards your organization. Organization in return benefits from a favourable corporate reputation. Sponsorships can help the public identify your brand with good business practice. (Bates, 2010)

2.5.10 Employee Relations

Employees relate to organizations efforts to manage well the relationship between employers and employees. Employees are a representation of brands. Many organizations conduct employee relations by sharing information, promoting involvement and instilling a sense of pride in business achievement. An organization with a very solid relationship with employees helps employees to be committed to the organization and demonstrate loyalty and this can improve teamwork, staff retention and as well as productivity. (Bates, 2010).

2.5.11 Community Relations

Community relations refer to ways by which organizations build and maintain a mutually beneficial relationship with the communities in which they operate. Building good relationships with members of the community where you do business can be one of the most important strategic

decisions an organization can do. Engaging local stakeholders and decision-makers help build your profile and level of influence. It also attracts local support and goodwill which can result in ensuring your organization's interests are factored into community decision making (Bates, 2010).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Excellence Theory in Public Relations

Excellence theory is one of the popular theories of public relations. It came out from over a decade and 5-years study in communication management. (Grunig, J., Grunig, L., 1993). The Public Relations Excellence Theory was formulated from data collected through a decade-long study of more than 300 organizations heads of public relations, management of organizations both profit and non-profit in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada by the International Association of Business Communicators. The Excellence Theory stresses the relations aspect of public relations and how it is crucial to build honest and hold a mutually beneficial bond with all stakeholders. The theory takes into consideration some other theories of public relations, public relations, and strategic management, models of public relations, evaluation of public relations, public relations roles, social responsibility, and global public relations. The excellence theory first explained the value of public relations to organizations and society. This is in the spirit of social responsibility of managerial decisions and the quality of relationships with all the organization's publics. For an organization to be effective, according to the theory, it must behave in ways that solve the problems and satisfy the goals of stakeholders as well as of management. If it does not, stakeholders will either pressure the organization to change or oppose it in ways that add cost and risk to organizational policies and decisions. To behave in acceptable ways as a good corporate

citizen, organizations must do research. They must scan their environment to identify publics who are affected by potential organizational decisions and actions or who want organizations to make decisions to solve problems that are relevant to them. Organizations must ensure that their public relations persons must serve as a liaison between their organizations with publics to develop long-standing relationships with them. The study revealed that good relationships were of value to organizations. Good relationship management can increase revenue by providing products and services needed by stakeholders. It reduces the cost of legal suits, regulation compliance, and negative publicity caused by poor relationships. Based on this theory about the value of public relations, the excellence theory derived principles of how the function should be organized to maximize this value. The research showed that involvement in strategic management was the critical characteristic of excellent public relations. Public relations managers played an important managerial role by being empowered and by having access to key organizational decision-makers., Again, the study showed that public relations lose its unique role in strategic management if it is subjected to marketing or other management functions. Subjection to another function resulted in attention only to the stakeholder category of interest to that function, such as consumers for marketing. Subjecting Public relations to marketing also usually resulted in one-way communication. An excellent public relations function was integrated. An excellent public relations function did work with other management functions to help them build relationships with relevant stakeholders. The excellence study showed that a well-coordinated model of internal communication increased employees' satisfaction with their jobs and with the organization. However, internal communication generally was not practised unless organizations had a participative rather than authoritarian culture and a decentralized, less stratified structure rather than a centralized, stratified structure. Fourth, the excellence study examined the effect of the

growing number of women in public relations and evidence that women had difficulty entering managerial roles as compared to their male colleagues. Excellent public relations departments serve as advocates both for their organizations and for strategic publics. In reality, he concedes excellent public relations departments practice a combined model. That is combining two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models and working with it. (Grunig, 1984). Public relations practitioners in their efforts to be more effective must identify their key publics and build, maintain and develop long-term mutually beneficial relationships with them.

2.7 Theoretical position of this study

Relative to this study, excellence public relations theory takes the position that public relations must be part of an organizational management process. The organization must incorporate Public Relations into its key managerial levels rather sublimating it into other departments in an organization. Public relations duty is to build, maintain, and develop good relationships. When this is strategically done, it improves the image and reputation of the organization. Ghana Police Service, a key Public service with high expectation of its publics has to consider the gross expectation of its publics and the effects of a good public relations strategy. When Public relations are subjected, it loses its unique role in strategic organizational management. Public relations to other functions of the Police Service can result in asymmetrical communication. The organization to would tend to understand the audience's attitude and behaviour and further use it to develop its strategy. This purposely benefits the organization more than its publics.

2.4 Empirical Review of Literature

Several previous studies have indicated the effects of public relations in managing corporate image and reputation. Cha & Kim (2010), a study on the development of corporate communication capital index which involved managers in charge of reputation management from the top 300 Korean firms claims that there is a positive effect between public relations corporate reputation and image management. They stress that public relations activities are very critical in managing an organization image and reputation as it helps to earn understanding and support among stakeholders. It also helps to influence public opinion and behaviour. Since public relations goal is to manage and promote the image of an organization, it, therefore, play a critical role in ensuring excellent public relations department will be able to conduct more strategic public relations activities from a longer-term perspective, develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with all stakeholders. The study finds that a small corporation stands the better chance of having a better corporate reputation as compared to a bigger one. It further explains why this phenomenon can occur. Some small corporations have better reputations than other larger corporations. For the effects of public relations factors, both size and formality of a public relations department positively affected corporate reputation. In particular, formality positively affected reputation greatly. It appears that an organization with a public relations department that has a well-structured job description stands the better chance of working better on an organization's reputation as allows its employees to plan and work strategically and efficiently.

Addo et al (2015) a study on the role of public relations in building corporate reputation: a study of Kinross Chirano Gold mines limited revealed that Public relations inform management of its stakeholder's concerns and foster understanding from them in regards to management prepositions. The study revealed various activities performed by the public relations unit ranging from the

compensation of properties taken over by the organization, communicating information on job vacancies, scholarship opportunities and other developmental projects. It also indicates ensuring employees and the organization as a whole to abide by government and environmental regulations. These activities are performed to foster mutually beneficial relationships with the organization's publics which comprise of the media, government, regulators, community inhabitants and traditional authority. From the findings, the researchers concluded that majority of the public relations activities performed to build the corporate reputation of the organization were in the form of corporate social responsibility activities on community involvement, development and investment, health and safety, the involvement of and respect for diverse cultures, corporate philanthropy and employee volunteering. The study further showed that the aim of the organization which is to project a favourable corporate reputation to its various stakeholders has been achieved through the positive corporate reputation rating from its publics and regulatory compliance audits from the government which places the corporate reputation of the organization in no doubt. Responses indicated that the effects of public relations activities have had on the organization's publics in terms of development and the rise of the standard of living of the community inhabitants has made public relations a stand out contributor to the positive corporate reputation of the organization. Public relations activities have aided in changing a significant number of lives in various host communities which have led to the acceptance and the good relationship between the organization and its publics. The researchers accessed that, the organization uses PR to address the concerns and expectations of its public in the process of establishing goodwill between the organization and the stakeholders. The drastic improvement of life of inhabitants, the sustenance of development, and the consistent level of abiding by mining regulations through public relations initiatives have contributed to the positive corporate reputation of the organization.

The various literature review demonstrates a positive effect of public relations on corporate reputation and image. However, it highlights several activities that organizations use in their efforts to manage their reputation and image. From the findings, there was the use of traditional public relations tools but in recent times with the existence of new media such, the use of online tools for public relations has become very helpful in their efforts. New media has not come to replace traditional public relations tools but it has come to support and enhance the work of public relations. Therefore, it will be very great and insightful to add new media in assessing the tools used by organizations in managing their reputation and image.

Despite the contribution of public relations to managing an organization reputation and image management, numerous problems or challenges come with. The dynamism of the world poses challenges to organizations in this course. Arjison (2017) states that one of the major problems has to do with financial constraint. Organizations are cutting budgets, which results to inadequate financing of the public relations activities. Again, another challenge has been to increase in communication platforms. Because of many choices in media, it requires a lot of thinking to choose the right medium to reach the target audience can be painstaking. A lot of time, investment needs to be made to reach out to the target audience and getting the expected results. Some organizations face the challenge of the poor labour situation. It is a known fact that most practitioners of public relations have background disciplines in other fields of studies such as journalists, marketers, advertisers, graphic artists, psychologists, and even Lawyers. Such people have do not have the requisite understanding of what it takes to be full practitioners in Public relations. Some make claims they cannot defend and organize campaigns that are substandard and unprofessional. This does not bring out the best in the organizational fight against a bad reputation. Because of modern technology, social media has become one of the tools that public relations practitioners use in

reaching their target audience. Many practitioners have a deficiency in the usage of platforms such as Facebook, Linked-in, Tweeter, Instagram, Some abuse it whiles others are not diplomatic in the way they use them to convey messages to the public. The managers of these platforms sometimes promote themselves and their products without engaging or interacting with their targets. This could create a public perception that the organization is self-centered.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, all the previous literature reviewed gives a deep insight into the topic under study. The findings will guard this study to delve deeper for instance to include new media tools that are used by public relations practitioners in managing corporate reputation and image. It will further look into the challenges that the Ghana Police Service encounter in making sure that there is always a favorable reputation and image for their organization. The ultimate goal will be to assess the overall effects of public relations on the Police service reputation and image

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.0 Research Approach and Design

This research is descriptive. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The key purpose of descriptive research is to describe situations, as it exists at present. This is mostly used in social science and business research. This type of research is characterized by objectivity. The researcher has no control over the variables. Thus, he/she can only report what has happened or what is happening by way of gathering data. Descriptive research provides essential facts and understanding of the nature of a situation (Kothari, 2004). This study used the mixed-method approach. The researcher believes that this method would reflect truly

participant's views and would ensure that the findings from the study are grounded in the participant's real experiences. The term mixed methods research is broadly accepted to refer to research that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data within a single study (Creswell et, 2011). A key aspect of the definition of mixed methods research is the mixing of the qualitative and quantitative components within a study. Mixing refers to the process whereby the qualitative and quantitative elements are interlinked to produce a fuller account of the research problem (Creswell, 2013). Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (Creswell et al, 2011)

3.1 Research Area

This study was conducted in Greater Accra. It is believed that Greater Accra is the gateway to Ghana and it is known to be the most cosmopolitan place. It hosts many across the country with different languages and culture. In terms of size, the smallest region, it is the most densely populated. Greater Accra Regional Police Command was established in 1952, as the law enforcement body responsible for policing the entire City. Its regional headquarters is located at the Central Business District of Accra Metropolitan Area. The Accra Regional Police Command has been divided into divisions and each of the divisions takes the responsibility of their area of jurisdiction to ensure there is public safety and law enforcement.

3.4 Population

A population can be defined as the collection of elements or objects that process the information sought by the researcher and about which inferences are to be made (Malhotra, 1996). Currently, the Accra Regional Police Command has fourteen (14) divisions and forty-two (42) districts. (ghanapolice.gov.gh, 2016). This study is targeted at public relations staff within the service. According to the structures of the service, the system runs its public relations unit at the regional

level. Currently, the total number of staff at the unit is seven (7), according to Ayittey, the staff at the public relations unit.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a smaller group of people who have the same characteristics and preferences as the total group from which it is drawn. (Wrenn, Stevens & Loudon, 2006). The sample is a subset of the population. A researcher need not select every item in a population because the results of a good sample should have the same characteristic as the population as a whole (Zikmund et al.2013). Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a smaller group of people who have the same characteristics and preferences as the total group from which it is drawn. (Wrenn, Stevens, & Loudon, 2006). A researcher need not select every item in a population because the results of a good sample should have the same characteristic as the population as a whole (Zikmund et al, 2013). Because the number of the population is few, the researcher intends to include all the seven (7) as participants in the study to gain a minimum marginal error in the study.

Purposive sampling was chosen to run this study. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique where the researcher relies on his or her judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in a particular study. This is a non-probability sampling method and it is said to be used when participants selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. (Black, 2011), concerning the research objectives, the researcher believes that purposive sampling deems fit as only respondents who have an understanding of public relations activities of the Police Service are engaged. This would help provide relevant answers to the questions as well as better data from the sample by saving time and money.

3.6 Data collection

The researchers adopted questionnaire and interview as tools to collect data. A questionnaire is a set of questions for gathering information from individuals. The reason for using questionnaires is that it can be administered by using mail, telephone, using face-to-face interviews, as handouts, or electronically. It is a fast, inexpensive, efficient, and effective method compared to others (Key, 1997). This method of data collection is quite popular, particularly in the case of big enquiries. It is being adopted by private individuals, research workers, private and public organizations and even by governments. In this method, a questionnaire is sent to the persons concerned with a request to answer the questions and return the questionnaire. A questionnaire is a written list of questions in which answers are provided by respondents. (Kumar, 2011) These questions would be typed in a definite order and printed. The questionnaire will be distributed to respondents who are expected to read and understand the questions and provide in the space meant for the questionnaire. The questionnaire would be made up of five different parts. It would be labelled from Part A to Part C. The first, which is Part A of the questionnaire, contains questions about the demographic profile of the respondent. Typically, the questions were used to identify gender, age range, and official rank of respondents. This part would have three questions, which would be closed-ended. The second part seeks to obtain data on the public relations activities that are used by the Ghana Police Service to manage the service reputation and image. This part would also be closed-ended questions and part C of the questionnaire intends to find out the challenges that the service encounter that hinders the management of public perception and the service corporate reputation.

The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the

interviewees say. (Kvale, 1996) Interviews occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. (Creswell, 2014). Interviews are particularly useful for uncovering the story behind a participant's experiences and pursuing in-depth information around a topic. Interviews are also useful to follow-up with individual respondents after questionnaires that are to further investigate their responses. (McNamara, 1999). Through the interview, the study seeks to gather data about how the management of the service interns to manage the unfavourable public perception and reputation and how it intends to rebrand the service and improve the mutual relationships with it publics. The interview would be conducted with an interview guide.

3.6.2 Data collection Process

Generally, there are two types of data, which is primary data, and secondary data. Primary data consists of information gathered for some specific purposes. Secondary data consists of information that already exists somewhere having being collected for some purposes. To ensure a valid and trusted research, both primary and secondary data were used.

Primary data refers to data collected directly from the first-hand experience. Primary data was collected for this research. The researchers used a self-administered set of questionnaires to gather primary data from respondents. A self-administered questionnaire refers to a questionnaire that has been designed specifically to be completed by a respondent without the intervention of the researchers. (Dilman, 2007) By this, the researchers distributed the questionnaires to the respondents for them to read, understand, and respond appropriately. This approach helped the researchers to spend less time on administering the questionnaires. Also, it was more leisurely,

respondents had time to read and provide an appropriate response. The researchers designed an interview guide for the interview. This helped the researchers to direct the conversation toward the topics and issues they wanted to learn of. However, before the study would be fully conducted, the researchers would carry out a pilot test. The pilot test is very imperative because it helps to test whether the questionnaire would work as expected, and test the sampling procedure, field force and other resources (Bradley, 2007). Five sets of questionnaires would be distributed for pilot test purpose before the actual research would be conducted.

Secondary data can be defined as a second-hand data that has been collected for a different or similar purpose. It refers to the information analysis that was gathered either by someone else or for some other purpose, or often a combination of the two. (Cnossen & Christine, 1997). Secondary data can be classified into two sources, which is electronic-based sources and paper-based sources. In this research, it concentrated on electronic-based sources to search secondary data, thus making use of the internet. Besides the internet, the researcher also referred to several reference books in the library.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis begins after the data had been collected and processed. In this study, as indicated earlier, the data for this research would be collected using a set of questionnaires and interview. After collecting all the data, every set of questionnaires would be checked to make sure respondents have answered every question. Checking is necessary to ensure that respondents have provided their responses according to the instructions given or not. In data analysis, some of the most common ways of simplifying data are by calculating the mean, percentage distribution, frequency distribution, and so forth. Other than that, researchers used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze data gathered effectively. The interview would be transcribed

exactly as it was recorded and be used for the analysis

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues in research command increased attention today. Because of this, it has become very imperative to be bound ethically in every credible research. Ethics refers to a system of principles, which can critically change previous considerations about choices and actions. It is said that ethics is a branch of philosophy, which deals with the dynamics of decision-making concerning what is right and wrong. (Kilpi & Toumala, 1990). The researcher is very mindful of this and would pay considerable attention to that the first ethical issue considered is consent. Respondents would be made adequately aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them. The researcher would not give anything as motivation to induce respondents to participate in the study. Respondents would be expected to voluntarily take part in the study after they have been brief of the purpose of the study. After their consent is sought, the respondents will be left alone to self-respond the questionnaire. The researchers would not involve themselves in that process. Again, there would be objectivity in the analysis of data. The data collected will be presented exactly as gathered from respondents.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This Chapter provides procedures or techniques used to find answers to the research questions. It helps to identify, select, process, and analyze information about the topic under study. It has elaborated on the research approach and the design. Mixed method was adopted to help get deeper into the problem statement. It defines the study area as well as population. Sampling technique and

size have been stated and how data would be collected and analyzed thereafter. It further states how the study would put in place all the necessary ethical considerations to ensure the quality and objectiveness of the work. Overall, the methodology answers how data is collected or generated and how it would be analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses the finding from the literature reviewed by referring to research questions and summarizes the findings. The chapter provides a conclusion based on the findings from the study and some recommendations. This study has provided some sort of insight to the researcher and she shares some reflections and the limitations of the study.

4.1 Discussion of findings

This finding of the study was based only on the literature reviewed. It provides answers to the research questions set by the researcher concerning the problem statement and the overall research objectives.

Question 1: What is the public perception of the Police Service in Ghana?

This question seeks to provide an understanding of what the public thinks of the Police Service in Ghana. From the literature reviewed, the Afrobarometer Report (2019) indicates that the Ghana Police Service has a negative or unfavourable image among the public. The findings state that Ghana Police do not duly follow the laws and regulations governing their professional work to enforce the law and protect individual lives. It further states that Ghanaians still believe the Police Service is the most corrupt institution in Ghana. However, the research further indicates that the current situation is improving as compared to their previous studies. From the findings, the negative perception of the Ghana Police has been because of bribery and corruption. The Police Service has been known to be collecting bribe from the public when they commit a crime such as a road traffic offenders. It also stresses that granting of bail in Ghana according to the Police procedure is supposed to be free, however; the Police is known to be collecting some unwarranted monies. This among others have breached the trust the public has in the Police service

Question 2: What are the public relations activities of Ghana police service towards enhancing corporate reputation and public image?

This question looks at some of the public relations activities that the Police service uses in managing its corporate reputation and public image. From the literature reviewed. Bates (2010) outlines some tools or activities that organizations use in their Public relations efforts to manage their corporate reputation. Among them, he mentions corporate social responsibility, social media engagements, newsletters, sponsorships, events, community relations, brochures, and catalogues. Cha & Kim (2010) stresses those public relations activities are very critical in managing an organizations image and reputation as it helps to earn understanding and support among stakeholders. It also helps to influence public opinion and behaviour. Since public relations goal

is to manage and promote the image of an organization, it, therefore, plays a critical role in ensuring excellent public relations department will be able to conduct strategic public relations activities from a longer-term perspective, develop, and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with all stakeholders.

Addo et al (2015) a study on the role of public relations in building corporate reputation revealed that Public relations inform management of its stakeholder's concerns and foster understanding from them in regards to management prepositions. The study revealed various activities performed by the public relations unit ranging from the compensation of properties taken over by the organization, communicating information on job vacancies, scholarship opportunities and other developmental projects. It also indicates ensuring employees and the organization as a whole to abide by government and environmental regulations. These activities are performed to foster mutually beneficial relationships with the organization's publics, which comprise of the media, government, regulators, community inhabitants, and traditional authority.

Question 3: What are the challenges that hinder the Ghana Polices Service from managing public perception and their corporate reputation?

This objective seeks to find the challenges that hinder organizations from managing their corporate reputation. Arjison (2017) states that one of the major challenges faced by organizations is financial constraint. Many organizations are faced with this low budget and this limits their ability to finance the public relations activities. The proliferation of many media channels has resulted in difficulty in selecting a suitable channel to reach their target audience. This requires time and a lot of considerations. Some organizations face the challenge of the poor labour situation. Some people

who handle public relations activities in some organizations are not specifically trained professionals. It makes them lack a proper understanding of the issues. The use of digital Public relations tools is quite technical and requires additional skills.

4.3 Conclusion

In these modern times, Public relations have become an integral part of an organization strategy. This is because of the premise that organizations stand the risk of reputational damage. However, an organization, to some extent, cannot control what the public thinks about their organization. Probably what one can adjust is what people see which can affect how they perceive you and the perception they form of your organization's reputation and public perception can be managed to a certain level, which can be appreciable. Today, the evolution of new media has brought a new dimension and the way organizations need to handle their public relations. Communications happen everywhere people meet and poor reputation management can lead to negative stories manifesting online and reviewing in the press as well. Unfortunately, bad reviews or news about an organization spread faster and this can cause several damages but a good reputation can help mitigate when an organization falls into a negative reputation. A good corporate reputation and public perception are very beneficial to the organization because it gives some sort of influence over the minds of the organization publics. Also, a good reputation and a favourable public perception help organizations to distinguish itself from others. As every organization seeks to be the best, it is non-negotiable to stand out from others. Staff retention can be one of the benefits of a good corporate reputation. Ordinarily, people would like to work with organizations that have a good reputation. People take pride when they work with such organizations. Growth opportunities also can come out of as a benefit of a favourable corporate reputation. Because organizations with

a favourable reputation can build a good relationship with their publics, it helps them to grow. A good corporate reputation and public perception is not just about making your business stand good in the face of your publics but it also involves making sure that organization grows and goes into the direction to achieve its organizational goals and objectives.

4.4 Researchers Reflections

The scope of this study brings an overview of how public relations can shape the reputation of an organization especially in an organization that provides public good and have a huge public expectation. This study has provided a fair understanding of the organization of materials, writing, and providing proper acknowledgement by way of providing references. This adds to the authenticity of the study and encourages others to read and refer to it as a source that can be beneficial for use.

4.4 Limitation

Initially, this study was structured to be a full five-chapter dissertation. However, due to the COVID-19, pandemic and the requirements to adhere to safety protocols as instructed by government of Ghana, the study had to be structured to a four chapter academic paper. This did not allow collection of primary data but only the use of secondary data for discussion.

4.5 Recommendation

Thoroughly going through the literature review, public relations can play a major role in ensuring that an organization has a very favorable corporate reputation and public perception. Organizations must understand their current public perception state amongst its publics. This can help to plan

and execute relevant public relations activities to ensure that the organizations objectives set are achieved. Organizations must ensure that they recruit person with professional knowledge in public relations, other than recruiting other persons who may not have a better understanding and the requisite skill needed for the job. The researcher further recommends that organizations must take full advantage of the use of social media to support traditional public relations activities. Social media has become a platform that most people use in their lives. In reaching and engaging the masses, social media provides a much larger avenue, therefore making it imperative for organizations to dedicate experts capable of managing. This can support the activities in reaching the target audience of the project.

Future research can be done to explore how digital public relations can be used to manage corporate reputation and public perception. There is no argument that technology has affected the way communication is done. New media has partly added to the platforms that organizations use these days. A further study can contribute to knowledge in several aspects by assessing how digital public relations can be used by organizations to ensure they build, maintain and always create a favourable corporate reputation and public perception.

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