

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

**PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING CLIENT SERVICES IN THE  
GHANAIAN GOVERNMENT SECTOR**

**BY**

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**MAPR 19063**

**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF  
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AWARD OF A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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**OCTOBER, 2020.**

## **STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

I **declare** that this **thesis** has been composed solely by me and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree in this University or elsewhere. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own. I am therefore to be held responsible for errors that might be detected.

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## **SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the preparation of this long essay was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of long essays as laid down by the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

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**2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER, 2020**

**DR. STANLEY SEMARCO**

## **DEDICATION**

I wholeheartedly dedicate this study to the Almighty God who has been my source of inspiration, direction, help and gave me the strength to continually never give up and make this journey a possibility.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to the Almighty God, the author of life and knowledge, for the strength and guidance to complete this long essay.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Ghana Institute of Journalism for allowing me to fulfill my dream as a master's student.

I also acknowledge the endless suggestions and guidance of my supervisor Dr. Stanley Semarco throughout my thesis.

Lastly, I would like to express my immense appreciation to my family for their unconditional love and assistance in completion of this thesis.

## **ABSTRACT**

Public relations are natural, vital as well as persistent component of human social relationship. It is very essential and an integrated component of public policy or service. Client services vary from one person to another depending on what the person seeks to achieve. Public relation has become an important subject matter in enhancing client services. Therefore, the study assesses public relations as a tool for enhancing client services in the Ghanaian government sector. Specifically, the study sought to determine the effective public relations channels used in enhancing client services, to examine the roles of public relations in enhancing client services and to identify the challenges public relations managers face in enhancing client's services in the public sector of Ghana.

The study used the qualitative approach and analysis was based on themes. Secondary data was used by reviewing of past and current literature related to the subject variables. The purposive sampling was used to select the articles used in the study. The review of the articles was done in three categories.

The analysis of this study's literature review found that, the media tool such as television was found to be the best and effective medium for enhancing client services. Also, the two main roles of public relations are; it is responsible for executing government policy and also responsible for protecting the brand of an organization. The study recommends that; future studies should adopt the quantitative approach in assessing public relations as a tool for enhancing client services in the Ghanaian government sector.

**Keywords: Public Relations, Client Services, Government Sector**

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Public relations are natural, vital as well as persistent component of human social relationship. It is very essential and an integrated component of public policy or service (Palaniappan & Ramachandraiah, 2016). Public relations involve designing campaign aimed at developing goodwill for individuals or organizations (Boateng & Hlavackova, 2017).

Public relations are aimed at creating or obtaining coverage for clients for free, popularly referred to as “earned media”, rather than paying for marketing or advertising. According to Boateng and Hlavackova (2017), public relations is to inform the public, prospective customers, investors, partners, employees, stakeholders and ultimately persuade them to maintain a positive or favorable view about the organization, its leadership, products, or political decisions. In recent times, advertising has formed part of broader public relations activities (Singh, 2017). For instance, good public relations would generate an article featuring a client, rather than paying for the client to be advertised next to the article (McKillop, 2014).

An important benefit of public relations is that organizations are able to establish and maintain cordial relations with its public as well as increase awareness and communication (Boateng & Hlavackova, 2017). An ideal organisation could be that which offers a good environment that regards the wellbeing of employees and also society in a humane and ethical manner (Heath & Coombs, 2005).

Public relations activities are headed by practitioners who handle functions such as media, community, consumer, industry, governmental relations, political campaigns, interest-group

representation, conflict mediation, and employee investor relations (Watson, 2005). Therefore, public relations specialists must understand the attitudes and concerns of community, consumer, employee and public interest groups to establish and maintain cooperative relationships. In government sector, public relations specialists may be called press secretaries or public communication officers. They keep the public informed of the activities of agencies and officials. Public Relations practitioners are most likely to help members of Publics construct positive images about the organization when they counsel the organization to behave in ways that people outside the organization want.

Client services vary from one person to another depending on what the person seeks to achieve. In the public sector, a client is believed to be referred to as a direct recipient of government services, who get access to those services by dealing directly with service providers. In general, typical client services in the public sector may include quality education, environmental protection, quality health care, good transport services, uninterrupted electricity, quality water, timely access to vital information and many more.

Delivery of services to satisfy the need of the public is achieved through several outlets (Muhia, 2010). The major channels include the following; print, broadcast, social media, direct mail, banners, signs, promotions and specialty items (pens, buttons and memo pads). Muhia (2010) argued that the public relations practitioners in government have devoted most of their efforts to communicating through the mass media since it is regarded as the most effective medium. The basis of any relations is communication which establishes connection and a connection target a relationship. The value of effective communication skills is incalculable (Covey, 2006). Wrong words, ill-advised gestures or misunderstood meanings can lead to very unsatisfactory outcomes

among clients. From the foregoing, this study assesses public relations as a tool for enhancing client services in the Ghanaian government sector.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Public relations units in many government sectors are not well established (Omondi, 2012). Most of the sectors are characterised with small offices, with inadequate facilities and often rely on other offices for equipment. In addition, public relations practitioners who are seconded to various ministries as Public Relations Officers lack adequate training and are usually not prepared to undertake their duties as Government Public Relations Officers. As a result, some of them choose the wrong medium in disseminating services to their clients. This mostly results into unsatisfactory outcomes.

Public relations as an occupation in most government departments has been defined more by its techniques than by its theory. Most public relations practitioners in government sectors have been the masters of a number of techniques. They have known how to secure media coverage, prepare press releases, write speeches, write and design brochures, produce video news releases, lobby representatives in conferences, stage special events, or prepare annual reports. However, the effectiveness of the various channels used in communicating client services to the general public has not been given adequate attention in academic literature.

In Ghana, a lot of concerns are raised mostly on government policies which have impact on the lives of the general public. People hold diverse opinions and views on most policies and these several diversions can be attributed to how it is communicated. According to Convey (2006), wrong communication can lead to undesirable and unbearable actions. Over the past years, scholars have given little or no attention to the role of public relations in the public institution. The few literature considered some selected government institution such as the forestry

commission (Boateng & Hlavackova, 2017). Given that public relations are essential for clients' satisfaction; this study examines the role of public relations in enhancing client services in the public sector.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

The main purpose of the study will be assessing public relations as a tool for enhancing client's services in the Ghanaian government sector.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study will be;

1. To determine the effective public relations channels used in enhancing client services in the public sector of Ghana.
2. To examine the roles of public relations in enhancing client services in Ghana.
3. To identify the challenges public relations managers face in enhancing client services in the public sector of Ghana.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the effective public relations channels used in enhancing client services in the public sector of Ghana?
2. What are the roles of public relations in enhancing client services in Ghana?
3. What are the challenges public relations managers faces in enhancing client services in the public sector of Ghana?

## **1.5 Research Hypotheses**

H0: There is no significant relationship between public relations and client services in public sector of Ghana.

H1: There is a significant relationship between public relations and clients' services in public sector of Ghana.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study would help identify the most effective public relations channels in delivering client services among the various public institutions in Ghana. It would emphasize on the relevance of public relations in the government sector.

In addition, the general public would have a clear view on the importance of public relations units and how their forms of delivery impact on their level of understanding. Also, the findings would help practicing and aspiring public relation practitioners as it will help them stem or avoid gross inefficiencies and mistakes of the past and thus contribute to efforts being made to balance objectively representation of sensitive institutions like government institutions.

Findings from the study would add to the existing body of knowledge on assessing the role of public relations in enhancing client services. This would serve as a platform for further research into issues related to public relations practices and how to achieve clients' satisfaction.

Furthermore, the research would aid public relation training institutions such as schools in coming up with proper training curriculum that pays attention to issues of image, poor publicity and good will. This would help groom aspiring public relations practitioners in controversial issues and topics touching on the country's information dissemination.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on all Ghanaians who enjoy some form of services from the public institution especially Ghanaians who reside within the Greater Accra Region. The choice of the scope was beneficial in examining the study variables. The study was limited to only people within the Greater Accra Region. The study covered the following variables; public relations, client services, and public relation channels.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

The study lacked enough information since the researcher was unable to collect data from the field. In view of this, the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Also, the focal point of the study that is Greater Accra Region was not enough since the country is made up of 16 regions and involving more regions can be of an advantage.

### **1.9 Organisation of the study**

The study was organized into four chapters and these are; chapter one (introduction) of the study covered areas such as: background of the study, the problem statement, research questions or hypothesis, and significance of the study. Chapter two focused on the literature review: which comprised of the theoretical literature and empirical literature and finally conceptual framework. Chapter three (methodology) focused on the research design, sampling and proposed method for future studies, criteria for inclusion and exclusion as well as ethical issues. Finally, the chapter four concluded on the study. It reflected on how the research contributed to knowledge and /or research and the outcome of research contribution.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Literature review is a very vital component of every academic study. This enables researcher to review past and current studies on the subject matter of the thesis. The researcher demonstrated a familiarity with literature pertaining to the variables of the study. Key variables reviewed included; overview of communication and political communication, the role of communication and its relationship with regards to winning elections.

#### **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

##### **2.2.1 Definition and Overview of Public Relations**

Public relations gained attention in the year 1889 when two men were employed to by George Westinghouse to publicize his animal project, alternating current (AC) electricity. However, it is believed that, the founder for this subject was Edward Louis Bernays. Heath (2006) recorded that, public relations became a profession in the early 1900s.

Since the inception of public relations, there has been several meaning from varied authors and writers. Public relations are the practice of intentionally managing the release and spread of information between an individual or an organization (such as a business, government agency, or a nonprofit organization) and the public. According to Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), public relation is defined as a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (Yann, 2012). In other words, public relation is a business function and administrative tool that serves to establish mutual

communication, understanding, acceptance, trust and cooperation between an organization and its target groups and to make this environment permanent (Gurel & Aydin, 2016).

From the above definitions, it can be inferred that, public relations and publicity is not the same. Public relations activities are controlled inside by the organisation whereas publicity is mostly influenced by external individuals (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). From the foregoing, public relations are an internal activity that revolves gaining exposure to some group of people on a subject that matters most to them. Present throughout history, PR has been an essential part of societies separated by miles and centuries. Whenever we consider social interaction, we discover components of today's PR practice, thus data, persuasion, reconciliation, cooperation (Cutlip, 2013).

### **2.2.2 Government Services and Public Relations**

The government is mandated to provide a varied range of services for their citizens. These are services that cannot be provided by individual and includes law enforcement and fire protection, wildlife preservation, national defense, public transportation systems, justice systems, social programs, and national museums (Omondi, 2012). The problems and pressures of society increasingly strain the machinery of government (Cutlip, 1994). Applying public relation to achieve customer satisfaction, Black (1976) argued that, Public relations should be non-political. It should facilitate improvement in democracy. Public relation is a very pivotal component in management both in the central government and the industry.

The common function of public relations in the government sector is to contribute to the meaning and realization of government policies, supports government responsiveness and serve. Also, give out to the public relevant and sufficient information to promote self-government (Omondi, 2012). Government Public relation specialists always perform most government

responsibility in a form of communication to the general public. The magnitude and complexity of government activities do not allow the central government to communicate to the public and therefore the onus lies on Public relation specialists to do that on behalf of the government.

Government public relations activities are grouped in four forms according to (Cutlip et al., 1994). First, Public relations in government are intended to communicate to the public about the performance of government institutions. Secondly, Public relations in government ensure active cooperation in government policies. Thirdly, it ensures the compliance to regulatory programmes and finally, fosters the public support for implemented policies and programmes. All these activities are put together to enhance the realization of client services in every country especially in Ghana.

### **2.2.3 Public Relations Practices in Ghana**

In Ghana, Public Relation is believed to have been introduced by the British during the period of colonization however; the exact date for the introduction is not yet ascertained (Atawura, 2010). During the era of His Excellency Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghana Institute of Journalism was established to train professionals in the area of public relations. In the year 1971, the Public Relations Association of Ghana (PRAG) was established to promote this profession. Currently, government public relations in Ghana are controlled by the Ministry of Communications. The minister is in charge of disseminating government policies to the public from time to time. The ministry was formally known as Ministry of Information which merged in 2014 into Ministry of communications with the Minister of Communications having oversight for both information as well as communications. Public relation practices may include; campaigns, lobbying, propaganda, professional ethics and corporate social responsibility (Anyijuka, 2016).

In practice, there have been two main schools of thoughts on public relations in Ghana. Gyan (1991) initially found out that, public relations were not considered as a profession in the early 1900s in Ghana. However, in the year 2008, it was established that, Public Relations was on heading towards professionalism in Ghana since majority of the participants were serving in higher managerial and decision making organisations (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2008). Wu and Boakye (2009) concluded that Public Relation specialists in Ghana tend to make maximum use of international public relations models and most frequent used models were cultural interpreter and personal influence models. Till date, Public Relation has taken different dimensions and angles since it is practiced everywhere in both the government and the private sector. The above studies failed to examine the various channels used by practitioners in disseminating information to the public. This has become an important subject matter in current literature regarding public relations. This study filled the gap by exploring on the media adopted by specialists in communicating government or organizations policies to their target audience and also established their relationship with client services.

## **2. 3 Review of Related Studies**

### **2.3.1 Effective Public Relations Tools and Client Services**

The tools used by government public relations specialists in disseminating information are numerous and differ from one institution to another. Narteh, Akwensivie and Agyapong (2012) grouped channels of public relations into three and they are; controlled channels, uncontrolled channels and semi-controlled channels. According to the authors, controlled channels include public service advertising, house advertising, publications, displays, exhibits, photographs. Also, uncontrolled channels comprised of news release, press conferences, public service announcements, talk and interview shows. On the other hand, semi-controlled channels are made

up of electronic communication such as e-mails, websites, as well as word of mouth. In addition to the above tools, Clow and Baack (2007) have opined that, the use of internet such as social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram) can be an important channel which can be adopted by public relations specialists in the government sector to communicate information. However, Zhu (2015) argued that, internet have little or no effect on public relations activities. Furthermore, in view of Enli (2017), the media had significantly influenced the manner in which Public Relations specialists disseminate information to the public and therefore, practitioners should pay adequate attention to them.

Nimmo (2005) asserted that, there is a strong and a positive relationship between television and newspapers and public relations communication. Among the numerous public relations tools, the use of television stands the chance of achieving a high level of influence on customers or clients as a result of its visual nature (Lancaster, 2005). Similarly, TV, radio, newspapers and magazine, online have been reported to the most useful channels (WAEON, 2016). Rivero and Theodore (2014) opined that, press releases, public affairs and lobbying are strong tools that can be used by Public Relation practitioners to reach their target centres. Alhadid and Qaddomi (2016) also established that the social media is the most effective tool in communication. This is because, their study found a significant impact of internet (social media) as a moderating variable among public relations and company image. From the foregoing, it can be seen that, previous studies have established several tools as the most effective ones which includes; the internet (social media), television, newspapers, radio. This study will provide a universal effective channel to be adopted by public relations practitioners.

In assessing the relationship between effective public relations tools and client services, Kirdar (2012) found that, where a wrong medium is selected in handling client complaints, it is likely to

result in dissatisfaction. Right media should be adopted to ensure that client services or complaints are well handled. Singh (2017) opined that, instead of paying for client to be advertised next to the article, Public Relation should adopt a media that feature the client. On the other hand, Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant and Kelly (2009) indicated that Public Relation specialists can rely on the media such as TV, radio and magazines to meet the services of their clients. They also added that social media platforms satisfy the needs and demands of clients well. In view of this, Public Relation specialists can adopt them.

### **2.3.2 Role of Public Relations and Clients Services**

When it comes to the function of the government public relations, it is responsible for the execution of public policy, assisting the news media in coverage of government activities, reporting the citizenry on agency activities, increasing the internal cohesion of the agency, increasing the agency's sensitive to its public's and mobilizing support for the agency (Palaniappan & Ramachandraiah, 2018). Similarly, Botan (2006) argued that, Public Relation can play significant share in policy formulating and execution programs. This means, Public Relation function can never be underestimated in every sector in the country. According Muhia (2010), government public relations has the tendency to promote social harmony and establish confidence between service providers and those receiving the services if it is well communicated. However, the study failed to empirically assess the right medium for disseminating information by the specialists in the defense and police department. In view of Gilaninia, Taleghani and Mohammadi (2013), they stressed that, public relations function to promote mutual understanding with audience and with confidence and strong reasoning. The central role of public relations is to protect the interest of an organisation from the public interest and other organisations (Gilaninia et al., 2013). This was supported by Sherman, (2019) who established

that, Public Relation specialists shape the image of every organisation around the globe. In addition, Alhadid and Qaddomi (2016) showed that, there was an impact of public relations on company image.

Public Relation professionals build and maintain corporate brands, disseminate institutional message and reduce the impact of wrong information delivery (Sherman, 2019). Internally, the Public Relation managers are not assigned to just disseminating information, they also ensure that, the organisation operates under ethical and legal auspices, respect the equity between work and compensate employees (Rivero & Theodore, 2014). It can therefore be concluded that, public relations function to build the image of the public sector by assisting the news media and implementing public policy.

On client services, ATI (2019) stated that, Public Relation ensures the different ways to deliver services to meet changing public and clients' needs. Also, Adweek (2016) opined that, Public Relations enable businesses to ensure quality and value addition in satisfying clients' needs. In today's businesses, without public relations, customers' satisfaction will not be ensured (Alamu, 2016). Saheed (2011) also established that, there is a significant impact between Public Relations and ensuring customer satisfaction. In Nairobi, Akuku (2014) found that, there is a significant impact of Public Relation on customers' satisfaction. Also, the study revealed a negative relationship since the Public Relations specialists fail to adopt the right media for disseminating information. Finally, the study concludes that Public Relation department of any organization contributes to its development and enhances customer's satisfaction. Public relations are used in bridging the communication gap between management and customers. It is important for business to implement Public Relations units with an aim of enhancing client services.

### **2.3.3 Challenges of Public Relations and Client Services in Ghana**

Like all forms of marketing and political communication, public relations also come with its distinct problems. Agyepong (2010) found that, challenges in PR started since the introduction of the Public Relations Association of Ghana where the younger trained PR officials from GIJ doubted the credibility of the old staff. In recent times, PR is still faced with a lot of problems and the common ones includes, lack of public relations education on the part of employers, lack of management understanding in terms of setting up a distinct department for their operations, there is also limitation of practice where some specialist limit themselves to simple forms of disseminating information, lack of in-service training, cultural factors and limited public relations institutions in the country (Atawura, 2010). Review of literature revealed that the most challenging problems that confront most public relations department of many institutions are lack of qualified personnel, insufficient operational space, poor recognition and no allocation of budget (Kotler, Wong, Saunders & Armstrong, 2005; Jobber, 2001). Also, it has been recorded that, most public relations are not independent and for that matter, they are not able to communicate directly with the chief executive officers of organisation (Jefkins & Yadin, 2000). According to Ajihson (2017), public relations practices are challenged with seven (7) major problems and they are: lack of finances, increase in communication platform which makes specialists find it difficult to select the right medium, client's expectation management as clients expect service providers to perform magic to come out with services that meet and exceeds their expectations, man-power situation where practitioners lack comprehensive understanding of what it takes to be a full practitioners in public relations, poor appreciation of the profession among the public and private organizations' leaders, low awareness of public relations and poor

usage of social media. These hindrances have had negative impact on information flow in a lot of public sectors (Ajihson, 2017).

In satisfying clients' needs, studies have suggested that there is still a low awareness of the public on the relevance of meeting their needs through public relations. Also, satisfying clients' needs via public relations has been associated with politics therefore rendering their operations worthless. According to Comcowich (2018), PR challenges in satisfying clients' needs include; attracting poor staff and the spreading of fake news or stories which defiles the reputation of the unit. To curb these problems, managers must implement adequate measures to ensure information flow within and without the organisation.

## **2.4 Theoretical Literature Review**

Theory is basically defined as a set of interrelated laws or general principles about some aspect of reality (Tan, 1985). The purpose of theory is to explain, predict and identify systematic relationships between facts. Every good study should be based on theories (Defee, Randall, Thomas & Williams, 2010) and therefore this study is no exception. There a number of theories and models that apply to public relations such as public relations theory, system theory, excellence theory, social theory, public information model and two-way symmetrical model. In this present study, the system theory, two-way symmetrical model and the public information model were applied to public relations

### **2.4.1 Public Information Model**

This model is termed to be a one-way communication model that is, it requires a sender to put across the message and a receiver who receives the message. The purpose of this model is to inform the public and therefore it is used by many specialists in the public sector. In this model, the receivers are unable to provide feedback to the sender on how the message fared them.

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984), “the aim of this model is to distribute information with no persuasive intent. The practitioners openly give out reports about the organisation to the general public. This model places more emphasis on disseminating information than creating news and therefore, information communicated are factual and clear. Past and present government officials have adopted this model by informing the public on the truth about their management.

Not only has the government sector, other institutions like the media company, non-profit organization practiced this model. Because of the universal nature of the model, it is the highest practiced model in recent public relations (Theaker, 2004). Though Sleeding (2008) argued that, to disseminate information effectively, the right media has to be chosen and included tools like press release, brochure, web content and flyers. In the government sector, a lot of information on client services has been communicated to the public through this form. For instance, the provision of free water and electricity to the Ghanaian populace was communicated through the application of this model. This was because the news published and communicated was good news and will benefit the general public.

#### **2.4.2 Two-Way Symmetrical Model**

Grunig (1984) argued that, among the models practice by PR practitioners, two-way symmetrical model is the best and perfect one when applied in communication. The aim of this model is to establish a mutual understanding among the players in the communication processes which is intended to benefit all parties. In addition, this model assigns responsibility to specialists to resolve conflicts with right strategies via the delivering of public relations mode. Two-way symmetrical model is intended to influence all the parties to realise a complete and balanced state in society. Two-way symmetrical model is mostly applied in government and media sector. The model suggests that, the government and the media should maintain a mutual cooperation.

This means, the government and its officials must adopt the mass media resources, fair and truthful to disseminate government information. Two-way symmetrical model practiced by PR specialists is used to share mission of the institution. According to UK Essays (2018), two-way symmetrical model makes organisation more effective. In addition, they stressed that, the model is the most ethical and right approach to public relations. The right tool for this model is the use of the mass media. In our country, information is disseminated to the public through the application of two-way symmetrical model.

### **2.4.3 Systems Theory**

System theory has its root originated by Ludwig von Bertalanffy. It was formally known as general systems until it was translated into theory (Littlejohn, 1999). This theory is one of the predominant theoretical lines of thinking underpinning much of public relations practice (Cutlip et al., 1994). The theory is defined as mechanical, organic and social systems that interact with their environment (Mersham, Ransburg & Skinner, 1995; Gregory, 2000). In other words, a system is made up of two or more components that interact with each other in a structural relationship and form an entity whose elements function interdependently (Abraham, 1991).

There are three major systems perspectives that are mostly applied in business settings and they are; mechanistic (closed system), organismic and adaptive (the combination are sometimes referred to as open system) (Gregory, 2000). These three systems provide public relations with great insights. In current literature, system theory perspectives are summarised as open and closed systems (Omondi, 2006). The systems perspective applies for Public Relations because mutually independent relationships are established and maintained between organisations and their publics.

The differences between the systems are, in open system, the elements within the organization influence and are also influenced by other elements. Also, the organisation as a whole is responsive to environmental change (Gregory, 2000) in order to survive since the main purpose of the system is survival. On the other hand, in the closed system seal their boundaries and therefore does not interact with their environment (Spicer, 1997). This system in the early development of management theory was viewed to better understand effective management until it was criticised (Morgan, 1986). Closed system focused on how to manage a unit in an organisation or an organisation itself without considering the relationships with other units or with the organization's environment (Gregory, 2000). The purpose of closed system is to survive and therefore interaction with the environment is not necessary to maintain balance.

#### **2.4.4 Application of Theory to Public Relations**

In the business environment, there are certain unforeseen circumstances that can influence organisational operations. These problems emanate from many sources in the environment (these are anything that generates change pressures on a system and the common ones involve; information, energy and matter inputs). It is required of PR practitioners to anticipate the chances of circumstances happening and met out strategies to deal with them. As counselors to top executives and line management, the Public Relations staff is charged with keeping the organisation sensitive to environmental changes, anticipating as well as reacting to changes.

The organisation is a system. It is made up of several departments that are sub-units or subsystems. The departments (sub units) are interdependent and help in fulfilling the goals and objectives of organisation. Organisations are adaptive systems. They make adjustments based on the response from the environment. They also spend time, resources and effort in monitoring the environment.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology used to achieve the research questions- the design, sampling and proposed method for future studies. Research methodology is the process that a researcher goes through to conduct a research. In this study, it consists of methods that were used in reviewing past literature.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

According to Cassell and Symon (2004), research design is defined as a step by step arrangement, which directly link the research question(s) of a study to how data are gathered, analyzed and interpreted which is done in an ordered manner. The purpose of this study is to assess public relations as a tool for enhancing client's services in the Ghanaian government sector. This study intends to use qualitative design. The review process was employed to integrate results from a large number of studies with many different ways of classifying and measuring the variables: public relations, client's services and the public sector under study. Qualitative research is "a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Qualitative research better reflects "assessing public relations as a tool for enhancing client's services in the Ghanaian

government sector” which cannot be reduced to numerical values using statistical analysis. In addition, this report uses the qualitative method to explore the research questions as it allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth explorations of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, information and data for the study was collected by reviewing past studies in a form of literature review. The literature review was conducted in a section which was in line with the objectives of the study. The literature was reviewed, criticised and gaps were identified which will serve as a reference for future studies. The literature review was analyzed using thematic content analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing and offering insight into patterns of meaning across a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

### **3.3 SAMPLING: Article Selection Approach**

This section describes how the empirical articles were collected for the purpose of this study which began with an electronic search of academic databases and the Internet. Each article was reviewed independently by the researcher and through subsequent discussions a joint summary of the analysis was produced for each article. The study’s article selection approach took the form of a purposive sampling in which the researcher selected articles that reflect the study variables. Purposive sampling refers to where a researcher thinks a particular article fits the study. Selection of article was done based on the researcher’s judgment. However, to ensure that article was selected appropriately, it was judged against some inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the literature review, eight articles were reviewed under the effective of public relations tools, nine articles were reviewed on the role of public relations and seven articles were reviewed on the challenges of public relations in Ghana. In all, twenty-four (24) articles were reviewed on the research objectives in the literature review. Key articles include; Narteh, Akwensivie and

Agyapong (2012), Zhu (2015), Palaniappan and Ramachandraiah (2018), Gilaninia, Taleghani and Mohammadi (2013), Agyepong (2010) and Ajihson (2017).

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

Articles included covered the variable public relations, articles on effective public relations tools should fall within 2005 till present, information on the role of public relations should fall within 2006 to 2020, information on the challenges of public relations in Ghana should fall within 2000 to 2020 and theory and models used should be linked to public relations.

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

Any information which is not linked to public relations is not included in the work. Articles reviewed that is less than 2000 in the year of publication were not included in the study. Models and theories not related to public relation were not included in the study.

## **3.4 Proposed Method for Future Studies**

This section described the methodology and techniques that will be used to conduct the research in future. For future studies, it is expected to consider dissertation instead of long essay. This is because a detailed and comprehensive conclusion can be drawn which can be applied in all government sectors in the country when it comes to public relations. As a result, future studies will undertake the study quantitatively. Quantitative research methods focus on numbers and anything that is measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their relationships (Leedy, 1993). The survey method will be used to gather data and information. The

survey method is described as an approach which focuses on quantitative analysis, where data are gathered through the use of questionnaire, interviews or published statistics. Also, the survey approach is any procedure in which data are systematically collected from a population or a sample thereof through some form of direct solicitation such as questionnaires (Campbell, Machin & Walters, 2007). Questionnaire will be used by the researchers to gather primary information. The benefits of using questionnaire will include the follow; less expensive, enables respondent adequate time to complete the instrument as well as limiting Hawthorne effect given its anonymity. The instrument will be structured with closed ended questions. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire will be tested. The validity will be tested using both face and content validity. On the other hand, the reliability will be tested using test retest reliability.

Future studies will use the simple random technique to select the respondents for their study. Simple random technique is a probability sampling technique where elements of the entire population are given an equal opportunity to be selected (Freriths, 2008). The purpose of using simple random sampling technique is to avoid any potential bias that may arise as a result of collecting data. The data that will be collected will be quantitatively analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 20.0).

Future studies will anticipate the following potential limitations; all questionnaires are likely not to be retrieved, getting respondents to participate in the study is likely to a major challenge since the sample will require a lot of people. Again, little participation from some respondents may limit their involvement during data collection. Administering the questionnaires will be tiring since the sample size will be large and the researcher will have to explain the key terms on the questionnaires to some of the respondents. The study is likely to be limited by time and financial

constraints. However, with proper time and budget plan, the future studies should be able to deal with time and financial constraints.

To ensure ethics, the researchers' supervisor will go through the study to ensure that, everything is done in line with the laid down procedures by their University. Also, the study will ensure the following ethical principles; confidentiality, autonomy, justice and beneficence and non-maleficence.

*Confidentiality:* The information that will be collected from the respondents will be kept confidential and stored on a password-protected computer with limited access to the researcher and her supervisor. Also, respondents name will not be taken or indicated on the questionnaire.

*Autonomy:* Respondents will be given the right to withdraw from the study and participation should be voluntary.

*Justice:* Selection of respondents will be done based on convenience. The respondents will be treated in the same way, regardless of their age, background or belief.

*Beneficence and Non-maleficence:* Respondents will be informed that there will be no direct benefits to them by participating in the research study and that the indirect benefits of the study will include generating data for policy making. Respondents will be assured that the information provided will not be used to harm them.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter describes the conclusion deduced from the literature reviewed and also outlined some recommendations for future researchers. Here, the researcher analysed the literature reviewed based on the research objectives.

#### **4.2 Analysis of Study's Literature Review Findings**

##### **4.2.1 The effective public relations channels used in enhancing client's services**

This section determines the most useful tools that are used by government sector officials when satisfying the demands and needs of the people in Ghana. Practically, there are numerous channels of enhancing client services. However, the most effective ones are identified below.

According to Clow and Baack (2007), the internet has been found to be the most effective channel adopted by public relations specialists in disseminating information to the general public. The internet has further been criticised in present times as not an effective channel (Zhu, 2015). On the other hand, Alhadid and Qaddomi (2016) also proved that social media is the most effective channel in executing public relations tasks. Communication. WAEON (2016)

established that TV, radio, newspapers and magazine, are the most appropriate channels. From the foregoing, it can be inferred that, the most effective public relations channel is the media. The media is made up of the television, radio, newspapers and social media (internet). PR specialists are at the liberty to employ any of these medium to disseminate information regarding client services. This review finding supports earlier study by Enli (2017), who found out that, the media had a significant impact on the way in which PR practitioners communicate information to the public. Similarly, Nimmo (2005) found that, there is a strong and a positive relationship between the media and public relations communication. None of the literature review contradicted the finding of the study. The study also found that, among the various media available for PR specialists to communicate to the public, television is the most effective. This finding is consistent with previous study by (Lancaster, 2005) who established that, use of television stands the chance of achieving a high level of influence on customers as a result of its visual nature.

#### **4.2.2 The roles of public relations in enhancing client services**

Different authors have highlighted on the role of public relations in enhancing client services. According to Botan (2006), one role of public relations is to ensure the execution of government policies geared towards satisfying the needs of the public. Also, Muhia (2010) added that, it is the role of public relations to promote social harmony and establish confidence between service providers and those receiving the services. This means, public relations is responsible to ensure that providing quality services bring about harmony and confidence among the provider and the beneficiaries. In satisfying the needs of the people and the general public, public relations is responsible for protecting the interest and image of an organisation from the public interest and other organisations (Gilaninia et al., 2013). Similar to defending the interest of the organisation,

public relations build and maintain corporate brands, disseminate institutional message and reduce the impact of wrong information delivery (Sherman, 2019). From the above reviews, two main propositions were made; public relations are responsible for executing government policy and public relation is responsible for protecting the brand of an organisation. There are several roles of public relations. However, it is noted for executing public policy and also protecting the image, interest and brand of an organisation. The first finding supports earlier study by Palaniappan and Ramachandraiah (2018) who found out that, public relations are responsible for executing public policy, reporting the citizenry on agency activities and increasing the agency's sensitive to its publics. Also, the latter finding is in line with the research study by Sherman, (2019) who established that, PR specialists shape the image of every organisation around the globe.

#### **4.2.3 The challenges public relations managers face in enhancing client's services**

The study also explored the major challenges faced by public relations units. According to Atawura (2010), public relations are hindered with lack of education, lack of management understanding, lack of in-service training and other cultural factors. Also, lack of qualified personnel, insufficient operational space, poor recognition and no allocation of budget were found by Kotler, Wong, Saunders and Armstrong (2005) to be some major challenges that PR managers are exposed to in discharging their duties. In addition, Ajihson (2017) identified some major challenges such as insufficient finances, too many available communication channels and low awareness of public relations. The literature review in above conceded that finance is a major obstacle that hinders effective implementation of their plans. Little or no budget is always given to public relations managers. It can be concluded that, lack of finance is the major challenge public relations managers' face in enhancing client services. This resonates with the

view in the literature that public relations still capture a small portion of the overall marketing budgets of most firms (Kotler et al., 2005). Again, lack of understanding was found to be one of the major challenges that public relations manager's face in satisfying customer demands and needs. This is in line with the outcome by Ajihsan (2017) and Atawura (2010) who all found that lack of management understanding on public relations has hindered the growth and the awareness of public relations in the country. Finally, insufficient office space was found to be another major challenge faced by public relations units. This outcome is in line with the study by Jobber (2001) who found that, lack of space for PR specialists was a problem.

### **4.3 Recommendation for Future Studies**

The main findings of this present study's literature review which will serve as a proposition for future studies are;

- i. The most effective public relations channel that can be adopted by Public Relation specialist should be the media. Among all the media tools, television was found to be the best and effective medium for disseminating information because of its visual nature.
- ii. The two main roles of public relations are; it is responsible for executing government policy and also responsible for protecting the brand of an organisation.
- iii. The major challenges for Public Relation managers are; lack of finance, lack of understanding and insufficient office space.

It is however recommended that, future studies should adopt the quantitative approach in assessing public relations as a tool for enhancing client's services in the Ghanaian government sector. Also, future studies should use the survey method to gather data and information through the use of questionnaire. Data should be analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

Future studies will fill the gap in literature by providing effective tools that will be universally accepted by all academicians. In addition, future studies will provide the right medium that should be used by PR specialists in the Ghanaian public sector. Future studies will consider more challenges that confront PR officials and will also empirically assess the role of public relations which the past studies failed to do

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